The Collaboration of General and Special Education in a Teacher Preparation Program Design: A Case Study

DISSERTATION

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By

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Abstract

Based on a case study guided by grounded theory, this research sought to investigate and derive meaning from an exploration of the phenomenon of a program design process. The study was designed to address two primary research questions: first, how did faculty from both general and special education departments describe their experiences in a program merging design process; and secondly, what challenges did the faculty encounter during the program design process? Data collected included: program documents, meeting observations and in-depth interviews with the six faculty members of the case study. Three faculty members from a separate university were also interviewed to provide a contrast of the data to examine their experiences within a merged teacher education program, thus providing a comparison in the research. Five major findings emerged from this study, including the following: there was a collectively shared guiding vision for the team; collaboration as a key factor in the process; a sense of community and connectedness appeared to strengthen the process. Faculty buy-in and organizational structures of the program merger were recognized as challenges to the design process. Also, availability of time and resources were additional challenges the team faced. The study provides recommendations to college of education faculty and administration
engaging in program merger design; to faculty engaged in leading the process as well as
to faculty in general and special education interested in program reform.
I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the five most important people in my life, for without them I would have never completed this journey. To my three girls, Natalie, Julia, and Gabby; each of you inspired this work in a variety of ways through your education, growth and encouragement. This journey began with just us girls several years ago and your support, daily assistance, listening to my outbursts, and your unconditional love brought me to completion. To my Mom, your unyielding belief in my ability to make it through any obstacle in life, including this degree. You have guided me through the most difficult of times. Mom, your presence, emotional, and in some cases financial support enabled me to achieve my dreams. It is your strength that carried me through. To my soul mate John; I began my first day at Ohio State in 1993 with you by my side; and I am beyond grateful that you have inspired me, helped me, and encouraged me more than I could ever need. There were many moments giving up felt easier, but you would not let me. At times I loathed you for that, but through it all, your humor, wit and sarcasm, but steadfast love enabled me to see I could make it through. I thank you and dedicate this to you!

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Publications


Fields of Study

Major Field: Education Teaching & Learning

Minor Field: Disability Studies
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Disparities in education are consistently faced by diverse groups of students, particularly students with disabilities (Frieden, Lev; Chairperson, 2004). Historically, students who have experienced oppression, marginalization, and long-term economic poverty continue to be more susceptible to school failure and lowered academic expectations (Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor, & Valle, 2011). Students with disabilities are particularly marginalized in schools and they are not reaching their potential for academic achievement standards commensurate with their peers without disabilities. These students are furthermore less likely to be engaged in meaningful work or recreation experiences after leaving high school (Frieden, Lev; Chairperson, 2004). A growing number of students identified with disabilities receive at least part of their education in a general education classroom setting further prompting the need for general education teachers to be better prepared to meet the educational needs of all students (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Blanton & Pugach, 2011; Hardman, 2009). Essentially, general education classrooms continue to grow more diverse and without proper preparation, teachers face difficult challenges in addressing the educational needs of diverse learners.
Two powerful laws: the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act*, 2004 ("IDEA," PL 108-446) and the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, 2015, the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, both shape the education of students with disabilities in today’s schools. Both laws include stipulations for special education, placing unique demands on schools to guarantee each eligible child with a disability a *Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)* in the *Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)* (Wright & Wright, 2007).

With each passing amendment to IDEA and ESEA, there is a renewed interest in improved preparation for all teachers as these federal changes indicate the primary responsibility for all students with disabilities to be in the least restrictive environment, which in many cases involves the general education classroom. National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) further states that professional education programs should prepare all school personnel to contribute to the education of all students, including those with disabilities. As a result, every teacher needs to be prepared to work effectively with students who have disabilities and to collaborate effectively with special or general educator counterparts (Blanton & Pugach, 2007).

Improving the quality of teacher education is one proposed method of education reform that can enhance the education of students facing educational achievement gaps. It is becoming more pertinent for general education content area teachers and special education teachers to work cohesively and collaborate to maximize instructional effectiveness for all students (Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor, & Valle, 2011; Blanton & Pugach, 2011, 2007). A variety of practices widely used in the special
education profession can support all teachers in raising academic achievement for every child while meeting the demands of rigorous teacher accountability measures. ESSA and IDEA and the widespread implementation of the Common Core State Standards have moved toward integrating special and general education. (Blanton & Pugach, 2007). Furthermore, all teachers are accountable for educating all students, including those with disabilities (Frieden, Lev; Chairperson, 2004). Based on the reauthorization to IDEA, (2004) all students with disabilities have the legal right to be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and cannot be removed from a general education classroom if the school is not prepared to meet a student’s needs (34C.F.R. 300.116 (b)(3)(e)). Schools are required to provide a level of support services through IDEA such as training in inclusive schooling, differentiation, modifying and adapting instruction, and collaboration per IDEA (2004, § 300.704(b)(4)(i), (b)(40(xi)). Rigorous content standards escalates the importance of the role of the content specialist and general education teacher while also increasing the demand for individualized instruction for many students. The ESSA allows for alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, aligned to challenging state standards.

Preparing general education teachers to be effective with diverse students not only addresses the needs of students already identified with disabilities but also has the potential to enhance the education of all students facing gaps in achievement. (Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor, & Valle, 2011) Teacher education programs across the country are challenged to prepare teachers to face high accountability standards and close
the achievement gaps. Regardless of structure and design of the teacher preparation programs; “it is the responsibility of teacher education to prepare graduates for today’s diverse student populations” (Blanton & Pugach, 2007, p. 4).

**Purpose of the Study**

In the United States, teacher education program structures and designs vary across colleges and universities. In many regards they differ not only based on the wide range of programs offered to train teachers in early childhood, elementary, secondary, and special education; they also vary within individual states governed by varying licensure bands. Some universities have restructured their education programs by merging the special and general education preparation programs to address the goals of better preparing all teachers to meet the diverse needs of all students (Blanton, Griffin, Winn, & Pugach, 1997). Universities that have redesigned their education programs have often had a source of funding to face the arduous task of education reform (Blanton & Pugach, 2007). Although program redesign is not always connected to funding from outside sources, “higher education faculty may have an interest in collaboration in teacher education but may not have the time in their workloads to engage in new teacher education initiatives” and “grants funded by the state can support time in faculty members’ workloads to focus on collaborative teacher education program development” (Blanton & Pugach, 2007, p. 35).

The earliest formal efforts to connect the preparation of special education teachers with that of their general education classroom counterparts originated in 1975 with the assistance of federal grants (Blanton & Pugach, 2011). Even though combined credential
programs for special and general educators have existed for more than 40 years, reformed programs are experiencing a resurgence as an attempt to enhance teacher preparation to educate these exceptional learners (Young K., 2008). With the current trend in colleges and universities across the United States as separate program options for both general and special education, it is my contention that teacher preparation programs are not adequately preparing teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners, particularly those with disabilities.

Because the responsibility of teaching students with disabilities is not only the responsibility of special educators but also the general education teacher of record, inclusive teaching practices are essential in preparing preservice teachers. My study aims to identify the processes in designing a teacher education merged program intended to meet the needs of diverse learners by strengthening general educators. The study will further examine programs that have achieved a merged program and the differences between separate and integrated programs. I chose to research this topic using a case study approach of a collaborative and interdisciplinary effort of both special and general teacher education programs that joined together to consider the design of a merged program. The primary goals of the program were aimed at improving the capacity of a specific graduate teacher education licensure program, housed within a Research 1 university, to train highly qualified preservice general educators to instruct a wide range of students. The participants in my study received state funding to design a dual licensure program model. The program design involved the revision of coursework and
field experiences, as well as the development of an inclusion course facilitating interaction and collaboration between general and special education.

The research questions I wanted to engage in my exploration included:

- How did faculty in both general and special education departments describe their experiences in a program design process?
- What challenges did the faculty encounter during the program design process?

In order to study the entire phenomenon of this case, I used grounded theory to identify themes and patterns that helped shape the research questions. Because of this approach, the research questions became more firm as the study proceeded.

**Theoretical Framework**

Within this inquiry, I intend to build on existing models of teacher preparation program designs to explore a program design process. I will explore the processes of developing a combined program through combining coursework to design a new program model. My analysis is developed from the area of scholarship surrounding merged programming in teacher education and the impact on the higher education departments of special and general education. I especially want to highlight the notion of collaboration in teacher education reflected in the results of this study. According to Blanton and Pugach (2011), “the practice of creating and implementing collaborative programs of teacher education…is growing faster than the development of overarching frameworks or conceptualizations to guide them” (p. 181).
Collaboration in Teacher Education

The scholarship related to collaboration informed this study for several reasons. First, the “impetus for discussions about collaboration in teacher education” was, according to Blanton and Pugach (2007), without question due to the passage of IDEA in 1975 (first enacted as Public Law 94-142). Because of the emphasis on students with disabilities integrated into the general education classroom, it was necessary for general and special educators to begin coordinating their teaching. Secondly, my research involved the combination of two distinct programs in teacher preparation of special and general education to come together to design a dual license education program. This task would be impossible without the collaborative efforts of faculty in both departments. Engaging in the scholarship regarding collaboration provides a lens into appreciating the role of collaboration within the two fields of teacher education, as well as the emphasis on collaboration in current national reforms.

Historically American schools have consistently examined ways to enact school reform. Typically the reform impetus involves the issues of “dwindling funds, concern about the quality of education” and improving learner outcomes (Gable & Manning, 1997, p. 219). However, more recently it is believed by involving teachers in school change efforts, such as accountability measures, critics believe that there is an increased likelihood of successful reform. Critics contend that increased collaboration amongst all educators is a key to successful reform. Scholars further state that collaboration ultimately has not been fully realized in both P-12 settings and in teacher education (Danforth, 2014; Bradwell, 2013; Blanton & Pugach 2011, 2007).
Teaching has been characterized as a "lonely" profession and historically much of the work of teachers has been performed in isolation from their professional colleagues (Gaikwad & Brantley, 1992). “This isolation can be seen as beginning with and perpetuated by parallel, noncollaborative teacher education programs” (Blanton, Griffin, Winn, & Pugach, 1997, p. 1). Special educators, unlike their general educator counterparts, have most likely faced an even greater isolation due to the traditional model in schools separating and alienating them physically and socially (Powell, 2004). Thus, general education classroom teachers came to perceive special educators as having a special capacity for their work with students of special needs and were a “breed apart...it was inappropriate to expect teachers lacking in such preparations and inclination to participate in educating students in wheelchairs or students who have difficulty learning academics” (Stainback & Stainback, 1996, p. 19). In other words, special educators chose to serve these children, thus it should be left to them. Unfortunately, this separation and specialization perpetuated the notion that other educators could opt out of responsibility of teaching children with special rights. Currently the overwhelming majority of programs in teacher preparation simultaneously prepare teachers for both general and special assignments in schools in separation from one another (Blanton, Florian, & Pugach, 2012).

As the inclusive educational practices have spread since the passage of IDEA, culturally and linguistically diverse children, in addition to students with special rights, have entered into general education classrooms enabling the special educator to be included in the core professional life of the school. General and special education
teachers are having to sort out new roles and terms of engagement. Essentially teachers are having to develop interactional skills to participate effectively in the joint planning, problem solving and instructional delivery needed to promote the success of diverse learners. Advocates and researchers contend the need for collaboration has never been greater. Collaboration is a deceptively simple concept with wide-ranging implications for the education of all children and the effectiveness of all educators. The word collaboration is often used generically, implying that collaboration happens when individuals are simply working together; however, this easily gives the impression that collaboration is an easy and natural process when the opposite is true (Friend & Cook, 2000). According to Robinson and Buly (2007) collaboration “takes effort, diligence, and training. It is not simply working together, liking each other, or spending time engaged in a joint activity” (p. 84). Rather, collaboration is an interactive process that enables people with diverse expertise to generate creative solutions to mutually defined problems (Blanton & Pugach, 2007). Given this, I was especially interested in the collaborative processes that took place in the case study group I studied as they navigated and interacted through the terrain of program design.

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is the potential contribution to the scholarship in the areas of teacher education reform and teacher collaboration. Educational reform and changing student demographics are dramatically altering the instructional context for education professionals. The reality of today’s schools and the traditional teacher preparation models have led to more collaborative approaches to prepare all teachers.
However, the development of collaborative teacher education is “highly dependent upon the willingness of institutions of higher education to focus more on what all educators have in common rather than what makes them different” (Hardman, 2009). This research focused on a single case study of one institution that engaged in a program design process. The goal was to move beyond a description of the case. Using grounded theory methodology, I analyzed the case in order to gather in-depth information, identify patterns, and generate theories related to program merging. As a case study guided by grounded theory, the primary purpose of this study was to understand the phenomenon of the program design process.

With the increase of students with disabilities included in the general education classrooms, there is a greater necessity for all teachers to be prepared to meet diverse needs. The importance of this study potentially contributes to the critical need for both general and special educators in teacher preparation programs to gain experience in collaboration and combining expertise to consider a more unified program. In doing so, more cohesive program reforms has the potential to impact the quality of teachers. Scholars have long since recognized high quality teachers ultimately impact “the children, families, and communities they serve” (Hains, et al., 1997, p. 204).

**Definition of Terms**

*Collaboration*: in its simplest, and most understandable form, is getting individuals, who may or may not have similar interests, to work together in an organized endeavour to a satisfying and most appropriate group end. In an inclusive learning community, collaboration takes place when members work together in tandem. Friend and Cook
(2000) listed the defining characteristics of successful collaboration as follows: 1) Collaboration is voluntary; 2) Collaboration requires parity among participants; 3) Collaboration is based on mutual goals; 4) Collaboration depends on shared responsibility for participation and decision making; 5) Individuals who collaborate share their resources; and 6) Individuals who collaborate share accountability for outcomes.

*Co-Teaching:* is “two or more people sharing responsibility for teaching some or all of the students assigned to a classroom. It involves the distribution of responsibility among people for planning, instruction, and evaluation for a classroom of students” (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008, p. 5). In the context of this study, co-teaching refers to the new, restructured, teaching arrangements for faculty that wish to engage in fully merged programs and they choose to co-teach coursework to provide a more unified course as well as model the intent of collaborative efforts they are hoping to achieve in student learning.

*Disability Studies in Education (DSE):* Predominantly focuses on political, social, cultural, historical and individual understandings of disability and supports the education of students labeled with disabilities in non-segregated settings from a civil rights stance. DSE challenges research methodology that objectifies, marginalizes, and oppresses people with disabilities. Examples of approaches to practice and DSE may include: Disability primarily recognized and valued as natural part of human diversity; Disability and inclusive education; Disability culture and identity as part of a multicultural curriculum; Connections, overlaps, and dissonance between DSE and special education
Discrete Program Model: In discrete programs, general and special education are independent of one another. Collaboration among faculty may occur for the purpose of providing courses to meet program requirements. These program requirements are potentially mandated by states or by national accreditation rather than as a coordinated preservice curriculum. Furthermore, general education faculty presentation of disability across courses may contradict the discourse students are exposed to in special education. “Faculty are unlikely to make attempts to reconcile or even to talk about such inconsistencies either programmatically or conceptually, thus leaving students to make these linkages on their own” (Blanton & Pugach).

Dual Licensure or Certification Program (or Unified Program): coursework prepares the teacher for licensure in both general and special education (Young, 2008).

Inclusion: according to the National Association of State Boards of Education (2008), means that “all children must be educated in supported, heterogeneous, age-appropriate, natural, child-focused school environment for the purpose of preparing them for full participation in our diverse and integrated society” (Public Policy Positions 2008, Section J. Students with Special Needs, Number 2). Inclusive philosophy is embraced by some merged programs where they are preparing educators to teach all students together in heterogeneous classrooms. Salend (2011) draws from the literature that inclusive education includes four key principles through which the philosophy of inclusion is put into practice. These four principles include: providing all learners with challenging, engaging and flexible general education curricula; embracing diversity and responsiveness to individual strengths and challenges; using reflective practices and
differentiated instruction; and establishing a community based on collaboration among students, teachers, families, other professionals and community agencies. “Inclusive education, therefore, aims to provide a facilitative and constructive focus for improving the education of children with disabilities” (Horby, 2015, p. 235).

**General Education:** the program of education that children who are typically developing should receive, based on state standards. General education is evaluated by the annual state standardized testing. Often it is referred to as “regular education;” however, general education is the preferred term because “regular” indicates that children receiving special education services are somehow "irregular." Since the passage of IDEA, all children should spend a significant amount of time in a general education classroom.

**Integrated Program Model:** defined as programs in which general and special education faculty design their programs and engage in intentional and coordinated program-level efforts to accomplish a significant degree of curricular overlap. The design is to strengthen the preparation of general education and special education teachers. The curricula of integrated programs reflects faculty collaboration regarding what every teacher needs to know and be able to do to teach the diverse range of students as well as the additional specialized knowledge and skills needed by those who choose to take on special education roles. In integrated programs, although some students may elect to take additional course work and experiences to gain the specialized knowledge and skills needed for special education licensure, there is no intention for every graduate to receive two licenses upon graduation.
**Merged Program Model:** In merged programs, students are prepared in a single curriculum with the complete integration of courses and field experiences designed to address the needs of all students, including those who have disabilities. General and special education faculty collaborate about the content and delivery of the program to develop a single curriculum and prepare every graduate to teach in both general and special education. Faculty from both general and special education work as a collective, model collaboration and inclusion, and engage in ongoing collaboration for the single teacher preparation program. Merged programs differ in that all students complete the same curriculum, presumably addressing both general and special education preparation in sufficient depth to prepare graduates for the two licenses they are required to earn as well for both roles.

**Self-contained classrooms:** is a phrase typically used by teachers and administrators to describe special classes used exclusively for educating students with disabilities. Special classes typically have 15 or fewer students. Though the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* does not specifically mention the terms “self-contained” or “inclusion,” the law does demonstrate a preference for educating students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The legal standards for school districts to show that a special classroom is the least restrictive placement for a student are increased; however, they continue to be used throughout many of the nation’s public schools.

**Special Education:** is governed by federal law under IDEA, defined as: "Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.” Special education is in place to provide additional services, support,
programs, specialized placements or environments to ensure that all students' educational needs are provided for.

*Universal Design for Learning (UDL):* has four parts that encourage educators to examine their instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments by increasing access to learning by reducing physical, cognitive, intellectual, and organizational barriers to learning, as well as other obstacles. These principles lend themselves to implementing inclusionary practices in the classroom. This framework to learning stemmed from the Universal Design (UD) or Inclusive Design in which buildings, products and environments were made accessible to all people, including those with disabilities, the elderly, etc. UD originated from the 1990 American with Disabilities Act in which the wide-ranging civil rights law prohibits discrimination based on disability. It affords similar protections against discrimination to Americans with disabilities. Using the UDL framework promotes better learning environments for all students, especially since all students, with and without disabilities, have varying abilities.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

The purpose of this study is to explore the restructuring of general education teacher licensure programs with a focus on one particular program funded by a long-term grant proposal. The research questions I endeavored to explore include the processes in creating an educational design developed to strengthen general educators to meet the educational needs of diverse learners, and the potential barriers or challenges to design in regard to the cross-disciplinary collaboration. Additionally, I wanted to engage in the significance of
moving forward in the program development, including how the design might change the culture of the organization and the resources needed to support a program reform.

In Chapter One, I identified the research problem and the research questions. I also introduced the purpose of the study and the theoretical frameworks that inform this inquiry. I elaborated on the frameworks that provide a lens to looking at the data from my research, particularly related to teaching philosophies and collaboration. I presented a discussion of the scholarship around underlying theoretical perspectives and historical instructional paradigms that have differed significantly in teacher preparation (i.e., behaviorism vs. social constructivism). Finally, I defined key terms that are useful for this study and I discussed the significance of the study.

In Chapter Two, I review the literature that informs this inquiry. I will first explore the literature regarding what appears to be the cultural and language barriers of special and general education programs. From this, I will then elaborate on the experiences of universities in their development of collaborative teacher education programs. I will provide specific examples of programs merging and the successes and challenges of each in their program design. Chapter Three describes the methodology that is used for this study and the assumptions I brought to the research. I will elaborate on the site of the study as my case study to build on the grounded theory I had for this research. I will describe the interviews I conducted and the outside resources that added to the data understanding.

In Chapter Four, I examine the findings and present a discussion of what the data analysis revealed. Specifically, in Chapter Four I provide a detailed discussion of: the informants’ stories and descriptions of their experiences in program design; the
documents and collaborative processes involved in creating a program design; the ways in which faculty viewed the programs and potential changes; and finally, how what I learned about teacher preparation will impact my goals and future preparation for teachers.

In Chapter Five, I interpret my findings and build on existing literatures for this study and their implications. More broadly, I reveal how this study examines the potential for future teacher preparation programs, particularly those considering redesign and merged programming. As part of this discussion, I review the implications from this research for teacher education and for my own pedagogy. In this chapter I also discuss the limitations of this study and I address the assumptions I held prior to beginning the research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

This review of the literature is organized into several sections. I begin this chapter with an example of what led me to this study topic in the first place. It is this background that reveals my passion and commitment to the field of teacher education. Secondly, I provide an analysis of the separation that exists in the fields of special education and general education in a majority of teacher preparation programs. This section also includes an examination of the barriers in the language utilized in both disciplines as well as the potentially opposing, somewhat contentious philosophies in teacher preparation programs. Next, I will explore the variations of the potential learning differences surrounding two learning theories that appear in the literature surrounding how teacher educators are prepared. In the next section, I will review current trends in teacher education related to this topic of program unification. More specifically, I will elaborate on three types of program models: discrete, integrated and merged, utilized in teacher education program designs as described by Blanton and Pugach, (2007). Blanton and Pugach’s research is useful to explore this trend of creating collaborative programs in teacher education. Because of the variances that exist in separate or collaborative models, Blanton and Pugach (2011) provide this useful conceptual framework to
“simultaneously make sense of and problematize the landscape of collaborative teacher education, based on a classification system of program models” (p. 221). Thus, I will elaborate further in this chapter the discourses used collaborative teacher education and discuss assumptions regarding the program development (Blanton and Pugach, 2011). Finally, I will review current programs that exist in teacher education programs by utilizing collaborative or unified models of preparing teachers. This review will enable me to better analyze and explore the case study I had the opportunity to study the process of a program design. It is this topic of designing programs to better prepare general educators to teach students with disabilities that began this journey.

**Origin of the Study**

The impetus for this study began from a research study I conducted in 2012. With Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I spent several months observing various inclusive general education classrooms. I also had the opportunity to interview over 15 teachers at this same school, situated in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. My research was focused primarily on how inclusive services were delivered to the students with disabilities. What arose from the interviews was this notion of preparedness, or lack thereof, to teach inclusively. In all the interviews but one, when teachers were asked to share the challenges of teaching an inclusive classroom, they shared how ill prepared they felt to teach students with disabilities. They also shared that the one or two courses they had in their general education teacher preparation programs was not enough to provide them with the knowledge and dispositions toward teaching students with disabilities alongside their nondisabled peers.
Teachers I interviewed shared they had no idea that teaching students with disabilities in the general education classroom was even a “right” for students with disabilities. In other words, the teachers were unaware that the 2004 revisions of IDEA states, “to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from regular educational environment occurs only if the nature of severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily” (34 C.F.R. Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities, Least Restrictive Environment Requirements, §300.114(a)(2)). The only teacher interviewed who believed she had the knowledge and skills to teach inclusively was a teacher first trained as an intervention specialist before obtaining the credentials to teach in a general education classroom.

During the period of this 2012 study, I was also personally advocating for inclusion of my daughter to be in the general education classroom. I had to often consider how my emotions contributed to the validity of my research. In all of my research experiences, I have endeavored to be an objective scholar who was only documenting the narratives of others and reporting on them, but fully aware that the way in which I experience reality is captured through my lens. A particularly powerful lens used in how I view the world is through my emotions. However, “parents of children with disabilities have a unique experience and point of view that should be valued” and
furthermore “may (have) developed special competencies” for advocating for their children’s education (Kanter & Ferri, 2013, p. 210).

In several instances of my personal advocacy and the interviews of teachers, I interacted with various teachers resistant to inclusion entirely. This led me to further research the impact of teacher attitudes on student success. More specifically, in that research project I was interested in the literature regarding teachers’ negative attitudes toward inclusion and how those outlooks could affect the potential for students with disabilities being welcomed in the general education classroom (Cullen, J. P., Gregory, J. L., & Noto, L. A., 2010). What I learned is that teachers who engage in teaching inclusively are often resistant not because of the students with disabilities, but more about the valid concern of their preparedness to meet the demands of teaching multiple abilities in the same classroom (Danforth, Becoming a Great Inclusive Educator, 2014). The dominant factors inhibiting teachers to teach inclusively include attitudinal barriers and teachers possessing the skills or knowledge to implement inclusive practices (Seçer, 2010).

It was from those first teacher interviews that I began theorizing that negative attitudes are often a result of fear and frustration (Waitoller & Artilles, 2013; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). The interviews of the 2012 study revealed that teachers experienced frustration with inclusion due to a lack of resources and preparation. Unfortunately, the school resource issues are a conundrum that more knowledgeable researchers and advocates can engage. The research I engaged in involves the preparation of teachers. Although future research in the areas of inclusion, the least restrictive environment, and
best practices for educating students with disabilities is still critical, the findings in my inclusive practices study steered me to want to investigate further how we prepare teachers in both general and special education. More specifically, how can colleges of education better prepare general educators to include students with disabilities?

The desire to answer that question led me to the awareness of existing education programs in which special and general education are combined or collaborating to prepare teachers, as I will discuss later in this chapter. I was interested in these programs’ potential for dispelling some of the fears and lack of preparedness for general educators to teach students with disabilities. The opportunity to interact with a collaborative team of special and general educators discussing these very topics arose at the most opportune time in my research journey. The more aware of the separations that exist in the fields prompted me to want to learn more, particularly the theories that separate them in the first place.

**The “Camps”**

There appears to be a paradigm difference between the fields of special and general education. In my own experiences with both fields, I have heard, as well as read, scholars consider the philosophical views in special education versus general education as being in “different camps” (McGinnis, 2003). From the onset of my doctoral program when I declared my field to be in Disability Studies and Inclusion, I met educators in special education and I assumed that we shared a common interest and philosophy. However, disability studies scholar Scot Danforth quickly shared with me that this was not always the case in the field of education. He went on to share his experiences with
fellow colleagues and used the word “camps” to explain a view that special education came from a behaviorist perspective, focusing on direct instruction versus general educators typically utilizing a cognitive, constructivist perspective (Danforth, 2014; McGinnis, 2003). From that first encounter, I endeavored to explore what were involved in the differences between these two “camps.” The philosophical perspectives of constructivism and behaviorism serve as a framework for understanding the different and sometimes contentious views of the “camps.”

Through this review of the literature, however, it is essential to explore the fields of special and general education and the dominant philosophies and language used in teacher preparation related to both areas. Inclusive practices are discussed in the ways in which some of the programs’ collaborative experiences utilized the topic of inclusion. According to Hornby (2015), inclusion and special education are also “based on different philosophies and provide alternative views of education for children with special educational needs and disabilities” and “(t)hey are increasingly regarded as diametrically opposed in their approaches” (p. 234).

**Special “versus” General**

To begin, it is my contention that current education preparation programs appear to contradict themselves in perspectives of pedagogy. Many programs profess teaching philosophies of inclusion, meanwhile, they separate the education programs into distinct categories of general and special. The two separate systems are justified “because special education, by its structure and definition, places disability as the major defining variable of learners” (Linton, 2010, p. 9). As a result, some general education teacher preparation
programs under-emphasize and marginalize the facet of variation in learners, and special education is the solution to prepare teachers to work with students with disabilities (Linton, 2010). Many scholars contend, however, that although both programs share a mutual goal of improving the instruction of all students, a separate culture exists between special education and general education. This cultural variance exists because the two fields have viewed the world of education from different theoretical perspectives. Without shared experiences and perspectives, a cultural understanding per se, special and general educators may struggle to work collaboratively to best instruct students (Robinson & Buly, 2007). Understanding the paradigms of others is an important step in this literature review, particularly when (something about faculty in special education and general education come together to design a program which is the focus on this dissertation. Therefore, an appreciation of the paradigm and an attempt to understand the different program’s beliefs and where the beliefs stem from is an important next step in the research.

**Barriers in the language**

Some of the literature has shown that educators in special and general education often use different language to describe similar things (Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Malgeri, 1996). Researchers at the Woodring College of Education at Western Washington University set out to examine this issue of the “language barrier” that exists between special and general education programs. In their initial conversations, the professors representing both general and special education first discovered that words in the programs were being used differently. Some of the common terms that arose in their
research included: behaviorism, constructivism, diagnosis, direct instruction, and fluency. Although these words were being used within their own programs, they found that different faculty members “thought they were speaking a shared language with the same definitions for terms, when, in fact, they were not” (Robinson & Buly, 2007, p. 85). What they were discovering in their inquiry is that the programs came from different paradigms and their beliefs came from different research bases.

To determine if this was an isolated incident or one that was broader and more pervasive, the researchers moved to the research literature (Robinson & Buly, 2007). They found they had different definitions in their own university and “there were also different definitions in the research literature, in teacher preparation materials, and in journals, reports, and materials written for teacher and administrator audiences” (Robinson & Buly, 2007, p. 85). The more the researchers talked and read, the more definitional barriers were uncovered.

The researchers took their findings to two national conference presentations and discovered the audience members not only actively engaged in the discussion, but they “offered further examples of language barriers between special education and elementary education” (Robinson & Buly, 2007, p. 86). The authors realized in their research process that “subtle differences in understanding are indeed creating a ‘polite polarization’ between general and special education” and this polarization exists in higher education as well.

This language divide was recognized in the researchers’ own departments as well as other colleges (Robinson & Buly, 2007). Some of the assumptions stemming from the
language used includes “special education departments operate from a behaviorist paradigm while general education departments lean toward a constructivist paradigm” (Robinson & Buly, 2007, p. 86). The authors contend that different philosophies of different departments are not in itself a problem. “The barrier comes in the definition then applied to the label” (Robinson & Buly, 2007, p. 86). For instance, special education faculty may describe general educators as unstructured or unfocused, with an overemphasis on “fun” activities that lack clearly defined educational outcomes; whereas, general education faculty may describe special education as rigid, overly structured and dehumanizing, with an emphasis on rewarding extrinsically (Howell & Nolet, 2000). These old paradigms and false beliefs interfere with collaborative efforts to implement best practice in education.

**Two learning theories**

There are several reasons why learning theories have a significant impact on education, consequently an important factor in why teacher education programs nationwide edify future teachers in theories of learning to determine the best methods in teaching students. “Learning theories are a source of verified instructional strategies, tactics and techniques” (Ertmer & Newby, 1993, p. 51). Several teacher education programs espouse they are guided by principles of constructivist theory (Rainer, Guyton, & Bowen, 2000). However, there is a dichotomy in the subject of this constructivist preparation. Scholars argue the “preparation of the teacher also operates within the transmission model” or a behaviorist approach (Richardson, 1996, p. 264). Woolley, Woolley, and Hosey (1999) explain that behaviorist learning theories have dominated
American education for the last fifty years, so it can be assumed that most students enter teacher education programs with behaviorist images of teaching and learning. Educational psychologists (Bohlin, et. al, 2012) contend that knowledge of a variety of teaching strategies is important for teachers facing the numerous challenges for instruction. With a theoretical background, educators become more adept at selecting strategies to use and knowing when to use them and knowledge of learning theories allows for the reliable prediction of solutions to instructional problems.

Scholars suggest that strategy selection based on research is more reliable than based on chance (Rainer, Guyton, & Bowen, 2000). To complicate matters, there are numerous learning theories challenging instructional design. Scholars and researchers have debated the effectiveness of choosing one theory when designing instruction or to draw ideas from different theories. One of the major differences between learning theories, however, lies in the interpretations more than in the definition of learning. A variety of learning philosophies attempt to respond to the questions: how does learning occur and how is instruction structured to facilitate learning? However, for the purposes of my research, I will be narrowing the focus to the ideas surrounding the behaviorist and constructivist theories. Specifically, the research will examine these theoretical perspectives connected to how teacher education programs embed the behaviorist and constructivist learning theories to prepare teachers. In presenting this material, some of the resources utilized to reveal these theories come directly from texts currently utilized in teacher preparation courses.
History of learning theories

Theoretical knowledge about learning provides a teacher the ability to interpret the complex reality of the classroom. Teachers that lack this theoretical background “will have to interpret classroom events according to commonly held beliefs or common sense” which is often based on inaccurate notions of human behavior (Ryan & Cooper, 2013, p. 178). Researchers have often portrayed teachers as lacking a professional body of knowledge and expertise and further argue that teachers rely on intuition and “practical knowledge” because they lack a set of “empirically derived practices and principles” (Snider & Roehl, 2007, p. 873). Practical knowledge refers to the beliefs and habits that teachers gain from experience rather than from experimental based principles and practices learned through education and training. Ironically, the current political climate and reform initiatives require educators to use “scientifically based” methods (Snider & Roehl, 2007).

Nevertheless, it is acknowledged by researchers and scholars that a basic understanding of learning theories can provide teachers with strategies and the ability to know a great deal about a lot, but keeping little in mind. To quote Bruner (The process of education, 1963; Cited in (Kurz-McDowell & Hannafin, 2004): “You don’t need to encounter everything in nature in order to know nature.” Teachers cannot afford the luxury of restricting themselves to only one theoretical position. They need to examine each of the basic theories that have been developed in the study of learning and understand the principles and history of education reforms that shaped them.

Behaviorism
Arguably education reforms are a political endeavor, especially after schools became compulsory in 1852 under the influence of Horace Mann and his recognition of the educational needs of an industrialized society (Tozer, Senese, & Violas, 2013). Around this time in history, the Progressive movement, typically associated with political reform, was beginning and education was definitely impacted. As the populations in schoolhouses grew, so did the debates regarding the best ways at achieving academic excellence; an argument that remains intact. Student populations became more diverse, placing an even bigger burden on educators to determine the best teaching practices. Schooling was viewed as the answer to how newcomers could fit into the nation. Developing effective teaching practices or teacher training became a crucial focus at this time and it was recognized that “teachers needed special preparation to comprehend the nature of learners (and) the learning process” (Tozer, Senese, & Violas, 2013, p. 68). Learning theories have been an important factor of teacher education since then, with behaviorism being one of the first learning theories to be embraced in education.

Behaviorism developed out of the ideologies of the progressive era during the 1880s to 1920s and John B. Watson is generally given credit for creating and popularizing the term behaviorism (Todd & Morris, 1994). Watson argued that psychology had failed in its mission to become a natural science; therefore, he urged the careful scientific study of observable behavior. Watson and other early behaviorists believed that controlled laboratory studies were the most effective way to study learning and that mental activity could be observed. Watson’s 1919 psychology text, *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*, is considered responsible for introducing
behaviorist principles to a generation of future scholars of learning and he is credited with preparing psychologists and educators for the influential work of B.F. Skinner (1904-1990) and other behaviorists in subsequent decades (Todd & Morris, 1994).

Behaviorists equate knowledge with changes in either the form or frequency of observable performance and the manipulation of the learner's environment as key to fostering development (Bohlin, Durwin, & Reese-Weber, 2012). However, behaviorists do not see the contributions of the learner as contributing to the body of knowledge. Behaviorism as a learning theory only focuses on observable behaviors and reduces any independent activities of the mind. Behavior theorists define learning as the acquisition of new behavior based on conditions in the environment, such as consequences or reinforcements (Boghossian, 2006).

Factors that influence learning in behaviorism are the stimuli and consequences used within an environment. Experiments by behaviorists utilize a strategy called conditioning and claim it as a universal learning process. Behaviorism is often used by teachers in rewarding or punishing student behaviors. The theory relies on the observable behaviors and typically the attempts to utilize what many believe as universal laws of behavior. Examples of strategies utilized in rewarding or punishing behaviors include token economies, contingency contracts and/or group consequences whereby specifying the behaviors to be performed, as well as the result for performing them, provides the delivery of immediate consequences (i.e., the token) and facilitates progress toward long-term goals (Hernandez, 2013). When employed in the classroom, the reward and punishment systems are used to motivate children to increase some behaviors and reduce
the frequency of others. In my personal teaching experiences and student teacher observations, rewards such as sticker charts to earn a classroom party or tickets to purchase items from a classroom store are just some examples that have been utilized for behavior modifications.

Positive and negative reinforcement techniques can be very effective and research has been used to demonstrate success in treatments for human disorders including autism, anxiety disorders and antisocial behavior. Because of these measurable successes, behaviorism received widespread support in areas in which it was applied to these specific needs (Matthews, 2003). The specific approach is called Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and it quickly became a very effective teaching technique (Mills, 1998). ABA is the version of behaviorism connected to educational settings. According to researchers, it has produced the most useful expertise for addressing student learning and behavior problems encountered in schools. ABA has especially been the standard of practice in the field of developmental disabilities, both in terms of teaching adaptive behavioral skills and addressing problem behaviors considered frequent in this population of students (Adams & Carnine, 2003).

In special education, identifying the stimuli that controls problem behavior is a basis for developing behavioral treatments and it has been studied extensively regarding individuals with developmental disabilities, behavioral disorders, educational disabilities, and those at risk for learning and behavior problems (O'Neill et al., 1997). Under federal special educational law (IDEA 2004) school administrators and special education directors continue to have legal support for their use of positive behavioral interventions
and strategies for supporting children with disabilities who engage in problem behaviors at school.

Behaviorism brought objectivity and the scientific method to psychology, but arguments against the theory also offered a glimpse into what might happen when psychologists lose sight of human qualities that cannot be observed or measured (Adams & Carnine, 2003). Behaviorism does not account for all kinds of learning because it disregards the activities of the mind. For instance, it does not explain learning that occurs when there is no reinforcement in place. Due to more significant changes in American schools, and the influences of Civil and Disability Rights movements, theories that had been overshadowed by behaviorism began emerging into academic and public awareness.

**Constructivism**

Unlike behaviorism that can be connected to distinct philosophers and psychologists of an era, constructivism as a learning theory goes back a number of decades; however, it has only received attention in the past few decades (Richardson, 1996). Constructivism views knowledge as the natural consequence of a constructive process, the process of constructing knowledge. In teaching, constructivism views instruction as the process of supporting the construction of knowledge. There are several variations of constructivism. A couple of examples include cognitive constructivism, stemming from the work of Jean Piaget and social-historical constructivism from the work of Lev Vygotsky, two well-known theorists in education (Woolley, Woolley, & Hosey, 1999). However, all forms of constructivism share the same core idea that learners construct their own knowledge (Boghossian, 2006).
As a learning theory, constructivism emerged from broader movements in Western intellectual thought. Similar to other learning theories, constructivism has multiple roots in the philosophical and psychological viewpoints (Bohlin, Durwin, & Reese-Weber, 2012). In education, general education teachers may not necessarily use the term "constructivism" to describe their teaching, but they are familiar with elements of constructivist teaching, including “building learning communities, understanding children's thinking to scaffold their learning, sharing power with students to help them solve problems and take responsibility for themselves and others, and assessing students' learning in multiple, authentic ways” (Woolley & Woolley, 1999, p. 4). For the constructivist teacher, each student’s reality is just as valid as anyone else’s, and no one has a privileged viewpoint. Therefore, it is viewed by the constructivist that “there are no objective criteria for what constitutes knowledge. What is knowledge to one individual may not be knowledge to someone else, because no two people necessarily have the same constructions” (Boghossian, 2006, p. 714).

More importantly, constructivist teachers view the learner as being actively involved in the learning process and to furthermore interpret the given information. Even though the emphasis is on learner construction, the instructional designer (or teacher’s role) is still critical. Constructivist teaching is not an agreed upon concept in education and this is true for classroom teachers and teacher educators (Mathews, 2003). The constructivist theory is challenging for teachers because it does not fit the one teacher, lecturer style, traditional classroom model. Thus, constructivism is considered difficult to translate into effective teaching practices (Rainer, Guyton, & Bowen, 2000). This
approach involves attending to and capitalizing on the social context of the classroom by creating a sense of community and assisting every child in gaining a sense of belonging. Constructivist teachers structure the classroom community so that each child is “actively engaged in problem solving, conflict resolution, and learning to self-manage behavior. Additionally, the constructivist perspective uses the power of social interaction to instill self-worth and self-esteem.” (Bloom, Perlmutter, & Burrell, 1999, p. 133).

According to Bloom and colleagues (1999) the constructivist perspective offers “an alternative to the traditional behaviorist's perspective by recognizing classrooms and schools as social places where social context and social activity influence children's thoughts and actions;” where “learning is a creative rather than a receptive act” (p. 132). They further assert that traditional approaches to teaching can be labor intensive and isolating to children, particularly students of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and students with disabilities. Hence, the debate of theories that are utilized in educating students ensues.

*The learning theories debate*

Previously stated, constructivism is based on the premise that learners construct knowledge based on their own experiences and prior beliefs. As students learn, that knowledge cannot be separated from the context in which it is learned. “Teaching practices that facilitate the construction of knowledge include opportunities for meaningful and authentic exploration, engaging activities, and interactive group work and student ownership of the learning process” (Snider & Roehl, 2007, p. 874). According to Snider and his colleagues, perspectives that are “not constructivist” have been termed
various things, such as positivist, traditional, content-driven, direct instruction, and of course, behaviorism. The teaching practices associated with behaviorism include teacher modeling, teacher directed, guided practice followed by independent practice, ongoing assessment, and systematic application of previously learned skills (Snider & Roehl, 2007). These shared examples to some educators seem like entirely different teaching choices but can they be combined to create an effective educator? Adams and Carnine (2003) posit the question, “Is there a single ‘best’ approach and is one approach more efficient than the others?” (p. 67). Because learning is a complex and drawn-out process that is influenced by one’s prior knowledge, the authors suggest “it depends.”

Depending on where learners are in terms of development, the most appropriate instructional approach for advancing the learners’ knowledge may be best described by one theory over another. For instance, a behavioral theory approach as described in managing classroom behavior may be more appropriate versus constructivist strategies in dealing with ill-defined problems. Essentially there are features of instruction, such as active participation and interaction, practice and feedback that are all supported by numerous learning theories. Therefore, advocating one theory over another should be less of a goal as the effectiveness of being well-versed in several. A focus on theoretical eclecticism is a valuable strength in education as no single theoretical base provides complete prescriptive principles for designing learning tasks (Bohlin, Durwin, & Reese-Weber, 2012). Indeed, it could very well be true that teachers are behaviorist in some aspects of their teaching and constructivist in others.
There is some evidence that education and training in the constructivist theory can transform teacher beliefs (Snider & Roehl, 2007; Woolley & Woolley, 1999). Woolley and colleagues (1999) discovered from students' course discussions and papers that their beliefs became more constructivist as they progressed through a teacher education program, but they were uncertain if these changes were real or long lasting. Woolley, Woolley, and Hosey (1999), however, found that teachers were constructivist in some ways but not in terms of classroom management.

**Integrating the learning theories**

Studies reveal primarily the theoretical beliefs of general and special educators. Interestingly, the study by Snider and Roehl (2007) found that special education teachers were more likely than general education teachers to believe that conceptual understanding and critical thinking should be emphasized even when students lack proficiency in basic skills. However, this belief system does not often translate into the special education curricula overall, as Gallagher notes in her chapter of *Disability Studies in Education* (Gabel, 2005), “an increasing emphasis on measurable “basic skills” instruction, lockstep curricula with accompanying basal textbook adoption, and pedagogical procedures that have gone from the merely prescriptive to the literally scripted” (p. 139). Behaviorist traditions dominates special education, and as the studies revealed, somewhat in general education as well. Scholars contend due to new legislation and trends toward high stakes testing, teachers are pressured into standardized curriculum and direct instruction rather than a constructivist pedagogy (Gabel, 2005).
Some of the work I refer to include a theoretical perspective of disability studies, as defined in Chapter One. Disability Studies (DS) predominantly focuses on political, socio-cultural, historical, social, and individual understandings of disability. A Disability Studies in Education (DSE) view further supports the education of students labeled with disabilities in non-segregated settings from a civil rights stance. Several DSE scholars (Gabel, 2005; Danforth, 2014; Ware, 2001; Baglieri, Valle, Connor, & Gallagher, 2011) assert behaviorism dominates the field of special education. They assert that through a behaviorist approach, special educators participate in the notion of “constructing normalcy through carving out the mythical normal child” (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2012, p. 22). Therefore, any deviation from “normal” is considered “abnormal.” Abnormal learning and behavior becomes something to fix. These scholars contend that with a shift toward a disability studies perspective, there are practical applications for classroom teachers to move toward a constructivist pedagogical position (Gallagher, 2004). According to these same scholars, not only does constructivist pedagogy provide teachers a theory with useful application, but the pedagogy “affords individuals with disabilities greater autonomy and authority in defining and directing their own learning. At the core of this approach to disability studies is the philosophical concept that all knowledge is socially/culturally constructed.” (Gallagher, 2004, p. 2). Teachers are concerned with the day-to-day effort of working with varying abilities of students. Furthermore, they find the inclusion of children with special needs frightening, especially when those children present difficult behaviors. Because of this, teachers resort to traditional behaviorist approaches such as rewards and punishments in an attempt to control their students.
There are, however, decades of empirical studies that have supported behavior 
instructional practices grounded in the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) as 
an effective methodology to teach children with disabilities (Loiacono, V., & Palumbo, 

Bloom, Perlmutter, and Burrell, (1999) explain that “a constructivist perspective 
offers an alternative to the traditional behaviorist's perspective by recognizing classrooms 
and schools as social places where social context and social activity influence children's 
thoughts and actions” (p. 1). With the constructivist perspective, learning involves 
construction of new meanings by learners within the context of their current knowledge, 
previous experiences, and social environment. Bloom and colleagues (1999) explain in 
further detail with ideas on fostering a sense of belonging, teaching children to self-
manage behavior and learning how to problem solve. They provide examples of how this 
“approach involves attending to and capitalizing on the social context of the classroom by 
creating a sense of community and assisting every child in gaining a sense of belonging” 
by the ways in which the classroom is structured. “Additionally, the constructivist 
perspective uses the power of social interaction to instill self-worth and self-esteem” (p. 
2).

Due to federal mandates (ESSA and IDEA) general educators can be expected to 
educate a significant number of students with disabilities in general education 
classrooms, thus today’s educators need to be skilled and competent in the use of 
effective evidence-based instructional strategies. Several scholars believe adding a 
constructivist perspective to education programs will help teachers to teach inclusive
classrooms and discover the power of what a constructivist position could do for both special and general educators (Gallagher, 2004). The traditional model of teaching has been based on the view that knowledge is objective in nature, and “these practices have constrained teachers' efforts to engage fully and authentically in the act of teaching” (Gallagher, 2004, p. 7). According to Gallagher, behavioristic methods obstruct students' learning, and teaching practices that are consistent with the constructivist framework of the disability studies perspective can lead to more productive inclusionary teaching. Gallagher further contends that “constructivist teaching cannot be proceduralized, otherwise it becomes just another form of technique-driven teaching that crowds out both teachers' and students' intellectual engagement” (p. 13). Advocates for constructivist models of teacher education and school reform make recommendations for teacher development regarding constructivist theories that has relevance for all learning: respectful relationships, purposeful communication, intellectual engagement and shared ownership (Rainer, Guyton, & Bowen, 2000).

Concluding remarks on the theories

It is evident that both behaviorist and constructivist learning theories are impacting practices in schools today. Therefore, it can be realized that these theories are impacting schools of education as well. Woolley, Woolley, and Hosey (1999) explain that behaviorist learning theories have dominated American education for the last fifty years so it can be assumed that most students enter teacher education programs with behaviorist images of teaching and learning. Behaviorist theories undergird the design of many basal textbooks and standardized tests and many special education and behavior management
strategies are based on behaviorist theories. At the same time, teacher educators are implementing reforms based on constructivist theories. This binary will be explored further and examined in the context of the data of the special and general education programs that consider the dual or merged licensing program. These differences in philosophies will be demonstrated in the review of data.

**Teaching teachers: Trends in Teacher Education**

Potential reform of teacher education involves the examination of how teacher education programs exist today. With national standards based reforms as a chief concern among most educators and administrators, teacher education programs have had to examine programs under the conception of teaching related to effective and less effective teaching (Richardson, 1996). Combined credential programs have existed for more than 40 years, but these programs are experiencing resurgence (Young, 2008). In the 1960s, agencies advocated for professional development for general educators as students with disabilities began to be included in regular classrooms. However it was not until the 1970s that federal support began to be available in the form of grants “for practicing teachers to gain awareness, knowledge, and skills about students with disabilities” (Young, 2008). Grants were not only created to help teachers meet the mandates of the newly passed IDEA legislation, but also targeting preservice teacher education. The grants were provided to university programs as a way of encouraging collaboration between special education and other departments. In some universities, the grants “became the foundation for the first blended, merged or dual credential programs” (Young, 2008). Yet at other universities, the grants were only used to create one special
education course for general education students which appear to be the hallmark for so many teacher education programs today.

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) states that professional education programs should prepare all school personnel to contribute to the education of exceptional learners. Teacher education programs thus have to ensure that preservice teachers acquire the knowledge, dispositions, and performances required to succeed in educating students with disabilities before they get to the classroom (Kemple, Hartlel, Correa, & Fox, 1994). Many states are requiring introductory level special education coursework for all preservice teachers and in-service teacher recertification. Nevertheless, requirements for coursework in special education for those planning to teach in general education varies by state, making it a challenge to ensure that education reform is in effect. Combining credential programs is one potential way that colleges and universities are pursuing for effective reform. However, new programs cause practical and scholarly confusion often because terminology cannot be agreed upon (Young, 2008). Terms like blended, merged, combined, unified, and dual have all been used to indicate changes to teacher preparation programs. For example, the term used most frequently in the literature for early childhood education programs is unified, referring to “those that combine all of the recommended personnel standards from the respective general education and special education program into a newly conceptualized curriculum” (Stayton & McCollum, 2002, p. 213). Often the terms utilized are not defined or they mean different things to different programs and people. Further, terms used to describe the programs can refer to connections between programs within departments in colleges.
and schools of education and sometimes they refer to programs across departments, whereas other commonly used terms refer instead to the licensure outcomes such as “dual licensure.”

The challenge in this review of program reform is that the titles ascribed to program names do not automatically reveal the specific program designs, structures, and features. A review of programs in this chapter indicates there may be less collaboration than the title of a program suggests. As a result, it is often difficult to know exactly what kind of collaboration or how much collaboration is taking place in specific program models. Different collaborative programs may use diverse titles such as blended, unified program or dual, and engage in widely varying degrees of faculty interaction and program coordination.

**Discrete, Merged, Integrated or Inclusive**

A review of the types of program models and the language used in teacher preparation is essential to understanding the program design process. According to Blanton and Pugach, (2007), teacher education programs fall into three categories: discrete, integrated, or merged programs. Most teacher preparation is provided via the *discrete model*, the separate preparation for both general and special education. In most cases, the “departments of elementary and special education are independent of one another,” the faculties rarely interact and students in special education might take a course in elementary education and general education students often take one required special education course (Blanton, Griffin, Winn, & Pugach, 1997, p. 207). Collaboration among faculty occurs mainly for the purpose of providing courses to meet program
requirements, more often out of mandated policies rather than offering a coordinated preservice curriculum. In the contrasting programs, general education faculty may speak about disability in ways that contradict the discourse students are exposed to in a special education service course. “Faculty are unlikely to make attempts to reconcile or even to talk about such inconsistencies either programmatically or conceptually, thus leaving students to make these linkages on their own” (Blanton & Pugach, 2011, p. 223). In discrete programs, students are “likely to experience dichotomy in their preparation” with a lack of collaboration in their programming; “they may exit discrete programs lacking a solid understanding of how to collaborate effectively with colleagues” (Blanton & Pugach, 2011, p. 223).

Recently professional organizations have questioned whether discrete programs adequately prepare either special or general educators for today’s schools (Blanton & Pugach, 2007). Two specific approaches of combining special and general education in teacher education include what Blanton and Pugach call integrated and merged models of education. In the integrated model, general and special education licensure programs remain separate; however, “the faculty work together to develop a set of courses and/or field experiences in which special education candidates learn about general education curriculum and instruction and vice-versa” (Fullerton, Ruben, McBride, & Bert, 2011, p. 28). The programs are coordinated in such a way that candidates can readily add special education licensure to their general education licensure. Contrastingly, in merged programs, the faculty in general and special education collaborate to develop one program in which all candidates receive licensure in both general and special education.
“Merged programs are developed through the extensive and deliberate collaboration of general and special education faculty to redesign the teacher education curriculum and field experiences” (Fullerton, Ruben, McBride, & Bert, 2011, p. 28).

**Integrated Model**

Programs in which general and special education faculty come together to redesign their programs are considered an integrated program model. In these instances, the faculty engage in intentional and coordinated program-level efforts to accomplish a significant degree of curricular overlap, which is designed to strengthen the preparation of general education and special education majors (Blanton & Pugach, 2011). According to Blanton and Pugach, the intentional and coordinated programwide approach of the integrated model differs from the add-on approach in discrete programs, where second licenses may be obtainable but tend to have little relationship to previous courses graduates may have taken. The courses taught in integrated programs reflect the collaboration of faculty regarding what “every teacher needs to know and be able to do to teach the diverse range of students in today’s classrooms as well as the additional specialized knowledge and skills needed by those who choose to take on special education roles” (Blanton & Pugach, 2011, p. 224).

Although some students may elect to take the additional courses to go on to special education licensure, integrated programs are not designed for every graduate to receive two licenses upon graduation. Particular to integrated programs, “there is a distinct and value-added role for special educators, a role that requires specialized knowledge and skills beyond what every teacher should know and be able to do”
(Blanton & Pugach, 2011, p. 225). In other words, in this program it is believed that special educators will need additional training beyond the general education students. However, candidates in integrated general and special education programs study together for much of their preparation. Students who elect to prepare for the distinct role of a special education teacher, either at the undergraduate or post-baccalaureate level, share a base of preservice education that has been thoughtfully redesigned to better prepare all candidates for a wider range of students.

**Merged Model**

A program that is a bit more coordinated in its efforts to collaborate is a merged program. According to Blanton and Pugach (2011), the faculty from both general and special education work as a team to ensure sufficient content knowledge to prepare all with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to work with students who have disabilities. As the faculty bring their efforts together, they recognize the specific expertise of their colleagues in either general or special education and are intentional in their efforts to connect relevant content and issues in all courses and experiences in the curriculum. The distinguishing characteristic of merged programs, however, is that they represent one single preservice curriculum for both general and special education students. All students experience the same curriculum, which addresses both general and special education preparation in sufficient depth to prepare graduates for both roles in the schools. Generally the program faculty have shared goals and collaborate extensively and routinely.
General and special education faculty in merged programs work as a collective and engage in ongoing collaboration for the one program they share. There is an ongoing expectation for faculty to work jointly in the service of the program, and this level of interaction is part of the organizational culture of the unit. As such, faculty in general and special education share their expertise to ensure that the merged program includes the content they agree is critical for all students, those in general and special education alike.

Faculty make purposeful connections across courses and field experiences so that all faculty, regardless of whether they have backgrounds in general or special education, know and understand what is expected in each course and experience within the program. Faculty may or may not reside in the same departmental unit, but on a day-to-day basis they function as part of the same teacher education program. Because there is one preservice program for general and special education, faculty work together on assessments that are evaluated by faculty with the appropriate expertise to provide the evaluation. That is, special education faculty working in merged programs will evaluate those portfolio entries regarding disabilities and the general education faculty will work collaboratively to develop and evaluate performance and portfolio assessments for all students. A merged program has typically included only the segment of faculty who are dedicated to the merged program model while other faculty may choose not to participate (Fullerton, Ruben, McBride, & Bert, 2011).

**Teacher Education Program Examples**

Blanton, Griffin, Winn, and Pugach (1997) provided descriptions of multiple programs across the country, in both early childhood and elementary education that
experience a teacher education reform process. The contributors to this research provide an analysis of the progress of this collaborative reform trend. Included in this research are ten different universities of varying sizes of education programs and student demographics. Table 1 provides a synopsis of the colleges of education and special education that embraced the challenge of reform, and sometimes through a lengthy process, embarked on the difficulties of program reform. Although the programs often had different motivating factors that began the process, this literature reviews several similarities and shared benefits and challenges involved in the changes. I have provided a detailed list of the findings, benefits and challenges to their reforms in Table 1, but education reform is a complicated process. Having an increased knowledge and understanding of the reform process will benefit an analysis of the interview data.

University of Alabama

Plans began in 1993 for a program change to merge the general education with special education in both coursework and fieldwork at the University of Alabama. The program developed became known as the Multiple Abilities Program (MAP) in which students would leave the program with a certificate equivalent to holding three certificates: an Early Childhood K-2; an Elementary 1-6; and a Mild Learning and Behavior Disorders K-6. According to the authors, the program exists because people willing to collaborate and believe in program reform took the necessary steps to begin (Gregg, et al., 1997). At the time, ideas and events at national, regional and local levels combined to motivate educators to desire an innovative teacher education program. Some of these ideas espoused viewed learning as socially constructed and teaching as
reflective decision making, both the focus of countless research studies prompting the reform endeavor. In the state, it was well recognized that new teachers were rapidly referring students to special education, prompting further examination into program delivery.

To begin the reform process, it was recognized that teachers in public education would benefit by contributing to the reform process. Teachers were recruited to help plan the program, thus public school teachers and university professors would be considered as co-equal members of a team in the preparation of MAP students. Participants met in two groups: special and general education. The teams independently analyzed and separated competencies that were 1) exclusive to general educators; 2) exclusive to special educators; and 3) applied to both groups. Interestingly, there was “very little that an elementary teacher should know that an elementary special education teacher should not also know and vice versa” (Gregg, et al., 1997, p. 109). Once this was accomplished, general and special education participants collaborated together to create a master list of competencies. University faculty analyzed the goals and objectives in existing course syllabi of both programs and discovered in this process a startling amount of overlap was found. After it was determined that reform would be possible, the teams applied for grant money from two foundations to fund the program and the outside university support provided the motivation and energy to move forward and accomplish reform that began in 1994 (Gregg, et al., 1997).

There were several benefits, most notably how the collaborative processes shaped those involved. Student competencies revealed that preservice teachers had success
regarding their employment opportunities and through their reflections. The MAP had an impact on other programs at the university as well. Students from the program compared favorably with interns from other programs. They were similar in use of lesson planning, classroom management and presentation of content; however, they were different in their sensitivity to children’s needs, their use of constructivist teaching approaches and willingness and ability modify instruction (Gregg, et al., 1997). The most significant impact according to the authors was the greater awareness of faculty members related to “team teaching, compacting curricula, and inclusion of children with exceptionalities in the regular classroom” (Gregg, et al., 1997, p. 125).

There were forces hindering the development of MAP. As stated by those involved in the reform process, there were faculty colleagues not supportive of the project because they “philosophically distrusted the merging of general and special education” (Gregg, et al., 1997, p. 125). Some had doubts the MAP’s integrated curriculum would allow students to develop the required minimum competencies in teaching and some perceived the project as having originated in the dean’s office and suspect as a “top-down” attempt to micromanage the college. Although there was a great deal of positive, collaborative efforts that enabled the MAP program to be adopted, one faculty member shared it was not “all sweetness and light” but they were willing to work through difficult times in the program reform. The most difficult problem the faculty faced was the work they devoted to the program design was in addition to the work they were hired to do by the university, including teaching loads, research and advising. Despite the difficulties
and obstacles, “MAP has proven to be a successful collaboration between special and general education” (Gregg, et al., 1997, p. 126).

University of Cincinnati

During the years of 1985-1989, according to the authors, faculty developed a level of trust and comfort needed to create a cohesive special education core at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio. Time was spent to establish lines of communication and the redesign at the university began in 1985 after the university became a member of the Holmes Group (1986). As part of this group, they committed all teacher education programs to a comprehensive reform agenda (Sapona, et al., 1997, p. 128). Prior to 1985, the special education’s contribution was only two courses for general education students. By fall of 1986, the faculty came to a consensus of a framework to develop a special education methodology core to serve all special education teacher education programs (Sapona, et al., 1997).

One of the first realizations of the program faculty at this time was the recognition that “previous practices in special education was successful with children in self-contained, isolated settings; but would not meet diverse children’s needs in settings such as general education classrooms” (Sapona, et al., 1997, p. 129). In 1988, a key event occurred that prompted the reform to the education programs. The department head asked all faculty for a one page response of their interpretation or definition of the diversity pattern. This event brought about intense discussions and a “refinement and redefinition of a shared philosophy of program” (Sapona, et al., 1997, p. 135). The
previous program philosophy did not examine how teachers were being prepared to respect diversity of all learners, particularly individuals with disabilities.

As a result of this new program philosophy, the faculty created guiding principles in how they intend to meet individual needs, thus requiring some changes to the program. The first major change was eliminating the two program options for certification in special education. A decision was made based on the increased demand for special educators to work in general education settings, requiring an understanding of both general and special education. During a 1989 meeting, long-time faculty members commented it was “the first time in over 20 years that open and collaborative discussions had taken place across program areas” (Sapona, et al., 1997, p. 137).

After years of maintaining separate programs, it was a significant obstacle for faculty members to begin a dialogue about core beliefs. Thus by 1991, themes for the program reform were adopted by all special education faculty. In the midst of the progress of overcoming philosophy obstacles, there were persistent challenges to the program reform as well. For instance, there was consistently a lack of time and commitment to examining shared beliefs. Faculty members engaged in both graduate and undergraduate programs did not have time to experiment with programs of study.

Only four faculty members piloted the integrated coursework; others within the program were unwilling to surrender control and maintained separate courses (Sapona, et al., 1997, p. 134). In the piloting efforts, modifications made to the graduate level worked well because of shared beliefs about teaching and learning but modifications to undergraduate were more difficult because of “dissimilar beliefs, strong feelings of
ownership in specific courses and time constraints from instructional responsibilities” (Saponà, et al., 1997, p. 134).

The dialogues across programs illustrated differing beliefs but also challenging was that the program shift added difficulty to the existing categorical, state labeling issue. The preparation programs focused on students being trained to teach in the identified Ohio areas of developmental disabilities. Prior to reform, faculty members across disability categories seemed to share few philosophical beliefs and the program faculty rarely met more than once a year. The initial versions of program design indicated continued separateness.

Through continued improvements and focus on reform, the program faculty continue to focus on the challenges such as effective communication, certification issues and resistant and reluctant faculty. Overall the faculty did not anticipate the amount of time and energy needed for reform but they also did not anticipate the positive outcomes most notably the integrated program that allowed faculty to work together.

University of Connecticut

At the University of Connecticut, unification began in 1987. The reform and renewal of the teacher education program impacted the curriculum the schools utilized and the culture of the faculty. For the first time, the college of education realized faculty working across departmental lines. They employed the use of and modeled reflective practice and inquiry focus, enabling faculty to question their own process of renewal, not simply evaluate students. Through the unification process, a benefit observed was the interdisciplinary nature of the groups in cross-departmental work of the faculty in
curricular areas. The faculty discovered that this enabled the cohort groups to work more collectively than observed of other cohorts. According to the faculty, “students were able to gain the inquiry, collaborative and leadership skills necessary to shape future teaching” (Norlander, Case, Reagan, Campbell, & Strauch, 1997, p. 45). Through these collaborative processes, the authors contend there was a greater focus on inclusion and inclusive education in the university coursework and an ongoing emphasis of jointly planned and conducted, in-service sessions in partnership schools (Norlander, Case, Reagan, Campbell, & Strauch, 1997).

Some areas of special education continued to seek specialized programs of study. They believed this created a rift and viewing special educators as being detrimental to the education of special education students. Faculty that remained “untransformed” created tension and resistance to collaboration. (Norlander, Case, Reagan, Campbell, & Strauch, 1997, p. 42). This split in philosophy created two special education faculties, but according to the authors, the division did not hinder the overall progress of the unified teacher education program.

Other challenges that the unification process encountered included anti-teacher education political dynamics at both the state and national levels. The state continues to utilize separate certifications for each discipline and grade level, with special education being a non-categorical K-12 certificate. Another challenge to the five-year integrated program that Connecticut established was the existence of fellow education institutions who continued to prepare teachers in a traditional four-year program.
Providence College

The small, private Providence College located in Rhode Island, merged the programming in 1986. This decision arrived by the philosophical commitment of all faculty, special and general. During this time, researchers were advocating the merging of special and general education (Pugach and Lilly, 1984). The faculty used the concept of a merger as a framework in 1985 and it was endorsed unanimously. Mostly involved in the merging process were general educators who received their masters in special education. They recognized the pedagogical demands on classroom teachers in the midst of state and federal special education laws advocating for the education of students with disabilities to be in the least restrictive environment, in many cases the general education classroom. Thus the program sought to “prepare teachers who could teach all children in the elementary classroom” (Ryan, Callahan, Krajewski, & Flaherty, 1997, p. 66).

Diversity, collaboration, the teacher as a professional, and research based effective teaching practices were imbedded in the program design.

One of the major hurdles for approval of the merger was from their Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate. According to the authors, in liberal arts institutions there is often tension between faculty in liberal arts and sciences programs and faculty in professional programs, particularly professional programs in education (Ryan, Callahan, Krajewski, & Flaherty, 1997). The challenge was and continues to be a focus of fitting the program into a four-year curriculum. Discussions on what was essential for beginning teachers were “lively, exhausting and painful” the authors share (Ryan, Callahan, Krajewski, & Flaherty, 1997, p. 69).
There was also concern that the program emphasized special education at the expense of general education content. Program outcomes and assessment continued to be the program’s greatest challenges requiring ongoing communication, debate, monitoring, review and revision. However, once the program was established, it consistently received positive reports from multiple sources in the college and in 1987 received a five-year program approval (Ryan, Callahan, Krajewski, & Flaherty, 1997, p. 71). Graduates of the program surveyed, rated their education experience in the merged program as overwhelmingly positive.

University of Florida

In the spring of 1995, the college of education initiated the effort to redesign elementary and special education teacher education (Bondy & Ross, 2005). What ensued was a four-year journey to unify the general and special education into a teacher education program that would include the entire faculty in the College of Education’s five departments sharing the responsibility. Various aspects of the reform process, challenges faced by teacher educators and valuable insights of teacher education experts was examined in an entire book edited by Elizabeth Bondy and Dorene Ross, Preparing for Inclusive Teaching: Meeting the Challenges of Teacher Education Reform, 2005.

The program, called Unified Elementary Special Education Pro teach (UESEP) is a five-year initial licensure program where students could elect a dual certification track and become certified in both special and general education. Or, students could elect an elementary track enabling them to receive an advance specialization. Through extensive collaboration, the resulting UESEP program accomplished an integration of early
childhood and early childhood special education content; sequenced courses and field; and the students graduate after five years with a bachelors in Special Education and a masters in Instruction and Curriculum (Correa, et al., 1997).

The program content is “designed to prepare teachers who are able to work effectively with diverse student populations and who understand and can use research-based practices” (Bondy & Ross, 2005, p. 56). It is during the methods coursework that students are immersed in inclusive methods courses with knowledge of special education and an emphasis “placed on instructional strategies, classroom-based assessment, and adaptations for children with mild disabilities and limited English proficiency” (Bondy & Ross, 2005, p. 57). The need for preparation to teach special needs students is recognized in the reform proposals as the reform proposals designated multicultural and inclusive teaching as a central principle. Prior to 1991, the collaboration between the departments of general education and special education was almost nonexistent. Involving college and departmental administrators meant that support for the program was developed early and maintained through communication. According to those involved in the reform efforts, the most critical resource in reform is the faculty involved.

In the UESEP, within each course the faculty infuses themes of diversity, inclusion of children with disabilities, collaboration, integrity of the content of the disciplines, the role of family, the assessment cycle, and developmentally appropriate practices (Correa, et al., 1997, p. 91). The program models were shared with others, as well as the sequence and brief descriptions of the courses as a foundation to begin program and curriculum development for faculties in other teacher education programs.
Growth in program faculty also afforded the faculty members to be selective in adding new faculty to match the evolving needs of the program and committed to the idea of unification. The unified program faculty members continued to meet two hours weekly to discuss numerous topics related to program success (Correa, et al., 1997).

Various stages in the program development were challenging because with each presentation, colleagues would suggest revisions. Some revisions were helpful while others would attempt to go back to the traditional and separatist focus of teacher education. Diplomacy and further education were needed to convince “traditional” elementary education faculty that developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood required rethinking segregated curriculum and implementing integrated content courses (Correa, et al., 1997, p. 88). At each stage of the program approval, faculty involved revealed that consensus was difficult to achieve. Three years after the first steps to development, the program was finally presented to the college curriculum committee for approval. There was still further debate and course restructuring to avoid duplication of content. However, the program was unanimously approved in the fall of 1995.

The faculty involved in the integration process admitted/acknowledged some of the biggest challenges involved in program change was “the energy required to reform departments, colleges, universities and state departments of education” (Correa, et al., 1997, p. 88). These changes can be formidable, and changes in such a large system typically are slow. Issues regarding diverse philosophical orientations have also plagued some of the reform efforts. Some faculty were suspicious of integrating special
education content into early childhood program because of fears the program would become too “behavioral” and not “constructivist.” Likewise, the special education faculty were concerned about the program not providing preservice teachers with enough individualized teaching strategies for difficult-to-teach students (Correa, et al., 1997, p. 101). Concerns were specifically related to what special education faculty believed was an absence of “behavior management and discipline, direct instruction and diagnostic assessment” (Correa, et al., 1997, p. 101).

Additional challenges faced from the onset were the lack of field placements that provide inclusive educational settings for young children with and without disabilities; therefore, placements remain in segregated programs. These issues and more remain, including faculty resources, cross-departmental interactions and lack of inclusive field placements. The authors contend that those interested in integration need to be aware of the obstacles in structural change and the “time and energy commitment required to create reform and systems change” (Correa, et al., 1997, p. 104).

California State University, San Marcos

CSU San Marcos was chartered in 1989 and was the first new public university in the United States launched in 25 years (Parsons, Vega-Castaneda, & Hood, 1997). This newness provided an opportunity to develop and construct a progressive teacher education program. The goal became to design an innovative teacher preparation program that addressed special education and issues of exceptionality, bilingual and multilingual education, and English as a second language in elementary K-8 general education. The program developers believed the result was a “model for fusing special
education, bilingual/multilingual education and general education theory and practice” (Parsons, Vega-Castaneda, & Hood, 1997, p. 153). They further believe the result was “seamless” because it did not have a preexisting program with competing ideologies.

Early on in the program development “special education emerged clearly as an area of critical need” (Parsons, Vega-Castaneda, & Hood, 1997, p. 155). Bilingual and multilingual educational issues were found to share common threads to special education, thus multicultural education and collaboration was imbedded in the mission statement, as well as multiple ways of understanding, and that all children can learn. The program was named the Concurrent Credential Program, and according to the faculty, the program is grounded firmly in the literature on inclusive education (Parsons, Vega-Castaneda, & Hood, 1997). Program design was based on field-based research by Parsons (1994) and the term “supported included instruction” emphasizing the need for the fusion of general and special education (Parsons, Vega-Castaneda, & Hood, 1997). Of the 48 credit hours, only three courses indicate the words “special education,” otherwise, the course names reflect the combination of pedagogy and skills across disciplines (Parsons, Vega-Castaneda, & Hood, 1997).

The program espouses this notion that “all students can learn, not only rote facts but to reason and use their minds well, and teachers are the primary agents for this learning; and in order to meet the considerable challenge of assuring that all students learn, teachers must be lifelong learners themselves, professionally empowered and skilled at building and participating in powerful learning communities at the school level” (Parsons, Vega-Castaneda, & Hood, 1997, p. 155). With inclusive education as a
guide, the program espouses the philosophy of preparing candidates to address the needs of all children in the schools, not just special groups mainstreamed to the extent they can succeed with related and support services. According to the authors, the program prepares students for the goals of co-teaching and collaboration and coursework is delivered by faculty at the field sites. Thus, it is proactive in inclusive teaming from inception and design (Parsons, Vega-Castaneda, & Hood, 1997). The course titles reflect these foundations and integration of content, skills and pedagogy. For instance, there are shared foundations, rather than the elitist view that “good pedagogical skills for children with disabilities are the property of special education teachers and distinct from good academic teaching” (Parsons, Vega-Castaneda, & Hood, 1997, p. 157).

Although the program was new to the university, there were still challenges facing the design. Field experience sequencing had to be negotiated in various ways to accommodate the programs and student progress, and development. For instance, schools and the current systems within the public schools (or individuals within the system) were not always ready in terms of changing to newly restructured paradigms like inclusive teacher preparation. Thus, student teachers have to be prepared to be “sensitive to their setting, apply what they have learned to the maximum extent possible and then implement” in their own classrooms someday (Parsons, Vega-Castaneda, & Hood, 1997, p. 175).

Another area of limitation for students in the program was the notion of co-teaching in general education classrooms, a relatively new idea for some teachers in both special and general education. Strictly adhering to the co-teaching expectation presented
challenges for teachers, and in IEP plan reevaluations. The program development also faced challenges in the traditional separate approach to certification in general and special education in the state as well as the reality of today’s schools and limited resources. Overall, the planning committee members believe that program integration is possible with “critical thought, flexibility, and risk-taking” to create an innovative teacher preparation program (Parsons, Vega-Castaneda, & Hood, 1997, p. 179).

**Saginaw Valley State University partnered with Bangor Central Elementary**

The prompting for teacher education reform at Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan developed out of a need recognized for teachers in nearby elementary schools struggling to include students with disabilities in the classroom. From that, a mutually beneficial relationship began with Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) and Bangor Elementary School (BCE) to begin the Unified Elementary Pilot Program (UEPP) (Curtis-Pierce, Barbus, Emond, Sweigart, & Prime, 1997).

In 1989 a vision for shared leadership and philosophy of inclusive education began at BCE. Around this same time, a new dean joined SVS and the education program received NCATE approval. The State of Michigan affirmed support for a mandated service delivery containing full inclusion. A core group of faculty at SVSU came together to propose a program reform that would reflect state and national recommendations for teacher preparation. In 1994, the conceptualized teacher preparation program began UEPP with the goal of preparing classroom teachers with knowledge, skills and attitudes for changing the K-8 classroom. Through a collaborative reform process, faculty members began teaching in the UEPP and reconceptualized their
teaching from separate and discrete courses into a unified and integrated format, as well as teaming with school site personnel. Those engaged in the reform partnership with BCE focused on the overarching belief that “reform efforts in teacher education must go hand in hand with reform efforts in the schools” (Curtis-Pierce, Barbus, Emond, Sweigart, & Prime, 1997, p. 244). The partnership that developed was “a dynamic and evolving joint initiative built on a strong foundation of collegiality, collaboration and mutual support” (Curtis-Pierce, Barbus, Emond, Sweigart, & Prime, 1997, p. 245).

Because of the partnership, a deeper level of collaboration and cooperation developed among all involved in the reform. Teams were established to review the issues in program reform. Problematic areas were condensed to a set of six issues. The six issues included: shared vision or philosophy; maximizing student outcomes; planning time; enlisting district support; preservice UEPP professional development; and parent/community involvement. The teams came together and began uniting as a cohesive group with a focus on an attitude of acceptance by all individuals involved, a culture of trust at the school site, caring and visionary leaders and the goal of open receptiveness to new ideas and solutions. UEPP was designed to meet all state outcome competencies in both areas of elementary and special education curricula in a single course of study. The program’s strength involved general and special education faculty and staff and special education bridging the gap between general and special education curriculum and strategies.

Previous methods instruction traditionally taught in separate, distinct courses became unified in UEPP. An observed benefit of the program was that the members of
the partnership found themselves expanding their traditional roles (Curtis-Pierce, Barbus, Emond, Sweigart, & Prime, 1997, p. 243). The distinctions between the special education and general education staff became less apparent as instructional teaming required faculty to give up sole ownership of courses, classrooms and instructional responsibilities. Individuals had to be “open to change” because their instructional roles were no longer clearly defined and the need to become a better classroom manager and facilitator of learning became crucial (Curtis-Pierce, Barbus, Emond, Sweigart, & Prime, 1997).

A need identified early on during the pilot program was funding. State funding was subsequently obtained through two statewide efforts, particularly the area of professional development linked to preservice teacher education. However, challenges in the area of professional development remain unresolved. For instance, two key issues remained, including the time to interact with others and responding more appropriately to individual needs of students in unified classrooms.

In addition to the struggles with professional development, the program developers determined the response from the faculty came in three forms: “the initiators, the ponderers and the resistors” (Curtis-Pierce, Barbus, Emond, Sweigart, & Prime, 1997, p. 245). Initially only a small group of faculty committed to play a role in the program because, they stated, there was a fear that the UEPP would be the only program, but it was a 2-year experimental period. Institutionalizing the UEPP would have involved ongoing evaluation and significant bridge building to accomplish this goal. Concerns
were also raised on district-wide teacher consensus, especially facing the challenges of students with special needs transitioning from the elementary to middle schools.

Like other reforms, those involved in the program faced difficult processes of change and faculty would have liked to have involvement to come more willingly. However, an essential component to the success of the UEPP was that the group met frequently and informally and established friendships. There were frustrations of never enough time to meet, plan and share ideas, but they did share a commitment to a “mutual vision” (Curtis-Pierce, Barbus, Emond, Sweigart, & Prime, 1997, p. 247). Upon completion of the pilot program, the students would be fully certified in elementary classrooms K-5 or grades 6-8 and endorsed to teach students with learning disabilities K-8; thus students assumed new and expanded roles as elementary classroom teachers.

Utah State University

Prior to the dual-major program created at Utah State University, the departments of elementary and special education were independent of one another and the faculties rarely interacted. Students typically took one special education course for elementary education and special education students took two required elementary education courses. Philosophically the two faculties were “far apart” (Salzberg, Lignugaris/Kraft, & Monson, 1997, p. 208). The governance was decentralized as well; the two departments managed their own financial affairs based on state budgets. Therefore, there was no incentive or disincentive to create a collaborative program. Although the college encouraged collaboration, there were no pressures within the university or outside political forces to unify the departments. Given this lack of external pressures, change
would have to be undertaken by department faculties and administrators willingly. A
dual-major began initially around students who were interested in completing a degree in
both general and special education; thus, it took both departments to compromise and
agree on program requirements. Following these examples, a federal grant made it
possible to further design and implement an integrated student teaching experience. The
vast majority of students that participated in the dual-major program were in the
mild/moderate area, and the K-8 program was only partially integrated.

There were several factors that enabled Utah State ready for program change. First, many students were advocating to have a dual major. Students recognized the dual
major as an edge in an increasingly competitive job market; dual majors had more job
opportunities. Secondly, a move to a new building finally put the two departments in
proximity to each other. Prior to this, the departments were housed in buildings on
opposite sides of the campus (Salzberg, Lignugaris/Kraft, & Monson, 1997, p. 209).
Thirdly, the college dean publicly acknowledged and encouraged collaborative efforts in
the two departments through memos and at meetings but was prompted further when
calls for inclusive classrooms were taking center stage nationally, potentially prompting
grants that would support joint planning by special and elementary education faculty for
program change.

Before the program reform, dual-majors involved careful course planning and
advisement that enabled students to complete both certification programs and Bachelor of
Science degrees within four years. Because of differing philosophies in the departments,
it made sense to move forward in the “action-oriented strategy that advisors focused on
needs of actual students” prior to a program reform. Thus a dual-major student body would provide the context for faculty to interact” (Salzberg, Lignugaris/Kraft, & Monson, 1997, p. 211).

During the process of dual-major discussions, philosophical topics emerged because both departments had a stake. The departments learned quickly that elementary and special education faculties had “major points of agreement about education and curriculum” (Salzberg, Lignugaris/Kraft, & Monson, 1997, p. 214). Rather than having to negotiate a shared philosophy or change their own programs substantially, they established a dual-major program that allowed professors in elementary and special education to continue to teach their own content and advocate their own philosophies (Salzberg, Lignugaris/Kraft, & Monson, 1997, p. 214). A benefit to this meant students were exposed to differing points of view, even those that were sometimes sharply contrasting.

Initially, the hope was that faculty members in both departments would come together and arrive at a common philosophy; however, only a few did so. Rather, the faculty involved in the reform process feared that requiring other faculty to combine philosophies presented an obstacle to establishing a dual-major program in the first place (Salzberg, Lignugaris/Kraft, & Monson, 1997). The informal discussions about philosophy between the two faculties were not productive and did not produce cooperative programming (Salzberg, Lignugaris/Kraft, & Monson, 1997, p. 214).

There was a study conducted of the USU pilot program, involving the graduates of the dual-major and their perspectives of program success. In the study, “some
graduates reported that some professors in elementary education criticized certain instructional methods widely advocated in special education classes (ie: direct instruction)” and in contrast it was reported that the “elementary education classes focused on creative teaching activities, whole-language approaches, large-group or whole-class teaching and on average and higher performing students” (Salzberg, Lignugaris/Kraft, & Monson, 1997, p. 216). The dissonance was confusing for students. For instance, they noted qualitative methods in general education versus the more specific types of assessment for curriculum decision making in special education. It was further reported that “professors in elementary education criticized certain assessment procedures taught in special education classes” (Salzberg, Lignugaris/Kraft, & Monson, 1997, p. 220). Another observed difference, according to graduates, was that elementary education provided a base in multiculturalism regarding ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity whereas special education concentrated on individuals with disabilities.

A study by Blanton, Blanton and Cross (1994) concurred these differences “that although general and special educators have much in common, they also have clear differences in how they think about teaching and in how they approach instructional decision making with students who have learning problems” (Salzberg, Lignugaris/Kraft, & Monson, 1997, p. 228). The faculty at Utah State would agree there is a need for collaborative models of preservice and in-service teacher education for both fields to “develop a common language and shared experiences” (Salzberg, Lignugaris/Kraft, & Monson, 1997, p. 228).
The reform that took place at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UMW) emerged from the collective motivation of a group of faculty, not from any mandates or other top-down directives. The faculty had a commitment to the full potential of urban teacher education, thus they named the program the *Collaborative Teacher Education Program for Urban Communities*. A framework was developed to reform the education programs with substantial integration of special and general education. However, a decision was made that special educators should be in the position to expect a more unique contribution than general education. Therefore, special education was blended into the programs, but those wanting a special education certification must complete a fifth year, post-baccalaureate. During the program reform, there was a consensus that rejected the notion that teachers should be all things to all students and that no specialized knowledge is to be had by special educators (Hains, et al., 1997, p. 186). Rather, the dominant view was there was a need for special education faculty to have a greater presence in the “general” teacher education program.

Consistent with national trend toward educational reform, the faculty work moved from individual beliefs about involvement in teacher preparation to collaboratively constructed, shared understandings (Hains, et al., 1997, p. 181). To address the mounting challenges for teaching and learning, inclusive education initiatives were brought forth as a focus. In 1994, a task force was set in motion to create two new interrelated programs to work with the full range of students, the education programs and post-baccalaureate special education program.
Like other institutions shared in this chapter, UWM had a high level of autonomy and little interaction among faculty members prior to reform. In the attempts to progress toward a more collaborative model, there was an initiative to establish local schools as “Professional Development Schools” to address the concerns of roles regarding team teaching arrangements (Hains, et al., 1997). Faculty were encouraged to step outside their own disciplinary boundaries to contribute to program reform. During this time, the notion of dual-certification was discussed and various conversations regarding special education took place that had major implications for new programming. The faculty all agreed that the goals for graduates should be the commitment to educating all children; to be prepared to work in collaborative team structures; to have a reasonable level of expertise in adapting the curriculum and provide support for students with disabilities.

Departmental barriers were less of an obstacle than anticipated for those involved in the reform process. In discussions of values, beliefs and outcomes, the faculty each developed eight core values as a foundation. Both special education and general education faculty created lists, and they were “in near perfect agreement” (Hains, et al., 1997, p. 190). Although the program had an emphasis on valuing local understanding, through the examination of the national teacher education reform agenda, the core values were verified and in some cases strengthened.

Interdisciplinary collaboration was a key factor as well as emphasis on open communication. Some of the challenges reform UMW experienced were the issues of faculty roles being challenged or changed. Determining the certifications was also a challenge. There were issues with the constraints on the program of space to fit the goals.
to accomplish a dual-certification in a four-year program structure. The faculty had concerns about what could be achieved in the time allowed. As a result, the conventional dual-certification model was rejected based on the belief that special education expertise should be defined as a much more sophisticated level. Instead a higher value was placed on the notion of team teaching (Hains, et al., 1997, p. 186). Discussions were often intense regarding this idea as a return to traditional practice of special education.

Conversations among the faculty often went back to the terminology used by different professional cultures and disciplines. Even with common terms that were used, there were multiple perceptions and values that existed related to these terms. Lengthy discussions seemed unproductive but were essential to “establishing common ground, shared knowledge, and collective will” (Hains, et al., 1997, p. 202).

According to the authors, the future of the program depends on continued collaboration, change and experimentation which all take “time and resources” (Hains, et al., 1997, p. 203). Faculty also believed the process would have been expedited if key players to the reform process were released from their traditional three-course teaching loads each semester. To connect their efforts in reform for a broader-based reform, the authors contend there are three future challenges. One, changing the norms for faculty moving to collaborative approaches is essential. Faculty need time to develop and delivery is significant; thus, modifying old structures and staffing patterns needs to happen for reform to succeed long term. Secondly, ambiguous to explicit programming places challenges on continued definitions of the program. Finally, resource development is critical, especially in time of budget reductions servicing more students with fewer
faculty members. Overall the faculty believed in the reform process. Although programs evolved slowly; they believed the program transformation would impact the quality of teachers who ultimately impact “the children, families, and communities they serve” (Hains, et al., 1997, p. 204).

Currently, the university is in the midst of another redesign of the program, called Redesign Initiatives Project for Urban Special Education Teacher Preparation. A five year grant from the U.S. Department of Education, running from 2011-2016, will result in the redesign and restructuring of UWM’s special education teacher preparation program at the elementary and middle school level. This program serves as a pathway for existing educators to obtain the special education preparation and address the critical shortage of special educators.

Syracuse University

The School of Education at Syracuse University offers a single teacher education preparation program in which “all students leave the program prepared to apply for certification in both Grades 1-6 general education and special education” (Ashby, 2012, p. 89). Syracuse University’s School of Education pioneered the inclusion movement in the United States, making way for all learners to participate fully in mainstream classrooms and other inclusive learning environments. As one of the original Holmes Group Institutions (1986), Syracuse received a Ford Foundation grant to establish a Professional Development School model in collaboration with the program and area districts. The inclusive program began reform in 1987.
The department is united in following a mission statement with a clear purpose that reveals explicit expectations in every class. The goals, regardless of the content area, ensure that preservice teachers understand they are “responsible for teaching all students, regardless of ability or disability” (Ashby, 2012, p. 89). Programs have to articulate clearly a scope and sequence of knowledge and skills represented in each educational experience. Diversity is a reality of schooling that must be reflected in every aspect of teacher education. Teacher candidates discuss disability as a social construct. They are taught how “cultural perceptions of disability do not emerge in a vacuum; they accrue slowly and over time, informed by normalizing discourses in medicine and psychology and reinforced by institutions and unchallenged beliefs of deficiency and need (Ware, 2001, p. 107). Ashby (2012) contends some students may feel pushed in uncomfortable ways to challenge the discourses and practices of schooling for students with disability labels (p. 89).

Although the program prepares students as inclusive educators, prepared to teach all children with and without disabilities in typical education classrooms, many of the graduates enter into teaching positions which are not inclusive, accepting positions as special education teachers in self-contained settings. While this is a challenging frustration, the faculty hopes that the students will be advocates for greater inclusion in their future jobs. The program provides tools and resources for collaborative teaching for inclusive education. Students are required to develop a shared philosophy of education and create a plan for roles and responsibilities in their inclusive classrooms. Coursework also provides the opportunity to share and discuss differing scheduling and support
models for special education and hold mock discussions with resistant teachers and administrators where the students role play their responses in support of inclusive practice (Ashby, 2012).

Some of the initial challenges that happened during the unification included mixed feelings among faculty regarding academic freedom and individual approaches to teaching specific courses. Change in general is a challenge, but systems change is particularly difficult, especially for universities that on the one hand, where a “major purpose of higher education is knowledge production and faculty and students often measure their contributions by innovation and refinement of most promising practices. At the same time though, a major contextual value of universities is academic freedom and the promotion of diverse perspectives and ideas” (Meyer, Mager, Yarger-Kane, Sarno, & Hext-Contreras, 1997, p. 20).

**Review of the programs**

This review of ten education programs explored the depth of commitment faculty members undertook to forge new visions of teacher preparation. The teacher educators described came together within their institutions to discuss what they shared in common regarding teacher preparation. Through time and effort, the faculty involved in program reform attempted to break down barriers between their special and general education departments. These longstanding divisions meant there were limited collaborative opportunities. The processes of reform described here shared several similarities in both the benefits and challenges related to the processes they were engaged in. Table 1 demonstrates these shared benefits and challenges including importance of a shared
vision, benefits of collaboration and community and the challenges related to faculty buy-in, program structures, and the obstacles of time and money.

Most of the programs shared in this review began their collaboration by finding a shared vision or commonalities between special and general education. Essentially, some degree of common ground was found, regardless if they were dominantly behaviorists or constructivists. Some of the terminology used by those involved in the reform process include “changeable, overlapping or unified” (Blanton, Griffin, Winn, & Pugach, 1997, p. 264). According to Blanton and Pugach, (2011) because the history of the relationship between special and general education has presented problems, reform has failed due to the lack of shared vision or finding common ground. In these program instances, once the shared vision was established, collaboration was more successful and productive in program design. Collaborations among faculty in some programs occurred through co-planning and co-teaching, and in a smaller number of programs a sense of community and positive relationships were established. Some faculty did not anticipate the positive outcomes of the opportunity for faculty to work together. In these programs, an emergence of trust and comfort developed cohesive relationships. Thus, the result was a deeper level of collaboration and cooperation.

Not all faculty members embraced the collaborative efforts of program reform in the ten programs explored in this review. This challenge was faced by every program that engaged in the reform process. Often faculty colleagues were not supportive of the project because they “philosophically distrusted the merging of general and special education,” (Blanton, Griffin, Winn, & Pugach, 1997) and there were dissimilar beliefs,
lack of trust and strong feelings of ownership in specific courses which made communication and collaboration a constant challenge. In the program evaluations, there were dialogues across the programs that illustrated the differing beliefs, as well as resistant and reluctant faculty. Faculty members across disability categories seemed to share few philosophical beliefs while others within the program were unwilling to surrender control and maintained separate courses.

Issues of time and money were also persistent challenges to several of the program reforms. The challenge of creating programs in a 4-year curriculum was discussed by many in addition to lack of time and commitment to examine shared beliefs. The most difficult problem, according to the University of Alabama faculty, was the work devoted to the program design was in addition to the work hired by the university, such as teaching and research requirements.

The issues of time, funding and opposing beliefs may have been the challenges that made program realization not feasible for all of the programs discussed. In a current search of all ten program websites, only two of the programs, Syracuse and Providence, remain as merged programs. Four programs including University of Florida, University of Alabaman, California State and University of Connecticut are currently utilizing an integrated approach in which the programs are partially linked and seem to have programming which fosters collaboration between the two departments. University of Cincinnati and Utah State have a blend of partial integration with dual-license pathway options. The remaining two programs, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Saginaw Valley State are entirely discrete. In conclusion, of the ten universities that describe their
program design process, only two retained the separatist tradition of special and general education (See Table 2)

Summary

This review of literature supports conclusions about the scholarship base for this study and offers support for the current research questions. I began with a discussion of “the camps” and the somewhat contentious and separatist views of the special “versus” general educators. This understanding is important to recognize that although the goal of student success may be shared by educators, dissimilar beliefs present challenges to faculty collaboration. I elaborated further on these opposing views in the discussion of the two learning theories, behaviorism and constructivism, and their connection to the philosophical debates that seem to exist in the field of special and general education respectively. The discussion of education program models: discrete, merged or integrated, a framework provided by Blanton and Pugach’s research, is useful to explore and classify the process of collaborative programs in teacher education.

This study addresses the process of teacher education program design as a shared responsibility between special and general education departments to better prepare teachers to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. The literature lacks a specific look at more recent collaboration of faculty and administration for the integration of special and general education. This study addresses the collaborative effort primarily through the views of a team engaged in a program design process designed to better prepare general educators in a potential program merger. The study examines the team’s experiences and its effect on program change. These conclusions support a need for
development of a new theory of program design as a process and as a collaborative effort among faculty and stakeholders in the colleges of general and special education.
Table 1: Merged or Integrated Program Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University and Program Name</th>
<th>Shared Vision</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Faculty Buy-In Structures as barriers</th>
<th>Time and Money</th>
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<tr>
<td>University of Alabama</td>
<td>Ideas and events at national, regional and local levels combined to motivate the teacher education program</td>
<td>Teachers were recruited to help plan the program because practitioners and university professors would be co-equal members of a team in the preparation of MAP students</td>
<td>It wasn’t all “sweetness and light” those involved have not liked one another, in program design. But they would rely on one another to give perspective</td>
<td>Faculty colleagues were not supportive of project because they “philosophically” diminished the merging of general and special education</td>
<td>Faculty had doubts the MAP’s integrated curriculum would allow students to develop the required minimum competencies</td>
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<td>Multiple Alliances Program (MAP)</td>
<td>Special and general education teams independently analyzed and separated competencies that were 1) exclusive to general educators 2) exclusive to special educators 3) apply to both groups. Ironically there was “very little that an elementary teacher should know that an elementary special education teacher should not also know” (and vice versa)</td>
<td>Teachers were recruited to help plan the program because practitioners and university professors would be co-equal members of a team in the preparation of MAP students</td>
<td>Collaborative processes have shaped those involved</td>
<td>Some perceived the project as having originated in the dean’s office and suspect that efforts to micromanage the college were most difficult problem: the work devoted to the program design is in addition to the work hired by the university</td>
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<td>Guiding principles in program with three MAP themes</td>
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<td>Largest impact the awareness of faculty issue related to “train teaching, compact curriculum, and inclusion”</td>
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<th>University of Cincinnati</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reform within Special Education</td>
<td>Key processes in the change to the program: 1) learning to talk with one another 2) leaving safety of own group 3) developing a special education core</td>
<td>After years of maintaining separate programs, the obstacle of shared beliefs about teaching and learning in piloting efforts</td>
<td>Modifications to graduate level worked well because of shared beliefs about teaching and learning in piloting efforts</td>
<td>Faculty members piloted integrated coursework efforts within the program unwilling to surrender control and maintained separate courses</td>
<td>Faculty did not anticipate the amount of time and energy needed for reform</td>
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<td>Created guiding principles challenge how individual needs met; requiring some changes to the program</td>
<td>Department head asked all faculty a one-page response, interpretation or revision of the diversity pattern to next meeting and through intense discussions a reframe and redefinition of shared philosophy of program</td>
<td>Emergence of trust and comfort necessary to develop cohesive special education core, years spent to reestablish lines of communication and build trust</td>
<td>Faculty members across disability categories seemed to share free philosophical beliefs the program faculty rarely met more than once a year</td>
<td>Faculty did not have time to experiment with programs of study, also time constraints from instructional responsibilities</td>
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<td>Department head asked all faculty a one-page response, interpretation or revision of the diversity pattern to next meeting and through intense discussions a reframe and redefinition of shared philosophy of program</td>
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<td>Department head asked all faculty a one-page response, interpretation or revision of the diversity pattern to next meeting and through intense discussions a reframe and redefinition of shared philosophy of program</td>
<td>Facility did not anticipate the positive outcomes most notably the integrated program allows faculty to work together</td>
<td>Dismal outlooks and strong feelings of ownership in specific courses, communication is constant challenge; dialogues across programs illustrated differing beliefs, resistant and or reluctant faculty</td>
<td>Lack of time and commitment to examining shared beliefs</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Connecticut</td>
<td>Reform and renewal of teacher education program, the curriculum and the schools utilized have had an impact in addition to the culture of the faculty</td>
<td>Faculty working across departmental lines, reflective practice and inquiry focus; enabling faculty to question own process of personal not simply evaluate students</td>
<td>Changes in leadership at the state, university and district levels often means &quot;re-educating&quot; new leadership regularly</td>
<td>Some areas of special education continue to seek specialization programs of study; thus creating a rift that somehow the broader conceptualization of education of special educators as determinants to the education of special education students</td>
<td>As the program moves to 5-year integrated programs, fellow education institutions continue to prepare teachers in traditional 4-year programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated Teacher Education Program</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary nature of the groups in cross-departmental work of the faculty in curricular areas make cohort groups powerful and enabling students to gain the inquiry, collaborative and leadership skills necessary to shape future of teaching</td>
<td>This split in philosophy has created two special education faculties, but not hindered the overall progress of the unified teacher education program</td>
<td>Greater focus on inclusion and inclusive education in university coursework; an ongoing emphasis of many jointly planned and conducted in-service sessions in partnership schools</td>
<td>Faculty that retain &quot;untutored&quot; placing less value on teacher education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providence College</td>
<td>Concept of a merger as a framework; it was endorsed unanimously. Philosophical commitment of all faculty, special and general</td>
<td>The faculty involved in the design had been general educators with masters in special education; they recognized the pedagogical demands on classroom teachers and state and federal special education laws advocating for education of students with disabilities in least restrictive environment</td>
<td>A hurdle was Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate for approval, in liberal arts institution there is often tension between faculty in liberal arts and sciences programs and faculty in professional programs, particularly professional programs in education</td>
<td>Challenge of creating the program in a 4-year curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dual Certification in Elementary and Special Education</td>
<td>Diversity, collaboration, teacher as a professional, effective teaching practices used in program design</td>
<td>Discussions on what was essential for beginning teachers were &quot;lovely, exhausting and painful&quot;</td>
<td>Program outcomes and assessment continue to be the program’s greatest challenges requiring ongoing communication, debate, monitoring, review and revision</td>
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<td>University of Florida</td>
<td>Faculty refines theories of diversity, inclusion of children with disabilities, collaboration, integrity of the content of the disciplines, the role of faculty, the assessment cycle, and developmentally appropriate practices</td>
<td>Involving college and departmental administrators meant that support for the program was developed early and maintained through communication</td>
<td>Most critical resource in reform is the faculty involved</td>
<td>Development became challenging due to revisions; some helpful others go back to traditional and separate focus of teacher education</td>
<td>Great reward for support of a pilot-test the new program and time to fine-tune the content</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unified Early Childhood Program</td>
<td>Faculty is selective in adding new faculty to match the evolving needs of the program and committed to idea of unification</td>
<td>The unified program faculty members meet weekly 2 hours to discuss numerous topics and students related to program success</td>
<td>Within the unified early childhood faculty there is united and respect for multiple views and the common goal</td>
<td>Diplomacy needed to convince “traditional” faculty refining aggregated curriculum</td>
<td>Debates on course restructuring to avoid duplication of content; the program</td>
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<td>Shared core belief in developmentally appropriate practices</td>
<td>Faculty discuss the best ways to teach students how to integrate multiple perspectives such as constructivism and behaviorism</td>
<td>Consensus was difficult to achieve, issues regarding diverse philosophical orientations</td>
<td>Financial support of the dean, the unified faculty have been able to design and implement a two-day intensive course a developing inclusive classrooms</td>
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<td>Future success depends on further collaboration and professional development with teachers in local schools</td>
<td>Faculty members of integrating because of fears the program would become too “behavioral” or too “constructivist”</td>
<td>Energy required to reform departments is formidable, change is slow</td>
<td>First year of program, students deemed to be on campus more, especially for computer labs and productivity</td>
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University and Program Name

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<tr>
<td>California State University, San Marcos Integrated Credential Program</td>
<td>Multicultural education and collaboration embedded in mission statement, as well as multiple ways of knowing, all children can learn</td>
<td>Program proposes students for the goals of co-teaching and collaboration</td>
<td>Cohorts were dynamic with their own style curricula, etc. Groups become close during the year.</td>
<td>Schools, and the current systems within the public school or individuals within the system may be ready for the changing to newly restructured paradigms</td>
<td>First year of program, students deemed to be on campus more, especially for computer labs and productivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared foundations and theory predominant, rather than the view that good pedagogical skills for children with disabilities are the property of special education teachers and distinct from good academic teaching</td>
<td>Students benefit from an integration model through a Collaborative consultation model</td>
<td>Area of limitation was also the co-teaching in general education classroom, a relatively new idea for some teachers in both special and general education classrooms</td>
<td>Field experiences also had to be negotiated in various ways to accommodate the programs and student advances, development</td>
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<td>Faculty members team teach early on in program development “special education emerged clearly in an area of critical need”</td>
<td>The model’s programming faced challenges in the traditional separate approach to certification in general and special education in the state</td>
<td>Zeal of “brownies” often contrasted the reality of today’s busy world with limited resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) Partners with Tanger Central Alumni (BCE) Pilot Programs</td>
<td>Commitment to a &quot;mutual vision&quot; is paramount</td>
<td>Overall the partnership is &quot;a dynamic and evolving joint initiative built on a strong foundation of collegiality, collaboration and mutual support.&quot;</td>
<td>The teams came together and began meeting as a team with a focus on the following: 1) attitude of acceptance by all individuals involved, 2) culture of trust at the school site, 3) culturally and linguistically diverse leadership and 4) open receptiveness to new ideas and solutions</td>
<td>Only a small group of faculty has committed to play a role in pilot program, desire is evident to continue in more willing way</td>
<td>Issues related to professional development are unresolved. Issues include the time it takes to interact with others and responding more appropriately to individual needs of students in unified classrooms</td>
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<td>Lines between the special education and general education staffs quickly blurred as instructional teams began working to develop a common course of action</td>
<td>The UEPSG group met frequently and informally establishing friendships</td>
<td>Bridge building must continue to maintain the relationship</td>
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<td>Utah State University Dual Major Options</td>
<td>Students advocating for the change to have a dual major</td>
<td>The college encouraged collaboration, but no pressures within the university or outside political forces</td>
<td>Obstructing faculty to discuss philosophies presented a major obstacle to establishing a dual major program</td>
<td>A federal grant made it possible to design and implement the integrated teacher education experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The department learned quickly that elementary and special education faculty have &quot;major points of agreement about education and curricula&quot;</td>
<td>Recognized the need for collaborative models of preservice and in-service teacher education for both fields to &quot;develop a common language and shared experience&quot;</td>
<td>Elementary education provides base in multiculturalism regarding ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity whereas special education concentrates on individual with disabilities. Students are exposed to differing points of view, sometimes sharply contrasting</td>
<td>Careful course planning and advising enables students to complete both certification programs and bachelor of science degrees within 4 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The hope was that faculty members in both departments would come together and arrive at a common philosophy; only a few did so.</td>
<td>The dean publicly acknowledged and encouraged collaborative efforts in the two departments through memos and at meetings</td>
<td>Both departments criticized one another in student courses.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The program was designed for students that were interested in completing a dual major and both departments complemented and agreed</td>
<td>Informal discussions about philosophy between two faculties were not productive and did not produce cooperative programming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued
### Table 1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University and Program Name</th>
<th>Shared Vision</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Faculty Buy-In Structures as barriers</th>
<th>Time and Money</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Syracuse University**     | The faculty were able to determine a number of shared values including:  
- Inclusion and equity  
- Teacher as the decision maker  
- Multiculturalism in education  
- Innovations in education  
- Field based emphasis | Objections were voiced as constructive to building consensus of values, principles and practices. Some problems solved philosophically through open discussion | Mixed feelings among faculty regarding academic freedom and individual approaches to teaching specific courses | Received a Ford Foundation grant to establish a Professional Development School model in collaboration with the program and area districts. |
| **Inclusive Elementary and Special Education** | Discussions were not obstacles, but constructive to building a consensus of values, principles and practices needed many times throughout implementation | Ignoring and bypassing resistance was not an option; instead, there was a consistent commitment to program development along with sincere responses to concerns. | Systemic change is difficult, especially for universities that, on the one hand, resist faculty contributions and promotion of diverse perspectives and ideas | Drafts of the program designs were shared for review and revisions to the larger group to address needs and concerns. This process was considered lengthy and sometimes painful. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University and Program Name</th>
<th>Shared Vision</th>
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<th>Community</th>
<th>Faculty Buy-In Structures as barriers</th>
<th>Time and Money</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee</strong></td>
<td>Working program titles: a framework to reform with substantial integration of special and general education</td>
<td>Program goals to prepare more collaborative, more accommodating, highly skills general educators</td>
<td>Emerged from collective motivation of group of faculty</td>
<td>Issues of role often challenged reform efforts</td>
<td>Special education is blended into programs, certification must complete a 5 year, post baccalaureate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborative Teacher Education Program for Urban Communities</strong></td>
<td>Shared goals for student teachers should be committed to educating all children; be prepared to work in collaborative teams</td>
<td>Encouraging for faculty to step outside disciplinary boundaries to contribute to program reform</td>
<td>Expected a conventional dual-certification model based on the belief that we need to redefine special education</td>
<td>Dual certification challenged with what can be achieved in time allowed, constraint on the program for a 6 year structure</td>
<td>Collaborative approaches mean time to develop and deliver significant, modifying old structures and staffing patterns challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eight core values created by special education and gen education faculty and they were in near perfect agreement</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary collaboration is key factor, as well as emphasis on open communication</td>
<td>Discussions regarding program change were often intense because of program differences</td>
<td>Collaborative approaches mean time to develop and deliver significant, modifying old structures and staffing patterns challenge</td>
<td>Collaborative approaches mean time to develop and deliver significant, modifying old structures and staffing patterns challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collective will of faculty continuously improving teacher education programs</td>
<td>Decision was made that special educators should be in position to expect a more unique contribution</td>
<td>Terminology used by different professional cultures and disciplines has to be explained. Multiple perceptions and values exist</td>
<td>Key players need released regularly from traditional three-course teaching loads each semester</td>
<td>Collaborative approaches mean time to develop and deliver significant, modifying old structures and staffing patterns challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work moved from individual, private beliefs about involvement in teacher preparation to collaboratively construct shared understandings</td>
<td>Terminology used by different professional cultures and disciplines has to be explained. Multiple perceptions and values exist</td>
<td>Future of program depends on continued collaboration, change and experimentation which all take time and resources</td>
<td>Key players need released regularly from traditional three-course teaching loads each semester</td>
<td>Collaborative approaches mean time to develop and deliver significant, modifying old structures and staffing patterns challenge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Program Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University or College</th>
<th>Name of program</th>
<th>Type of program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syracuse University</td>
<td>Inclusive Elementary and Special Education</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence College</td>
<td>Dual certification in elementary (grades 1-6) and special (grades K-8) education</td>
<td>Merged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Florida</td>
<td>Unified Elementary ProTeach — Dual Certification</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Alabama</td>
<td>Multiple Abilities Program (MAP)</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State University San Marcos</td>
<td>Integrated Credentials Program</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Connecticut</td>
<td>Integrated Bachelor’s/Master’s Teacher Education Program</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Cincinnati</td>
<td>Reform within Special Education</td>
<td>Integrated, Discrete undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah State University</td>
<td>Dual-Major Options</td>
<td>Integrated and Dual licensure programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee</td>
<td>Collaborative Teacher Education Program</td>
<td>Discrete with a pathway to special education licensure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saginaw Valley State University</td>
<td>Pilot Program- not in existence</td>
<td>Discrete only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview

This chapter describes the methodology I used to guide this research project. First, I discuss the study participants and my entry into the field. In this study, I describe a higher education institution’s phenomenon of the program design process as a case study based on grounded theory. This approach provided a view into the inner workings of a collaborative team engaged in an education reform effort.

Situating myself in the research is also an important step to describe how the research developed and my personal connection to the questions I sought out to reveal. Within this chapter I will outline a description of the context of the study and the participants. I will provide a detailed explanation of the methods and procedures I employed and the timeline for the study. I also include a description of the data collection procedures and the assumptions I held prior to the start of the study. Finally, this chapter includes the steps I followed for data analysis. Using grounded theory methodology to analyze the case provided an in-depth look into the data collected. Uncovering patterns led to assertions which generated theories that should prove beneficial to the field of teacher education reform.
The purpose of this study was to learn what is involved in developing a program design by bringing together two distinct programs of general and special education with the ultimate goal of creating a program to address the achievement gaps of diverse learners by strengthening general educators. In particular, the following questions guided my inquiry:

**Research Questions**

- How did faculty in both general and special education departments describe their experiences in a program design process?
- What challenges did the faculty encounter during the program design process?

**Context of the Study**

At a top Research 1 university, a program reform study was being conducted which presented a unique opportunity to investigate my questions on a deeper level through a case study approach. A strength of utilizing a case study method involves the use of multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process (Charmaz, 2006). Through this field research methods, my questions could be addressed through documents and artifacts, participant observation and interviews of those involved in the program design and the examination of existing merged program models.

**Study Participants**

The participants of the study included the faculty of two different teacher preparation departments, including both general and special education, of the university engaged in the program design. In the general education department, the chair of the department put forth an email request regarding a proposal from a grant-providing entity.
to consider program design in teacher preparation. The chair was seeking faculty interested in reviewing the proposal that focused on enhancing the capacity of general education teachers to work with students in special education.

Initially, five faculty members from the general education department expressed their interest in participating in this grant. The general education faculty began to meet and discuss about the existing offerings and program model(s) and opportunities for students to be able to have experiences across diverse settings and to work with diverse populations and how they could better support that endeavor. Some of the faculty believed the proposal was also focused more broadly and inclusively in terms of issues like equity and diversity, language variation as well as special education. Regardless, it became apparent to the five faculty members that to discuss special education meant special education faculty should be involved. Thus, colleagues in special education, housed in an entirely different department, were approached by the lead general education faculty investigator to determine if they were interested in trying come together and build a program that provided an opportunity not currently in place at this university.

The lead investigator of the general education faculty contacted a colleague in the special education department to determine their interest in the program design. Three faculty members from special education expressed their interest in becoming involved. Although I was not present for the meetings in the first year, the documents and interviewees later revealed that two members from the general education department involved prematurely left the program design team. The reasons for the faculty members’ departure is unknown. The resulting group was a blend of six faculty, three in general
education and three in special education. The principal investigator informed the faculty that I desired to conduct my dissertation with the group. I first gained entry to observe the meetings through the Interval Review Board Approval. After attending the first meeting, I sought the permission of the faculty to interview the six remaining faculty (See Table 3).

**Table 3: Interview Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name (Pseudonyms)</th>
<th>Special (SE)</th>
<th>General (GE)</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
<th>Length of Interview</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>05-14-15</td>
<td>60:22</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor in General Education, PI of Case Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sherry</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>05-14-15</td>
<td>59:41</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor in General Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Amber</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>05-20-15</td>
<td>39:13</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor in Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>05-26-15</td>
<td>40:08</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor in Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>06-16-15</td>
<td>59:09</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor in Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Eugene</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>07-15-15</td>
<td>37:11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor in General Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>08-03-15</td>
<td>45:38</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor of Inclusive Education at Sunshine University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>08-03-15</td>
<td>37:34</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor and Director of Inclusive Education at Sunshine University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>08-04-15</td>
<td>51:08</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor of Inclusive Education at Sunshine University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Access and Entry into the field

My entrance into the group began the second year of their program design efforts. My advisor was already actively involved in the program design and invited me to various consultant meetings into the second year of the design process. The team had already conducted various meetings, met with outside consultants and connected with local schools and educators regarding the perceived goals of the program design. Because I desired to learn more about the experiences of those involved in this program design; I completed the Internal Review Board process to gain access to the process at that time. Although I began my observations during various planning meetings that involved the process of restructuring courses and creating a program that may or may not be sent for approval to the university curriculum committee; nevertheless, in its conclusion, it would be provided to the grant funders for their review.

Faculty from each department are often the instructors of the university coursework related to the graduate general education licensure programs as well as special education teacher licensure programs. Faculty who instruct courses in these programs were essential to meet with directly as they provided information from their respective program perspectives. They brought knowledge of preservice teacher outcomes, strengths, and gaps of the course content. Patterns of strengths and gaps might exist across programs regarding specific teacher competencies. Seeking the input of the faculty within these programs involved them in the collaborative process of redesign. These faculty represent a collaboration of people from various disciplines and diverse
contexts of teacher preparation programming. Each of the six faculty listed in Table 3 agreed to participate and be interviewed.

**Case Study Approach**

This project can be best described as an observational case study because: 1) the major data-gathering technique used was participant observation that was supplemented by more in depth interviews; 2) the focus of the study was on a particular group; and 3) the focus of the study was the negotiation and implementation of the program design within the university. In particular, I focused primarily on the group of people, the professors, who regularly attended the planning meetings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 55). The meetings began as an artificial context, in that the group of participants who attended the meetings were not a naturally existing unit that worked together or previously collaborated. In fact, half of the members represented the general education and the other half represented special education. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) address this artificiality when they state, “Picking a focus, be it a place in the school, a particular group, or some other aspect, is always an artificial act, for you break off a piece of the world that is normally integrated” (p. 55).

Although this was not a group of people who were normally integrated, interestingly enough, after two years of monthly meetings, the group began to feel less like an “artificial” context. In other words, because several of the research participants were regular attendees at their meetings, what emerged was a core group of faculty who were invested in the restructuring process. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) believe that, “a good physical setting to study is one that the same people use in a recurring way” (p. 55).
The faculty who attended the meetings used the space as a place to ask questions, to learn new strategies, to design the program model, and to problem-solve through their difficulties.

**Sunshine University**

Although the faculty of the case study group were incredibly informative, their input on the potential for merging programs was only derived from their personal educational experiences and that of the existing program design. They each read articles related to program merging and met with consultants that had extensive knowledge of program merger; however, with the exception of one faculty member, no one had taught or been taught at a university where special and general education programs co-existed or offered a dual license. A contrasting university that utilizes a one-department program to provide teacher education was an ideal site for a contrast examination.

I was aware of two universities in the country that utilize a merged program. I contacted both universities, and received a reply from one of them. The dean of the program provided me the emails of three faculty members that could help me with the answers to my questions regarding how their merged programming works. They were interested in meeting in person, so I traveled to their location to explore their program through their personal interviews. I felt the comparison of program models would be beneficial to meet with faculty part of program that has been merged for over 25 years. The school considers itself an Inclusive Teacher Preparation program and the students attending graduate with a dual-license in both special and general education. The program considers itself utilizing a shared philosophy, which was in contrast to the
differing departments of the case study team. I will elaborate on the program and findings in Chapter Four. Utilizing ethnographic methods to explore two separate universities, allowed for a comparison of the different contexts in which program design is accomplished and delivered to prepare teachers. Program model designs such as integrated, merged and dual-licensure programs were introduced and defined in Chapter One and important for determining the sites for research and the research analysis as well.

Data sources

The reform group began with a Request for Proposals (RFP) that included a focus and interest on designing programs that supported teachers’ knowledge and skills and dispositions and preparedness to work with students with disabilities as well as students of various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. A proposal was written and accepted.

The group received funding to design two dual-licensure program models; one world language combined with mild-moderate licensure and secondly, a social studies combined with mild-moderate licensure. In the state, there only exists a K-12 mild-moderate licensure thus there was a goal to create a justification for a 7-12th grade mild-moderate licensure. Mild/moderate populations are defined as those students receiving special education services having mild emotional/behavioral disorders, autism spectrum disorders, learning disabilities, other health impairments (including ADHD), speech/language impairments, mild intellectual disabilities, and developmental delays. The restructuring efforts first included a collaborative and comprehensive self-study of existing programs, such as the examination of the current coursework and program
structures for two focal masters’ licensure programs, as well as the redesign of the two focal programs. The program design involved revision of coursework and field experiences, the development of narrative and video-based case studies that illustrate the needs of diverse learners, and the revision of an inclusion course that will facilitate interaction and collaboration between general and special education preservice teachers.

The data gathered included on-site observations during meetings, interviews and a review of related documents to the program design. Through the use of grounded theory and ethnographic methods, there can be significant levels of understandings by engaging in the ongoing meetings and “becoming to some extent a participant in it” (Abbott, 2004, p. 15). The aim of this type of research is to see the world through the eyes of the members being observed and to document the social interactions among the members (Creswell, 2009). As the ethnographer, my goal was to participate in the program design meetings yet “trying to keep an outsider’s view even while developing an insider’s one as well” (Abbott, 2004, p. 16). Through a grounded theory approach, it enabled me to allow an understanding of the phenomenon to emerge through data analysis and a literature search that was performed mainly after data had been collected. By utilizing multiple methods and strategies, my goals were “to capture an in-depth and rigorous understanding, but one that is understood to be a situated understanding” (Lewis, p. 29).

In this study, the interviewing was significant “to learn how terms and the discourses they carry operate in the institutional setting” (Lewis, 2000, p. 38). The interviews used in this approach are used to locate and trace the points of connection among individuals working in different parts of the institutional complexes. I carefully
chose questions that would enable me to maintain conversations that are in the open manner. It is important for me to discover through the interview process how the understandings of the program design on the part of the faculty involved shape their subsequent behaviors.

Finally, the frameworks and concepts presented here helped to guide the types of questions being asked throughout this study, as well as inform the types of methods and methodologies employed within. Thus, for the purpose of this study, the perspectives discussed within this section informed my epistemology, and the ways in which I viewed the collaboration experiences.

**Grounded Theory**

A qualitative grounded theory method was chosen for this case study because I wanted to examine the phenomenon of a teacher education program reform process from the perspectives of the faculty. Since grounded theory is “discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to the phenomenon,” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 23) this approach was most appropriate.

I sought to examine the phenomenon of a teacher education program reform process with no predetermined theories (Creswell, 2009). Developing theory from the data served as the main purpose for using grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In order for a study to qualify as a grounded theory approach, some assumptions must be present: (a) all concepts related to the phenomenon have not yet been identified; (b) relationships between concepts are undeveloped; and (c) asking questions enables the search for important, yet unanswered questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 37). These
assumptions were true for this study. Because of my desire to see what theories could arise from the teacher education reform process, I chose grounded theory as my methodological guide. Various themes and assertions arose throughout the data collection and analysis stages. Other key characteristics of grounded theory helped deepen my understanding of the research inquiry, in particular, theoretical sampling and theoretical sensitivity. As a method of data analysis, theoretical sampling involved the joint process of data collection, coding, and analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This procedure required giving attention to the emerging categories since they helped guide some of the data collection. While analyzing the data and identifying various themes, I also revisited other data sources and asked additional questions. This process helped me fill in missing pieces as the theories emerged and kept me focused on discovery as the aim of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 180).

Theoretical sensitivity also helped deepen my understanding of the research inquiry as I identified important elements of the data and gave those elements meaning (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 46). This approach required interaction with the data in both the collection and analysis stages. I asked questions of the data to help me better understand the complex nature of the relationships between the variables. I constantly looked for themes to emerge. As the researcher, I was actively participating during all stages of the research process as themes consistently emerged that required revision and further development. I adapted grounded theory as the guiding principle of the research methodology.
Epistemological Perspectives

As a researcher, where one situates (himself/herself) themselves paradigmatically is often a reflection of his/her cultural identity, selfhood, and epistemology, and many times can influence research in many ways that can include the ways in which questions are asked, what questions get asked, and the types of methodologies that will be used (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The research began as a case study to understand the experiences and challenges in combining general and special education programs. The epistemologies used in this research reveal the embedded duality that exists between general and special education and the deep structural divides in terms of both policy and practice.

Before examining my theory, the use of ethnographic methods enabled me to gather my data including participant observations, interviews and the researcher's reflections on her or his own experience. Thus, a researcher may begin from an experience that he or she knows something about (Abbott, 2004). Situating myself in the research was paramount in understanding my connection to the inquiry on a professional and personal level.

Situating Myself

As a researcher who is positioned personally and professionally to the research, I acknowledged that my identity influenced the design of my research project, the types of questions I asked, as well as the ways in which I, as the researcher, engaged and interacted with the participants. My educational background as both an elementary and middle school teacher and my professional experiences as a teacher educator all afford
me insights into the language of teacher education. Furthermore, I have personal
connections to my inquiry focus including a daughter with cognitive disabilities receiving
her educational services in the inclusive classroom. Each of these experiences has had an
impact on how I approached and analyzed this research.

I was fortunate to attend a university where the ideas of constructivism and
collaborative ways of teaching and learning were espoused. However, to be honest, these
theories and ideas did not match the way I had grown up to know and experience
teaching. When I began my first year of teaching in a middle school, I further felt my
philosophies learned at the university contradicted those of the school and teachers.
Thus, I began to resort to standard, top-down model approaches in my own teaching. My
first interaction with special education was the day I was asked to cover a class during my
planning period. The multiple-handicapped teacher had to leave, and I spent a forty
minute block of time in a room full of students with moderate to severe disabilities and I
was terrified. My first reaction was “why are these kids even here? What is the point? I
wonder if their Moms demanded they be here.”

I now think quite differently based on my lived experiences; although I believe
my previously held views are not uncommon to the philosophies a majority of educators
ascrIBE to in our schools. In my now 12 plus years of experience in working with a
variety of educators, I consider many teachers would argue that students with disabilities
should be separated in education and the focus of their learning spent primarily on
developing basic life skills. Both in my professional and personal life I have witnessed a
trend of fear and resistance to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

My daughter is in the 6th grade in which she receives about 60-70% of her educational services in inclusive classrooms. This percentage is only accomplished in large part to the advocacy I have done for her over the past seven years she has attended public schools. Even as I write this, I am involved in an intervention process of facing due process and civil rights with the new middle school she is attending. However, when my daughter began kindergarten, she was placed in a multiple-handicapped, segregated classroom. It was a depressing room, set up in sterile rows of desks, devoid of literature and learning, outside of basic skills. I observed quickly that all too often special education classrooms “lack thoughtful or recognizable academic opportunities” and that the practices of working with students with disabilities “reduce the whole of a child to the deficit contours associated with various categories of impairment” (Kliewer, 2008, p. 14). The advocacy I have done and am currently involved in has taken significant negotiations into untangling the belief that my daughter, and others like her, would learn better in a self-contained classroom of impaired learners.

Disability Studies Perspective

My research into disability studies has revealed much about why some teachers and people believe this way to begin with. When my daughter began her education, we were thrust into a medical model of approaching how we raise and educate our youngest daughter. According to Siebers, (2008) “the medical model defines disability as an individual defect lodged in the person, a defect that must be cured or eliminated if the
person is to achieve full capacity as a human being.” “The concept of normalcy has been used to justify the differential treatment of society’s ‘undesirables’ throughout history” (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2012, p. 80). Educating students with disabilities separately from typical developing learners is synonymous with the dominant cultural view. Danforth and Gabel, (2006) explain the methods to describe students with disabilities in education comes from a deficit model approach.

Including children like my daughter with significant cognitive disabilities in the general education classroom is hindered by the assumptions teachers have that these children cannot succeed, as supported by the deficit-based paradigms and medical models that are the foundation of special education practices (Kugelmass, 2001). Thus, there are significant tensions between an education system consistent with a goal of full inclusion and the mainstream deficit approach to education in which the type and severity of a disability becomes the primary measure of a child’s access to a regular education setting. In the midst of my persistence that my daughter have the opportunity to be included in the general education classroom, I am often met with resistance phrased in the tone of “The gap is too big for her to do well,” or “She isn’t getting anything out of the class” in addition to “We don’t know how to teach her what the rest of the class is learning when she can’t read.”

**Least Restrictive Environment**

According to Causton (2014), a common misperception about inclusion is that students must “keep up” or perform at grade level in their academic work. Students with disabilities are not required to perform at grade level to be included in the general
education classroom. The law specifically guarantees that children with disabilities are entitled to the Least Restrictive Environment, (LRE):

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Through the use of modifications, students can engage with content in different ways with different materials and supports than other students receive (IDEA, 2004; Title I (B) Sec. 612 (a)(5)(A)).

As an example, for a student like my daughter, who could be reading at a second grade level in high school English, the teacher can change the format for how she receives written information. The student can read material with a partner or access it digitally via an audiobook on a computer and can still engage in the discussion of content alongside peers. Reading at a different grade level is an issue of access to printed material, but engaging with the content is where meaningful learning occurs.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) mandates that all students with disabilities have the legal right to be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and cannot be removed from a general education classroom simply because the school is not prepared to meet a student’s needs (34C.F.R. 300.116 (b)(3)(e)). Therefore, training for the education grade level team can be written into an Individual
Education Plan (IEP) under support for school personnel (See Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, § 300.704(b)(4)(i), (b)(40(xi)). Schools are required to provide a level of training under IDEA such as training in inclusive schooling, differentiation, modifying and adapting instruction, and collaboration.

It is with this knowledge that my personal and professional research prompted my desire to examine programming of teacher preparation in a way that better prepares general educators to be familiar with not only the laws stipulating the inclusive principles of educating students with disabilities, but also that all educators, special and general, are prepared in ways that enable them to meet the diverse needs of learners. As I reveal this personal background into my research, I realize that the challenges before me in this data collection are specifically the personal biases I bring with me to the corpus of the data. More specifically, my previous orientation to including students with disabilities in the general education classroom was with skepticism and rejection. It took a significant and personal experience in my life to understand possibility and potential in a different way. “Not all parents (or teachers, for that matter) go through this dramatic shift in beliefs” (Danforth, 2014). Because I experienced a 180-degree turn in my own beliefs, I have theorized that individuals could experience a similar change through a transformative moment or practice within inclusive coursework.

For example, Campbell, Gilmore, Cuskelly (2003) found preservice teachers’ attitudes were more positive immediately after completing college coursework. Parajares (1992) discussed a correlation between beliefs, knowledge, and the pedagogy of a teacher. Burke & Sutherland (2004) revealed that several studies have determined that
more positive attitudes are reported following training and the most positive attitudes toward inclusion can be found in teachers who received more education for working with students with disabilities.

Burke and Sutherland (2004) further contend that there is a correlation between teacher attitudes and their knowledge of disabilities. Negative attitudes might exist toward students with disabilities and inclusion because the teachers do not perceive that they have enough knowledge about this subject area. Danforth (2014) reveals that teachers are often “confused, overwhelmed, and ill prepared to work effectively in inclusive classrooms and schools” due to inexperience and poor professional preparation in working with students with disabilities. (p. 6). Given the data on the significance of teacher attitudes and fears, I have long since believed that with education and awareness, particularly in a teacher education program, future educators’ attitudes toward inclusion might improve. Through the use of grounded theory, my background and disciplinary perspectives alerted me to these potential biases, but also “to look for certain possibilities and processes in (the) data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 16).

**Investigator Biases and Assumptions**

Like all researchers, I came to this project with my own experiences and lenses. I was an instrument in the data collection, as everything I saw and heard was filtered through my beliefs, preferences, and experiences. In the opening paragraph for this chapter, I stated that the research methods I employed would allow researchers to understand their research participants’ unique perspectives and behaviors, *mostly* through their own lenses. I say “mostly” because in the research methods, the researcher is part of
the process, an instrument through which all data and interpretation flows (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 4).

For example, one of my biases is that I am a proponent of inclusive education, which comes from my own experiences, both professionally and personally. Professionally, my graduate studies have been at a university values an inclusive philosophy and practice. Personally, I have had to actively advocate for my daughter to receive an education in an inclusive classroom. I have spent a considerable amount of time researching the benefits of inclusive education so I have had to work diligently at not presupposing the merged program designs are ultimately what is “best” for educators.

My subjectivity served as a lens through which my observations and interpretations flowed, a necessary, interpretative part of my research methods. I also tried to remain cognizant of the ways that my subjectivity may have created methodological concerns. I sought to minimize these concerns by continually questioning the assumptions I brought with me to this research. I paid particularly close attention when something surprised me; for in that surprise, I was able to articulate what it was I expected to see or hear in the setting. This reflexivity helped make my subjective assumptions more transparent.

My relationship with the principal investigator (PI) of the grant may also have influenced my data collection, findings and conclusions as the PI is on my dissertation committee and read my qualifying examinations. However, I never attended any social events with those in the case study outside of the context of the grant project and I had not become acquainted with the group members until this project surfaced as a possibility.
for research at the suggestion of my advisor. Nevertheless, I am a graduate student doing research on a project implemented by six professors, so the power distribution in our professional relationships was unequal.

I knew that negotiating this relationship might prove to be difficult. On the one hand, if I had a role in the grant design team, then they may not have been forthcoming with me about their experiences in this process. On the other hand, if I did not work collaboratively with the university team, then I may not have had the opportunity to know of their experiences at all, as they were the ones who informed me of meetings and shared the access to their documents. I have had to negotiate these relationships carefully and try to remain as neutral as possible. I have had to wade through the data and decide if a particular comment was essential to understanding the program design or if the comment was made by someone frustrated by the process. Remaining focused on what I could learn from this research was my goal, so that I may pass along to other professionals looking to implement a similar program design effort. There were comments, however, made by those interviewed that gave me insight into things that could make the design run more smoothly. Those things are reported in my research.

Data Collection and Sources

The data collection consisted of interviews following the ethnographic methods as described by James P. Spradley (The Ethnographic Interview, 1979). As a qualitative method for the collection of data, Spradley’s contends the interviewing process must first develop rapport with the interviewees and attaining meaningful information. Qualitative interviewing provides a research design that will allow the consortium of participants to
contribute to the corpus of data informing my research. The interviews will focus on their initial perceptions of program design, how their perceptions may have changed over time and what they believe they need to know in moving forward in the implementation of a redesigned education program. The interviewees selected have significant knowledge about the program design and were actively involved in the entire process.

Informed consent was first obtained from all participants and relevant authorities and I provided them adequate information to indicate the protection of participants' rights as indicated by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), including the “right to self-determination, right to privacy, right to autonomy and confidentiality, right to fair treatment and the right to protection from discomfort and harm.” (See Appendix B). I conducted the semi-structured interviews with as many of the faculty members indicated that agreed to participate (See Table 3). Pseudonyms were created for each of the faculty members. The first six interviews were from the program design. Three of the individuals were from the general education department and the other three individuals were from the special education department. Their roles, gender, and duration of interview are all listed on Table 3. In addition to the six names are the pseudonyms of the three faculty members I interviewed from the merged program at Sunshine University for an understanding of their roles and a comparison to the data of my case study.

Spradley (1979) describes the various types of ethnographic questions that the interviewer might ask and elicit answers that have to be drawn from those being questioned. The questions I employed (See Appendix A) enabled me to utilize additional conversational questions and more in-depth information. Based on these interview
questions and further conversations, the interviews ranged in time from 45 to 90 minutes per participant. Each interview was audio-recorded and I produced verbatim transcriptions of each interview.

I created a data collection tool (See Appendix C) that served as a guide to the semi-structured interviews conducted with the participants. The study was of minimal risk to the subjects included. The participants that consented to be interviewed were assured of privacy and that no personal information would be shared. Consent forms were presented and reviewed before any interviews or note taking in meetings were completed. Data were systematically analyzed to identify “emerging themes” and used a “constant comparison” method to code for more complete interpretation and analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Patton, 2001; Baxter & Jack, 2008). Data collection only occurred with those who gave their consent. Interviews were conducted within the university setting. During this inquiry, field notes and transcripts used pseudonym substitutes for real names. All family names (last names) were deleted from the transcripts and audio recordings. Two protected copies of the translation key between codes and interviewees’ real first names were kept until completion of the research. Names were removed from any observation notes and transcriptions and coded to protect confidentiality. In efforts to ensure validity in this study, I triangulated the data from multiple data (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The data sources for this inquiry include: 1) texts and artifacts; 2) observation notes; and 3) transcribed interviews.

I gained various perspectives over the span of one year utilizing three primary data collection methods: textual analysis, observations and in-depth interviews. I also
collected additional interviews from a university utilizing an existing program format of the merged program model as a check against what I was learning during the program design.

**Texts and Artifacts**

The faculty group I observed utilized a cloud-based service that provided a simple and secure way to store and share files and folders online. Throughout the program design, the team members were able to upload and interact with over 400 documents. Peer reviewed journals, syllabi, meeting notes and faculty resumes are just a few of the many artifacts in the storage cloud to review the process of this specific case study. To begin my study, I started a year in advance by sifting and reading through the documentation that I was given access to by my advisor. These crucial texts were instrumental in my ability to construct my research questions and follow the “ball of string” that led me to the themes I wanted to explore further. The documents proved further helpful after I had conducted all of my interviews and the group had completed their final reports for the end of the grant study.

**Observations**

The meetings for the program design began in late 2013. These meetings were facilitated by the primary investigator of the study and I was introduced to the group as a doctoral student doing research on the program design already in progress. The initial days of data-gathering were primarily centered on my observations. I was trying to absorb the discussions the faculty were involved in. This period included sorting through the views and comments of those in the department of special education and those in the
department of teaching and learning. Many of the conversations that took place, as I will elaborate in Chapter Four, were program related but also philosophical in nature too. Though feeling somewhat detached in those early days, eventually I established good rapport with the participants. When I eventually sought out individuals for interviews, I was able to contact them directly and felt comfortable doing so.

During most project meetings, I took notes on my laptop because there were others in the setting doing the same. This led to rich reconstructions of dialogues because I made sure to record direct quotes by participants. In the event that I did not capture the entirety of the direct quote, I summarized what I had heard. I recorded in-depth field notes of what had transpired during the meetings, also utilizing the data collection tool (See Appendix C). The field notes included direct quotes from participants, questions they asked during the meetings, and other details of my experience in the setting. My reflective questions, comments, and concerns, in addition to ideas and connections that I was making about what I thought I was learning, were recorded in the field notes as “observer comments” and they appear throughout.

**Interviews**

After a few months of collecting data utilizing these observational methods, I realized that I needed to understand how the design participants were making meaning of the program design on a deeper, more personal level. I sought out individuals for interviews while I continued to attend scheduled meetings and all day retreats. For the interviews, although I utilized a structured guide of interview questions to begin, I tried to maintain the fidelity of research methods by allowing each interviewee to direct the
content of the interview and side conversations. Detailed, descriptive questions are “inconsistent with the emergent nature of qualitative research in general and grounded theory methods in particular” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 30). I encouraged each participant to elaborate on topics and issues that they initiated and I followed up with more in-depth questions as I sought to more fully understand their perspectives. The interviews allowed participants to share their experiences, observations, understandings, and stories in private, without the public stage of the larger group meetings. The in-depth interviews also allowed them the space and time to reflect upon their understandings and experiences. To ensure that a variety of perspectives were included, I utilized purposeful sampling (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003) by interviewing both the special and general education faculty who were involved in the planning meetings and responsible for the report to the grantors.

Participant interviews spanned a time period from May 2015 to August 2015. My loosely-structured interview protocol was reviewed and approved by my advisor and the IRB. Interviewees read and signed the IRB approved letter of consent I created (See Appendix B). All requests for interviews were granted. Following each interview, I transcribed the interviews word for word. I learned that even though transcribing is a tedious process, it is also personally invaluable for researchers. I heard the participants’ voices, articulating their perspectives, as they played and re-played, both as a recording on the tape and in my mind. With each re-play, I began to hear new things, which ultimately allowed me to more fully understand how they experienced the process of program design and their beliefs on the value of program merger.
The length of time spent in the observations of meetings, reading over the group’s documentation, the multiple perspectives of participants, and the breadth of methods used in collecting data, reduces the likelihood that I am misinterpreting my participants’ perspectives through the process of “using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, [and] verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (Stake, 2000, p. 443). One of the challenges I encountered in this project was the representation of the data, in particular, related to beliefs about inclusive educational practices and program efforts. This was a challenge because these beliefs stir cultural discourses ignite passion and emotion. In teacher education there are cultural discourses, policies, and procedures; thus, I tried not to judge what participants said about disability or what special or general educators needed in their training as offensive, but instead as reflective of larger cultural discourses. However, I also believe that faculty have agency to interrogate their own assumptions. I believe that whatever has been socially constructed, has the power to be de-constructed and ultimately re-constructed given new perspectives and value.

**Data Analysis**

When I began the analysis, I asked the following questions of the data: What is the main issue or problem? What idea keeps coming up? (Strauss & Corgin, 1998, p. 119). To answer my own questions, I wrote sentences or phrases that captured the overall story being told by each overarching theme. Because I used grounded theory methodology to analyze the case study, theories emerged from the data rather than being hypothesized prior to data (Charmaz, 2006). Data collection, coding, and analysis were occurring simultaneously. This process is common in grounded theory development,
beginning with the first document read and the first interview conducted (Charmaz, 2006). This grounded theory methodology study looked to develop theory in teacher education reform where the research is somewhat limited on program design, as well as the experiences of the design team. Theories were generated through the exploration of the emerging concepts in the data and their interrelationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Therefore, the study’s purpose was to develop practical theories in the area of teacher education reform.

Data was systematically analyzed to identify “emerging themes and categories” and used a “constant comparison” method to code for more complete interpretation and analysis using the following steps (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Patton, 2001; Baxter & Jack, 2008). I wrote extensive field notes in a word document; I printed each set and organized them into binders. Within each binder, there are sections divided by topics from the online portal the participants utilized in establishing the program design for the grantors. The binder also contains all interview transcripts. During the initial stages of data collection, I tried to capture everything I saw and heard. During those first observation meetings, I was able to make a preliminary list of codes and potential interview questions.

As I completed the observations of meetings and began interviewing, I was able to build on my questions and add more inquiries. Both tasks, data collection and analysis, became more concentrated in the process of “Delimiting the theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 109). This sort of data analysis can best be described as the constant comparative method, where “analysis and data collection [occur] in a pulsating fashion”
(Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 66). As I continued collecting data, I revised my coding scheme into a first set of codes, and then additional codes and I sought to understand how the data fit or failed-to-fit the categories that I constructed in understanding the social processes and relationships at work in this setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Some of the categories I constructed myself (e.g. collaboration, constructivism, behaviorism, academic freedom, etc.) while others I abstracted from the language used by participants (e.g. time, funders, grant, guiding principles, etc.).

Once the interview transcripts were complete, I began a complete read-through of the field notes and interview transcripts, making notes in the margins reflecting the themes of each line and paragraph. After finding multiple categories and utilizing several codes, I was able to condense the data into manageable categories that I would divide and connect the information. Some of the first set of codes I have in the margins of my interviews included topics like beliefs, collaborating, grants, money, time, friends, frustrations, etc. With a large amount of codes and themes, I needed to place them in more manageable contexts.

I created categorical tables to divide the comments from the participants related to the categories. Following the final complete read-through, I began inserting the excerpts of coded data into two categorical tables focused on my two research questions. Now that all my data was divided into the experiences the faculty had in the program design, I then focused on the two areas and worked on dividing those two areas into more manageable parts as well. The first research question related to the team’s experiences. I categorized those into three areas. The second research question regarding the team’s
challenges I was able to sort into two areas of experiences (See Figure 1) and challenges (See Figure 2). This process focused the data into organized and manageable parts whereby I could more easily search for patterns and begin to interpret what these data meant. Once I narrowed down to five main findings, I went back to the transcribed interviews and connected the original coding to labels F1, F2 and so on to link my data more readily to my findings (See Figure 2). What eventually emerged was the realization of the discourses about how to work collectively within a program design to prepare future educators while experiencing and working within university structures, procedures, and practices.

Figure 1. Experiences
Figure 2: Challenges

- time and money
- faculty buy-in, structures as barriers

Challenges

Figure 3: Coding Sample

Finding 1: First the framework or shared vision had to be established for the group to move forward.

Finding 2: The group had to collaborate to create the framework and make progress in design.

Finding 3: The group developed bonds and friendships during the process.

Finding 4: Faculty share and outside consultants observe that there is inherent department resistance to program merger.

Finding 5: Time and money always an issue, and the restrictions by the grantors.
Trustworthiness

In using grounded theory, I knew that I needed to focus on concepts of verification or trustworthiness. The constant comparative method and theoretical sampling helped with the verification of the developing theories because throughout the study, I engaged in a joint process of data collection, coding, and analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Sources of trust in grounded theory address four criteria: fit, relevance, work, and modifiability. According to Glaser (1998), “Fit is another word for validity…does the concept represent the pattern of data it purports to denote? This is the beginning functional requirement of relating theory to data” (p. 236). The data from this study fit well with the research questions that focused on generating categories and concepts from a comprehensive program reform. I enlisted the support of a peer reviewer in the open coding phase of the data analysis. I had placed the various emerging themes into categories. My peer reviewer and I then reviewed the emerging themes and categories together. We sought to identify categories and sub-categories that best represented the data.

Prior to the inception of this study, as a teacher researcher, I held a few assumptions. These assumptions first surround my overall philosophical beliefs that inclusive education is beneficial for all learners. It is my contention that students with disabilities learn best in classroom settings with their general education peers (Causton-Theoharis & Theoharis, 2008; Peterson & Hittie, 2002) and I recognize that the law has deemed that special education services are portable services that can be brought directly to individual children (Causton-Theoharis, J. (2009). I also draw my philosophies and,
therefore, my assumptions from a Disability Studies perspective in which my interest, like other scholars in the fields of disability studies (DS) and disability studies in education (DSE), are similar to other critical traditions. With this view, I endeavor to unravel the “fallacy of human typicality” exposing the “values-laden processes through which ‘disability’ constructs ‘ability,’ ‘Black’ instantiates the privilege of ‘White,’ female becomes the neutered male, and so on. Discerning the ideologies of difference that ultimately boil down to distinguishing the normal and acceptable from the abnormal, and hence unacceptable, is relevant to understanding common bases for exclusion” (Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor, & Valle, 2011, p. 2123).

From this perspective, I consider the pursuit of educational and social justice in teacher education courses as essential components to coursework to promote justice, equality, democracy and freedom in a critical educational discourse. However; “(dis)ability is long overdue to be a conversation among critical theorists, pedagogues, and educationalists who fail to recognize disability as a meaningful category of oppression” (Ware, 2001, p. 112). The silence on issues related to differing abilities confirms the typical societal immersion of cultural stereotypes related to disability.

Due to my philosophical standpoints on Disability Studies and Inclusion, approaching this research was challenging based on the assumptions that merging general and special education programs to prepare teachers is not only a social justice issue but merging programs could be done so with just time, dedication and collaboration. My other assumption going into this research surrounding my philosophies and somewhat negative experiences with a select few special educators led me to assume that those in
special education were the individuals against program merging and potentially viewed students with disabilities only from a medical, deficit model (Siebers, 2011). These assumptions will be further discussed in my findings and conclusions.

**Summary**

In summary, I began this chapter by revealing the study participants and my entry into the field. It was my desire to explore the idea of a program merger of special and general teacher education programs and to engage in a study of the design process. A design team presented itself as an opportune time to interact with the group in a case study approach based on grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). My background, personally and professionally, was important to review to explain my connections to the questions I positioned for the research. I reviewed the ethnographic methods and procedures I employed as well as the data collection procedures and assumptions I held prior to the start of the study. I also shared the purpose of the three interviews I collected from Sunshine University, an example of merged program in the departments of general and special education. I explained the purpose of these interviews were used to provide a comparison of my data (Stake, 2000). Finally, in this chapter I provided the steps I followed to analyze the large amounts of data I acquired from the study. I explained how the use of grounded theory methodology to analyze the case study provided me an in-depth look at the data that I will describe in detail in Chapter Four.
Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings

Overview

Within this chapter I examine the findings from this investigation. I will begin with a discussion of what the data analysis revealed. I explore the ways in which the study participants discussed program design. Through their discussions, they reveal the ways in which they view how teachers could be prepared to meet diverse learning needs. These discussions highlight some of the ways in which faculty view their teaching programs, the value of them and their philosophies.

The primary focus of this case study was to explore an education team‘s experience with a program design process conducted in a higher education institution. A secondary purpose was to examine the collaborative effort of faculty and administration during the process. As the researcher, I kept the following audiences in mind throughout the process: teacher preparation education administrators and faculty who may consider a program design integrating the departments of special and general education into a merged program design; and individuals interested in gaining insight related to organizational change.

Data were collected and analyzed to answer these questions:

- How did the faculty in both general and special education departments describe their experiences in a program design process?
What challenges did the faculty encounter during the program design process?

As noted in Chapter 3, the data collection techniques included document analysis, observations of program reform meetings and in-depth interviewing. Document analysis conducted during the study included the online portal documents and syllabi the faculty team utilized to create a dual license program. Although the interviews were my primary data source, I used the documentation and meeting observations to confirm my findings through data triangulation (Stake, 2000). The quotes included in this results section are primarily taken from the interviewees’ responses and a few from my meeting notes. Through my coding and analysis, I developed five major findings in my study that answered my research questions. My first three findings answered my first research question. Finding one, a collectively shared guiding vision for the program design was a strong foundation for the merged program design process; finding two, collaboration was a key factor in the process to program design; and finding three, a sense of community and connectedness appeared to strengthen the program design process. The other two findings answered my second research question about the challenges faced by the team. Finding four, faculty buy-in of a possible program merger, as well as organizational structures were recognized as potential challenges to the program design process and finally, the availability of time and resources were additional challenges the team faced.

List of Findings

As a result of selective coding, five findings were identified:
**Finding 1:** A collectively shared guiding vision for the program design was a strong foundation for the merged program design process.

**Finding 2:** Collaboration was a key factor in the process to program design.

**Finding 3:** A sense of community and connectedness strengthened the program design process.

**Finding 4:** Faculty buy-in of a program merger and organizational structures were recognized as potential challenges to any future implementation.

**Finding 5:** Availability of time and resources served as challenges to the program design process.

The five findings are supported by data collected primarily from the case study team documentation, meeting observations and interviews of the six program team members. In addition to the six faculty in the case study, three additional interviews from Sunshine University, an existing merged program model, will be presented to serve as way of comparing the findings of the data. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the anonymity of the participants.

To provide clarification, an “SE” or “GE” will follow each interviewee pseudonym to indicate the department they are from, special education (SE) or general education (GE). The consultants for the program design noted that each member of the faculty has research areas and talents that contributed to the project, as evidenced by his or her curriculum vitaeas outlined in the Final Report. The program evaluator further recognized that the project faculty were “very well versed in the standards of their respective professional organizations and of the state, so the knowledge base in this
regard was deep and varied” (Katz, et al., 2015, p. 18). Before sharing the findings, the team’s experiences and research interests detailed in the Final Report are worth including to provide context in the case study (Katz, et al., 2015).

The Team

The principal investigator (PI) Pat is a professor in early childhood education. Her areas of teaching, scholarship and service are in early childhood education, early childhood special education, inclusive education, language issues within the early years and relationships between families, schools and communities. She has over two decades of academic appointments in both general and special education teacher programs where she has played leadership roles in preparing teachers to address students of all exceptionalities and from diverse cultural, linguistic, and social economic backgrounds. She has been recognized by state departments of education for her leadership in early childhood education. Pat’s contribution to the team was piloting new content and strategies in existing courses, helped team members make conceptual connections across content areas, monitored the budget, wrote the monthly reports, supervised the graduate assistant, and participated in calls and conferences and all team meetings and related activities.

The co-investigator Sherry is an associate professor in education. Her research explores the nature of emergent bilingualism and biliteracy in early childhood; instructional practices and educational policies that support emergent bilingual children’s language, literacy, and content learning in general and bilingual education classrooms; and faculty-initiated reform efforts toward culturally- and linguistically-sustaining
teacher education. She has collaborated with colleagues, as well as local and national partners, on two large-scale teacher education curriculum restructuring projects at her previous institutions. She led a faculty learning community focused on infusing attention to the needs of English learners throughout all aspects of a five-year, preservice teacher education program. At a different university, she served as core faculty on a five-year grant-funded teacher education curriculum restructuring effort focused on preparing highly qualified preservice (general education) teachers for inclusive classrooms.

Sherry’s contributions to the team included her collaboration with the team members in coordinating project events and meetings, she provided guidance in the development of the guiding principles and the incorporation of culturally- and linguistically-responsive content across the program. She co-led the development and revisions of courses, she contributed to syllabus revisions, and participated in grantees calls and conferences and all team meetings and related activities.

Sara a professor in special education had a contribution to the team in her experiences with special educational matters. Her research examines the effectiveness of instructional practices designed to improve outcomes for youth with high-incidence disabilities. Specifically, she studies interventions designed to improve students’ self-determination (e.g., goal-setting, self-awareness, self-management, self-advocacy), their academic skills (particularly in reading and written expression), and, where possible, both self-determination and academic skills simultaneously. She has published numerous journal articles in these areas. Sara teaches courses that focus on assessment and intervention for children and youth with high-incidence disabilities. She has nine years of
experience teaching secondary students with a range of disabilities in urban, rural, and suburban settings and she has been involved in teacher training since 2000. Sara participated in the program design through her efforts in coordinating project events and meetings, led or co-led the development and revisions of two courses and she contributed to syllabus revisions for several other courses. Sara also participated in grantee calls and conferences and team meetings and related activities.

Amber is a Senior Lecturer in special education and teaches numerous courses within the mild to moderate and moderate to intensive licensure programs. She also coordinates student teaching and elementary field experiences for the mild to moderate preservice candidates. Amber was a teacher in various settings for students with mild to moderate and moderate to intensive disabilities across several grade levels. She has co-authored grant proposals and managing national and state grant projects. Her research interests include curriculum development for transition-age youth with disabilities, reading interventions for high school students with learning disabilities, and preservice teacher preparation and evaluation. Amber’s participation included contributions to course design, conferences and all team meetings and related activities.

Rose, a professor in special education, has over a decade of teacher preparation experience to contribute to the group. Her research explores methods for improving long-term outcomes for students with low-incidence disabilities. Specifically, she studies how technology can be used to teach new skills, and how preferences can be identified and used with students with no formal means of communication. She has published regularly in these areas and has been awarded several grants focused on using video
prompting to teach new skills. Rose teaches courses that focus on teaching children with no formal communication system how to communicate with others, and on the assessment and intervention for children and youth with low-incidence disabilities. Rose supported the team’s restructuring efforts by attending meetings and other events, contributed to the development and implementation of the project’s guiding principles and shared themes, contributed to all syllabus revisions, participated in conferences and all team meetings and related activities.

Eugene is assistant professor in world language, general education. He has taught at the elementary, middle school, high school, and university levels in the United States and France. His research interests include classroom-based performance assessment, functional linguistics in foreign language teaching and learning, and high-leverage teaching practices in foreign language teacher preparation. Eugene participated in the team’s restructuring efforts by course syllabi design, piloting new content and strategies, such as the integration of Universal Design of Learning and Funds of Knowledge within his coursework, and presenting in team members’ courses. Eugene also participated in conferences and all team meetings and related activities. It is through these individual strengths and contributions the faculty listed above began the process of trying to clarify the purpose and vision to the program design (Katz, et al., 2015).

**Finding One**

*A collectively shared guiding vision for the program design was a strong foundation for the merged program design process.*
Reform groups offer a number of reasons for their interest in program change and integration in preparing teachers; however, the “underlying reason is their belief in high quality teaching and teacher education” (Bondy & Ross, 2005, p. 20). The case study team's participation was all voluntary. Although each member had various reasons for participating, the team shared reasons why, such as supporting teachers’ knowledge, skills and dispositions in a program design; their interest in collaboration to develop more effective programming; contributing to strengthening the general education program to meet diverse needs; and being part of program change.

Once the team began meeting, according to the Final Report (Katz, et al., 2015), the group developed guiding principles (See Appendix D). The activities that helped accomplish the creation of the principles included discussions across the leadership team that met consistently at the start of the project. The outside consultants recounted “the openness with which the team was willing to engage in discussions and debate issues, the input from varied groups, and the decision to organize the principles and themes to create a sense of their importance and a focus for ongoing discussion of how these principles and themes appeared and addressed across the curriculum” (Katz, et al., 2015, p. 18). The principles the team developed became a shared vision for the program as they were used to consistently direct the courses the faculty designed as well as a focus of conversations during the seven case study team meetings in May and June of 2015.

A key factor contributing to the program team process was this collectively shared guiding vision. According to Costa and Kallick (1995) a shared vision is the description of what a team would like to achieve and is intended to serve as a clear guide
for choosing current and future courses of action. The faculty team put forth its shared vision in the form of specific guiding principles that were co-constructed early in the design process and were to be used in all of the courses designed by the team (See Appendix D). Through the development of five guiding principles, the faculty team was able to focus its efforts on the common goal of improving educational outcomes for the traditionally marginalized students.

**Guiding Principles**

The challenge facing the team members was to develop a plan that reflected the important commitments that the group developed. The guiding principles and program themes were created as the focus, tying the courses together in specific, meaningful ways for all involved in the program design. According to three of the team members, the guiding principles were necessary for them to begin the process of identifying the educational goals for the program and helped guide them in determining what future students need in a dual-license program.

My entrance into the program design development was after the guiding principles were already created, therefore I was unable to witness how the team was able to negotiate the wording of these five statements. Three of the faculty members shared that the outside consultants were instrumental in guiding them in the design of the principles. The principles were co-constructed among the six faculty and they were to serve as a guideline in the course design.

As part of the design they were developing, the team all agreed that the guiding principles were to be used in all course syllabi for the new program. In a review of the
artifacts of the online storage shed, all of the course syllabi from the program design had the guiding principles listed. According to the interviewees, each of the principles utilized were phrased in ways in which the entire team could agree upon them (Data Collection Tool, May 2015). Reflected in my meeting notes, the principles were based on concepts that teachers should have to be prepared to teach and had to be included in all course syllabi. For instance, the first principle reflects the recognition of diversity within students and that teachers should recognize that diverse students come to schools with resources that are important for learning. One of the ways this first principle was reflected in the data was the inclusion of Funds of Knowledge in some coursework.

The second principle indicated that teachers recognize the uniqueness of each student and the responsive approach needed to meet the individual needs of every student. Principle three mentions the idea that inclusive education broadens access to students that might be typically excluded. Although inclusion is mentioned here, the idea of “full inclusion” where students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom, is not discussed in the data. This will be examined further in more detail later.

The fourth principle discussed the importance of teachers building relationships with families requiring cultural and personal sensitivity, perseverance, and flexibility. And finally, the fifth principle examined what it meant to be a responsive teacher, aware of personal biases and assumptions and that teachers need to recognize and appreciate diversity. This particular principle was the topic of a somewhat contentious argument during one of my field observations, as I will discuss in detail later in this chapter.
An integral part of the team's efforts was to utilize outside subcontractors including an evaluator, a consultant, and two national advisors to serve in their respective roles. According to the evaluator in her final report: “the team has developed a strong conceptual framework and common themes and concepts that thread throughout the design, which has the capacity to provide a rich and sound program experience for candidates” (Katz, et al., 2015, p. 26). This was an important resource for the project.

In the program meetings I observed, my recorded data collection notes often indicated the comments from team members referring back to the guiding principles and the awareness of their respective program expectations. I observed seven different meetings, and in each meeting various team members discussed the principles and the consensus of what students should be able to come out of the program and be prepared to do.

The case study group found through their meetings and on-going discussions there was much they shared in common than differently; and this discovery of compatibility propelled the group into collaborative efforts. Sara (SE) stated, “Well I think what's worked really well is just the process we've gone through to get on the same page, and to develop the guiding principles. And I think having the expert come in when they came in and were here in person, kind of served as that person who is kind of in between those worlds... objective” [Interview #4, lines 121-124]. She went on to say, “A lot of times we used different language to talk about the same things... but regardless if your practices beliefs and philosophy and all that stuff are different, the goal is still the same. I believe that we're all going in the same goal in mind of helping kids” [Interview #4, lines 205-208]. In one particular meeting, this language differential was evident
when a special education team member laughed about the use of “socio-cultural” as a pedagogical theory. She said, “What does that even mean?” (Data Collection Tool, May 5, 2015). This was further reflected in the Final Report as the team members acknowledged they “represent a range of orientations: behavioral, sociocultural, socio-constructivist, and sociolinguistic” (Katz, et al., 2015, p. 6). The varying orientations could have presented challenges in the ways in which teaching and learning were discussed. Three of the interviewees shared that the outside consultants were helpful and bringing the team to a point where those different theoretical orientations did not impede the team’s progress in designing the program.

In her interview, Sara (SE) mentioned an experience with one of the evaluators stating that, “She helped us to pull together our guiding principles.” [Interview #3, lines 75-76]. She went on to say:

At the first meeting with (the consultant), I think until that point we had been sort of struggling along…we all seem to be getting along pretty well, we were really not sure the steps needed to be, they were vague early on. And then (evaluator) came the first time and some of the conversations were ‘Ok you're talking about one thing, and this is what I believe. And so how do we bring those two things together?’ And you know (the consultant) said ‘Ok you could both believe those things because they overlap. What is it about those things you could use, that you all agree with?’ Some of this has come back around and come from the last couple of meetings saying I'm not willing to go that far. Because as soon as we go that far, you're breaking what I believe. So we have to be flexible and work
together, but you can’t agree to something you're opposed to. (The evaluator) really helped us to get on that. [Interview #3, lines 76-85]

These statements came following a meeting in which there were somewhat tension filled discussions related to the principles. In the quote above, Sara (SE) pointed out that some of the topics came “back around” and she was “not willing to go that far.” She was referring to a conversation the team had regarding the statements of an outside consultant indicating the group may need to revisit the guiding principles to be more specific on the fifth guiding principle. This particular consultant stated that there was a risk in the use of “personal biases.” The consultant was concerned that this principle might dilute the message to future educators. He stated the language was more aligned with intercultural education perspectives and that the message to teachers should not be that they do not see differences; rather, that teachers acknowledge differences. This conversation troubled some of the faculty in the meeting. A few of the members were adamant that the principles did not need to be re-worded and that if they rephrased that principle it might contradict what they believe. For example, Sara (SE) stated clearly in the meeting on May 19, 2015, “It sounds as if he is wanting me to acknowledge that disability is a social construction and no, I don’t believe that. Disability is not socially constructed. You are either disabled or you are not” (Data Collection Tool, May 2015). This conversation engaged the topic of how conceptions for learning, disability and ability are being conceptualized as they design a program. The notes from the outside consultant indicated the principles revealed separations between ability. For instance, bilingual students are considered from the “normal” group and the case study team should consider focusing on
assumptions in the program design that advantage some and disadvantage others. This was not a concept some of the team members were open to, as revealed in Sara’s (SE) meeting statements and interview quotes. The faculty chose to retain their agreed upon guiding principles and in this meeting some expressed they “were already a just compromise to what the members would all agree with” (Data Collection Tool, May 19, 2015).

Through the development of the guiding principles, all six of the team members shared that their beliefs about special education and inclusion did not change. However, Amber (SE) was clear to point out that although the project did not cause her to change her beliefs about special education and inclusion, one of the high points of the project was realizing the two departments of general and special education “don't really have opinions that are very different related to those topics either.” [Interview #2, lines 141-142]. In the interview with the team leader, she echoed the others’ sentiments that “We're not forcing anybody to do anything, to think a certain way. The guiding principles were really helpful because it said ok, you know what, we are on the same page… it’s what we can live with.” [Interview #1, lines 244-246].

The strategy of designing these shared guiding principles and shared themes seemed to help the team move forward in determining the priorities they wanted preservice teachers to have when they graduated from the potential new program. Five of the six interviewees in the program team commented how the shared guiding vision was essential to their further planning process and collaboration. Also, the members of the team all seemed to be in agreement during the planning meetings I observed that the
outside consultants and “support” team provided concrete strategies for creating the principles and shared themes explicit throughout the program. For instance, the members of the team utilized the guiding principles on each of the syllabi they designed and having shared assignments was important to reflect the principles and themes (Katz, et al., 2015). The principles anchored the work of the team members. The team members discussed in the meetings ways to assure that the guiding principles were threaded throughout their work of the program design (Data Collection Tool, May 2015). As the program design progressed, they continued to draw upon the guiding principles as they related both to the emerging content and clinical experiences for courses the faculty were designing (Katz, et al., 2015).

Overall, the work on the guiding principles, according to the interviewees, was critical to the progress of the program design because it provided a shared understanding between the faculty team members. It revealed some of the most fundamental commitments that not only guided the program, but would also guide the recruitment of candidates and the practicing teachers who would mentor them, if the program were to be implemented. Based on the interviews, the guiding principles provided a shared anchor for deliberations with faculty members beyond the leadership team. In other words, the principles were important to how the new program would be conceptualized and how that conceptualization might be communicated to all stakeholders central to the project and potential buy-in by faculty in both departments. This will be explored further in finding four as a challenge as well.
Finding Two

Collaboration was a key factor in the process to program design.

Friend and Cook (2000) identify aspects of successful collaboration including mutual goals, shared responsibility in decision-making, shared resources and accountability, and valuing of personal interactions. In a search for topics related to “collaboration in teaching,” over 90,000 books and articles were found in the college library system. Beyond the generally agreed-on belief that collaboration between general and special education is a good direction in which to take, (Blanton & Pugach, 2011) the word is often used broadly, implying that collaboration happens when individuals are working together. This expansive use of the term easily gives the impression that collaboration is an easy and natural process, when the opposite is true (Friend, 2000). Collaboration is hard work.

Collaboration of the case study team

Collaboration in this case study group was not only observed in various situations, it was referred to by five of the six interviewees at least two or more times in a context that collaborating was a benefit to the program design. Pat (GE), the principal investigator of the grant team and facilitator of the group meetings, indicated the group met a lot the first year, typically about every two weeks. Based on several meeting observations and interviews with the case study team, all six team members agreed that collaboration with each other to design the program was essential but did require time and effort. They recognized that if it were not for the grant opportunity, the two departments might not otherwise have the chance to connect and share ideas and promote
connections of the two fields. Three of the interviewees stated that they came into the collective process with an appreciation for the expertise of the other team members to contribute to the program design. For instance, Pat (GE), shared in her interview, “I very much support collaboration. I think they're (special educators) great people, they have great skills. You know I think I came in with that kind of perspective.” [Interview #1, lines 225-227] Likewise, Sherry (GE), from general education, went into the collaborative process to focus her efforts on “supporting the team with all of their specializations they are weaving in.” [Interview #2, line 126] Educators like Amber (SE) (SE), were especially excited about the opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. She shared:

I've always had a personal interest in effectively collaborating and co-teaching in general education. Part of the reason I’m interested in it is because I feel like it's something not done very well in the schools, and that was something I was passionate about when I was a teacher figuring out the best ways to collaborate and co-teach with the general education teachers that I was working with.

[Interview #3, lines 19, 23-25]

All six of the team members recognized that a significant amount of collaboration across the two departments was needed to accomplish the task of designing a program that would prepare high quality teachers with the ultimate goal of creating a program to address achievement gaps of diverse learners by strengthening general educators. Amber (SE) (SE) shared, “I certainly think it's possible to prepare high quality teachers in both general education and special education. But it requires a huge amount of collaboration.”
[Interview #5, lines 139-140] Eugene (GE) was eager for the chance to collaborate with colleagues because of previous positive experiences in collaborative environments. He shared, “Where I taught, everyone was part of a grade level collaborative planning team, and everything was interdisciplinary. The special education teacher was part of the team, and if there wasn't one for each grade level, they moved around to the team meetings. They knew the curriculum, they knew we needed support. I mean, it wasn't always the best support, but at least everyone was talking.” [Interview #6, lines 102-106]

Collaboration was not described by any of the faculty in any negative terms; rather, they shared they were “open to it,” “wanted to collaborate,” and “needed more collaboration” [Interviews #3, #5 and #6]. The team met various times over several months, often for entire days. The seven meetings I observed typically lasted 5-6 hours each date. Members of the faculty each contributed to the online resource storage shed and several members had outside meetings in pairs to work on different aspects of the program (Data Collection Tools, May 2015). All of these examples demonstrate the amount of time and effort in this collaborative process.

Various models of collaboration took place in the seven meeting observations. In all seven of the meeting observations, I observed whole group discussions, pairs of faculty working on syllabi for courses and side conversations related to their own departments. For instance, in all of my data collection notes, I have indicated how the team members were interacting during that particular meeting. Some examples include: “Rose (SE) is working on the final report and Pat (GE) and Amber (SE) (SE) are working on the syllabus for their shared course; entire group is discussing guiding principles; etc.”
For some meetings, the same pairs worked together and in other meetings a different pair of faculty were working on a part of the design. From my notes, I indicated over the length of the meetings a balance of parallel working on tasks, pairs interacting regarding a syllabus, or the entire group in conversation.

**Co-teaching or co-planning**

Although Sherry (GE) from general education was concerned about how the program would actually work in implementation, she stated, “What’s worked well is we have had the opportunities to have these conversations.” [Interview #2, lines 173-175] Amber (SE) agreed with Sherry (GE) stating, “Doing a full implementation would be ideal and getting funding would be ideal. But I would say, at a minimum, I definitely foresee us co-teaching some of these courses and doing more together to make even small changes across our programs to reflect this collaboration.” [Interview #3, lines 110-114]

The topic of co-teaching and co-planning were mentioned in four of the six interviews. Co-Teaching is defined as two teachers or educators working together with groups of students, sharing the planning, organization, delivery, and assessment of instruction, as well as the physical space (Bacharach, Heck & Dank, 2004). Katz (1993) explains that “in an effort to meet the challenge of integrating more students with special education needs into general education classrooms” co-teaching has evolved as a potential response to this challenge. (p. 53). Co-planning and co-teaching provide an opportunity to rethink the relationship between general and special education teachers, particularly toward trends of more inclusive practices of education (Blanton & Pugach, 2011). Sara (SE) expressed through the collaborative process of the design team, she saw
a lot of opportunity to engage in co-teaching and co-planning in the future and in preparing preservice teachers. She stated:

I feel like we have to continue to have continuum of services, and so I do believe that we can do a lot with co-teaching and co-planning and I think there's a lot of promise there especially if we train people in both programs from the beginning to do that. I mean, our teachers aren’t trained to co-teach and then they go out and there's nobody who can. Teachers aren't being trained to co-teach, so I think that there's a lot of opportunity to train both general and special education teachers to co-teach... we'd be able to do a lot more effective inclusion. [Interview #4, lines 174-179]

Amber (SE) (SE) claims she foresees the faculty involved in this project co-teaching some of the designed courses in the future. Likewise, Eugene (GE) experienced co-teaching in some of his earlier teaching opportunities and he believed it worked well to meet a variety of student needs.

**Middle ground**

Determining shared goals and focusing on collaborative reform efforts were necessary to engage in program design. This notion of “meeting somewhere in the middle” philosophically was a re-occurrence in the interview data. The middle ground, or “a standpoint or area midway between extreme or opposing positions, options, or objectives” according to Webster’s Dictionary was an important aspect to embrace in order to move forward in the collaboration. The faculty identified the opposing positions as often a source of tension in coming together, and in some instances, they believed to
be the reason some faculty would either not participate or left the reform group early on. Sherry (GE), in general education, referred to the concept of “camps” in her statement regarding those tensions of opposing philosophies:

It is not an easy process or a clear cut clean process…it’s a struggle and sometimes a tension-filled process, I don’t want it to seem like we are all coming together and all on the same page. It takes a lot of conversations, but it is a continuing tension, because the reality of bringing people together who have various orientations toward their work and conceptualizations of how the world works and people learn is a challenge. The idea is not to change minds and bring people over to your camp, but to think about how to work side by side and to understand the contributions and how each of the perspectives allows you to see something differently. So the ability to come to the table and not necessarily change your perspective or outlook, but rather agree to consider how the different perspectives are going to show different things. [Interview #2, lines 134-151]

Pat (GE), agreed with the notion that although opinions could be expanded, no one was being asked to change his or her perspectives. She explained that in projects she has been involved in, as well as this grant project, they were trying to get people in both departments “to talk, get to know each other.” She said, “We're not forcing anybody to do anything, to think a certain way. The guiding principles were really helpful because it said ok, you know what, we are on the same page, and it is what we can live with.” [Interview #1, lines 244-246] However, it was indicated in two of the interviews that if the focus of the program design did not seem to meet in the middle, they may have been
less likely to want to collaborate. According to Sara (SE), the middle area between opposing positions, such as the theoretical orientations of special and general education departments, may have still been a deterrent for some faculty to engage in collaboration. Three faculty members shared in their interviews that faculty members not involved in the design team either left the group early or refused participation based on perspectives that were most likely too far removed from members of the team or the opposite department.

Rose (SE) felt that although the team disagreed on some points, they managed to work together. In her opinion, because not everyone stayed on the project, the faculty that remained might have more “middle of the road” viewpoints, whereas faculty outside of the group, might have views too far away from the beliefs of the team. Amber (SE) echoed Rose’s (SE) view: “There definitely wasn't resistance within our team, or at least the team that's sitting here. I can't speak for people that left (the group). But within this group, I think within this group there hasn’t been any. And I don't think in special education faculty there’s been any (resistance) because I think that special education wants to be at the table, and they want to be part of the conversation with things that are going on related to children with disabilities.” [Interview #3, lines 169-173]

Interestingly, to demonstrate a differing of philosophies, Sherry (GE) shared that the general education faculty would probably design a very different program if the two departments were coming from a constructivist or “critical orientation” like disability studies, who view disability as socially constructed. However, she explains, “That is not what our resources are; our resources are the personnel who are here. So we are trying to
build on the human capital who are here and also learn from each other and being open to new perspectives and how those perspectives might inform the work the students will be doing in the schools and with the children.” [Interview #2, 151-154]

Commonality of departments

Although in the beginning of the process there was a lot of dialogue and conversations about their backgrounds and philosophies, an important aspect of the collaborative experiences, according to several of the interviewees, was the realization the two departments shared more in common than they realized. Amber (SE) shared, “I suspected that was always the case. There really are a lot of similarities between what we're doing across our programs. So it was just a nice affirmation that we're really not that much different. I mean we are, we are different in some ways. But there are a lot of things within our programs that are similar.” [Interview #3, lines 59-62] She went on to say a challenge “of this project were the differing philosophies, but that we came together and with a lot of things on the same page. Ultimately we all want to do what is best for kids. How we get there might be a little bit different.” [Interview #3, lines 230-232]

When Rose (SE) was asked to elaborate on the differing philosophies, she said, “I remember some of the first meetings that we had some of the terms (others) would say something and I was like I don't even know what that word means. I don't even know what you're saying. You're talking about some kind of theory or pedagogy maybe. So some of our first meetings were like, I just need you to tell me what that means. And then we would say something and they would say wait, what's that?” [Interview #5, lines 70-74] A follow up question regarding how those discussions were negotiated, Rose (SE)
shared that after the first meeting with the outside consultant, the team was able to pull together the guiding principles and develop steps to determine the team's shared goals. The outside consultant brought together the team's discussions and beliefs, and stated everyone could maintain their beliefs because they overlap. Rose (SE) shared that the consultant enabled her to appreciate the need to be flexible and work together while knowing that she could not agree to something she was opposed to. [Interview #5, lines 75-85] Rose (SE) elaborated by stating:

We're in agreement on what's sound. And there is such a huge spectrum of what we believe is really broad. The way that I approach teaching and the way (others) approach teaching are different, and yet the goal is always the same. It really has been refreshing and validating to go to a group where I wouldn't totally do it that way, but I can see why what you are talking about would work. We started coming at it from opposing sides, and now we're approaching in the same direction even though we do things differently, we are the same working towards the goal. [Interview #5, lines 353-361]

Eugene (GE) also recognized that the two departments share a lot of concepts, but he also noted that philosophically and theoretically, there were some differences. He indicated, “I think our special education colleagues would do very clearly behaviorialists, they're interventionists, and that's different than the (general educators). But that's ok, I think it just takes a lot of talking, and then I think there are deeper beliefs and conflicts, perhaps, that would come to the surface if we were to fully do this.” [Interview #6, 130-135]

Further discussion on the potential faculty conflicts will be explored in finding four;
however, even though the team members maintained differing viewpoints in some areas, they were able to focus their energy on collaborating in ways that sustained the program design. Discovering a common ground was important to make progress in the design; however, it also seemed to establish positive working relationships among the team members.

### Finding Three

*A sense of community and connectedness strengthened the program design process.*

Community is a feeling of fellowship with others when sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals. According to Short (1992) there is power in establishing a strong collaborative learning environment. The power of collaborative dialogue and negotiating agendas with each other can lead to changes in teaching and in classrooms. Short (1992) contends “until teacher educators explore more fully how to personally connect our own models to our teaching, we will have a limited effect on changing teacher education or education in schools” (p. 41).

Community involves developing respectful relationships. The case study team began their journey creating an atmosphere of support, collegiality, and respect. A sense of community and connections among the faculty team became evident in the meeting observations and in the reflections of the interviews. According to the final report, these didactic relationships appeared to strengthen the program design process. In response to the question “what processes have worked best in the program design,” Amber (SE) replied she felt the most important part of the project was a lot of the dialogue the team had at the beginning and then “just being able to form these good relationships with
faculty in (general education). You know, I really hope we continue to do work with them in the future.” [Interview #3, lines 80-82] She later shared, “I've done a lot of grant work and the grant is over, the people you don't come in contact with every day, it is easy not to have those discussions post grant so it will be important for us to maintain some sort of a relationship. I mean, I think we've all just formed really good relationships. [Interview #3, lines 201-208] Amber (SE) seemed to indicate that it was the connections she made with these particular team members that fostered her sense of community with them, prompting her to want to collaborate and interact more in the future.

   Sara (SE), a special education colleague to Amber (SE), agreed by stating, “I feel like we built a really good bridge and I think we've made a really good team. I don't expect the project will end.” [Interview #5, lines 197-199] Sara (SE) explained that during her involvement in the project, she never felt she did not want to interact or collaborate with the team. She elaborated that she had been on other projects in education and would begrudgingly meet the others involved in the project. However, in the program design team, she felt positively toward meeting and working with everyone on the team.

   This connectedness seemed to be important for several reasons. The underlying philosophical divide that will be explored in finding three was a potential for challenging relationships. Pat (GE), explains, “I don't think, we didn't go in it like ‘well you think this, and we think that.’ We’ve just gotten to know each other and we like each other.” [Interview #1, line 43] Sara (SE) felt the same way regarding potential disagreements that “once we spent some time together, we could disagree on some points, but we
worked together.” [Interview #4, lines 198-199] Sara (SE) elaborated further that the established positive relationships produced a feeling of safety and comfort. She explained:

I think we all felt safe enough, and we all like each other. I joke around about the food budget and the social activities, but I think those things like going to happy hour actually got us to the point we like each other. And when you like each other, it's a lot harder to say I like you but I don't believe in anything you do. And that was a huge part of it. [Interview #4, lines 185-189]

**Safety and trust**

Like Sara (SE), Rose (SE) also mentioned security and comfort regarding the collaborative processes in the group. The notion that philosophical beliefs might be challenged seemed to dissipate when positive relationships were established. Rose (SE) explains:

I felt safe in this group. I felt safe in the way that if I don't agree, I know I can disagree with you and walk away. Whereas, even in my own program, I don't always feel safe. I will say something and leave feeling like I need to just fume, or felt bullied. I have never felt like that in this group. It's amazing that we have created a group of colleagues that when general education did a search for faculty, they included special education. I cannot tell you the last time that happened, that special education was invited to participate in activities explicitly for a (general education) position. We've started breaking down those walls. And when I'm talking, we may not agree, but let's figure it out. Let's have the conversations. To
have a group of colleagues that you feel safe with, is not always most common thing in academia. You get to a place where, and I feel like I can say anything in this group, and it would be ok. That's a really nice feeling to leave a project with.

[Interview #5, lines 333-346]

Three of the interviewees and the final report indicated that although the spectrum of what the team members believed was broad, “the team was in agreement on what is sound.” [Interviews #4, 5] Rose (SE) and Amber (SE) both shared statements regarding the notion that although they came into the project from opposing sides, the team was approaching the same direction. Even though they may do things differently, the team was on the “same page working toward the goal. Nobody dug their heels in and nobody was antagonistic.” [Interview #5, lines 354-355] Rose (SE) further reflected that “to go to a group where I wouldn't do it that way, but I can see why what you are talking about would work, that's lovely. [Interview #5, lines 352-362] Eugene (GE) shared similar observations and stated, “There was, overall, a lot of positive energy in the group.”

[Interview #6, line 214]

The outside evaluator of the group noted that there was a cohesiveness within the project leadership team based on the members’ evident “trustling, open relationships across general and special education; creating a safe space for difficult conversations; (and) developing an understanding of the unique role of an inclusive teacher education project” (Katz, et al., 2015, p. 26). The report went on to say “what this team did particularly well was to develop a set of working relationships that enabled the faculty leadership group to make consistent progress in one of the most difficult aspects of
teacher education redesign for inclusion, namely, working across general and special education” (Katz, et al., 2015, p. 27).

The evaluator further recognized a particular strength of this project was the team members' strong willingness to work across their various areas of expertise; maintaining an interest in doing so, and they demonstrated how they have learned from one another in terms of fundamental concepts that strengthen the preparation of teachers. It was further noted that although this team, made up of both special and general educators, was not likely to collaborate; “they used the project as a serious opportunity to forge new relationships that appear to have a real chance of being sustained over time” (Katz, et al., 2015, p. 27). Like some of the team members, the evaluator also used this term of safety and how the team created a space where they could securely talk about what they knew and how they integrated new knowledge into their thinking. The team spent a great deal of time and effort working on positive and supportive relationships and these feelings of fellowship match the definition of community.

**Finding Four**

*Faculty buy-in of a program merger and organizational structures were recognized as potential challenges to any future implementation.*

The faculty team in the design process faced several challenges and some that may have surfaced if the discrete programs of the university were to consider merging or creating a dual license program. First, the historical separation of the departments of special and general education are prevalent not only at the university of the case study team, but also a majority of universities in the country. The longstanding separation of
special and general education described in the literature review will be explored in more
detail from the responses of the team and how that separation impacted their experiences.
The theoretical orientations go beyond physical separation in the context of how
disability and diversity are discussed. The design team faculty also recognized
differences between special and general education regarding the focus each department
often had on disability and diversity. Although the separation of departments presents
potential challenges, the issues that the team experienced related to the bureaucracy
surrounding the grantors of the program design. I will describe a particular meeting that
was a turning point for the team members in their design process.

Faculty buy-in

In a literal sense, the words “buy-in” mean to purchase shares of something or to
buy ownership of something that is shared with the owners. However, in a figurative
sense of the phrase, it means to agree with or to accept an idea as worthwhile (Cambridge
Dictionary, retrieved February, 2016). In this discussion, faculty buy-in involves the
notion of the faculty outside of the design team agreeing with or accepting a program
merger and change. Although the team was working on a design for particular grantors,
they discussed implementation and the potential challenges they would have.

Sherry (GE) in general education explained her perception of the resistance to the
program implementation:

The resistance can take many forms, but one place of resistance is breaking down
the current structures that, for example, faculty don’t co-teach in ways that they
get credit for, and so we aren’t prevented from co-teaching. But it also doesn’t
mesh well with how current loads are distributed, so it will be more work, for no more compensation. But it matters more the time and the space to do things thoughtfully and do them well. So, with the current structures where co-teaching doesn’t equate or reflect or adjust your teaching load, I think that is going to be a point of resistance in terms of the structure and the infrastructure [Interview #2, lines 289-295]

Faculty within the departments of special and general education often come with different perspectives and need professional development and other supports to consider any program change (Blanton & Pugach, 2011). The team also anticipated potential changes that could more easily be accomplished within existing organizational structures. They were realistic about how to use the semester structure and the limitations of various summer sessions and came up with solutions that built on the goals of the project. For instance, at least three of the faculty members took the collaborative efforts of the design and restructured the courses they were already teaching based on the changes made in the program design. The other five team members shared how impressed they were that Eugene (GE) was using the topic of UDL already in his courses. Within this finding, the design team each discussed what they recognized as a historical separation of departments that would potentially create challenges to faculty buy-in.

Historical separation of departments

According to the final report of the case study group, at the beginning of the grant period, the project team encountered challenges in the “philosophical differences between the general education faculty and the special education faculty” (Katz, et al., 2015, p. 6).
Historically, special education and general education, both in the field at large and between the departments of the case study, approached education from different theoretical and philosophical backgrounds (Blanton 2011, 2007). The case study faculty, for instance, “represent a range of orientations: behavioral, sociocultural, socio-constructivist, and sociolinguistic” (Katz, et al., 2015, p. 6). In other words, prior to this case study, the special education and general education programs often had varying philosophical beliefs and engaged in minimal collaboration. The final report of the program design described the two departments of special and general education as previously not working together because of philosophical differences and disagreements around teaching practices. The report described the project as a groundbreaking opportunity that allowed for the programs to come to the table and discuss the shared goal of creating the most effective teachers who are prepared to teach all students. For the first time in nearly a decade, many of the faculty in these programs were ready, willing, and excited to work together and model effective collaboration between general education and special education experts (Katz, et al., 2015).

All six of the interviewees agreed that the opportunity to collaborate together brought the two departments together in ways that had not been accomplished much before. Amber (SE), as a special educator, explained she was very aware that historically in the field, as well as the university, within the field of special education and general education there have been two very different philosophies. She describes a very “ongoing war if you will, between behaviorist and a constructivist point of view” and she argues that “special education has more of a tendency to have a behavioral view.”
Amber (SE) further stated that each field maintaining only one point of view is limiting. “Historically,” she said “there has always been extremes, but I almost feel like special education is becoming modernized in the field. And that's one of the things I talk about in my classes with our undergrad students is that even though you're trained in a very behavioral point of view, in a behavioral approach you need to understand other people on your team that have been trained in other ways; you have to have those to really serve the kids the best you can.” [Interview #3, lines 155-161].

The limited collaborations that did take place at the institution prior to the case study team were often related to the mutual coursework such as introductory education courses and reading courses that students had to take in both programs. An interesting observation during one of the planning meetings was the discussion of coursework students had to take in both programs. For instance, it was shared the “special education students take a lot of (general education) coursework, but (general education) students take little to no special education coursework. It’s not required” (Data collection meeting, May 5, 2015). As Amber (SE) pointed out, “There is no reciprocity” (Data collection meeting, May 5, 2015). Amber (SE) in special education went on to say in her personal interview:

A lot of our conversations were centered on more about our philosophies and our backgrounds because special and general education have not really collaborated much in the past, ever. I mean, there was a point in time where special education was housed with them, but that was a very long time ago. So since that kind of
division, there hasn't been as much collaboration. There have been little pockets of collaboration, but not to the degree of redesigning an entire project that would eventually bring our programs together in a way, because it's a lot more permanent, a lot more structured. [Interview #3, lines 48-54]

Rose, also in special education, was likewise very aware of the division between special and general education. She expressed in the ten years she had been at the university, she was discouraged from people in her department to ever collaborate with faculty in general education. “That was the very clear message. So when you get into building this program with people that you know you’re not supposed to, there was this kind of mentality, you don't. I think we went into this project like, I'm going to put on my armor and I'm going to be ready, and we're just going to duke this out. And then, of course, you meet this group of people, and you're like, oh we can put the armor away. But I think we showed up a little like this, at least in my area.” [Interview #5, lines 56-63]

Eugene (GE) was surprised at his arrival to the university that the special and general education programs were in different departments and in different buildings. “There are barriers that are there already” he said, and “I know the spirit of this was to make some steps in taking down some of those barriers.” [Interview #6, lines 125-126]

However, in terms of removing the barriers to implementation, Pat (GE), recognized faculty buy-in as an obstacle because she shared “those are things you have to deal with. There's too many times where you look, where there has been programs designed and not implemented because everybody agrees on paper, until you start implementing.” [Interview #1, lines 300-302]
Special Education “does disability” and General Education “does diversity”

The separation between special and general educators not only appears in the distinction of theoretical orientations but various scholars contend there are also differences related to the ways in which diversity and disability is examined in both departments (Blanton, Florian, & Pugach, 2012; Hardman, 2009; Danforth & Gabel, 2006). For instance, in discrete programs, the separation of special and general education may impact the topics of diversity and disability. Special educators may regard diversity by addressing disability but choose not to address race, class, culture, or language (Pugach, 2005) whereas, general educators may not place disability within the larger context of diversity. Blanton, Florian, and Pugach (2012) consider it a “long overdue conversation among scholars from different diversity communities within teacher education to begin to think about what is needed if we are to advance teacher education that is responsive to the full range of diversity of students and that takes account of the multiple markers of identity that characterize individuals and groups of students, disability among them” (p. 235).

The gaps in diversity and disability awareness was observed by Pat (GE) as she shared, “The diversity part, the special education folks said we know there’s not enough diversity in our classes.” [Interview #1, lines 61-69] Pat (GE) further stated that they likewise realized the deficiency in general education. “We saw the problem, of general education, not having enough, you know capacity to really work with kids with special needs.” [Interview #1, lines 136-137] Rose (SE) agreed that her students “don’t have that high quality understanding of multicultural.” [Interview #5, 209-210] Amber (SE) in
special education believed a gap in the general education preparation was linked to the "classroom environment." She elaborated, “I think that is an area that special education candidates get a lot more instruction in versus candidates from general education programs. I think that even just some of the kind of behavioral things we have sprinkled in to our redesigned program we have supported candidates with things like that. So I would say that's probably, from my perspective, the biggest contribution that special education made in this project. I think we need all of these pieces.” [Interview #3, lines 214-224] Amber (SE) went on to describe contributions the general education philosophies added to her knowledge base related to cultural pedagogy and critical orientations, “That’s something that would be helpful for special education candidates to be exposed to. I get that the whole view that special education is very deficit driven, it really is, because it’s all about remediation, and how to work with them. So I think incorporating critical reflection in special education would be beneficial for our candidates.” [Interview #3, lines 234-244]

Four of the six team members indicated they recognized this difference in the focus of diversity as a focus in general education and disability in special education. They further acknowledged that these gaps also meant special education should focus more on diversity and general education to reflect on disability. The responses to interview questions revealed these gaps further in the number of times particular faculty mentioned diversity or disability when discussing differences in learners and program design. For instance, the general education faculty mentioned diversity 23 times, whereas disability was only mentioned four times among the three general educators.
However, the special education faculty discussed diversity only four times, but referred to disability 24 times (See Tables 5 and 6). These numbers indicate an interesting division between the topics of disability and diversity in the departments of special and general education and are recognized as a challenge the group had to face in the design process. As the team worked together in the design, they faced an even greater challenge during the process related to bureaucratic issues.

Table 4: Diversity vs. Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview #</th>
<th>Dept</th>
<th>Diversity Comments</th>
<th>Disability Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>2</td>
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Table 5: Overall Statements on Diversity and Disability

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<th># of comments from faculty</th>
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<th>Disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Educators</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Educators</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bureaucracy

Although there was support from the departments’ leadership, there were other structures in place between balancing the goals of the design with the reality of the bureaucracies within which such redesigns operate. The original grant proposal was initially presented to the team to create “an experimental program that aimed to better
prepare general educators to address the needs of students with disabilities” (Katz, et al., 2015, p. 15). The grant objectives were specifically clear on the following goals in the proposal for a program to be created that will enable general education teachers to be better prepared to:

a) Increase academic and social performance by collaborating with other professionals and families;
b) Decrease number of students referred to special education for evaluation because they will know how to implement inclusive practices such as UDL;
c) Thorough knowledge of laws and know how to advocate for children with disabilities and ELL;
d) Develop classroom based inquiry practices – so all children are participating and progressing;
e) Develop attitudes and practices of what it means to be equitable by meeting the individual and classroom needs of the students;
f) Meet the needs of children from all cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds;
g) Develop skills to implement formative assessments by using data from the ongoing performance of students, making adaptions.

With these goals in mind, the group set out to create an experimental program to do just that. Members of the case study team, within the context of the project, were able to draw on their scholarly expertise in their respective fields in achieving the conceptual and practical work of redesign. In general, the team demonstrated the knowledge about
the workings of the university and from the meeting observations and interview statements, they understood any challenges that they might have to be overcome to enact the program.

The team learned later on in the process that the intent of the grant was to develop a merged dual-licensure program in which all candidates would earn both a general and special education license. The team decided to shift its focus to accomplishing the dual license goal with an experimental 7–12 mild-moderate endorsement. More specifically, the team aimed to build a pathway program that would strengthen the general education program by better preparing general educators to teach diverse learners and set general education majors on a “pathway” to a special education license. In other words, students would achieve a teaching degree and initial licensure and could return to obtain the additional license in special education. Team members soon learned they had to work within the existing state grade bands and were limited to one model of a dual licensure and this did not include a pathway option, despite their advisors’ unanimous recommendations to build a pathway program.

“The Meeting”

The team’s frustration with the grantors was evident in all seven of the meeting data collection notes. Statements recorded included: “team members are frustrated” or “the team sounds angry with having to work within the parameters of the grantors” (Data Collection Tools, May 2015). A meeting took place from the grantors a few months after the team had already begun the collaborative process of designing the program. Based on the grant proposal, the team members believed they were charged with creating an
“experimental program design,” one in which the team could be creative and “think outside the box” as Sara (SE) phrased it. However, once the plan was presented to the grantors, it became clear that the design plan was not acceptable.

Five of the six faculty interviewed recall a reaction that surprised and in some cases angered the team members. Sara (SE) stated the grantors responded harshly to the team’s proposed program; the grantors were not pleased with the plan. The team members each expressed their shock and disbelief of the subsequent grantors’ reactions and treatment. Sara (SE) said “it felt like a power struggle. Like they were telling us we gave you this money, and now we’ve got you, and you’re our puppets to design a program we want” [Interview #4, lines 70-71]. Eugene (GE) in general education echoed that statement and said, “They were trying to shape the work into a package they wanted to see. It felt like there were forces from outside our space that didn’t trust us.” [Interview #6, lines 83-84] He shared the anger surrounded the issue of the pathway design that the team proposed.

Pat (GE) explained, “For the grant, we all have our own evaluators. And then we have all of our consultants. And all of our consultants were saying you have to do a pathway. You can't do this in a 15 month program. And so then we thought maybe we can do it if we just do 7-12, because originally we wanted to just do grades 7-12. Then we found out we couldn't do the 7-12.” [Interview #1, lines 95-98]

The team had to shift from a design that was based on facilitating a pathway for candidates into special education to a dual-license plan. The design the team created would enable all candidates to have a stronger base in special education, but allowing
only a smaller group to become licensed special educators through a pathway rather than a dual-licensure of all candidates. This was a source of frustration for each of the team members and one of the obstacles mentioned by all six members. “I think one of the most exciting parts of this grant initially was that we thought we were being tasked to do something creative and outside of the box” Amber (SE) in special education explained. “And when we proposed our project, we proposed a program that would license teachers in grades 7-12, so we were changing the grade bands. That was a very exciting part of the project, because it was innovative and creative and different. And when it was focused on just 7-12, at least the intervention piece, it made it more manageable to do it in a shorter amount of time. So once they determined that we could not design a project around that, I think that's when major shifts had to happen.” [Interview #3, lines 91-99] The grantors placed parameters on the group and for Eugene (GE) that was a source of contention. He shared, “It felt like they want to be the holders of the new idea and innovation.” [Interview #6, line 85]

The “shared enemy” as some faculty referred to the grantors was a challenge in the design process, but it was not insurmountable. The team faced these challenges and managed to create a program that was submitted to the grantors. The participants discussed the historical separation of the departments of special and general education, but they each expressed that the faculty buy-in or theoretical oppositions did not create an issue to the design process. However, the stipulations and structures of the grantors did create frustrating challenges for all of the design team members. One of the main reasons
the conditions of the grantors was particularly frustrating for the design team were the ways in which time restrictions were placed on the faculty.

**Finding Five**

*Availability of time and resources served as challenges to the program design process.*

The concept of “time” played an interesting role in the case study team process and more often it was a challenge to the program design process. Time can be considered from two varying points of interference for the case study team (See Figure 5). First, there is the consideration of the amount of time the collaborative process took to redesign the program surrounding the proposal. Meanwhile, there were also various perceptions of the acceptable amount of time spent in coursework and field experiences to adequately prepare teachers. For instance, the grantors instructed the team to create a program that students could obtain a dual license in 15 months. This time constraint distressed Rose (SE). She explained, “We train our teachers in two and a half years, and it feels like barely enough time. I think our teachers are excellent when they go out. But they are new and barely to the place where they're going to be successful. And they think we can get them an additional license in one and a half years?” [Interview #5, lines 272-276]

During the seven meeting observations, the topic of fitting in content was discussed at every single meeting. Phrases like “How can we fit what is needed in special education in the method block courses for general education?” or “There’s not enough time for that there” were repeatedly heard. Time spent in coursework and/or field experiences in the program design was of utmost concern. Research shows that time usage is probably the “single best documented predictor of student achievement across types of schools,
classes, student abilities, grade levels, and subject areas” (Vannest and Parker, 2010, p. 94). Thus, where time should be spent was a source of contention.

**Figure 4**

![Diagram showing time, amount of time the collaborative process takes to redesign teacher preparation programs, and various perceptions of an acceptable amount of time spent in coursework and field experiences to adequately prepare teachers.]

**Not enough time**

Creating a dual license in the amount of time students could achieve the degree was brought forth numerous times as “not doable.” The group decided to further narrow the focus with a goal of creating a dual licensure program for mild-moderate intervention specialist and world language educator. The focus program was a graduate program without a pathway option, and the team was challenged to develop a program that would fit in the graduate degree 15-month time period. Sara (SE) recalled this experience with angst. She explained the team hoped to create what would be like a “special stamp” students would get on their diploma that would state they have an additional specialty. It
would be an unofficial endorsement, not a state level endorsement, but a university endorsement for expertise in diversity and inclusion.

The program design would endorse students not just to teach the content area they received their license in, but to teach content area to a broader range of learners. Sara (SE) explained the team thought that would be something more marketable; that plan might possibly open to students the opportunities to add additional licenses, or endorsements in the future. She shared it was never initially intended to be a second license because they knew the time constraints. Sara (SE) lamented, “We weren't trying to change the special education program. The way (the proposal) was written was to change the general education program to better prepare general educators. Then, when (the grantors) told us it needs to be a dual license (scoffing). The word experimental was used throughout the (grant proposal), an experimental program or design. They might have said license, but they never said dual-license.” [Interview #4, 25-30]

Rose (SE) was angry in her reflection of the time constraint that they “could not extend the program and it couldn't be longer.” [Interview #5, line 153] The frustration with the unexpected changes and time constraints was a consistent theme in the observations and each one of the interviews. Rose (SE) shared her prevalent concern related to time constraints of creating a dual license:

Initially, I thought it would be possible to build a shorter program and as we started getting into everybody's stuff, it became very clear that in order to prepare a good dually licensed teacher, you need more time, not less. You can't do it in
the same amount of time that you would get a single license. It is simply not pedagogically sound. [Interview #5, lines 103-106]

She went on to explain her rationale from a special educator standpoint:

Special education is so diverse; the kinds of needs that those kids have is so diverse, and so I went from a very simplistic view of what this process would be, to realizing just how many twists and turns it has, and I think having this team has in some respects been the most eye opening to watch how other programs and realize we can't just mess, or change the order of that. We can't just move courses around because it is so intentional... the kind of planning that goes into that. But this all goes back to the time, right? The only way to prepare a good teacher is to practice, and have time practicing. [Interview #5, lines 106-117]

From a general education point of view, Pat (GE) explained time devoted to the license was not enough either.

We originally wanted to do 7-12 because special education wanted to do that, because they didn't have a 7-12. In their program the K-12, they are having a hard time doing it justice. Also, our advisors were saying you can't do it justice, so why do this? And then you have a grant proposal, to be an experiment. They weren't willing to experiment with the 7-12. I guess that they thought they could get our programs through without any problem, and it's not that easy. [Interview #1, lines 163-169]

Five of the six team members shared the resentment experienced as a result of the grantors' treatment of the team in response to their initial presentations. “It was really
inappropriate the way (the grantors) dealt with the situations” Rose (SE) explained, “If you reread the (proposal) in nowhere does it say dual license, it says experimental license, so when we came back, we were like, what about this, and they were like, no that's not going to happen.” [Interview #5, lines 380-382] Pat (GE) shared, “They want us to do what they want us to do... they want to control us. And we just kind of went our way. [Interview #1, line 147-148]

The theme of “time” was not only reflected in the program length divergences, but the amount of time the group invested into the process. “We worked a lot of hours, a lot of effort and angst and dealing with the (grantors) and trying to navigate around people. I don't usually feel bullied and this was a group that made me feel bullied and I have to face the (grantors) again and contemplating of applying for other funds for other projects. This project has made me question, has made me wonder, if it is worth my while.” [Interview #5, lines 372-378]

The changes placed on the team members in the first year of the program development delayed the start of their real work on the project (Katz, et al., 2015). Amber (SE) shared in her interview, “I feel like a vast majority, unfortunately, of our time was taken up trying to understand what our funders really wanted. At times during the project we were invested in something, we put a lot of effort into it, and then found out it's not what our funders wanted, so we had to backtrack. So, I feel like there was a lot of time where we weren't super-efficient because of all the changes and all the miscommunications.” [Interview #3, lines 66-72] Amber (SE) went on to share, “It was the most frustrating to spend all this time working on something that we can't
implement the way that we're designing it.” [Interview #3, line 89] As the team constructed the written final report, several members commented on the “anger, angst and frustration” they all felt regarding the funders. Observing the phrasing of the final report brought in humor of how much detail to include. “I bet they will look at our report more than others because of how much trouble we’ve given them” Amber (SE) (SE) states with a laughter response in the room.

**Time and Money**

Although the grantors placed time constraints on the team in both the time to design and the time frame of the program; four of the six interviewees felt that in addition to “time,” money was also a source of frustration in the process. “I think the next step is to look for funding that could be more long term, like several more years and a large amount of funding, because if we are going to do what we are envision to do, it's going to take a long amount of time and resources” Amber (SE) (SE) shared. [Interview #3, lines 192-194] Sara (SE) agreed and felt strongly taking money from the grantors again was not acceptable. “We were told we might have the opportunity to get funded, but if they offer it, we say no. If we want to implement this program, we should implement our program, a program that we're proud of, and we believe could work, one that will benefit the students. And I think we're all to that point.” [Interview #5, lines 348-352]

Likewise, Rose (SE) said “We're not going to seek implementation funding from this particular funder. We had lots of discussions how we're all looking for other sources of funding to take this project to the next step. So it would be great if we could, if we could do a full implementation of what we had envisioned. Now I don't know about the
licensure band stuff, because that's kind of out of control, that's a state level policy thing. As far as dual-licensure program, even at the undergraduate level, so we have more time doing a full implementation would be ideal and getting funding would be ideal. But I would say at minimum, I definitely foresee us co-teaching some of these courses, and more together to make even small changes across our programs.”  [Interview #3, lines 106-114]

Amber (SE) and Sherry (GE) from both departments expressed the next step should be to look for funding that could be more long term, like several more years and a large amount of funding to do what the group envisioned to do. Four of the six team members shared it would take a “long amount of time and resources” to implement a program they were satisfied with. Rose (SE) declared “there is a big difference in creating a program when another university has like a 5-year, multi-million dollar grant compared to our 18 month, $150 thousand grant. That is a big deal!” [Interview #5, lines 240-241] Amber (SE) (SE) explained “I think all of us have agreed we are going to keep our eyes out for funding and something that we are interested in doing and maybe writing a grant and implementing this program and doing research. So the next baby step would be, you know, submitting some of these courses that we have redesigned to the curriculum committee and working together to implement the courses we have designed and see how they go. [Interview #3, lines 192-201] Eugene (GE) exclaimed in his response to moving forward “It will take more grant funding. But even at that, what happens after the grant funding expires, what happens to it when the money is gone? I think it all comes back to time and money.”  [Interview #6, lines 89-93]
Moving Forward

After submitting the final report and program to the grantors, the case study team completed their program design. Due to the issues surrounding the grantors, the group did not anticipate the program being accepted or moving forward toward the implementation as the program was written. However, in various conversations following the interviews, the program facilitator indicated a number of courses from the program design process were put forth and accepted by the curriculum committee. The dual-license program may not be enacted at this university but initial steps were taken toward bringing the departments of special and general education together through this project.

Sunshine University

My data came from a group of faculty exploring the idea of program merger. I felt it was important to compare my data of two programs coming together to an existing university that has provided teacher education in a merged program model. I interviewed three faculty members at the Sunshine University to explore the role of collaboration in program that is considered “merged” based on the classification system of Blanton and Pugach (2011). These interviews provide a unique perspective to inform my analysis of the case study team’s accomplishments because it is one of the few universities I found in the literature to be an entirely merged program, where the only option for students when they graduate is a dual-license in both general and special education. The opportunity to meet with a few of the faculty there was important to understand the context of their program as compared to the faculty in the case study who were engaged in creating a
program that would provide a dual-license in one area. The case study team was attempting an example of an integrated or merged program from an existing discrete program model. (Blanton 2011, 2007).

**Shared vision**

According to the faculty at Sunshine University, the shared vision of their inclusive program is “assuring equity” and it is this vision that they believe makes their program unique. In daily use, the words *fair, right,* and *equal* are used as synonyms for *equity* and *equitable.* Meanwhile, Webster’s Dictionary defines equity as fairness; impartiality; and justice. However, *equal* and *fair,* according to some scholars, seem to be insufficient synonyms for *equity* when applying the terms in educational contexts (Danforth, 2014; Theoharis 2009). Jill, professor of inclusive education, explained the ways in which the faculty describe equity to future teachers. She said, “Equity is not about treating everyone the same; instead, equity requires an understanding of the different resources and other forms of support available to learners who vary in their culture, learning, and especially students with disabilities.” [Interview #7, lines 22-25]

Although the three interviewees from Sunshine University indicated they arrived in their positions after the merger of the special and general education programs, all three faculty members shared that the long history of the program has remained foundational to the beliefs of equity and social justice, especially for students with disabilities. [Interviews #7, #8, #9] According to Jill, their program is “beyond” the dual-license classification system described by Blanton and Pugach (2011). She elaborated by stating:
There is merged and then there is inclusive. So merged is (faculty) work together and collaborate and so on. But this program, by design, this program from start to finish is about inclusion. So, if you are coming here to become a math educator, you are going to understand how to teach math to all learners. Every single decision about this program is made with that in mind. [Interview #7, lines 12-16]

Because inclusion is the shared vision of their program, it is this shared vision the faculty believe makes it go beyond merged. The faculty interviewed, including John, the director of the program, expressed they remain consistent in their future hiring of faculty by the commitment to matching new hires with the theories and pedagogies of the program. Part of the mission in hiring others is “maintaining this legacy and commitment to inclusion” and the “shared vision.” [Interview #8, line 46 and line 67] John shared “The faculty that were part of the program merger are the generation of professors just retiring. They envisioned it and set it up. They had those arguments between faculties so that doesn't happen here so much anymore. (The) program is grounded in the idea that all of our elementary teachers are teachers of all the kids, regardless of the job they get.” [Interview #8, lines 21-25]

The faculty believe this shared vision is not only a strong foundation for their program, but enables them to focus on inclusive principles as their foundation rather than enduring competing beliefs and philosophies. For instance, inclusive educator Jill states:

In big classes at other colleges I have taught at, we were still discussing whether or not we should include kids, and we spent a lot of time and energy doing that work. But here, that’s never a discussion. We don’t spend any time or energy on
that and that is the beauty of it. By the time they get to me as their professor, it’s not the ‘should we or shouldn’t we,’ but the ‘how we?’ It’s not just a time saver, it’s just that everyone comes in with that same philosophy as students because they have been told what this place believes about learners. We teach them to be change agents so if they get a job in a segregated setting, our resources help them to hopefully make that situation short lived. [Interview #7, lines 23-28, 34]

As both Jill and John, the director of inclusion studies, mentioned, arguments surrounding the shared vision and inclusive beliefs were resolved prior to their arrival in the existing program. Thus, teaching in the merged program does not have the division many programs in higher education currently have. However, John shared, “I think the danger here could be to talk this place too rosy. It’s not. I mean, it’s not perfect; we are not all on the same page. But, there is a shared vision.” [Interview #8, lines 66-67] The shared vision of the faculty, according to John, is what makes their collaboration “maybe easier to do.” [Interview #8, line 68]

**Collaboration**

The faculty at Sunshine University agreed that the co-planning and co-teaching aspects of their program is what enable them to prepare educators for more inclusive environments. First and foremost, the program faculty profess that collaboration is not only expected, but modeled. According to Robinson and Buly, (2007) skills for effective collaboration among general education and special education teachers are learned through modeling and, furthermore, modeling that occurs during initial teacher preparation programs can be a powerful and influential opportunity for teachers.
According to John, collaboration is an “expected part of the program by design.”

[Interview #8, line 85] John co-teaches several of his courses, alongside his colleague Jill. He goes on to share:

There are pockets of co-teaching. We have general classes in blocks, and in the blocks the faculty that teach in that block have the same students that semester. The students have a shared field experience that relates to all of those classes, so the blocks require some collaboration. But the block of faculty meet to organize calendars, we talk about student by student mid and end of semester. There's still collaboration, which this doesn't happen across the university. It's good, but we meet all the time. And so, on campus they laugh at how we are always meeting. And that is not sort of a traditional faculty sort of view. [Interview #8, lines 85-93]

John’s colleague, Denise, shared more of the historical context for the program’s collaboration. She explained the history of the program included faculty who were all interested in merging the elementary and special education programs. They based the merger around the notion of collaboration and they “spent a good amount of time building the foundation; they really wanted it to be clear to students that the faculty merged, and that courses were merged.” She went on to say that part of the merger meant shared teaching, and faculty meetings became joint and collaborative. Denise explained even though a lot of things have changed in today’s programming standards, including things like state testing and teaching evaluations, what has “stayed really foundational, along with this long history (we have) had is about disability rights.” [Interview #9, lines
The program design was created with a commitment to collaboration, including courses like one Denise teaches entitled “Collaborative Approaches to Teacher Education” in which there is a focus on special education requirements such as IEP’s, rather from a collaborative and an inclusive perspective. Based on the classification system put forth by Blanton and Pugach (2007), the program faculty explain they have a level of collaboration that most closely fits that of merged programs. Denise explains, “Our decisions are made as a group and information shared with the students is shared as a block.” When asked how she felt about the collaboration process, she replied, “You know, we are a ridiculous close faculty, socially too. We spend a lot of time together. We like each other.” These statements reflect the statements of the case study team in terms of connectedness.

**Summary**

In summary, Chapter Four presented my findings from this investigation. I began with sharing the five findings from the data I collected including: texts and artifacts from the program design; observation notes from the seven team meetings I attended, and the transcribed interviews of all nine participants. Six of the interviewees were from the case study team, and three of the interviewees were from Sunshine University, a merged program that I visited to provide a compare and contrast to my data. After I shared scholarly information about the six case study team members, I shared in more detail each of the findings. Within the five findings, I presented the ways in which the case study team members addressed topics and issues in the program design process.
More specifically, I discussed how the team developed guiding principles, how they experienced the collaborative process and the resulting sense of trust and community the team shared. I went on to share the challenges the team faced including addressing the issues of faculty “buy-in” and the existence of the separation of special and general education. This separation was noted not only in geographical location for the case study team, but also in the departments’ theoretical orientations as well. I explained the chief barrier the team expressed to be as the “meeting” that changed the direction in which the team had to go to continue the program design. These encounters further revealed the issues of time and money and the obstacles they created in program design. Chapter Five I will take these findings and provide my interpretations and recommendations for future research and faculty desiring to engage in program design.
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Overview

This chapter provides the interpretations of the findings from this case study research and recommendations for faculty in teacher education programs who may choose to be involved in a collaborative program design process as well as for future research. I also discuss the limitations of this study and the implications from this research for those engaged in teacher education reform and my own pedagogy. The primary purpose of this study was to explore how one program reform team experienced a combined program design process. The research questions I used in my exploration included:

- How did faculty in both general and special education departments describe their experiences in a program design process?
- What challenges did the faculty encounter during the program design process?

I utilized a case study approach to respond to these research questions, but I went into the research with some initial assumptions of what the program design would necessitate and some of my ideas were naïve as to how program merger could be conceived. First, I began with the idea that to engage in the merging of special and general education programs, success could only be realized if both groups could experience a change of
views or rather a convergence of philosophies. Specifically, I considered if general and special educators could connect the dominant program theories of constructivism and behaviorism, a more cohesive teacher preparation program could be developed.

Secondly, I believed that existing merged programs were already a consortium of shared philosophies surrounding inclusion operating, from the idea that social justice and equity drive their teacher preparation. I presumed they had the optimum program delivery because of their shared ideologies and views. Finally, I firmly believed that regardless of the classification of a teacher education program such as discrete, integrated or merged, I am convinced inclusive practices need to be collective and taught in the preparation of both general and special educators.

I will discuss in further detail later in this chapter how I am now able to refute as well as confirm some of my original theories on program design to prepare teachers. Based on my findings, the data revealed that the departments of special and general education can collaborate and integrate while maintaining divergent orientations and still be successful in creating a merged program design. Secondly, I learned programs that have already integrated the departments of general and special education have similar obstacles and challenges to engage in, not unlike discrete programs. Finally, I confirmed through this case study that there are broader understandings and opportunities for personal growth when faculty of general and special education departments engage in this type of collaboration. Classrooms today require intensive teamwork and initiatives that bring faculty together to collaborate will increase the likelihood that teacher candidates will work together to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities.
“There is no better place to model this necessary collaborative practice than in our institutions of higher education” (Robinson & Buly, 2007, p. 94).

**Interpretations of the findings**

The case study was undertaken first, to explore the program design team’s experiences of the collaborative reform process. Interviews of faculty members of the existing merged program provided a means of comparison to the objectives and vision of the case study team. Theoretical sampling of these two different groups provided the opportunity “to maximize the similarities and differences of information” (Creswell, 2009, p.13). The five findings from collected data provided the conclusions to my theories regarding the process of merging general and special education teacher preparation. To address the theories I came into my study with, I have interpreted my findings to include the following conclusions:

First, based on my findings, the data revealed that the departments of special and general education can collaborate and integrate while maintaining divergent orientations and still be successful in a creating a merged program design. I contend this is only possible with the establishment of a shared guiding vision and it would be more productive if positive working relationships and a community of care are established.

Secondly, I learned programs that have already integrated the departments of general and special education have similar obstacles and challenges to engage in, not unlike discrete programs. Although it is my contention that all teacher preparation programs need to consider forms of integration, more research is needed on the process to accomplish this goal. These conclusions speak to the value of addressing the benefits and
challenges of educational reform efforts. Understanding these benefits and challenges ahead of time could help general and special education faculty plan efficiently and effectively for potential program change. I confirmed through this case study that there can be great benefits to both general and special education departments engaging in this type of collaboration. Through these collaborative efforts, teacher educators are modeling collaboration to future teachers who may be more empowered to collaborate and co-teach with their special and general education counterparts in schools and bring inclusive teaching to fulfilment. Recommendations and questions for expanded studies have been provided based on these findings and conclusions.

*Shared vision propels progress*

Based on my findings, the data revealed that the departments of special and general education can collaborate and integrate while maintaining divergent orientations and still be successful in creating a merged program design. I contend this is only possible with the establishment of a shared guiding vision and would be more productive if positive working relationships and a community of care are established. According to Young (2011), separate programs perpetuate separate preparation and segregated services for children. Thus, the status quo of segregated general and special teacher education programs gives little more than lip service to collaboration. It is collaboration across general and special education that has long been identified as critical to improving educational opportunities for students who have disabilities (Cyr, et al, 2012). However, despite the acknowledgment that every teacher needs to be prepared for this aspect of their work, how best to prepare them remains unresolved. With groups like the case study
team coming together in universities, perhaps these conversations can be approached in more depth.

The data revealed that program merger or integration of general and special education departments can progress even with divergent orientations in special and general education. I contend that this program design progress can occur with certain conditions in place. First, the case study team established a shared vision by setting up the guiding principles for the program design. Developing these common goals created a common language from which the members discussed the topics and issues (Robinson & Buly, 2007). Throughout the program design, the team also cultivated collegial relationships across departmental lines. I contend that to make the most effective use of time and effort, establishing community and mutually respectful relationships is a benefit to a program design.

The case study team members appeared to respect one another and valued all ideas as worth hearing. The meetings were preplanned, documented, and adeptly facilitated. Team members shared their values, theoretical perspectives, pedagogy, research-based practices, competencies, knowledge, skills, and dispositions vital for the program design. Although the faculty came from two discrete teacher education departments, they created a collective vision for a merged program. Shared discussions, ones that centered on program philosophy and programmatic themes, brought faculty members together in instances of shared dialogue that some of the team members had not engaged in before. In several of the programs discussed in the literature review, as well as the case study group, the initial discussions about philosophy helped the faculty to
establish a climate of trust, explore alternative perspectives, define problems and issues, and resolve conflicts. Having a clearly-stated philosophical commitment and goals for the collaborative program were critical to the successful development and implementation of these two programs and they were characteristic of other programs described in the literature review as well (Blanton, Griffin, Winn, & Pugach, 1997).

Community is caring

The unique aspect of the case study group was the mutual agreement they all shared that they “liked” one another. This sense of community and caring for one another is what seemed to propel the group to continue the arduous work of program design. The work of Nel Noddings describes caring as a relation, a connection or encounter between two human beings. She emphasizes what constitutes a caring community, in part, from cultivation of empathy, social concern and responsibility among children and teachers. More importantly, caring does not conflict with goals of academic development. Noddings (2012) goes on to say a “climate in which caring relations can flourish should be a goal for all teachers and educational policymakers” (p. 777). Although the caring climate Noddings is referring to is focused on establishing a caring environment in classrooms, it was evident that those caring relationships of the team were a foundational aspect of what made the team work so well. Regardless of their differing opinions on learning theories or related programming topics, the case study team members genuinely cared for one another and that enhanced their ability to communicate with one another, even on the challenging topics like theoretical differences in their departments.
Because the team was successfully able to collaborate for an extended period of time, maintain positive, working relationships and develop courses that can expand on the preparation of general educators to teach diverse learners, I now believe the integration of special and general education programs can successfully be achieved even if the departments of general and special education maintain opposing theoretical orientations. This finding is confirmed in the previous studies (Blanton, Griffin, Winn, & Pugach, 1997).

According to Blanton and Pugach (2009), broader conceptions of teaching and learning are developed when teacher educators work together. The case study team became aware of new terminologies and views that were in some cases completely new to them. Shared conversations in this teacher education reform resulted in integration. The programs discussed in this study were able to successfully make progress in reform because they began their collaboration by first finding the commonalities between their program philosophies of special and general education. Reform has not merged in other universities due to the lack of shared vision or departments taking the time to find common ground. Once common ground was found, the case study team and universities reviewed in Chapter Two could begin the process of design, regardless of the dominance as a behaviorist or constructivist.

Attempting to create an integrated or merged program design brings faculty members into close contact with one another, forcing special and general education faculty to work with alternative conceptions about teaching and learning. The interactions pushed faculty to consider the predominantly behaviorist tradition in special
education and the social constructivist views in general education (Blanton, Griffin, Winn, & Pugach, 1997). According to Blanton et al., (1997) “with a few exceptions, special education has been slower to embrace a social constructivist perspective in which teaching and learning are viewed as highly complex. This approach requires a teacher to operate in an ever changing context of decision making that goes beyond narrow assumptions of teaching and learning as the transmission of information” (p. 261). The theories of behaviorism and constructivism were discussed in Chapter Two as being potential challenges to the departments’ developing consensus. However, exchange opportunities can assist the general educators in the team with a consideration of “specific aspects of behavioral practice (that) might be useful to all teachers” (Blanton, Griffin, Winn, & Pugach, 1997, p. 262). An example of this was the course that the special education faculty assisted the general educators in developing for the program merger - a course that is being adopted and taught regardless of a full, dual-license program implementation.

Reform within a large institution is daunting, according to Blanton and Pugach (2007) with larger departments and faculty to include. The case study team acknowledged that faculty members in their respective departments would not be likely to support a program merger if it impacted the courses they teach. With resistance as a seemingly insurmountable obstacle, how then should faculty proceed in the midst of opposition? The case study team, and programs discussed in the literature review, indicated that rather than be discouraged by doubters, reformers should concentrate on the program accomplishments. Collaborative opportunities between the departments of
special and general education must be made a priority and when faced with resistance, reform faculty need to move forward by “celebrating their achievements and continuing the communication despite the apparent or real resistance” (Blanton, Griffin, Winn, & Pugach, 1997, p. 260). The team members I observed did just that.

**Program research is needed**

Through an examination of the literature and data, the case study team shared many of the same issues as institutions that engaged in program reform. The universities discussed in Chapter Two revealed the challenges faculty engaged in reform experienced from the special and general education departments. Often faculty members were not willing to “buy-in” to the process of program merger due to the philosophical and theoretical differences. Frequently, those outside the reform groups were objectors or naysayers to merging. In at least two cases, the merging was unsuccessful and the issue of diverse philosophies was shared as an overwhelming obstacle. The case study team did not personally experience opposition to its program design; rather, the team received support from the respective departments. Amidst the challenges faced from the grantors and potential faculty naysayers, the team members still implemented aspects of the program reform in their courses to impact student learning. The team did, however, acknowledge the differences of the two distinct teacher preparation programs. The outside consultant observations, in addition to all of the interviewees, recognized that the theoretical oppositions of departments were an issue in a program merger and could be a potential challenge of the team's merged program design, if it were to be adopted.
After I completed the interviews of the case study team and the review of the literature, I considered the few merged programs in the country to be model examples of teacher preparation programming. Regarding buy-in, according to the interviewees from the case study and Sunshine University, not all people, or even most people, should be expected to change anyway. This was an assumption I held prior to this research. I previously assumed that for reform to be entirely successful, there had to be a meeting in the middle or a radicalized inclusive philosophy that seems to exist at Sunshine University. I also believed that programs like the one at Sunshine University did not experience issues of “buy-in” or objectors. While the faculty there did share that there are arguments noticeably absent from their interactions such as “should we do inclusion,” faculty still have differing theoretical orientations in areas that make co-teaching and/or co-planning a challenge in teacher preparation. Learning about these challenges enabled me to observe the inclusive program philosophy espoused does not necessarily make their program “more successful,” easier to implement and better at preparing well-rounded, successful teaching candidates. However, how to define success in a program is a broad concept at the outset. Who determines the “success” of a teacher preparation program?

This question certainly prompts further studies related to program merger or integration. Is success measured by *U.S. News and World Report*, or the National Education Association’s indicators of an effective teacher preparation program? Clearly, separate programs have existed for generations and they have prepared highly-qualified teachers. Can separate programs prepare equally qualified teachers as integrated programs is a difficult question to ask and opens the door for further questions. For
instance: What makes a qualified teacher? Or, which type of programming prepares a teacher to teach inclusively?

Future research might be able to explore the graduates from universities like the examples I provided in Chapter Two compared to graduates from universities utilizing discrete programs and investigate if the teachers utilize more inclusive teaching practices as a result of their teacher preparation programs. This was the focus of a 2006 dissertation by Ji-Ryun Kim when she examined the influence of teacher preparation programs on preservice teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion, their perceived self-efficacy, and their inclusive practices. Preservice teachers from combined programs showed significantly more positive attitudes toward inclusion than the preservice teachers from separate programs (Kim, 2006). In her study and in my own search, there have been limited studies examining the actual influences of different formats of teacher preparation programs on preservice teachers’ preparedness of inclusive practices. According to Kim (2006), “It is not clearly understood whether combined dual certification teacher preparation programs prepare preservice teachers to become more effective inclusive education teachers” (p. 55).

Although this could be the focus of future studies on the program success, depending on the classification system provided by Blanton and Pugach (2007), I am more inclined to agree with the interview of Denise from Sunshine University. When asked to defend their merged program is successful in preparing teachers she said “Asking if inclusion is a good idea is like asking if Tuesday is a good idea. It just is. First of all, we don't need data to do what we know is right. We didn't need data to know
that slavery was wrong, data to know that kids of color deserve education, we don't data that girls are good at science. There are some things you do that are morally right.”

[Interview #9, lines 263-269] According to Utley, (2009) “the moral and political responsibility of a democracy is to widen the definition of citizenry to include all citizens” therefore, should it not be the “responsibility of teacher education programs to educate teachers to include all students” (p. 148). The goal of preparing all teachers for inclusive education should be the focus of future research. Although as I consider how this research might further the field of teacher preparation, I ponder this thought:

Research is no longer required to prove that students with disabilities have a moral and legal right to be in the general education classroom; then why do we need research that teachers should be prepared to teach all learners? There are other studies that could be considered to expand on the research I have presented here.

**Implications**

The implications of this research for teacher education and for my own teacher pedagogy indicates that when engaging in the process of collaboration, it is still a worthwhile endeavor, even when considering a program merger may not be possible. The idea sharing and, ultimately, best practices for teacher preparation is the most likely outcome of a collaboration between special and general education departments in higher education institutions. “Collaboration in teacher education can be difficult work, it is also essential work if the nation is to realize the commitment made beginning with the first Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1975 and, more important, to foster all students’ learning of the general education curriculum” (Blanton & Pugach, 2007, p. 11).
I have shared in this research teacher education programs that have “moved beyond the status quo of programs that demonstrate little collaboration or curricular coherence among general and special education and have implemented other, more collaborative models of teacher education” (Blanton & Pugach, 2007, p. 11).

The benefits of collaborating are too great not to engage in that process, and by not adequately preparing preservice teachers for the classroom environments they are most certain to face, which include learners of all abilities, most notable, those with cognitive disabilities. The desegregation of the students with disabilities by current policies and laws will mandate more teachers to be prepared to teach ALL learners and modify instruction accordingly. The case-by-case and one-lesson plan approach simply does not work. Preparing teachers for this reality is essential. The best place for such preparation is from the start of their teacher preparation, the college classroom.

I recommend the following to higher education institutions and faculty from both departments of special and general education who desire to engage in a process of program integration or merger. These recommendations are included for potential leadership in the departments of special and general education and for faculty desiring to engage in a program design team. Supportive leaders are critical to the success of any change endeavor but, in particular, the integrating of two different department areas. The recommendations focus on these main areas: a shared guiding vision with collaboration and the needed resources and support.
Recommendations for Program Design Leaders

A clarity regarding “process” needs to be very strong: how it will happen; how decisions will be made; how people will participate; the authority granted to the design team; the role of departments; the role of department representatives serving on the design team; the role of faculty; and the role of administration. Laying a strong foundation is key to the effectiveness of program change efforts. Educators should ask, “What type of student do we want to graduate from our institution?” Leadership and faculty need to accept that there will be differences of opinion among the faculty involved regarding what students should learn and become as a result of their time in the teacher preparation program. It is important to realize that faculty are often emotionally connected to their profession and disciplines.

An atmosphere where faculty feel safe to share and differ must be cultivated, as well as a climate that emphasizes integration in order to create an interconnected program. It will, likewise, be important for team members and leadership to recognize the value of taking time to work through a complex process because the changes will likely be transformational, both for those involved in the process and for those students who will experience the new program. Communication is a significantly important task, but even more important is to recognize that communication is a two-way process. Time needs to be built in for the faculty to dialogue on the program design and engage in revision. Furthermore, an appreciation for the contributions that faculty make to the process will only help to enhance the dynamics of collaboration.
In an effort to move the processes of program design into implementation, higher education administrators need to allocate the resources required. First, those involved in the revision process must recognize that a great deal of time and energy will be needed for a program review process. Administration should plan for how to make time and room in the schedules of faculty members involved in the design process. The change effort would need to be supported by providing the necessary resources for all aspects of the process. A commitment to the program design team is needed through the release of time and/or compensation to honor their commitment. Room in the faculty team members’ work schedules is also needed to allow them time and energy to devote to the process. Providing release time for faculty members serving on the design team would also enhance the program process.

A budget for the program design process is essential. Money for materials, data collection, constituency input, hospitality, etc. Ideally, it would benefit faculty to include funds for faculty to engage in interdisciplinary education and team teaching. An additional cost might include faculty development, a critical piece to achieve program implementation. Faculty would need to be provided training and assistance to be successful in implementing the new coursework vision. A predetermined budget should be made available to project the expenses for the program design process and during implementation. This budgetary concern would have to be communicated early in the process so that faculty agree and understand the parameters.
Recommendations to Teacher Education Faculty

The following recommendations are for faculty who may consider serving on a team that engages in the program design process. It is important for there to be a focus on the time commitment in the process; a shared vision; making time for collaboration and finding connectedness within the team are key areas for consideration. Faculty should recognize, to the degree possible, how much time will be involved in serving as a member of the program design team. They will need to make room in their schedule to actively participate on the design team. The time committed will often be spent engaging in philosophical conversations.

Once a shared guiding vision is created, faculty need to be willing commit to it as was demonstrated by the case study team. During conversations, to establish positive collaborative relationships and trust, it will be important to value the theoretical orientations of others while working toward building trust among one another. Faculty also need to work to keep that trust strong by developing community-minded relationships.

Recommendations to Departments of General and Special Education

A final recommendation I would like to include is a mention to all faculty in both the departments of general and special education to address head on the opposing, somewhat contentious philosophies of how to prepare teachers to teach inclusively. The arguments between departments often stem from the language used regarding assumptions that “special education departments operate from a behaviorist paradigm while general education departments lean toward a constructivist paradigm” (Robinson &
Buly, 2007, p. 86). However, even within these tensions are varying degrees of what these terms even mean. Departments should explore existing theoretical orientations toward educating students because avoiding them does not promote developing a guiding vision. Based on this study, some fundamental differences were observed between the departments, however I recommend we begin to talk about those differences and the existing arguments. It is through those conversations that potential for progress in program merger can occur.

**Implications for my own pedagogy**

For my own pedagogy, this study has promise building into future research opportunities for me in the areas of public schools and at a university I hope to work within. First, similar to some of the institutions I described in Chapter Two, partnerships with area schools could be an effective way of promoting collaboration and inclusion. Schools could benefit from professional development and support from local colleges of education. Additionally these partnerships would enable preservice teachers to experience and observe inclusive practices based on the relationships and professional development established.

Secondly, action research could take place in the context of a university by establishing collaborative opportunities between special and general education. In many of the universities I described in Chapter Two, often the program changes began with small groups of faculty making small changes to their teaching by collaborating with the special or general education department. The case study team began after a funding
opportunity; however, they have continued some of their collaborations outside of the grant as a result of that experience.

Pockets of co-teaching could also be a consideration for my future teaching goals to address the gaps in program delivery. A continuum of co-teaching strategies for inclusive practices in K-12 settings has been developed and there is much research in the area of how they address the increasingly diverse learning needs and academic levels of students (Friend & Cook, 2000). However, co-teaching does not necessarily align with traditional practices in higher education. Moreover, teacher educators often discuss collaborative teaching arrangements but seldom model collaborative teaching behaviors (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012).

One of the challenges facing co-teaching is that systems within higher education do not typically have policies in place for alternative course loads and teaching methods (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012). Higher education institutions are often resistant to a co-teaching model regarding faculty pay or providing a load release for participating in a co-taught course. The case study recognized this challenge in Sherry (GE)’s comments that they “aren’t prevented from co teaching, but it also doesn’t mesh well with how current loads are distributed” [Interview #2, lines 291-294]. To try and engage in co-teaching would mean more work for no more compensation. Yet, according to Graziano and Navarrete (2012) when co-teachers communicate “about their styles, preconceived notions, fears, and growth, the experience is positive for both the instructors and students. Collaborative planning time is critical in co-teaching” (p. 123).
Regardless, finding a colleague with similar interests and undertaking a small project can be an invaluable attempt to begin those small steps to program merger. Writing a small grant, setting up a study and co-writing could assist with the development of common understandings (Robinson & Buly, 2007). This case study research revealed to me that program merger does not necessarily have to be a large-scale grant opportunity to witness a drastic, program change. Reform does not require an all or nothing stance. Small groups of collaborative opportunities can still move toward integration, even if it is only in one area such as a co-taught class, or a small group of faculty from two departments meeting weekly, bi-weekly or at least monthly. Small steps can lead to big changes.

**Future Research**

The case study team spent over two years in the program design process. In that time, they were able to create a program plan and articulate course syllabi for a proposed dual licensure program. Most of the courses were revised, and a few new courses were designed in addition to assignments created across the curriculum. A more in-depth study focused on the merged curriculum would be informative. Questions to guide this study could include: How is diversity addressed in the new program design? How is disability addressed in the new program? What dominant discourses and theories are presented in the merged program?

The sense of community and connectedness among the members of the case study team in this study was a unique outcome, as well as a component of the process. Looking more in-depth into the role of community in the workings of groups in learning
organizations could be interesting. Questions to guide further study could include: How do faculty and administrators in higher education define community? What type of group-learning experiences foster a strong sense of community? What group characteristics tend to enhance a sense of community? What type of leadership is needed to foster a sense of community? What causes some departments to form a greater sense of community than others?

My study did not address the role of leadership involved, other than the influence of the grantors. Questions to guide a further study into leadership involvement could include: What characteristics of departments affect their participation in program processes or other change efforts? How open are the various departments to the change efforts? How would the leaders of the departments of special and general education contribute to a program design? What type of leadership is needed for this type of program design effort?

Future case studies might be beneficial to carry out these research goals. Case studies offer the opportunity for a view of a process. According to Stake, (1995) case study research brings us to an understanding of a complex issue and can add strength to what is already known through previous research.

**Limitations**

The goal of this case study was to portray a complex process of program design in a way that conveyed a vicarious experience to the reader. I utilized this case study method to build upon existing theory from a constructivist paradigm. According to Baxter and Jack, (2008), “Constructivists claim that truth is relative and that it is dependent on one’s
perspective” and it was through stories of the participants they were able to describe their views of reality (p. 545). This enabled me as the researcher to better understand the participants’ views and actions in program reform. According to Stake (1995) this type of case study was intrinsic in nature because I had a genuine interest in the case. It was not undertaken “primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because in all its particularity and ordinariness, the case itself is of interest” (p. 548). I was interested in a unique situation of two departments collaborating for a specific time and place. I chose to conduct an intrinsic case study, which according to Stake (1995) means that I had an intrinsic interest in the subject and I was fully aware that the results have limited transferability.

Some of the limitations to this study are related to the areas of my personal connections to the research focus. First, I am the mother of a child with cognitive disabilities. While I was immersed in the experiences of this research, I was simultaneously engaged in the process of advocacy for my daughter and other students with disabilities in a school district that is less than cooperative regarding students with disabilities being educated in general education classrooms. This advocacy places emotional strain on parents and other family members, and I feared it would impact my objectivity in the study when analyzing the data related to theoretical orientations oppositional to my own. Secondly, my relationship with the principal investigator (PI) of the grant was also a concern during my data collection because the PI is on my dissertation committee and read my qualifying examinations. Reporting on the data
could have presented a challenge in terms of what I chose to share about the team responses.

There were additional limitations regarding the site of my research. My entrance into the group began the second year of their program design efforts; therefore, I was unable to include data from the beginning of the team’s collaborative experiences. The case study team had already conducted various meetings, met with outside consultants and connected with local schools and educators regarding the perceived goals of the program design by the time I entered the process. In addition, only six faculty at this large institution were involved in the program design. A team including more faculty and more fields would have produced more data potentially altering my findings. For instance, would the community and connectedness be observed in a larger group? What additional challenges would the group have faced with more faculty members' involvement?

Another limitation was the interviews I conducted for the data comparison. The three interviews were only at one example of a university that utilizes a merged program. Also, none of the three faculty members were present at the university when it blended their special and general education programs. All of the faculty that were present during that merger had retired and I was only able to connect with one of them and he directed me to articles written about the merger process. Finally, my conclusions are difficult to ascertain because the resulting program was only a proposal and not a dual-license program that was being fully submitted for acceptance as it was designed. Therefore, the process described in these pages only reflects what took place in the potential program.
merger for two particular areas of education programming in a large university. It is difficult to determine if the same findings would have emerged if the program was to be fully implemented. Nevertheless, the findings I have shared provide some guidance to future departments that wish to engage in the program design process.

**Summary**

The case study team I had the opportunity to engage my study with faced a number of challenges, particularly the outside constraints place on the group by the grantors. The hierarchical mindset of the grantors, the separation of disciplines by departments, and the slow nature of change in educational institutions were challenges the group had to contend with throughout the collaborative process. The design team members worked to break down these barriers by working together and making changes in the areas in which they could do so. Although more work is yet to be done, the team members have already begun impacting students, faculty, administration, and staff in the courses they teach and as a result of this shared experience.

One of the most important results of the program design process was the community and connectedness created among the case study team members. The team members experienced caring for one another, listening to one another, respecting one another, sharing one another’s burdens, and the joy of reaching consensus on the final report provided to the grantors, effectively concluding the process. The findings of this study provide some guiding principles for an integrated or merged program design process. Education reform is a challenging process for all who are involved. The process requires much time, widespread participation, strong leadership, and a willingness to
work through difficulties. However, teacher education reform can be rewarding as it assists higher education institutions in providing an education in preparing teachers to meet the diverse needs of learners in schools today.

Those wary of bringing special and general education together and engaging in collaborative teaching or teacher education typically focus on and identify the differences between special and general education. The history of the relationship between special and general education has presented problems, but only because we have often neglected to find common ground. By asking the question “How are we alike?” the professionals in this case study were successfully able to establish a common framework through their guiding principles. Reaching agreement at varying levels enabled the roles of special and general educators to overlap and establish a common commitment to children. Departments of Education and higher education need to work together to better align policy, practice, and resources to improve the quality of all teachers in both general and special education. By working together, general and special educators, state policy makers, and higher education faculty can accomplish more to support the learning of students who have disabilities than they can working in isolation. (Blanton & Pugach, AACTE). Ideally, educators should collectively embrace the goal of preparing teachers who are equipped explicitly for the commitment to accept all children as full members of their classrooms.

Inclusive teaching practices have come a long way since IDEA 1975. Children with special needs can go to typical schools, attend extracurricular activities and young adults can get jobs, all with only a modicum of resistance. However a gap remains our
nation’s colleges and universities to recognize the need for collaboration and a unification of programs to better prepare general and special educators; and only a few actively seek it out. Parents are tired of fighting and weary of advocating. They are drained of personal, financial and emotional resources when it comes to securing the best opportunities for their children. Ensuring a high-quality teaching force so that every student receives an equitable education needs to be a national priority.
References


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School of Education Syracuse University. (2016, February 14). Retrieved from Syracuse University: http://soe.syr.edu/


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Appendix A: Potential Interview Questions

1. Please describe the position you hold.

2. What is your role in the development of preservice general or special educators?

3. Can you elaborate on how you came to be involved in this grant project?

4. What role are you playing in the curriculum-change process undertaken under the auspices of the Incentive Grant?

5. Describe the processes being used in order to make necessary curriculum changes.

6. In your view which processes are working best? And which processes are working least well?

7. How has leadership contributed to the curriculum-change work? Who has provided leadership and in what ways?

8. Can you describe what you have observed as the university’s organizational structures contributing or complicating the curriculum-change process?

9. Have you experienced any changes in beliefs about inclusion, special education and dual-licensure teacher preparation since involved in this process, and if so, can you elaborate on those impressions?

10. Are you aware of any programs that provide the goals of the grant you are working on? If so, what do the programs look like? What are the practices employed? Is it research from the special education field or general education field?

11. What do you believe the next steps should be taken in the program development?
12. Are there any barriers to adoption of program redesign? If so, can you elaborate on those barriers?

13. How do you feel is the best way to move forward in implementing a program redesign?

14. Do you believe the steps taken thus far have the capacity to strengthen general educators to meet the needs of diverse learners, particularly those with disabilities?
Appendix B: Consent to Participate

The Ohio State University
Consent to Participate in Research

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research. This letter contains important information about this study and what to expect with your consent to participate.

Your participation is voluntary.

Please consider the information carefully. I will be conducting a study about the conditions conducive in developing an education teacher license program designed to meet the needs of diverse learners as well as the resources needed to move toward implementation. I am also investigating how the program development potentially changes the culture of teacher education at the university level, including how the various university units and personnel involved are impacted by this redesign.

With your signed consent, we will engage in face-to-face interview that may require 60-90 minutes of your time at The Ohio State University Columbus Campus at either Arps Hall, 1949 High Street, Columbus, Ohio or the PAES PE Building 245, 305 W 17th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio. I will be audio-recording the interviews. There may be an instance that I would like to follow up after our interview for clarifications.

The research often includes various program meetings where observations and note taking could be included in the research. None of the meetings will be audio-recorded, however my attendance at program meetings will involve written observations and note taking that may include related information connected to the research.

Confidentiality:

Efforts will be made to keep the study-related information confidential. However, there may be circumstances where information must be released. Records may be reviewed by the following groups (as applicable to the research):
- Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies;
- The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board or Office of Responsible Research Practices;
- The sponsor, if any, or agency (including the Food and Drug Administration for FDA-regulated research) supporting the study.

There is no more than minimal risk in this research. There are no direct benefits to you. This research is intended to expand knowledge on developing an education teacher license program.

Contacts and Questions:

For questions about your rights as a research participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

For questions, concerns or complaints about the research, or if you feel you have been harmed by study participation, you may contact Dr. Laurie Katz, katz.124@osu.edu or Carrie D. Wysocki, wysocki.212@osu.edu.
Appendix B: Consent to Participate Continued

The Ohio State University
Consent to Participate in Research

Participant Rights:
You may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you or your child is a student or employee at Ohio State, your decision will not affect your grades or employment status.

If you choose to participate in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you may have as a participant in this study.

I am aware that I am being asked to provide permission to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

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Researcher Witness:

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Appendix C: Data Collection Tool

Date: _________________
Time: _________________

Activity:

☐ Interview (Name) _______________________ (Location) _____________________

Interview recorded?  ☐ YES  ☐ NO

☐ Meeting observation (Description of meeting)

_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________

General Notes of activity:

_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________

**Detailed study procedures**

*Data collection will include interviews (audio-recorded or note-taking) of the consenting participants. Data collection will only occur with the signed forms of permission to participate. If any of the audio recordings or data-collection inadvertently records a non-participant, the data collection will be erased and excluded from any analyses. Interviews will be conducted at The Ohio State University Columbus Campus at the two named locations. The research often includes various program meetings where observations and note taking could be included in the research. The program participants that have consented to the research therefore could have meeting related information connected to the date. Once the study is completed, these data collection records will be destroyed. There is no more than minimal risk to the participants in this study.*
Appendix D: Guiding Principles

1. The diversity within the populations of students who are emergent bilinguals and who have exceptionalities reflects rich and varied cultural and linguistic resources that are important tools for learning.

2. Each student is unique and deserves a responsive approach to education to meet his or her intellectual, linguistic, physical, social, and emotional strengths and career development goals.

3. Inclusive education widens access to education and promotes full participation and opportunities for all learners vulnerable to exclusion to realize their potential.

4. Building relationships with families requires cultural and personal sensitivity, perseverance, and flexibility.

5. Responsive teachers are aware of personal biases and assumptions and recognize and appreciate diversity.