Teacher Perceptions of Resource Room Practices for Students with Visual Impairments

THESIS

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Abstract

Inclusion practices have been spreading for students with visual impairments. The resource room is one of the service delivery options of inclusion settings. Students with visual impairments might need additional accommodations and receive them in a resource room. The purpose of this study is to explore how resource room teachers describe resource room practices based on their experiences with students with visual impairments in a resource room. A national survey was administered to teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) in the USA to describe resource room practices. The results indicate that the collaboration between resource room teachers and general education teachers on academic goals is more than social and behavioral goals. Additionally, the collaboration between resource room teachers and parents on social and behavioral goals is more than on academic goals. Lack of consultation and collaboration with regular education teachers and inadequate learning space/room conditions are main barriers that impede the efficiency of the resource room practices for students with visual impairments.
I would like to give a huge thank you to Dr. Tiffany Wild and Dr. Peter Paul.
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Education of Students with Visual Impairments
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the present study. First, blindness and low vision were defined, and statistical data for students with visual impairments in the USA was provided. Second, statistical data for inclusion practices was provided. Third, resource room was defined, and studies for resource rooms were briefly summarized. Next, the purpose of the study was introduced, and three research questions were proposed. Then, the research methodology for gathering data relevant to the questions was discussed. Last, the details about the key terms of the study were provided.

Students with Visual Impairments

Students with visual impairments is a generic term that represents a group of students with low vision to those who are totally blind. Students who have an acuity of 20/200 or worse in the better eye with the best correction or who have a field of vision of 20 degrees or less are considered blind, whereas those with a visual acuity of 20/70 to 20/200 are considered as having low vision (Holbrook & Koenig, 2000). According to the Project Ideal website (n.d.) students with visual impairments are classified based on their level of functional vision as low vision, functionally blind, and totally blind. “Low vision students use their vision as their primary sensory channel. Functionally blind students can use limited vision for functional tasks but need their tactile and auditory channels for learning. Totally blind students use tactile and auditory channels for learning and functional tasks.”
There are approximately 28,000 students with visual impairments enrolled in Special Education classrooms during the 2013-2014 academic year. This corresponds to 0.1% of the total enrollment in public schools, prekindergarten through 12th grade (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). In addition, in the Annual Report 2015 of American Printing House for the Blind provided the exact numbers regarding blindness in the United States:

Total number of students: 61,739

By reporting agency

Reported by state departments of education: 51,271 (83.04%)
Reported by residential schools for the blind: 5,196 (8.42%)
Reported by rehabilitation programs: 3,659 (5.93%)
Reported by multiple disability programs: 1,613 (2.61%)

Inclusion Practices

Inclusion practices have been spreading for students with disabilities. According to the recent national statistical data (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], Fall 2016), approximately 90% of students with visual impairments were enrolled in general schools in Fall 2012, and 64% of them received 80% or more of their daily instruction in general education classrooms. In addition, special education classes served 38,000 students with visual impairments in the 1976-1977 school years and 28,000 students with visual impairments in the 2012-2013 school years (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). Because of the number of students with visual impairments increased, the number of students with visual impairments in special
education classes should have increased in the same way. However, the statistics above clearly show that the number decreased from 38,000 to 28,000 due to the spreading inclusion practices. In addition, general education practices alone may not be efficient for students with visual impairments, and they might need additional accommodations and receive them in a resource room.

**Resource Room**

A resource room is where students with disabilities spend some time to get academic or other assistance from special education teachers, therapists, and other professionals, but they are educated in the same setting with their peers without disabilities the rest of the time outside of the resource room (Dev & Haynes, 2015). Students with disabilities, including visual impairments, who are placed in a resource room have an opportunity to study in small groups with special education teachers and other specialists. These teachers and specialists help the students to improve their areas of weaknesses in resource rooms.

According to the Watson (2016), “A resource room is a separate setting, either a classroom or a smaller designated room, where a special education program can be delivered to a student with a disability individually or in a small group.” Students with disabilities spend minimum three hours a week in the resource room, and this time may vary on the age of the child. It is very uncommon that students with disabilities spend more than 50% of their day in the resource room. Resource room teachers consistently concentrate on the specific area of needs of students with disabilities. In addition, they work collaboratively with regular education teachers and parents to improve the success

Payne & Murray (1974) conducted a survey with elementary school building principals to comprehend their attitudes toward integration of the students with disabilities in the regular classrooms. The principals agreed that the resource room was most needed to support the students with emotional disabilities. Friend & McNutt (1984) designed a survey study to determine the nationwide status of the resource room as a service delivery system. The study indicated that the resource room was the most often used alternative to the regular education classroom setting for special education students, and the one most frequently used to serve the mildly-to-moderately students with disabilities.

Wilson et al. (2011) examined the educational placement options for 559 secondary school students with disabilities in three schools in New York State and found that 46% of the students received resource room support. Wilson et al. (2011) also classified those students in terms of the type of disabilities and placement options, and according to this classification, 48% of the students with specific learning disabilities (SLD), 48% of the students with emotional and behavioral disorder (EBD), and 51% of the students with other health impaired (OHI) were served in the resource rooms.
Glomb & Morgan (1991) conducted a survey study to investigate which resource room strategies were used to promote the success of the students with disabilities in general classrooms. Resource room teachers were also asked about common barriers that impeded resource room practices in the survey. Teachers rated the five barriers from the highest to the lowest, lack of time to consult with regular education teachers was the highest rated response to this question. As a result, it was proposed that resource room teachers needed to have more time to consult and cooperate with regular classroom teachers (Glomb & Morgan, 1991).

Rich & Ross (1986) observed 58 classrooms in 16 elementary schools to compare the time utilization between students with disabilities in a regular classroom, resource room, special class, and special school. According to the results, students with disabilities in resource rooms had more allocated time and spent more time on task than students with disabilities in the regular and special classes. Sargent (1981) observed six resource room teachers to investigate their time utilization with students with disabilities in a resource room and found that resource room teachers spent slightly more than half of time in direct instruction in a resource room. Whittaker & Taylor (1995) surveyed special education directors to determine the amount of planning time that resource room teachers have and found that approximately 75% of the administrators reported that resource room teachers have 45 minutes or less planning time each day. Only 5% of the administrators declared that the teachers have more than 75 minutes planning time. However, those studies were not conducted particularly for students with visual impairments. Therefore,
there is a huge gap in the literature for resource room practices with the students with visual impairments.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore how resource room teachers describe resource room practices based on their experiences with students with visual impairments in a resource room. The research questions are as follows:

1. What degree of collaboration and coordination between a resource room teacher and a general education teacher, and a resource room teacher and parents of the students with visual impairments in terms of academic, social, and behavioral goals?

2. Which equipment and accessible technologies are used in the resource room with students with visual impairments? How much time do resource room teachers spend with students with visual impairments? Which subjects do students with visual impairments receive instruction in the resource room?

3. What are some barriers that impede the efficiency of the resource room practices?

This research is significant because there is a huge gap in the literature examining resource room practices for students with visual impairments. This research will work to help fulfill the gap. The goal of this study is to better understand the practices with students with visual impairments in the resource room.

Survey Study Method

A national survey was administered to teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) in the USA. “Survey research is a specific type of field study that involves the collection of data from a sample of elements (e.g., adult women) drawn from
a well-defined population (e.g., all adult women living in the United States) through the use of a questionnaire” (Visser, Krosnick, & Lavrakas, 2000, p. 223).

The survey instrument was administered online via the Internet using the survey software Qualtrics. The survey format included 30 closed-ended questions (multiple choice and checklist). The first part of the survey contained questions about demographic information of the participants. Those questions included participants’ gender, ethnicity, self-reported training, roles in the school and years of experience both overall and specifically experience in a resource room. The next section of the survey contained questions that were directly related to the resource room practices. Those questions investigated the time that students with visual impairments spent in the resource room, the barriers that impeded the efficiency of the resource room practices, the subjects that students receive instruction in the resource room, equipment and technology that were used in the resource room, and the collaboration between resource room teachers, general education teachers, and parents.

Description of Key Terms

i. Students with VI: Students with visual impairments is a generic term and represent a wide range of group from students with low vision to students who are totally blind.

ii. Resource Room: A resource room is where students with disabilities spend part of each school day to get academic or other assistance from special educators, therapists and other professionals as needed. The rest of the time they are in the same setting as their peers without disabilities.
iii. Inclusion: Inclusion begins in regular education settings, and students’ academic performances are not concern of inclusion but is only concerned in students’ benefits of being in the general education class (Huston, 2007).

iv. Mainstreaming: Mainstreaming is when students with disabilities spend a portion of their school day in the general education program and a portion in a separate special education program (Huston, 2007).

v. Least Restrictive Environment: Least restrictive environment can be described that children with disabilities are educated with nondisabled children as much as possible (Smith et al., 2016).

vi. Survey Method: Survey research is a specific type of field study that involves the collection of data from a sample of elements drawn from a well-defined population through the use of a questionnaire (Visser, Krosnick, & Lavrakas, 2000).
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This chapter provides the research background of the present study with the focus on resource room practices. First, inclusion and mainstreaming concepts are defined and discussed. Second, researches on teacher and principal attitudes toward inclusion are examined. Third, educational placement and service delivery options and resource room programs for students with disabilities are described. Fourth, studies on resource room with students with disabilities are examined. The final section of this chapter summarizes the literature review.

Inclusion and Mainstreaming

Some scholars believe that inclusion and mainstreaming are synonymous, but they are not. Huston (2007) explained the mainstreaming, inclusion, and full inclusion concepts and their differences. Mainstreaming is a placement of students with disabilities in one or more regular education classes, so mainstreaming begins in special education settings. Students with disabilities must earn their way to be placed in general education classrooms. On the other hand, inclusion begins in regular education settings, and students’ academic performances are not concern of inclusion but is only concerned in students’ benefits of being in the general education class. Students with disabilities can be removed from general education classrooms if appropriate services cannot be provided in the general education settings. However, full inclusion means that students with
disabilities will be in a regular classroom full time regardless of their disabilities’ condition and severity.

Inclusion has numerous advantages. Smith et al. (2016) indicated some of the advantages of inclusion:

- Opportunities for social interaction for students with and without disabilities
- Ease in accessing the general curriculum
- Higher academic expectations for students with disabilities
- Preparation for adult life in inclusion communities
- Opportunities for nondisabled students to become more accepting of students with disabilities
- Reduction of stigma associated with segregation” (p. 21).

There are professionals and parents who did not support the inclusion. For instance, some parents concerned that their children with disabilities might be bullied by students without disabilities, or they might get less attention in a general classroom. In addition, some general education teachers may feel unready to teach students with disabilities or collaborate with special education teachers (Smith et al., 2016). The success of inclusive education depends on trained teachers, willing parents, and educated community members and professionals who provide support services.

Even though mainstreaming and inclusion are different from each other, both aim to create a least restrictive environment for the students with disabilities. “The least restrictive environment is described as children with disabilities educated with nondisabled children as much as possible” (Smith et al. 2016, p. 13). Despite the main
goal, including students with disabilities with their peers without disabilities as much as possible, students with disabilities sometimes may not be placed in general education classrooms or may spend some time in different classrooms such as resource rooms. Students with disabilities may also be placed in the regular education classroom, but get additional support services, such as paraprofessionals.

Teacher and Principal Attitudes Toward Inclusion

Several studies can be found in the literature about perceptions of general education and special education teachers or special education directors on resource room practices with students with disabilities (Dev & Haynes 2015, Idol 2006, Scruggs & Mastropieri 1996, and Payne & Murray 1974). Even though those studies were not conducted specifically with students with visual impairments, the results can guide educators who work in the field of visual impairments to comprehend inclusion practices in general.

For example, Idol (2006) conducted interviews with general education classroom teachers, special education teachers, instructional assistants, and school principals of four elementary and four secondary schools to examine how special education services were provided. The results showed that the participants were positive about educating students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Many of the participants preferred to have students with disabilities with a special education teacher or instructional assistant in the general classroom or have maintaining to have resource room services. The scholar also provided recommendations to the educators. One of the recommendations was
considering mainstreaming instead of inclusion for the students who have serious behavioral and emotional problems.

Payne & Murray (1974) conducted a survey with elementary school building principals to understand their attitudes toward integration of the students with disabilities in the regular classrooms because they believed that if the principal was supportive of the inclusion of students with disabilities, the positive attitude insured the success of the inclusion program. According to the results, 40.3% of urban principals and 71.4% of suburban principals accepted the concept of inclusion.

Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996) examined 28 surveys, which were conducted from 1958 to 1995 to understand general education teachers’ perceptions of the students with disabilities in their classes. They reported that 65% of the teachers supported the concept of inclusion, and 53.4% of the general education teachers are willing to teach students with disabilities in their classroom. 54.4% of the teachers believed that students with and without disabilities could benefit from inclusion practices. When the responses were compared between general education and special education teachers, they found that general education teachers less frequently agreed that inclusion provided benefits than special education teachers. Although 66.6% of the special education teachers agreed that inclusion provided benefits, 50.8% of the general education teachers agreed that inclusion provided benefits.

On the other hand, not all research yielded positive opinions about inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes. For instance, Dev & Haynes (2015) conducted an interview with 11 teachers to examine their perceptions about the
success of students with disabilities in resource rooms, self-contained rooms, and general education classrooms. Teachers who participated in the interview worked in both resource or self-contained rooms and general education classrooms. The results indicated that even though some teachers realized that some students with disabilities were seen to learn higher level skills in general education classrooms when they make a transition from resource rooms or self-contained classrooms to general education classrooms. However, this improvement was not valid for the students with severe social, emotional or physical disabilities. Teachers believed that self-contained rooms or special schools were most appropriate environment for students with severe social, emotional or physical disabilities.

Some responses in the Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996) and Payne & Murray (1974) studies supported findings in the Dev & Haynes research (2015). Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996) found that 30.3% of teachers agreed that students with disabilities could be detrimental to the classroom and having students with disabilities in the classroom required additional time, work, and attention. Most general education teachers agreed that they did not have sufficient time to undertake the responsibilities of teaching students with disabilities. Moreover, only 29.2% of the teachers agreed that general education teachers had enough expertise or training for inclusion. Teachers also agreed that adequate resources (material and personnel support) were not available to support inclusion efforts, and teachers were less willing to include students with severe disabilities than students with mild disabilities.
The principals who were conducted in a survey in the Payne & Murray (1974) agreed that resource room was most needed to support the students with emotional disabilities as a service delivery option. They agreed that itinerant teachers were most needed to support students with visual impairments and students with hearing impairments. This study also showed that urban elementary school principals were less willing to include students with disabilities into regular classrooms than were suburban elementary school principals.

Approximately two-thirds of the teachers who participated in the study of Dev & Haynes (2015) believed that insufficient social skills were the biggest obstacle to students’ integration in inclusion classrooms for the students with disabilities. The teachers agreed that pre-service teacher education for inclusive settings, teacher attitudes toward inclusion, and administrative support were the three critical factors for student success in inclusion classrooms. The participants in the study also identified that if a teacher knows how to differentiate instruction for a diverse group of learners and handle a variety of behavioral challenges, students with or without disabilities were inclined to be more successful in inclusion classrooms. Furthermore, teachers stated that collaboration and consultation among the teachers with support of school administrators, parent involvement, and teacher self-efficacy were key factors for the success of the students with disabilities in inclusion classrooms.

Service Delivery Options

Service delivery options take an important place in mainstreaming and inclusion settings for students with disabilities. According to the Idol (2006), there are four special
education service delivery options that support general education teachers who teach students with disabilities in the general education classroom: 1) consulting teacher services, 2) cooperative teaching in the classroom, 3) supportive resource programs, and 4) instructional assistants.

A consulting teacher model is a form of indirect service delivery model because general education teacher consults with special education teacher and teach students with disabilities. In this model, students with disabilities are still able to learn in the general education classroom. The cooperative teaching model is a form of a direct service delivery model because special education teachers and general education teachers work collaboratively in the regular education classroom with students with disabilities. In this model, students with disabilities are included in the general education setting, and support services are provided within the general education classroom.

In supportive resource programs, regular education teachers and resource room teachers work collaboratively to design student’s individualized instruction and support the student to transfer what she/he learned in the resource room to the general education classroom. Instructional assistants, who are paraprofessional aides, provide assistance to students with disabilities in the general education classrooms. Those assistants remain with students with disabilities during the school time (Idol, 2006).

On the other hand, students with disabilities may attend special classrooms most of the school day, such as self-contained classrooms. A self-contained classroom is where students with disabilities spend all or most of their time and work with special education teachers, therapists or other professionals. A self-contained classroom is placed in a
general education school. Students with disabilities might attend some school activities with students without disabilities (Dev & Haynes, 2015). Self-contained classrooms are different than the service delivery options that are described above. In other service delivery options, students with disabilities are placed in general education classrooms, but in self-contained classrooms, the main placement is a self-contained classroom not a general education classroom for students with disabilities. Therefore, a self-contained classroom may be accepted as a service delivery option under the definition of mainstreaming.

**Resource Room**

The resource room is another service delivery model. There are different definitions and descriptions about the resource room that can be found in the literature. For instance, according to the Dev & Haynes (2015), a resource room is where students with disabilities spend some time to get academic or other assistance from special education teachers, therapists, and other professionals, but they are educated in the same setting with their peers without disabilities the rest of their academic day. The entire academic day is not spent in the resource room.

Wiederholt and Chamberlain (1989) also defined the resource room.

“The resource room is any setting in the school to which students come to receive specific instruction on a regularly scheduled basis, while receiving the majority of their education elsewhere (usually in a general school program). Therefore, resource rooms are not part-time special education classes where students with handicaps are integrated with peers only for lunch, gym, or art.
They also are not consultative programs where students remain full-time in a general classroom setting and where modifications are made in instruction. Neither are they study halls, discipline or detention centers, or crisis rooms.” (p. 15)

According to the Smith et. al. (2016), the main principle in inclusion model is that students with disabilities belong in the general education classroom. Students can be pulled out only their needs meet better in a resource room setting. Resource room teachers provide intensive interventions to the students with disabilities in the resource room setting. Resource room practices enable students with disabilities to improve their areas of weakness generally in small groups. Resource room teachers should collaborate with general education teachers to work on particular areas that students with disabilities find problematic. Making accommodations that are needed by students with disabilities is the role of resource room teachers, so they should take the lead for communication and collaboration with general education teachers.

Jenkins & Mayhall (1973) described the different types of resource room programs in US schools. First, the resource room programs were examined in terms of program dimensions. While some students with disabilities receive instruction directly from the resource room teacher, other students with disabilities receive instruction from the general education teacher; the resource room teacher serves as a consultant with a classroom teacher. Second, some resource room programs are skill-oriented programs, but some others are ability-oriented programs. Although some students with disabilities receive reading, writing etc. from skill-oriented resource programs, others receive
instruction, which is related to perceptual and motor abilities from ability-oriented resource room programs. The program is based on the students’ needs. Last, resource room teachers can work as resident or itinerant teachers. Residential resource room teachers serve students with disabilities in one single school. However, itinerant resource room teachers serve students with disabilities in two or more schools and regularly visit them. Even though resource room programs may be different from school district to school district, the rooms also have common attributes. All resource room programs need to provide individualized and daily instruction and assessment for the students with disabilities and work to ensure improvement in student performances.

Studies about Resource Room


The research on the topic of resource rooms examines many different facets of the topic. For instance, Friend & McNutt (1984) designed a survey study to determine the nationwide status of resource rooms as a service delivery system and to identify characteristics of resource room programs in the United States. In this study, the researchers sent a questionnaire to a special education representative in each State
Department of Education, and all of them responded. The results of the study showed that the resource room was the most often used alternative to the regular education classroom setting for special education students, and the one most frequently used to serve the students with mildly-to-moderate disabilities.

Wilson et al. (2011) examined the educational placement options for 559 secondary school students with disabilities in three schools in New York State. The research found that 46% of the students received resource room support, and 33% of the students were co-taught. Fifteen percent of the students received alternate day support, and 6% of the students received no direct support. Wilson et al. (2011) also classified students in the study based upon the type of disabilities and placement options. Forty-eight percent of the students had a specific learning disabilities (SLD) and 48% of the students had an emotional and behavioral disorder (EBD). In addition, 51% of the students classified as other health impaired (OHI) were served in the resource rooms, while 44% of the students classified as having a speech and language impairment (SLI) were served in the co-taught classrooms. Those percentages reported provided above were the largest percentages of disability groups reported in the study.

Another researcher group focused their study on why students with special needs prefer a resource room instead of a general education classroom, or a general education classroom instead of a resource room. Vaughn & Klingner (1998) analyzed the findings from eight different studies, which examined students with learning disabilities in their educational settings and made a comparison between students’ perceptions of resource room settings and inclusive classrooms. According to the study, most of the students with
learning disabilities preferred to receive instruction in a resource room instead of a
general education classroom for part of the school day. Students who liked the resource
room believed that they learned more in the resource room setting. They also claimed that
they got extra help, had fun activities and easy work, and were better able to concentrate
on their work due to quiet studying conditions. On the other hand, students who liked the
general education classroom claimed that it was better to make friends in a general
education classroom for them because the students were nicer. Furthermore, they liked
the general education classroom because there was a negative stigma to attending the
resource room. Vaughn & Klingner (1998) also analyzed how the placements decisions
were made, and most of the students declared that teachers and parents worked to make
the decision together.

Some researches like Harris & Mahar (1975) focused on the problems in the
research room that impede the effectiveness of the resource room programs in schools in
rural areas. They determined four main problems: 1) lack of organizational readiness, 2)
system shock, 3) interpersonal roadblocks, and 4) lack of trained personnel. In describing
the lack of organizational readiness, the deficiencies of the school administrators to
prepare the school for resource room teachers was found. In describing system shock, the
struggles of conflict and power between the resource room teachers and regular
classroom teachers were found. When referring to interpersonal roadblocks and lack of
trained personnel, the inadequacy of the resource room teachers’ pedagogical methods,
lack of materials, and inexperience of teachers working with different age and
development levels of the students were found.
Glomb & Morgan (1991) conducted a survey study to find out which resource room strategies were used to promote the accomplishments of students with disabilities in regular classrooms. In other words, they wanted to learn the successful strategies that were used in resource rooms with students with disabilities and transfer those strategies to regular classrooms to promote success of students with disabilities. According to the results, Glomb & Morgan (1991) proposed that resource room teachers needed to have more time to consult and cooperate with regular classroom teachers. They also suggested that resource room teachers need to have more training especially consultation and collaboration skills. Resource room teachers were also asked about common barriers that impeded resource room practices in the survey. Teachers rated the following five barriers from the highest to the lowest: lack of time to consult with regular education teachers, regular classroom teacher’s knowledge of strategies and procedures for working with students with disabilities, regular classroom teacher’s attitudes about working with students with disabilities, lack of administrative support for working with general classroom teachers, and resource room teacher’s lack of knowledge of effective instructional strategies. Lack of time to consult with regular education teachers was the highest rated response to this question. Regular classroom teacher’s knowledge of strategies and procedures for working with students with disabilities was the second highest response for the question. The current research described in this paper was inspired by Glomb & Morgan’s (1991) research. Some of the survey questions were similar to the ones proposed in this current research.
Some of the studies like Sargent (1981), Whittaker & Taylor (1995), Rich & Ross (1986) concentrated on time utilization of the resource room teachers. Sargent (1981) observed six resource room teachers to investigate their time usage. He also assessed resource room teachers’ estimations for the time used and needed in the resource room. He found that resource room teachers spent slightly more than half of time in direct instruction in a resource room. They spent 16.38% of the time for preparation and planning time for instruction, 9.22% in general school duties and 8.51% in consulting with staff. Direct instruction took more time than any other activities in the resource room.

Whittaker & Taylor (1995) surveyed special education directors to determine the amount of planning time that resource room teachers have. The survey was given to 159 special education administrators from Connecticut, New York, Ohio, and Vermont. Around 75% of the administrators reported that resource room teachers have 45 minutes or less planning time each day, and only 5% of the administrators reported that the teachers have more than 75 minutes planning time. More than 85% of the administrators also declared that planning time ought to be used to complete plan for instruction, consult with other teachers, consult with other staff, complete reports on student progress, consult with parents, and develop IEPs (Individualized Education Plan).

Rich & Ross (1986) observed 58 classrooms in 16 elementary schools to compare the use of time between students with disabilities in four special education alternatives: regular classroom, resource room, special class, and special school. Students with disabilities in all special education alternatives spent slightly more than 4 ½ hours in the
classroom. Of that allotted time, 65.2% was allocated to learning tasks, and students were on task 64.4% of that time. Consequently, students spent specifically 33% of the school day on tasks. Rich & Ross (1986) found that the students in resource room alternatives had more allocated time and spent more time on task than students with disabilities in the regular classes and special classes. The resource room significantly exceeded the other alternative placements in order to maximize learning time.

Some studies like Coladarci & Breton (1997) focused on teacher effectiveness and compared the influence of home and classroom environment on learning of the students with disabilities. The researchers conducted a survey study to examine teacher efficacy. The study examined responses from 580 resource room teachers in Maine. Many resource room teachers agreed that when any of the students showed academically improvement, they believed that they found better ways of teaching their students. If one of the students learned a new concept, many resource room teachers believed that they knew the essential steps in teaching that concept. Furthermore, many resource room teachers also agreed that most of the students’ motivation and performance depend on the home environment, so resource room teachers could not do much. Moreover, resource teachers believed that students’ learning is primarily related to family background and the influence of students’ home environment is more than the influence of their resource room environment.

Another area investigated by researchers examining resource rooms is that of reading instruction in resource room and the general education classroom. Vaughn, Moody & Schumm (1998) interviewed 14 special education teachers, who work in a
resource room with students with LD (learning disabilities) from 13 different elementary schools. The researchers also made observations in order to assess grouping and instruction that students with learning disabilities received in the resource room. In addition, the researchers gathered data on how differentiated instruction, materials, and curriculum were provided for students by the resource room teachers. Most of the teachers stated in interviews, and was substantiated by the observations, that they used the same materials for all of the students. To put it another way, most of the students with LD did not receive any differentiated reading program in the resource room, so the reading instruction in the resource room was not different from the reading instruction in general education classrooms in that study even though it was expected by the researchers that the resource room materials would be different. Most of the teachers also pointed out that whole language was the best approach for reading instruction.

Gelzheiser & Meyers (1991) observed 48 classroom, remedial, and resource room teachers in order to determine whether they had different reading instruction based on their diverse teaching environment. According to the results, Gelzheiser and Meyers (1991) did not find much difference between reading instruction that was provided by the teachers in the classroom and resource room. Although researchers expected that resource room teachers would provide different reading instruction, the study did not provide support for that assertion. Therefore, the researchers argued for widespread use of resource rooms.

Breton & Donaldson (1991) surveyed 580 resource room teachers in Maine about the supervision they had received. Of those, 53% stated that their special education
director was their primary supervisor, and 39% of the teachers declared that their building principal was their primary supervisor. Resource room teachers reported that they did not receive much supervision, and the supervision that they received did not address their teaching practices. On the other hand, they also reported that the supervision that they received was useful and beneficial.

Jenkins (2005) examined the Content Mastery Center (CMC) as an alternative resource/consulting model for students with special needs. In the CMC model, students receive all instruction in the general education classrooms and join the CMC classroom if they need extra support. When Jenkins (2005) compared CMC classrooms with resource rooms, she stated that when students with special needs went to the resource room, they missed the instruction being provided in the general education classroom. She also added that students were satisfied with the CMC because their grades were positively affected after they attended the CMC.

Conclusion

Inclusion practices have been spreading for students with disabilities. Around 90% of students with visual impairments were enrolled in general education schools in the Fall of 2012, and 64% of them received 80% or more of their daily instruction in general education classrooms (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). Mainstreaming and inclusion are two different concepts. Mainstreaming is a placement of students with disabilities in one or more regular education classes, so mainstreaming begins in special education settings. On the other hand, inclusion begins in regular education settings, and students’ academic performances are not concern of inclusion but
is only concerned in students’ benefits of being in the general education class (Huston, 2007). Consulting teacher services, cooperative teaching in the classroom, supportive resource programs, and instructional assistants are service delivery options for students with disabilities (Idol, 2006).

A self-contained classroom is where students with disabilities spend all or most of their time and work with special education teachers, therapists or other professionals. A resource room is where students with disabilities spend some time to get academic or other assistance from special education teachers, therapists, and other professionals, but they are educated in the same setting with their peers without disabilities the rest of their academic day. The entire academic day is not spent in the resource room (Dev & Haynes, 2015).

General education classroom teachers, special education teachers, instructional assistants, and school principals were found to have had a positive attitude toward inclusion (Idol 2006, Payne & Murray 1974, Scruggs & Mastropieri 1996). Teachers believed that self-contained rooms or special schools were most appropriate environment for students with severe social, emotional or physical disabilities (Dev & Haynes 2015). Resource room is another service delivery option for students with disabilities. Resource room was the most needed support for students with emotional disabilities (Payne & Murray 1974), and was the most often used alternative to the regular education classroom setting for special education students. In addition, resource rooms are most frequently used to serve students with mild-to-moderate disabilities (Friend & McNutt 1984) as well as the most often used educational placement option for students with specific learning
disabilities (SLD), emotional and behavioral disorder (EBD), other health impaired (OHI) (Wilson et al. 2011).

When examining common barriers for working with students with disabilities, research found that a lack of time to consult with general education teachers was the highest rated response, and general classroom teacher’s knowledge of strategies and procedures for working with students with disabilities was the second highest response (Glomb & Morgan 1991). Students in resource rooms had more allocated time and spent more time on task than students with disabilities in the regular classes and special classes (Rich & Ross 1986). Resource room teachers spent slightly more than half of their time in direct instruction in a resource room (Sargent 1981). The current study is significant because there is a tremendous gap in the literature for resource room practices with the students with visual impairments. This study will help the field to better understand the practices with students with visual impairments in the resource room.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used for the descriptive, survey research study. First, the survey study method will be defined and explained. Second, the instrument will be described. Third, the dissemination process will be described.

Survey Method

A descriptive, survey research design was chosen to investigate the resource room practices for students with visual impairments. “Survey research is a specific field of study that involves the collection of data from a sample of elements (e.g., adult women) drawn from a well-defined population (e.g., all adult women living in the United States) through the use of a questionnaire” (Visser, Krosnick, & Lavrakas, 2000, p. 223). Most surveys possess three major characteristics:

1. Information is collected from a group of people in order to describe some aspects or characteristics (such as abilities, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and/or knowledge) of the population of which that group is a part.

2. The main way in which the information is collected is through asking questions; the answers to these questions by the members of the group constitute the data of the study.

3. Information is collected from a sample rather than from every member of the population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 390).
Instrument

In preparing to write the survey instrument, I was inspired by the research that I read. For example, Glomb and Morgan (1991) conducted a survey study to find out which resource room strategies were used to promote the accomplishment of the students with disabilities in regular classrooms. One of the question on Glomb and Morgan (1991) was “how do resource room teachers rate some of the most common barriers, such as time and administrative support, to effectively serving students with mild and moderate handicaps?” (p. 229).

I decided to ask a similar question in my survey. The 20th question in my survey was “what are the barriers that impede the efficiency of the resource room practices? Please check all that apply.” The alternatives for this question were:

a. Lack of cooperation and collaboration with the regular education teacher
b. Lack of administrative support
c. Inadequate learning space- room conditions
d. Students’ level differences
e. Other [text box to indicate]

Glomb and Morgan (1991) also asked, “to what extent do resource room teachers use strategies that promote the success of handicapped students in regular classrooms?” (p. 225), and some answers were related to the consultation and collaboration skills between a general education teacher and a resource room teacher in terms of academic, social, and behavioral goals for the student. I used similar questions in my survey, too. For instance, I asked, “How often do you meet with regular education teachers to discuss
student’s progress?” as the 21st question of my survey. The alternatives for this question were:

a. Always
b. Often
c. Rarely
d. Never

Based on this information, I also asked the participants to rate the collaboration with the regular classroom teacher on academic, social, and behavioral goals for the student in three different questions (see appendix A for the survey questions). While these questions began the development of the survey, additional questions were developed to answer the research questions. I also asked the participants to rate the collaboration with parents on academic, social, and behavioral goals for the student in three different questions (see appendix A for the survey questions). The survey was placed online using Qualtrics software. The survey was password protected and the password only known to the researchers in the study.

An Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved consent script was the first page of the survey. Survey participants were asked to provide consent by selecting next on the computer screen, before moving on to the actual survey. After the participants had agreed with the consent, directions about the survey were provided. Following the directions, participants were asked a series of questions. The survey format includes 30 closed-ended questions (multiple choice and checklist). The first set of questions asked participants about their demographic information. Those questions include participants’ own training,
educational backgrounds, their role, and years of experience both overall and specifically experience in a resource room.

“How many students do you serve in the resource room?” was asked as a 13th question in the survey to the participants. The choices for the question was 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. If the participants chose the 0, the participants were thanked for their time and the survey ended for them. The remaining questions investigated the time that students with visual impairments spent in the resource room, the barriers that impeded the efficiency of the resource room practices, the subjects that students receive instruction in the resource room, equipment and technology that were used in the resource room, and the collaboration between resource room teachers, general education teachers, and parents.

Dissemination

The target population for this study was teachers of the students with visual impairments (TVIs) in the USA. Teaching members of the Association for Education of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) were asked to participate in this study through e-mail solicitation via a list serve. In addition, those teachers who are members of the Facebook group Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired/O&M Specialists was asked to participate through a posted solicitation message. Any teacher in either group was eligible to participate.

An initial solicitation e-mail and announcement was given to prospective participants in both groups asking for participation in the survey on 23rd of January 2017, and a follow-up solicitation was given two weeks after the initial solicitation (6th of February 2017) to thank those who had already participated in the survey and to politely
encourage others to participate. Participants were not given any incentive to participate in the research study. Names were not collected as part of this survey, only demographic information. The demographic information was general survey information collected and was not be able to be traced back to one particular member of either group.

All teachers in AER and who were members in the Facebook community of TVIs were invited to participate in this research. The researchers were not able to discern the numbers of active participants who gained access to this survey as a result of sharing and liking on Facebook and forwarding online. Therefore, it was not known the number of teachers who may have had access to this survey.
Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this national survey study was to investigate how resource room teachers describe resource room practices based on their experiences with students with visual impairments in a resource room. First, the response rates were addressed. Second, the sample demographics was demonstrated. Third, data screening was processed.

Response Rates

A consent script was the first page of the survey. By selecting “next” on the computer screen, the participant provided consent. 56 participants agreed with the participant consent form. The participants were not forced to respond any questions, so the number of responses to the questions showed differences. Even though 56 participants agreed with the participant consent form, 49 of them answered the next question and indicated his/her gender. Seven respondents just agreed with the participant consent and did not continue to answer the remaining survey questions.

The number of responses to the questions decreased from the first question to the last question of the survey. For example, “Are you visually impaired” was the third question of the survey, and 49 participants answered this question. On the other hand, “How often do you meet with parents to discuss student's progress?” was the twenty-eighth question of the survey, and only 23 participants answered this question.

Questions 1-13 were background questions. Those questions included participants’ own training, educational backgrounds, their role, and years of experience
both overall and specifically experience in a resource room. The 13th question was “How many students do you serve in the resource room?” The choices for the question was 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. If the participants chose the 0, the participants were thanked for their time and the survey ended for them.

Demographics

Because the participants were not forced to respond to any questions, the number of responses to the questions showed differences. For example, 49 participants indicated their gender; 96% of them were female, and 4% of them were male. Similarly, only 50 participants indicated her/his race and ethnicity; 88% of them defined themselves as White. While 4% of them defined themselves as Black, 2% defined themselves as Latino. Only 2% of participants defined themselves as bi-multi racial, and 4% of them refused to indicate. Furthermore, 12% of respondents were visually impaired, and 88% of them were not visually impaired.

While 89% of participants had Master degree, and 9% of them had Doctorate degree; only 2% of them had Bachelor degree as a highest earned degree. 46 participants indicated which state they lived in. They were from 25 different states. Five participants were from Ohio, represented the largest number of participants in the survey. Pennsylvania had four participants; California, New York, and Wisconsin had three participants each in the survey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>Race and Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Black</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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<td>Latino</td>
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<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>44</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-muti racial</td>
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<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
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<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Visual Impairment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>43</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Master</td>
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<td>Less than 5 years</td>
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<td>5-10 years</td>
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<td>15.22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-15 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-20 years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 30 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Demographics of Participants

The results showed that 88% of participants worked in a public school, and 7% of them worked in specialized school. Only 2% of participants worked in private school, and 7% of participants worked in charter school. It was possible to select more than one alternative for the question, so total percentage was more than 100%. The years of experiences of participants varied from fewer than five years to more than 30 years.

While 28% of participants had been teaching for 15 to 20 years, 20% of participants had
been teaching for less than five years. Only 15% of participants had been teaching five to 10 years. 44 participants indicated their educational background and certification area(s). Many participants had O&M (Orientation & Mobility) certification with the degree of the Teacher of Visual Impairments. Participants also had the elementary education, special education, early childhood education, math education, English, French, and social studies degrees in their backgrounds.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Setting</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>88.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
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<td>2.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Served Age Groups</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>63.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>84.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>86.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>84.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post High School</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position in the School</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time resource teacher</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time resource/Part time regular education teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time resource/Part time consultant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>73.17%</td>
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<td><strong>Having Students with Additional Disabilities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1-25%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36.59%</td>
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<td>26-50%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-75%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-100%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Having Experience in General Education</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>69.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Experience in General Education</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-teach with general education teacher</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>44.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-plan with general education teacher</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>48.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach general education classes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>48.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Educational Variables of Participants

The age groups that TVIs served were investigated. The alternatives were preschool, elementary, middle school, high school, and post-high school. It was possible to select more than one alternative if participants worked with different age groups. The
TVIs who participated in the survey averagely worked in more than three different school levels. The results showed that 87% of participants worked in Middle schools, and it was selected more than any other alternative for the question. About 85% of participants worked in Elementary and High schools.

About 70% of participants had experience in general education classrooms. The highest responses were co-planning with general education teacher and teaching general education classes with 48%. Co-teaching with the general education teacher was the second highest response with 45%. General education experiences of the participants also were asked. Three of them reported that they taught Math, and the others reported that they taught first grade to fifth grade, kindergarteners, and French. One other response was the itinerant teacher.

The results showed that 17% of participants selected “other” choice for the question, and they explained what type of general education experience they had. One reported that teachers worked in a general education classroom students with visual impairments, and another one supported students in general education classes mainly math and science. Another participant assisted various students with visual impairments in making their classrooms/work accessible to them. One other worked as an itinerant teacher, and the other one worked as a braille transcriber.

The positions of participants in their schools were investigated. While 44% of participants worked as an itinerant TVI, 12% of participants worked as a full-time resource room teacher. Additionally, 12% of participants worked as a part-time resource
room teacher/part-time consultant. About 10% of participants worked as TVIs and O&M specialists.

The results showed that 37% of participants had between 1-25% of caseload were students with additional disabilities, and 24% of participants had between 26-50% of caseload were students with additional disabilities. Furthermore, 22% of participants had between 51-75% of caseload were students with additional disabilities, and 17% of participants had between 76-100% of caseload were students with additional disabilities.

Data Screening

The 13th question was about the number of students in a resource room. The alternatives for the question were 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. If the participants chose the 0, the participants were thanked for their time and the survey ended for them. If the participant had “0” students in a resource room, she could not provide insight and additional information. However, if the participants indicated a number higher than 0, the next question was opened for them in the survey that pertained to learning about their resource room practices.

The results showed that 20% of participants chose the 0, so the survey ended for them. On the other hand, 80% of participants had one or more students with visual impairments in the resource room, so they continued the survey and answered remaining questions. Additionally, 43% of participants had five students in the resource room, and it was the highest percentage for the question. While 13% of participants had three students, 10% of participants had four students. Only 8% of participants had two
students, and 8% of participants only one student in the resource room. Figure 1 shows the number of students with visual impairments in a resource room.

Figure 1. Number of Students in a Resource Room

Another question investigated the amount of time resource room teachers spent in a day with the students with visual impairments in the resource room. The options were less than one hour, one hour to two hours, two hours to three hours, and more than three hours. The results showed that 38% of participants spent one to two hours a day with students with visual impairments in the resource room, and it was the highest percentage for the question. While 25% of participants reported that they spent less than one hour, 21% of participants reported that they spent more than three hours. Additionally, 17% of participants reported that they spent two hours to three hours in a day with students with
visual impairments in the resource room. Figure 2 shows the amount of time resource room teachers spent in a day with the students with visual impairments in the resource room.

![Bar chart showing the amount of time spent in a day](image)

**Figure 2. Amount of Time Spent in a Day**

In addition, the subjects that students received instruction in the resource room were investigated. The alternatives were reading, writing, math, science, and other. It was possible to select more than one alternative for the question. Participants averagely selected more than two alternatives for the question. Reading and writing were selected by 63% of participants. Math was selected by 59% of participants, and “other” was chosen by 54% of participants. Only 17% of participants reported that their students received Science subject in the resource room. Figure 3 shows the subjects that students with visual impairments received instruction in the resource room.

![Bar chart showing the subjects received instruction](image)
The participants who chose “other” stated that students with visual impairments received braille, technology, social skills, tactile graphics, low vision devices, expanded core curriculum (ECC), independent living and compensatory skills, and art class. They noted that instruction depended on the student, so students received help in any subject if they needed.

Furthermore, the participants ranked the subjects that their students with visual impairments received instruction in the resource room. The alternatives were reading, writing, math, science, and other. “Other” was selected by 48% of participants as most often their students with visual impairments received instruction in the resource room. They also reported their responses for “other” choice, and more than half of them pointed out the expanded core curriculum (ECC) was received most often by students with visual impairments in the resource room as an instruction. Braille reading and technology also were written by participants under the other choice.
The participants ranked the subjects that presented barriers most often for their students with visual impairments in the resource room. The alternatives were reading, writing, math, science, and other. The results showed that 61% of participants selected the other choice that presented barriers most often for their students with visual impairments in the resource room. ECC was written by the participants under the other choice.

The frequency of completion homework in the resource room by students with visual impairments was also investigated. According to the results, 46% of participants reported that their students rarely completed homework, and 29% of participants reported that their students often completed homework in the resource room. Additionally, 13% of participants noted that their students always completed homework, and 13% of participants noted that their students never completed homework in the resource room. Figure 4 shows the frequency of students completed homework in the resource room for students with visual impairments.

Figure 4. Frequency of Completion Homework by Students
The participants ranked the subjects that their students with visual impairments completed homework in the resource room. The alternatives were reading, writing, math, science, and other. “Other” was selected by 63% of participants for their students with visual impairments completed homework in the resource room.

The next question investigated the barriers that impeded the efficiency of the resource room practices for students with visual impairments. It was possible to select more than one alternative for the participants. 24 participants selected 48 alternatives. Participants averagely selected two alternatives for the question. The results showed that 54% of participants reported that inadequate learning space/room conditions were the barrier that impeded the efficiency of the resource room practices for students with visual impairments. While 50% of participants pointed out the lack of cooperation and collaboration with the regular education teacher as a barrier, 33% of participants reported that students’ level differences were the barrier that impeded the efficiency of the resource room practices for students with visual impairments. Additionally, 29% of participants pointed out the lack of administrative support as a barrier. Figure 5 shows the barriers that impeded the efficiency of resource room practices for students with visual impairments.
Figure 5. Barriers That Teachers Faced in a Resource Room

“Other” was chosen by 33% of participants for the question and explained the barriers that impeded the efficiency of the resource room practices for students with visual impairments. Two participants pointed out the lack of time as a barrier. One of them mentioned that she did not have sufficient time to remove students from their class to come to resource room. The other one mentioned that she spent time with some students in the resource class supporting their core classes, but she did not have time to focus on vision related instruction (ECC and IEP goals).
Another participant complained that she had impossible itinerant travel schedule to her resource room hours. One other stated that she did not have a true resource setting. Another participant mentioned that being understaffed and lack of resources for students who are blind/visually impaired as barriers. She also pointed out the severe needs of some students left students who "need" less attention with a lower level of attention and academic support. The other participant mentioned the access problem as a barrier. She stated that much of the math program was done on the smart board in real time. No one had access to the information used prior to when the board was touched, and random clocks, money, equations, graphs, etc. were generated. This was very difficult to adapt for braille students.

Additionally, the frequency of meeting between resource room teacher and general education teacher of students with visual impairments was investigated. The alternatives were always, often, rarely, and never for the question. The results showed that 61% of participants reported that they often met with regular education teachers to discuss student's progress. While 22% of participants always met, 17% of participants rarely met with regular education teacher to discuss student's progress. Figure 6 shows that the frequency of meeting between resource room teacher and general education teacher of students with visual impairments.
Figure 6. Frequency of Meeting between Resource Room Teacher and General Education Teacher

The participants rated the collaboration with the regular classroom teachers on academic, social, and behavioral goals for the students with visual impairments in three different questions. One was the lowest and five was the highest alternative for the question. While 35% of participants rated “five,” 35% of participants rated “three” for academic goals, and the mean was 3.52. The results showed that 36% of participants rated “three” for social goals, and the mean was 2.86. Furthermore, 45% of participants rated “three” for behavioral goals, and the mean was 2.95 for behavioral goals.

The frequency of meeting between resource room teacher and parents of students with visual impairments also was investigated. The alternatives were always, often, rarely, and never for the question. The results showed that 43% of participants often met with the parents to discuss student's progress, and 43% of participants rarely met with the parents to discuss student's progress, too. Moreover, only 13% noted that they always met
with the parents to discuss student's progress. Figure 7 shows that the frequency of meeting between resource room teacher and parents of students with visual impairments.

Figure 7. Frequency of Meeting between Resource Room Teacher and Parents

The collaboration with the parents on academic, social, and behavioral goals for the students with visual impairments were investigated in three different questions. The TVIs rated the collaboration with parents in those questions, and one was the lowest and five was the highest alternative. Nearly 35% of participants rated three for academic goals, and the mean was 3.08. Slightly more than 36% of participants rated three for social goals, and the mean was 3.27. Additionally, 50% of participants rated three for behavioral goals, and the mean was 3.27.

Moreover, the frequency of equipment that used in the resource room by students with visual impairments was investigated. The alternatives were always, often, rarely, never, and do not know. Most participants indicated that they always or often used the following equipment and activities in the resource room with students with visual
impairments: textbooks, pictures, computer simulations/games, demonstrations, hands-on experiences, worksheets, inquiry activities, and student designed activities. Most participants indicated that they rarely or never used the following equipment in the resource room with students with visual impairments: videos, power point presentations, whiteboard projections, lectures, group work, partner work, and drama/role playing.

The last question investigated the availability of accessible technologies for students with visual impairments in the resource room. The alternatives were yes, no, n/a (not applicable), and do not know. The results showed that 81% of participants had CCTV, and 62% of participants had Braille notetaker. While 86% of participants had computer/laptop with screen enlargement software, 76% of participants had accessible IPad. Moreover, 65% of participants had accessible table computer in their resource rooms. Participants also reported that they had braillewriter, Prodigi, Ruby and Aladdin magnifiers, and synthetic speech devices in their resource rooms.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this descriptive survey research study was to investigate how resource room teachers describe resource room practices based on their experiences with students with visual impairments in a resource room. The research questions were as follows:

1. What degree of collaboration and coordination between a resource room teacher and a general education teacher, and a resource room teacher and parents of the students with visual impairments in terms of academic, social, and behavioral goals?

2. Which equipment and accessible technologies are used in the resource room with students with visual impairments? How much time do resource room teachers spend with students with visual impairments? Which subjects do students with visual impairments receive instruction in the resource room?

3. What are some barriers that impede the efficiency of the resource room practices?

The responses to the survey questions and findings of the study were initial for the students with visual impairments in the resource room. There was not found particularly any research that teachers describe resource room practices based on their experiences with students with visual impairments in a resource room.
Question 1

The first research question investigated the collaboration and coordination among a resource room teacher and a general education teacher, and a resource room teacher and parents of the students with visual impairments in terms of academic, social, and behavioral goals. I investigated the question because the collaboration and coordination between the teachers and parents are significant not only for the success of students with visual impairments in resource rooms but also for every student in different placement options. For example, Dev & Haynes (2015) found that collaboration and consultation among the teachers with the support of school administrators and parent involvement were key factors for the success of the students with disabilities in inclusion classrooms. Resource room teachers needed to have more training especially in consultation and collaboration skills and needed to have more time to consult and cooperate with regular classroom teachers (Glomb & Morgan, 1991). When students with disabilities were placed in inclusive settings, collaboration became more essential to families (Edwards & Da Fonte, 2012). In addition, 50% of participants point out the lack of cooperation and collaboration with the regular education teacher as a barrier that impedes the efficiency of the resource room practices, in the present study.

In the present study, the results showed that resource room teachers rarely/often/always met with general education teachers and parents. The frequency of meeting between resource room teachers and general education teachers was bigger than the frequency of meeting between resource room teachers and parents. While 57% of resource room teachers always or often met with parents, 83% of resource room teachers
always or often met with general education teachers. The participants reported that the collaboration between resource room teachers and general education teachers on academic goals was more than on social and behavioral goals. On the other hand, the participants reported that the collaboration between resource room teachers and parents on social and behavioral goals was more than on academic goals. Those results can be interpreted that resource room teachers meet with general education teachers to discuss academic goals for the students with visual impairments, but resource room teachers meet with parents to discuss social and behavioral goals for the students with visual impairments.

Question 2

The equipment and accessible technologies that used in the resource room with students with visual impairments were investigated in the survey. The participants reported that they always/often used textbooks, pictures, computer simulations/games, demonstrations and worksheets as equipment and hands-on experiences, inquiry activities and student designed activities as activities in the resource room with students with visual impairments. The participants also reported that they rarely or never used the videos, power point presentations, whiteboard projections and lectures as equipment and group work, partner work, and drama/role playing as activities in the resource room with students with disabilities. More than 80% of participants had CCTV, computer/laptop with screen enlargement software, and slightly more than 75% of participants had accessible IPad. Moreover, more than 60% of participants had Braille notetaker and accessible table computer in their resource rooms. Participants also reported that they had
braillewriter, Prodigi, Ruby and Aladdin magnifiers, and synthetic speech devices in their resource rooms. These results can be interpreted that resource room teachers had an adequate accessible technology available to their students with visual impairments in the resource room.

The amount of time that resource room teachers spent with students with visual impairments were investigated in the survey. There are some studies in the literature concentrated on time utilization of the resource room teachers. For instance, Sargent (1981) found that resource room teachers spent slightly more than half of time in direct instruction in a resource room. They spent 16% of the time for preparation and planning for instruction, 9% in general school duties and 9% in consulting with staffs. Direct instruction took more time than any other activities in the resource room.

In addition, approximately 75% of the administrators reported that resource room teachers have 45 minutes or less planning time each day, and only 5% of the administrators reported that the teachers have more than 75 minutes planning time (Whittaker & Taylor 1995). Students with disabilities in all special education alternatives spent slightly more than 4.5 hours in the classroom. Slightly more than 65% of 4.5 hours was allocated to learning tasks, and students were on task about 65% of the allocated time. Consequently, students spent specifically 33% of the school day on learning tasks (Rich & Ross, 1986).

In current study, the amount of time that students with visual impairments spend in the resource room varied from less than one hour to more than three hours. It is seen that even though 62.5% of participants spend a maximum of two hours, 37.5% of
participants spend more than two hours in a day with students with visual impairments in the resource room. If inclusion principles can be applied better for the students with visual impairments, they may need less time in the resource room. In my opinion, if general education teachers differentiate instruction and make accommodations, students with visual impairments may feel safe themselves, so they may need less time in the resource room.

It was found that Science was received much less than any other subjects in the resource room by the students with visual impairments. These results reflect the work of Wild & Paul (2012). In that research study, a survey with teachers of the students with visual impairments. According to the results, more than 80% of participants indicated that students with visual impairments were included when working on scientific experiments. The results showed that students with visual impairments spent the majority of their time in regular education classrooms with their peers. (Wild & Paul, 2012).

About half of participants selected “other,” as most often their students with visual impairments received the instruction of other subjects in the resource room. Although braille reading and technology were used by participants under the other choice, more than half of the participants who chose “other” pointed out the ECC (expanded core curriculum) was received most often by students with visual impairments in the resource room as an instruction. The ECC consists of the following nine areas: compensatory or access skills, career education, independent living skills, O&M skills and concepts, recreational and leisure skills, self-determination skills, social interaction skills, use of assistive technology, and sensory efficiency skills (Sapp & Hatlen, 2010,
It was found that students with visual impairments in the resource room received ECC more than any other subjects. These results can be interpreted that resource room teachers do not teach students with visual impairments only academic lessons in the resource room but also prepare them for life after school.

Question 3

The third question investigated the barriers that impede the efficiency of the resource room practices. Glomb & Morgan (1991) found the following as common barriers based on the responses of resource room teachers: lack of time to consult with regular education teachers, regular classroom teacher’s knowledge of strategies and procedures for working with students with disabilities, regular classroom teacher’s attitudes about working with students with disabilities, lack of administrative support for working with general classroom teachers, and resource room teacher’s lack of knowledge of effective instructional strategies.

The results of the current study supported Glomb & Morgan’s (1991) findings. For example, lack of consultation and collaboration with regular education teachers and lack of administrative support were found as common barriers in both studies. In the current study, 50% of participants pointed out the lack of cooperation and collaboration with the regular education teacher as a barrier. Additionally, 29% of participants pointed out the lack of administrative support as a barrier that impeded the efficiency of the resource room practices for students with visual impairments. These results can be interpreted that cooperation and collaboration among general education teachers and resource room teachers were crucial for the success of students with visual impairments.
In the present study, 33% of participants reported that students’ level differences were the barrier, and 54% of participants reported that inadequate learning space/room conditions were the barrier that impeded the efficiency of the resource room practices for students with visual impairments. Being understaffed and lack of resources, impossible itinerant travel schedule, accessibility problem, and lack of sufficient time also were shared as barriers that impeded the efficiency of the resource room practices students with visual impairments. Inadequate learning space, being understaffed, and lack of resources can be grouped under the lack administration support because providing a learning space, assigning a staff, and providing resources are the mission of the administrators. If principals provide resources and safe, adequate learning space, resource room practices for the students with visual impairments can be improved.

Limitations

The results of this survey are not generalizable to the general public and results do not reflect the entire field of visual impairment education because the survey only explored how resource room teachers describe resource room practices based on their experiences with students with visual impairments in a resource room. I asked all teachers in AER and who were members of the Facebook community of TVIs to participate in this research. The researchers were not able to discern the number of active participants who gained access to this survey as a result of sharing and liking on Facebook and forwarding online. Therefore, the exact number of teachers who accessed to this survey was not known, but only 56 TVIs submitted their responses to the survey. 56 participation may be interpreted as low response rate.
Some TVIs commented on the Facebook group that I posted the survey, and they stated that they did not have enough experience in a resource room with students with visual impairments. Therefore, they did not participate in the survey. This might be one of the reasons for low response rate. In addition, the respondents may not have known the answer to a specific question, or they may have decided to skip over part of the questions which is common in survey research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Because respondents were not forced to respond to all questions, the number of responses varied from question to question in the survey. Even though about 40 response were provided for the first questions, only around 20 response were taken for the last questions. Therefore, low response rate for participation to the survey and taking responses less than others for some questions by the participants are the limitations of the study.

Content validity of the survey was limited. I wrote the questions contained in the survey and one other researcher reviewed the questions for content validity. The questions were not vetted with current practicing resource room teachers or teachers of students with visual impairments. This is a further limitation of this research study.

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this national survey research study was to investigate how resource room teachers describe resource room practices based on their experiences with students with visual impairments in a resource room. The resource room teachers described their experiences and practices with students with visual impairments in a resource room by completing survey questions. The findings of the study provide initial data into the use of resource rooms by students with visual impairments and the services
the rooms and teachers in those rooms provide. This is the first study of its kind in the field of visual impairments.

Collaboration and cooperation among resource room teachers and general education teachers and parents, as well as the equipment and technology used, time spent in the room, subjects taught, and were described as barriers in this study. For example, resource room teachers and parents meet less frequently than resource room teachers and general education teachers meet to discuss student’s progress. Even though resource room teachers and general education teachers meet more frequently, lack of collaboration and cooperation between teachers was found the second highest response as barriers that impeded the efficiency of the resource room practices. Teachers need to be aware of the barriers to learning described above and work together, with parents, to help overcome those barriers in order to promote student success.

Instruction in the science content was provided at a much lower frequency than any other subject in the resource room for students with visual impairments. Inadequate learning space/room conditions were chosen by resource room teachers as barriers that impeded the efficiency of the resource room practices. ECC (Expanded Core Curriculum) was received most often by students with visual impairments in the resource room as an instruction. These findings provide researchers better understanding for resource room practices with students with visual impairments.

Future research should examine suggestions or solutions for the barriers described by resource room teachers. Furthermore, the way in which students receive instruction in the ECC in a resource room should also be investigated. An examination as to the reasons
why Science received much less time for instruction than any other subject in the
resource room by the students with visual impairments should be investigated.
References


Sapp, W., & Hatlen, P. (2010). The expanded core curriculum: Where we have been, where we are going, and how we can get there. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness, 104*(6), 338-348.


1. Please indicate your gender.
   a. Female
   b. Male
   c. Other

2. Please indicate your race and ethnicity.
   a. [Asian/Pacific Islander]
   b. [Black]
   c. [Latino/a]
   d. [Native American]
   e. [white]
   f. [bi/multi-racial]
   g. [other] Specify: ______________________
   h. [don’t know]
   i. [refused]

3. Are you visually impaired?
   a. Yes
   b. No
4. How many years have you been a teacher?
   a. Less than 5
   b. 5-10
   c. 10-15
   d. 15-20
   e. 20-25
   f. 25-30
   g. More than 30

5. In Which state do you live?
   a. [text box]

6. What is your educational background and certification area(s)?
   a. [text box]

7. What is your highest earned degree?
   a. Bachelor
   b. Master
   c. Doctorate

8. What age groups do you serve? Please check all that apply.
   a. Preschool
   b. Elementary
   c. Middle school
   d. High school
   e. Post high school
9. Do you have experience in General Education?
   a. Yes (if yes what experience do you have?)
      i. Co-teach with general education teacher
      ii. Co-plan with general education teacher
      iii. Teach general education classes [text box to indicate]
      iv. Other [describe]
   b. No

10. What is your position in the school?
   a. Full time resource teacher
   b. Part-time resource/part time regular education
   c. Part time resource/part time consultant
   d. Other [text box to indicate]

11. What % of your caseload are students with additional disabilities?
   a. 1-25
   b. 26-50
   c. 51-75
   d. 76-100

12. In what type of educational setting do you work? Please check all that apply.
   a. Public
   b. Private
   c. Specialized school
   d. Charter school
e. Community school

f. Other [text box to indicate]

13. How many students do you serve in the resource room?
   a. 0 (if 0 radio button to “thank you”)
   b. 1
   c. 2
   d. 3
   e. 4
   f. 5
   g. More than 5 [text box to indicate]

14. How much time do you spend in a day with the students in the resource room?
   a. Less than 1 hour
   b. 1 hour to 2 hours
   c. 2 hours to 3 hours
   d. More than 3 hours

15. Which subjects do your students receive instruction in the resource room? Please check all that apply.
   a. Reading
   b. Writing
   c. Math
   d. Science
   e. Other [text box to indicate]
16. Please rate the subjects that your students receive instruction in the resource room most often? (1 least, 5 most)
   o Reading
   o Writing
   o Math
   o Science
   o Other [text box to indicate]

17. Which subjects present barriers for your students in the resource room? (1 least, 5 most)
   a. Reading
   b. Writing
   c. Math
   d. Science
   e. Other [text box to indicate]

18. How often does your student complete homework in the resource room?
   a. Always
   b. Often
   c. Rarely
   d. Never

19. Please rate the subjects that your student completed homework in the resource room? (1 least, 5 most)
   o Reading
20. What are the barriers that impede the efficiency of the resource room practices?

Please check all that apply.

a. Lack of cooperation and collaboration with the regular education teacher
b. Lack of administrative support
c. Inadequate learning space- room conditions
d. Students’ level differences
e. Other [text box to indicate]

21. How often do you meet with regular education teachers to discuss student’s progress?

a. Always
b. Often
c. Rarely
d. Never

22. Please rate the collaboration with the regular classroom teacher on academic goals for the student (1-least, 5-most)

- 1
- 2
- 3
23. Please rate the collaboration with the regular classroom teacher on social goals for the student (1-least, 5-most)
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

24. Please rate the collaboration with the regular classroom teacher on behavioral goals for the student (1-least, 5-most)
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

25. How often do you meet with parents to discuss student’s progress?
   a. Always
   b. Often
   c. Rarely
   d. Never
26. Please rate the collaboration with the parents on academic goals for the student (1-least, 5-most)
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

27. Please rate the collaboration with the parents on social goals for the student (1-least, 5-most)
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

28. Please rate the collaboration with the parents on behavioral goals for the student (1-least, 5-most)
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
29. How often are the following used in the resource room by your students with visual impairments?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment Name</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Do Not Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pictures</td>
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<td>Computer Simulations/games</td>
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<td>PowerPoint Presentations</td>
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<td>Whiteboard Projections</td>
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<td>Demonstrations</td>
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<td>Lectures</td>
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<td>Group Work</td>
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<td>Partner Work</td>
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<td>Hands-on experiences</td>
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<td>Scale Models</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worksheets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inquiry Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student-designed Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drama/Role playing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other: Please Indicate</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
30. Are the following types of accessible technology available to your students with visual impairments in the resource room?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment Name</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCTV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Braille</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notetaker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer/laptop with Screen Enlargement Software</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessible IPad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessible Table Computer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other [Text Box]</td>
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</table>