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Running Head: THE URBAN PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN FACILITATING INCLUSION

Servant Leadership: The Urban Principal's Role in Facilitating Inclusion

A dissertation submitted to the Division of Research and Advanced Studies

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Abstract

This study intends to examine the specific relationships between general education and special education teachers and the principal's role in facilitating their shared success relative to inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom and curriculum. The information gathered may help inform the practice of principals leading teams in the process of creating inclusive settings. Providing support to collaborating teachers improves the services delivered to students. Discovering patterns and behaviors that sustain successful teams may aid in the overall achievement of schools.

The application of servant leadership principles assists principals in facilitating inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. These ten themes discovered across sites indicate that commonalities exist: shared philosophy; concerns about teacher/pupil ratio; time; planning; communication; professional development; flexibility; principal's visibility; team stability; and high expectations for student achievement. All participants shared the daily focus of meeting the needs of students.

Principals who support inclusion: are visible during the school day; provide stability in team membership; are flexible in organizing schedules; provide professional development that teachers find applicable to their daily work; and join teachers with similar philosophical beliefs when organizing inclusion teams. The most important finding is that all principals examined held high expectations for student achievement and expected teachers to provide students with instruction reflecting those elevated expectations.

Implications for practice are that principals who wish to support teachers working collaboratively in inclusive settings should nurture a school culture that supports teachers meeting the needs of all students. Implications for principal and teacher preparation programs

and staff development planners are addressed. Implications for research indicate that the ten themes identified should be more deeply examined, prioritized, and used to increase the body of educational leadership knowledge. Other implications for research involve investigating the relationship between school culture and the success of inclusion in schools.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to all of my students: past, present and future. Danny Gniandowski and Donnie Oda greatly inspired my work in the area of inclusion. Danny was one of those rare individuals sent to Earth to change the lives he touched. His life here is over but his spirit continues to guide the inclusion work I do. I hope that one day Donnie will break the spell of autism to let us know what educators need to do to support learners like him. I believe that Donnie makes huge progress during the times he is included with his peers for instruction, I wish there was a way to quantify those gains.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Problem Statement

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) or The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2000 (ESEA) and Adequate Yearly Performance (AYP) requirements for subgroups of students with disabilities have increased the curricular demands placed on special education teachers, students, and schools. As educational leaders, principals are required to relay these legal, ethical and moral demands to teachers. General education teachers may no longer push to have struggling students removed to a special education room. Parents seek the support of advocacy groups, which more frequently push for placement of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Parents are more empowered to insist that children are fully included in general education classrooms. Special education teachers provide students with personally designed instruction and curricular adaptations. General education teachers provide students access to the articulated curriculum, by imparting their content knowledge. The two service providers must now work together to meet the needs of all students instead of working in silos as they frequently have since the implementation of Public Law 94-142 (The Education for all Handicapped Children Act, 1975) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Principals face multiple layers of concern regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Teachers resist inclusion practices, due to factors such as fear, change, lack of understanding of the legal requirements, inexperience in collaboration, and pressure to meet all of the high stakes curricular requirements (Fullan, 2001). Parents of students with disabilities learn to lobby for the least restrictive environment for their child without understanding the conceptual difficulty inclusion presents to teachers and school

structures. Students in inclusion classrooms face obstacles that teachers must address, eliminate or minimize. Special education teachers sometimes receive treatment from general education teachers which minimizes their voice and discounts their wealth of expertise (Friend & Pope, 2005).

Looking beyond these legal, personal, and cultural problems the question of social justice appears. Social justice issues exist in all schools. The study sites, situated in a city school district with all the complexities of urban schooling, further amplify the need for inclusive practices (Bell, 2004; Kozol, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1999, McLaren, 1989). All students deserve access to high quality instruction, in the articulated curriculum, from highly qualified teachers who care about student success and are able to adapt learning activities to meet the diverse needs of all learners. "An argument could be made that equality of opportunity cannot exist until social inequalities such as unequal access to education have been addressed" (Merrett, 2004, p. 95). Principals who concern themselves and staff with assuring a socially just environment seek practices for providing appropriate settings for all learners. Relationships between professionals model relationship expectations for students (Friend & Pope, 2005). Harry and Klingner (2007) suggest that schools collaborate in order to provide all students full access to the general curriculum. Addressing the problem of urban principals facilitating successful inclusion environments addresses issues of social justice.

Increased accountability measures increase demands in classrooms, offices, and boardrooms for school personnel. Principals have increased expectations of teachers since the passage of NCLB. The demands face teachers every day. Often professional development efforts in schools do not match the needs of the teachers. Most general education teachers' and special education teachers' training programs provide different skill sets and theoretical bases (Friend,

2000; Friend & Pope, 2005). Principals expect teachers to implement inclusion and may unknowingly neglect to provide opportunities for learning, planning, and instituting appropriate practices for teachers working collaboratively in delivering instruction to shared students.

Teachers frequently do not have shared understanding of the curriculum, methods of adaptation, or means of implementing inclusive practices in classrooms. Compounding teacher frustration is the lack of knowledge of legal mandates and ramifications for non-compliance with NCLB. Teachers resist change for a variety of reasons and many principals do not know how to help or where to start the change toward an inclusive environment for students with disabilities (Conner & Ferri, 2007). Evidence that collaboration assists the process of successful inclusion exists (Friend & Pope, 2005; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004; Villa & Thousand, 2005), but practitioners often do not have access to this evidence.

Two studies point to the need to investigate the role of the principal in inclusion practices. Witt (2003) examined educational administration programs and their preparation of principals regarding special education issues. Her findings indicated that principals were not as well prepared for leadership in the area of special education as the job demands them to be. Rau (2003) examined perceptions of principals' support of inclusion. Interviews and observations with teachers, staff, and parents were conducted to find their perceptions of support provided by the principal for building inclusive cultures in schools. Both studies indicate a need to further investigate the principal's role and the need to determine best practices for principals committed to improving practice relative to special education.

Professional significance of the problem rests in the school leader's need to build a cooperative climate that staff model for students. This positive climate also uses success to increase student achievement. Principals who maintain a commitment to socially just practices

enact practices that support collaboration, cooperation, and shared responsibility for all students in the building (Artiles, Harris-Murri, & Rostenberg, 2006).

What we do not know about the urban principal's role is whether he/she influences the success of teams working together in inclusive settings. We can assume since the principal influences the culture and climate of the building (Barth, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2006) that there are specific principal practices that positively or negatively affect the relationships in the building. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the specific relationships between general education and special education teachers and the principal's role in facilitating their shared success relative to inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom and curriculum. The intent of this study is to identify general themes of practice that assist urban principals in facilitating the relationships between collaborating teachers in inclusion programs.

The Research Question

The research question for this study is: How do selected urban principals facilitate the relationship between general education and special education teachers in K-12 inclusion programs?

Review of Literature

This section includes basic evidence, which suggests that inclusion is successful. This review of literature presents the historical and legal context of including students with disabilities into general education classrooms. The historical and legal aspects of inclusion begin the investigation of inclusion. An attempt to describe what inclusion looks like according to research completed in school sites provides the reader with a definition of inclusion and inclusion setting. Parents struggle to engage schools in the process of including students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Educators charged with delivering instruction in inclusive settings, must

take into account the individual needs of students. This shift changes roles and expectations for parents as well as school personnel. Parents and educators form new relationships in order to meet legal and moral responsibilities.

An examination of the educators relative to the nature of the work performed in urban schools follows the discussion about students and teachers. The discussion about the work of principals and teachers working in urban schools, which successfully include students with disabilities in general education classrooms provides the reader with an understanding of why examining the principal's role as facilitator is important. Building principals set the tone of schools (Barth, 1990; Quinn, 2004; Sergiovanni, 2006). The move to include students with special needs in general education classrooms presents an especially multifarious dilemma. Teachers simultaneously face increased accountability and increased expectations to provide differentiation of instruction (Kluth & Straut, 2001; Scheurich, Skrla, & Johnson, 2004). Meeting a wider range of student needs while meeting the expectation that all students perform at or above grade level benchmarks creates a high pressure atmosphere.

The final area of the literature review, collaboration, focuses on the need of the people involved in delivery of instruction to work together in concert with the articulated curriculum, their assigned roles, and professional expectations, to meet the needs of individual students served. Meeting the needs of an ever-increasing span of diverse learners causes wider gaps for teachers to close (Tillman & Johnson, 2003). Before NCLB initiated the most recent attention toward students with disabilities, Paul and Ward (1996) presented the notion that inclusion is an ethical issue. Social justice and legal implications suggest that implementing successful inclusive practices meets the needs of all students.

Inclusion

Inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms has a historical premise woven within the development of federal law and ensuing local implementation. Understanding why inclusion is required accompanies the passage of new laws such as "No child left behind" (NCLB) and its adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements. Legislation and judicial decisions continue to cause educators to define inclusion and inclusion settings. Teachers and principals struggle to find evidence of successful inclusion and discover means of implementing models of inclusion in their schools and classrooms. The nature of students with special learning and physical needs require schools to shift from traditional pedagogy to a more collaborative means of instruction delivery.

Historical and Legal Overview

Efforts to include children with special needs in public schools began as early as the establishment of pubic schools. "In its early days, special education embraced the diagnostic/prescriptive model characteristic of modern medicine, and disability was viewed as pathology" (Sailor & Roger, 2005, p. 504). Dr. Alexander Graham Bell spoke to the National Education Association in 1898:

> Why shouldn't these children form an annex to the public school system, receiving special instruction from special teachers, who shall be able to give instruction to little children who are either deaf, blind, or mentally deficient, without sending them away from their homes or from the ordinary companions with whom they are associated? (as cited in Gearheart, 1967, p. v).

The historical and legal trail of inclusion here focuses on 1973-2004, beginning with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This landmark legislation began the inclusion process. Inclusion in 1973 meant students with disabilities could not be denied access to public schools.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Evaluation and Placement Must be Nondiscriminatory

Failure to provide persons with disabilities with an appropriate education frequently occurs as a result of misclassification and inappropriate placement. It is unacceptable to base individual placement decisions on presumptions and stereotypes regarding persons with disabilities or on classes of such persons. For example, it would be a violation of the law for a recipient to adopt a policy that every student who is hearing impaired, regardless of the severity of the child's disability, must be placed in a state school for the deaf.

Section 504 requires the use of evaluation and placement procedures that ensure that children are not misclassified, unnecessarily labeled as having a disability, or incorrectly placed, based on inappropriate selection, administration, or interpretation of evaluation materials.

These sources and factors include, for example, aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social and cultural background, and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is the effectiveness with which the individual meets the standards of personal independence and social responsibility expected of his or her age and cultural group. (http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/edlite-FAPE504.html retrieved June 5, 2006).

The following timeline outlines what Villa and Thousand (2000) view as the historical context of inclusion. They use the entire first chapter of *Restructuring for caring and effective education: Piecing the puzzle together* to explain the conceptual framework and paradigm shift necessary to move all schools to inclusion.

1975   Public Law (PL) 94-142, The Education for all Handicapped Children Act

Required all states to provide a free appropriate public education for every child between

the ages of 3 and 21 regardless of how or how seriously he may be handicapped.

1985   Discussion began on a national level prompted by Assistant Secretary of Education

Madeline Will's Wingspread regular education initiative (REI) speech and her two

subsequent related publications in 1986 (p. 8).

1986   PL 99-457   "The Preschool Law", expanded services for all 3-5 year old children with a

disability and included services for birth to age 3 children with a disability. The word

handicapped was replaced by the word disabled.

1990   PL 94-142 amended by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA) which extended civil rights protection in employment,

transportation, public accommodations, state and local governments and

telecommunications to people with disabilities. The language used to refer to persons

protected by IDEA was changed to person first language.

1990   IDEA PL-101-476 Placement was to be determined by student needs and not labels. The

central issue was that appropriate curriculum adaptation should occur within the general

education classroom.

1992   Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) developed and

published 6 resolutions, one of which was:

> for the full inclusion of special programs through instructional
> environments that eliminated tracking and segregation, services
> that focused on the prevention of learning problems rather than
> after the fact labeling, minimal restrictive regulations, and flexible
> use of funding to promote success for all children (Villa & Thousand,
> 2000, p. 11).

1992   National Association of School Boards of Education (NASBE) released a report

which suggested a major shift in how students with disabilities were educated. They

"charged state boards of education to establish goals and policies that supported

collaboration between general education and special education" (Villa & Thousand,

2000, pp. 11-12). NASBE also recommended creation of a unified educational system.

This unification should take place by changes in organizational and instructional practice,

pre-service preparation, and in-service training. The group encouraged teachers to focus on effective instruction.

1993   Almost all states were implementing inclusion at some level.

1994   Goals 2000: Educate America Act (PL 103-227) Supported by President Clinton, this act included explicit language that educational goals apply to all students including minorities, limited English proficiency students and students with disabilities.

1995   The National Center for Educational Restructuring and Inclusion found that there was increased attention to supporting the inclusion of students, but that the plans were less than sufficient to achieve the Goals 2000 level.

1997   Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reauthorized. PL 105-17 reaffirmed that special needs students indeed need to be placed in general education classrooms and that general education teachers must be included in individualized education program (IEP) planning processes and meetings.

More recently Congress has enacted legislation which further supports the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

2001   Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), PL 107-110, reauthorized and nicknamed "No child left behind" (NCLB), this outlined the expectation of closing the achievement gaps between students with disabilities, minorities, and poor children and their higher achieving peers.

2004   IDEA (PL 108-446), reauthorized in alignment with NCLB.

There is a lack of understanding about the law regarding the school and teachers' obligations to special needs students. There is legal confusion among the experts and legislators. Interpretation of laws and guidelines ranges from the parents' view that nothing is too much to

ask for and the over extended district treasurer's view that anything extra is too much. Some proponents of inclusion see inclusion as a benefit to all disabled students regardless of cost and measurable benefit (Hoy & Hoy, 2006).

In 1975, PL 94-142, set IDEA in place. Least restrictive environment (LRE) is the piece of the legislation which provided the understanding of inclusion that practitioners apply to make sense of the requirements of the law. The idea of inclusion as a policy is included in the continuum of options or services under the policy umbrella of IDEA. Practitioners started crafting words, beginning with "mainstreaming", which defined placement. The concept of mainstreaming held with it the application that special education students had to earn the right to be in the regular classroom with peers. This practical word held no legal ties.

Interpretation of the law occurred through the court system. Case law defined the term least restrictive environment. Time students with special needs spent with non-special needs peers in the school setting began to be documented. Parents and practitioners began to insist on equal access as a practice, but had not yet accomplished the establishment of inclusion in the regular classroom as a right. Thus, the grassroots movement toward inclusion began. The premise of social context and service delivery were organized within a group of services to support special needs students.

The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH) is an organization formed in 1975 to stand for the rights of the severely handicapped. TASH, "an international association of people with disabilities, their family members, other advocates, and professionals fighting for a society in which inclusion of all people in all aspects of society is the norm" (http://www.tash.org/ retrieved June 3, 2006), became instrumental in driving toward more inclusive practices and language in the law.

> TASH supports a vision of high expectations for all students and a commitment to a set of learning goals or standards that are strong, clear, understood, and put into practice. TASH values and supports diversity and recognizes both the legal right to and the reciprocal benefits of inclusive education (http://www.tash.org/ retrieved June 3, 2006).

President George W. Bush's articulated views (October 2, 2001) on individuals with disabilities:

> It is imperative that special education operate as an integral part of a system that expects high achievement of all children, rather than as a means of avoiding accountability for children who are more challenging to educate or who have fallen behind (http://www.ed.gov/inits/commissionsboards/whspecialeducation/about.html retrieved June 3, 2006).

President Bush's plans, under the direction of NCLB, would override IDEA as the way implementers looked at special education delivery. As of 2001, evidence that educational systems fail students due to the lack of expectations tied to the general education curriculum prefaced the beginning of changes undertaken with the passage of NCLB. Adequate yearly progress (AYP) measuring of various subgroups, including students with disabilities, brings the needs of students with disabilities to the forefront for every local district in the United States. Report cards and increased accountability for local improvement demand that communities institute change in areas that demonstrate achievement gaps.

The latest reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 addressed the model of waiting to fail. There are concepts outlined to close the achievement gap. Including language about the response to intervention (RTI) adds a new layer of safety before identification of disabilities places children in special education. Least restrictive environment (LRE) continues to be contested but is now built into education legislation by providing access to the curriculum due to the testing and accountability provisions of NCLB. Schools must provide access to the curriculum for all students. IDEA is an entitlement law. Free appropriate public education (FAPE), LRE, and due process are specific services children with disabilities are entitled to under the law. NCLB is an

umbrella law; we are responsible for educating every child. Thus, inclusion is a winning situation for all. Since IDEA entitles students to equal educational access and NCLB requires that schools report the progress of all students, each child regardless of the nature of his/her abilities is entitled to a free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, including access to the articulated curriculum and must participate in state level accountability testing measures.

Parents utilized formal and informal organizations and liaisons to begin the grassroots movement toward inclusion. Power brokers Tom Harkin, Jim Jeffords, and Ted Kennedy represented bipartisan support for changing the education of all children. Congress brought the elements of IDEA under the umbrella legislation of NCLB. The teachers, parents, students and schools in which the teachers work individualize the process that has led to the current situations of inclusion. Parents and students represent the voice of inclusion, which continues to provide the impetus of change toward more inclusive schools.

Parents and Students

Turnbull, Strickland, and Hammer, (1978, a & b) provide evidence that collaboration in developing individualized education programs (IEP's) has been a process developed over almost 30 years. The authors describe the IEP process and review the legal requirements as applicable in 1978. The paper examines the IEP as a basis for defining appropriate education. Turnbull, Blue-Banning, Turbiville, and Park (1999) purport that offering traditional educational paradigms as the only option for parent partnerships is too restrictive. Assuming an ecological focus shifts the focus from development of the child to the ecology in which the child can flourish in a responsive context. Culture of the child and parents must also be a consideration in the development of the partnership.

Consideration of quality of life as an overarching goal within the parameters of IDEA for students with disabilities suggests that quality of life should guide the curricular and assessment measures (Turnbull, Turnbull, Wehmeyer, & Park, 2003). Administrators must consider the student outcomes of being productive and living independently as goals. Although difficult to measure, quality of life has implications for implementing IDEA, services and supports. Reconciliation must occur at the policy level between academics and quality of life. Parents and students directly benefit or suffer from quality of life decisions that include or exclude them.

Summers, Hoffman, Marquis, Turnbull, and Poston (2005) compare parents' levels of satisfaction and importance of the aspects of professional partnerships. In the area of satisfaction the parents of children age 6-12 were found to be least satisfied, and parents of children birth to 3 years old were most satisfied (p. 54). Older parents and non-white parents were found to be less satisfied. Parent satisfaction directly relates to the relationship between the parent and the school. Satisfied parents usually have fewer demands and communicate with teachers and administrators in a positive mode.

Use of advocacy groups has increased over the thirty years of inclusion history. Advocates attend to the specific needs of parents attempting to assure that their child can receive a free and appropriate education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Guiding parents through the alphabet soup of education is one function of an advocate. Education, support, and attending meetings with parents are other roles an advocate may fulfill.

Advocates rattle the core of partnerships in many districts. Administrators often perceive advocates as money hungry, demanding and unreasonable. Advocates have been known to represent the needs of children they have never met. Several advocate groups are working hard to change their combative reputation with schools. There are other barriers to partnerships with

parents. Conner and Ferri (2007) look at the public debates over inclusion including the various views of parents. They assert that the medical model used to establish special education practices adds to the paradoxical nature of inclusion.

There seems to be a second or lower tier for special education students that continues despite research and evidence to the contrary. "A disjointed and separatist second system for special students has developed and continues to be the norm" (Wang, Reynolds & Walberg, 1994, p. 151). The separations continue to exist under a variety of names: time out, alternative school, special placement, program, resources room, expulsion, transition classes, home instruction, ability grouping and tracking. Bauer and Brown (2001) report that the dual system still exists in many settings despite efforts toward inclusive settings.

Regardless of whom you represent or whom you believe, the bottom line in inclusion is the student. Meeting the needs of the student must be the focus of teams serving students with disabilities. Shared vision begins with teachers and administrators acknowledging the wishes of the parents. Once a shared vision is established, the best means of meeting a student's needs can be examined. Inclusion is growing as an option for students with more and more severe handicapping conditions. Selecting the proper setting requires knowledge of the models of inclusion available. Prior to selecting a model for a school or a specific student, a working definition of inclusion must be established for the professionals serving the same school community.

Definition of Inclusion and Inclusion Setting.

Inclusion of students with disabilities in the general classroom began as a demand from parents seeking the least restrictive environment for their children (Barnett, & Monda-Amay, 1998). "While inclusion is not a term used in the law and regulations, it is currently the often

used terminology to indicate consideration of the least restrictive environment for students with

disabilities" (Tanner, Linscott, & Galis, 1996).

The following excerpt has been selected to represent the definitional focus for this study:

The term inclusion has been used to describe the education of students with disabilities in the general education setting. Although many definitions have been used to describe inclusion, the term is generally taken to mean that students with disabilities are served primarily in the general education classroom, under the responsibility of the general classroom teacher. When necessary and justifiable, students with disabilities may also receive some of their instruction in another setting, such as a resource room. Additional support can also be provided within the general education classroom, by paraprofessionals or special education teachers. Although this is similar to mainstreaming, a critical difference of inclusion is the view of the general classroom as the primary placement for the student with disabilities, with other special services regarded as ancillary (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004, p. 7).

The word inclusion is not expressed in the law. Inclusion and mainstreaming are words

used to define placement. The following excerpt includes the section of PL 108-446 interpreted

by school districts when determining the level of inclusion provided to students:

PL 108-446, 20 USC 1412, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, Title I Amendments to the individuals with disabilities education act, Part B Assistance for education of all children with disabilities,
Sec. 612 State eligibility,
  (5) Least restrictive environment.--
    (A) In general.--To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (*IDEA Section 612 (a)(5)(A))*
([www.copyright.gov/legislation/pl108-446.html 31](http://www.copyright.gov/legislation/pl108-446.html) retrieved May 31, 2006)

The policy for inclusion in any school district is derived from this legislation on least

restrictive environment (LRE). "As a matter of law, the LRE requirement intends to separate the

questions of educational program and physical settings" (Gerber, 1996, p.168). In their

description of IDEA 1997, Gartner and Lipsky (1999) explain the development of inclusion.

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"Without ever using the word 'inclusion' Congress and the President adopted legislation that has the potential to change education for students with disabilities" (Gartner & Lipsky, 1999, p. 24). They explain that IDEA 1997 provides the basis for making students with disabilities full members of the school community. Continuing the discussion, they posit, "Congress acted more on belief and ideology than on research" (p. 25).

Consideration of the least restrictive environment for each student takes place during the annual individual education program (IEP) planning meeting and includes the input of education professionals, parents, the student, and any other interested parties with a vested interest in the child's placement. The ideology shared by the group and the child specific vision in the IEP blended with state curricular guidelines, federal mandates, and district philosophy determine the actual educational setting placement for each child. The setting is designed by the team or the school to fit the child's needs. However, models of inclusion are established in the literature to assist teams in designing appropriate learning environments. Understanding these models is helpful to principals who work with teachers to create inclusive classrooms.

Models of Inclusion

The models of inclusion presented here serve as frameworks for initiating relationships between teachers who agree to share students. Staff development and change are barriers to cross in the move toward more inclusive teaching (York-Barr & Kronberg 2002). Agreement about curriculum and instruction assists teachers working collaboratively. Students must be integral to the process of selecting any model. Gee (2002) focuses on curriculum and instruction within an inclusive community school. The transformation to inclusive communities cannot happen without consideration of the children and youth served. Inclusion must be embedded in daily practice and planning in order to reach the mission level of a school's vision.

Planning and daily communication support all models. The three delivery models examined by Brown, Kluth, Suomi, and Jorgesen (2002) are: co teaching (2 teachers), team teaching (3 teachers), special education teacher as consultant (4 or more teachers). Variations of these three models for delivery of instruction occur throughout the literature.

The supporting unique needs (SUN) team was organized to meet the needs of administrators, special education teachers, general education teachers, parents, and students (Sobel & Vaughn, 1999). Stakeholders indicated that the district needed an innovative system driven by flexibility, creativity, and professionalism to move to inclusion. Professional development for staff was integrated in the model and tied to specific student needs.

Thousand, Villa, and Nevin (2007) share the use of a book study to introduce four models of co-teaching. They explain that introduction to the models would allow the teams to select the model that best fits their needs and styles. Each bi-weekly staff meeting would begin with a fifteen minute ongoing study of their 2004 book *A guide to co-teaching; Practical tips for facilitating student learning.* They suggest that this process allows the teams to revisit their commitment to co-teaching.

Voltz, Sims, Nelson, and Bivens, (2005) describe a framework to build strong school communities, developed to guide teachers' thinking about inclusive standards-based classrooms. The critical components of inclusion in instruction listed are: methods, materials, environment, content, collaboration, and assessment. Time and a common framework were found to be critical in successful implementation of standards based reform with inclusion. The most basic components of inclusion are the desire to serve the instructional needs of students and a shared vision that inclusion, cooperative teaching and learning meet the needs of a diverse student body.

Desire to serve the students' needs drives teachers and principals to find means and ways to provide learning environments that meet the needs of all learners. Teachers who practice in collaborative settings, with support from principals who share their vision, have the potential to change instruction forever. Teachers' and principals' work does not occur in a vacuum. The next section discusses the challenges and nature of the work of educators serving urban communities.

The Work of Urban Principals and Teachers

Expectations for principal performance as presented in the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards describe what we know about a principal's responsibility to implement best practices for leaders building inclusive environments. The nature of urban principals' work in practice and description of the components of inclusion that a principal can influence assists us in understanding the role of the principal in facilitating inclusion. Servant leadership as described by Greenleaf (2003) enhances what we know about the principal's role in facilitating inclusion models. The following sections address standards of expectation for leaders, the nature of urban educators' work, and a deeper explanation of servant leadership.

Identification of best practices for successful inclusion involves teachers in addition to principals, thus this section contains description and study of the nature of urban teachers work. Literature here is relative to the processes necessary to launch the dynamics required for teachers to build successful inclusion classrooms and the principal's influence on those dynamics and processes. Collaboration begins when teachers agree to work together. The routes of entering a collaborative relationship and building a collaborative school culture described in this segment provide answers specific to the relationships between teachers serving students in inclusive classrooms and the principals who support them. The teachers' work in regards to student achievement in general can be found in job descriptions, Danielson's (2007) *Enhancing*

professional practice: A framework for teaching, and state standards. What follows is a description of the work of urban principals and teachers relative to approaching collaboration, inclusion, and meeting the diverse needs of students with individualized education programs.

Nature of Urban Principals' Work

The Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards stress collaboration within the school community and the larger community, attention to legal and ethical decision making, improving academic performance of all students, and providing appropriate professional development for staff (National Board Policy for Educational Administration, 2002). The work of a principal reaches from the school's office, into classrooms and outside the building walls to the city or urban area surrounding the school. Meeting with community leaders as well as parents and teachers consumes a great amount of the principal's time. Evaluation of staff, supervision of daily operations, preserving a safe learning environment, and keeping abreast of legal obligations represent part of a principal's role. Part of keeping abreast of legal obligations relates to change processes that effect schools. Nearly 40% of a school administrator's time is spent on special education placement and other special education issues (Marshall & Parker, 2006). Given the scope of the principal's responsibilities facilitating any relationship can assist the overall success of the building.

Urban principals must confront negative teacher attitudes and stereotypes (Cooke, 2007). Increased discipline problems arise when teachers do not fully understand their students' culture. Principals must support teachers' efforts to establish trust with students and culturally relevant motivation in order to increase "students' sense of self efficacy, productivity, performance and involvement in schools" (Cooke, 2007, p xvii). Given that often resources in urban schools are limited urban principals must generate this support and motivation without money. Student and

parent poverty compound this lack of educational funding, which detract from the need to focus on academic learning. Regardless of the needs of food, shelter and clothing students come to school, and teachers and principals must meet their educational needs. Urban educational leadership carries a burden of overcoming poverty, crime, learned helplessness, and drugs. Rusk (2003) tells us that "it is the very isolation and hyperconcentration of poor minorities that overwhelms them individually" (p. 134).

Urban principals face unique challenges such as: high rates of family poverty; high student mobility; inadequate teacher preparation to deal with urban settings; racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity; funding; and the lack of coherent financial and curricular planning due to "patchwork" management (Cooke, 2007; Flessa, 2005). Using four case studies to investigate principal behaviors and school outcomes in urban schools, Flessa (2005) presents vignettes which suggest "at least from the principals' own perspective, being principal in an urban school is especially challenging work, given the simultaneous, urgent managerial and instructional needs that demand principals' time" (p. 285). The findings indicate that principals' skills as well as institutional and structural support are required to use management to further academic goals.

An examination of Chicago schools during a restructuring period indicated that principals needed to learn to adjust to a more collaborative form of leadership in the effort to decentralize school leadership (Hess, 1995). Principals were required to implement the decisions made by instructional teams composed of community members, parents and staff. Shared leadership meant that decisions (financial, academic and building policy) and ultimate responsibility rested with the building level committee but the principal was responsible for carrying out decisions made by the committee. Hess (1995) refers to this phenomenon as contested authority.

Professional standards for principals provide a framework of expectations for principals' behaviors. Several National Board Policy for Educational Administration (2002) standards address the need for principals to collaborate and the expectation that principals provide the means to meet the needs of diverse learners. Standard 2.3 states that principals apply best practice to student learning (p. 5). Under this standard, leaders are expected to apply theories and demonstrate concern for diversity to the learning process. Standard 4 specifically addresses collaboration: "educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community member" (p. 9). The details of this standard go on to explain that principals must become skilled in accommodating diverse conditions and dynamics as well as providing "leadership to programs serving students with special and exceptional needs" (p. 12). Standard 5 addresses the need for educational leaders "to promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairly, and in an ethical manner" (p. 13). Standard 6.1 expects building leaders to understand the larger context which includes local, state and federal laws and policies. These mandates include legal precedents. Principals can "describe community norms and values and how they relate to the role of the school in promoting social justice" (p. 14). Blend the standards with district expectations and the job of principals seems overwhelming to many. Leadership encompasses more than meeting standards and motivating people (Barth, 2006; Collins, 2005).

Greenleaf (2003) categorizes servant leadership as leadership that encourages the individuals in the organization to grow personally and professionally while achieving a sense of personal satisfaction. The servant leader provides the setting and other resources necessary to allow those being led to perform at the highest possible level. "The most significant contribution a principal can make to developing others is creating an appropriate context for adult learning.

Context…plays the largest role in determining whether professional development efforts will have an impact on that school" (DuFour, 2001, p. 14). Collins (2005) believes that "true leadership only exists if people follow when they have the freedom not to" (p. 13) and "greatness it turns out is largely a matter of conscious choice and discipline" (p.31). These three key leadership authors support the idea that the principal indeed has the ability and responsibility to facilitate relationships with in the school building.

Virtues (hope, faith, civility, trust, piety) relate to leadership. "Trust gets attention after the school or school district gets into trouble" (Sergiovanni, 2005, p. 119). "Leadership is about helping people understand the problems they face, helping them manage these problems, and even helping them learn to live with them" (p. 122). Sergiovanni (2005) identifies trust and learning as key to leadership. Inclusion and treatment of students with disabilities as equal partners in the learning environment requires trust (Friend & Pope,2005; Kugelmass, 2004).. Trust also arises in the investigation of parents' views toward schools. Lack of trust is indicated by an increase in the number of advocacy groups supporting parents of students with disabilities (Summers, J. A., Hoffman, L., Marquis, J., Turnbull, A., & Poston, D., 2005; Villa & Thousand, 2005).

What we know about the principal's role in facilitating inclusion models links to culture and climate in the building. "Contemporary scholars have observed an emerging style of principal leadership characterized by high faculty involvement in and ownership of decisions, management of the school's vision, and an emphasis on significant change and improvement" (Cooke, 2007, 42). Kugelmass (2004) reports that a theme running through the analysis of leadership practice was that leadership is embedded in the culture of a school. Development of an inclusive culture required a shared commitment by the entire staff to processes that translated

to an overall enhancement of involvement by all participants (Kugelmass, 2004). Again, change must be addressed and the principal serves as a central figure in building positive school culture (Barth, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2006). Establishing inclusion classrooms requires a change in practice and in attitudes.

Slee (1996) states that often educators represent practices "as integration or inclusive education policy in an attempt to combine incompatible discourses of social justice and equity with antithetical languages of special education based on a medical model of disability and corporate mangerialism" (p. 105). The attitudes of building administrators toward special education and their knowledge of special education issues are critical to the success of students with special needs (Witt, 2003). Rau (2003) found that principals' own theoretical knowledge about the benefits and best practices surrounding inclusion seemed to be important in defining the goals of inclusion. One-half of all educational administration preparatory programs examined do not require aspiring principals to learn about special education issues (Witt, 2003).

Barnett and Monda-Amay (1998), prior to NCLB, found that principals viewed inclusion as mostly appropriate for students with mild disabilities. Milne (2003) presents her autobiographical case study about the task of leading a school through the process of becoming the district's designated site for severe and profoundly disabled students. Fear of different students, meeting physical plant requirements, and helping all stakeholders integrate the new "family members" were part of her challenge. Her expertise set the tone for the building and the program expanded to include more students with disabilities in classrooms throughout the school. Limitations and barriers are addressed but not allowed to thwart progress for students.

Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxen, Cabello, and Spagna (2004) stress that no one way of delivering services was superior or inferior. Services were restructured, schools modified

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services, and schools expanded services. Walther-Thomas and DiPaola (2003) present five principles as best practices for building leaders to use in relation to enhance achievement of special education students: create a positive school culture that embraces shared leadership; understand special education laws and the related roles and responsibilities of educators; effective principals are problem solvers; effective principals are good role models; and effective principals facilitate ongoing professional development.

The building principal can influence many components of inclusion classrooms by assessing the needs of the teachers involved and providing the resources necessary to establish successful inclusion classrooms. Providing appropriate professional development moves the team forward together. Discovering which processes launch the dynamics necessary for teachers to build successful inclusion classrooms becomes imperative to the success of the two teachers working together. "It is important for principals and policy-makers to recognize that inclusion requires not just a belief, but a vision which is implemented through a variety of strategies that support the vision" (Rau, 2003, p. 146). Understanding the fluid nature of teaching and collaboration and accepting that not all plans may come to fruition enables the leader to continue to facilitate the relationships between the teachers. The nature of the teacher's work also determines the needs of the two teachers working together.

Nature of Urban Teachers' Work

Urban schools have the highest dropout rates of all public school systems. They educate 40 percent of this country's low-income students and 75 percent of its minority students. Urban districts have the largest number of students with physical, emotional and mental disabilities. In many cases, urban teachers teach in dilapidated buildings with insufficient resources and have little control over curriculum and pedagogical decisions (Adams & Adams, 2003).

If you have read Peter McLaren's (1989) *Life in schools* or Jonathan Kozol's (1985) *Death at an early age,* then you understand the challenges facing today's urban teachers.

Changes have occurred since these two men documented their stark experiences in urban classrooms, but seasoned inner city educators, resoundingly, agree with the problems so eloquently described by McLaren and Kozol. Lighting and heat are often poor. Students frequently lack proper nutrition, clothing and hygiene. Parents, often overwhelmed by survival, view school personnel as the enemy. Basic classroom supplies run out before the school year ends. Teachers show up every day committed to making a difference in students' lives. Providing quality instruction moves teachers and students forward.

Classroom teachers have been conditioned to close the door and run the room. Cuban (1983) presents findings from his historical research about changes in instructional practices. He reports that even through a wide variety of initiatives and educational revolutions teachers still basically teach using teacher-centered instruction. Changing how teachers deliver instruction is extremely difficult. The reforms have affected curriculum and organizational structure of schools but not pedagogy.

Prior to the passage of IDEA and NCLB entrepreneurial educators attempted to create more equitable classrooms through use of inclusive practices. Teachers' perspectives differ based on their role as either special education teacher or general education teacher. Federico, Herrold, and Venn (1999) chronicle the journey of co-teaching from the general education teacher's perspective. They vicariously present the role of the principal and special education teacher. The change process necessary to establish a successful inclusion classroom includes not only one perspective but, the perspective of both teachers involved in the shift.

Prom (1999), a special education teacher, studied the perceptions of two general education classroom teachers who served students with special needs. She worked in the classrooms with the teachers and students. The author was aware that teacher perceptions and

what actually occurred did not always match. The general education teachers' perceptions changed over time; one in a positive direction and the other in a somewhat negative direction. Prom (1999) determined that measuring teacher expectations and frequent review of student goals may be best practice.

General classroom teachers and special education teachers are exposed to different university/collegiate curricula. Pedagogical preparation, performance tasks and skill sets required to gain entrée' into the field via program, graduation, and licensure requirements differ for collegiate students preparing for teaching in special education and general classrooms. Authors, Zuna and Turnbull (2004), address the issue of the teacher training gap between special education and general education. The division is growing in light of NCLB. The other issue is the unequal treatment of students with disabilities. They consider social, educational, economic, and cultural implications. Their main point is that these issues must be addressed at the system level in order to find equitable solutions.

Voltz, Sims, Nelson, and Bivens (2005) describe a framework developed to guide teachers' thinking about inclusive standards-based classrooms. The critical components of inclusion in instruction listed are: methods, materials, environment, content, collaboration, and assessment. Time and a common framework were found to be critical in successful implementation of standards based reform with inclusion. Gadke (2001) encourages the idea of the teacher becoming the researcher in order to find what "best practices" are according to those who are living the experience.

Examination of the nature of the principal's and the teachers' work leads us to investigate collaboration. No description of collaboration fits all collaborative teaching settings. Collaborative teaching has the potential to change the way teachers teach and delivery of

instruction. Collaboration begins with trust and a commitment to meet the needs of students. Collaboration must meet the needs of the students, teachers, and the vision of the building. The next section describes collaboration and how the building principal can foster and facilitate collaborative relationships.

Collaboration

Examination of the research on collaboration offers the reader an understanding of the challenges met by teachers and principals who pool resources and become an alliance to provide quality learning experiences for all students regardless of ability. How teachers work together now differs from how teachers worked together 20 years ago. The new model of collaboration incorporates a problem solving model. Discussion of how teachers learn to collaborate when sharing responsibility for students helps describe the development of their relationship and further determine how principals facilitate relationships in the building they lead. Using symbolic interactionism to explain how these relationships will be examined provides a framework for the study and findings presented later in this dissertation.

The principals' role in cultivating an inclusive environment builds upon the study of culture and climate of schools. Seeking answers to the question of how teachers come to work together and how principals orchestrate team and partnership work provided this researcher with a foundation to begin investigating the principal's role in facilitating collaborative relationships. In a pilot study Ogletree (2007) identified three needs of collaborative teams: communication, professional development, and time. Research on collaboration supports each of these components and offers more areas of need.

The following definitions agree that a shared or common goal is an essential component of collaboration. "Collaboration exists when two or more persons with diverse expertise work

together to realize a common goal" (Gable, Korinek, & McLaughlin, 2000, p. 450).

"Interpersonal collaboration is a style for direct interaction between at least two coequal parties

voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal" (Friend &

Cook, 2003, p. 5). Friend and Cook (2003) list defining characteristics for collaboration:

voluntary; requires parity among participants; based on mutual goals; depends on shared

responsibility for participation and decision making; individuals who collaborate share resources;

individuals who collaborate share accountability for outcomes.

Friend and Cook (2003) refer to the following emergent characteristics as those that grow

from successful collaborative experiences:

1. Individuals who collaborate value this interpersonal style.

2. Professionals who collaborate trust one another.

3. A sense of community evolves from collaboration.

Cramer (2006) lists four principles of collaboration:

1. The long term indirect goal of collaboration is to help students achieve their fullest
   potential through creation of "a climate of heightened professionalism (p.11).
2. Collaboration promotes the efficient and effective resolution of problems (p. 12).
3. Collaboration is a creative problem solving process that allows diverse individuals with
   independent areas of expertise to generate different solutions than any one of the
   individuals could independently (p. 13).
4. Teachers who make a commitment to a collaborative effort must subsume their personal
   preferences to the total requirements of the task (p. 14).

These sources, when combined, encompass a definition of collaboration that includes two or

more equitable professionals sharing a common goal, each valuing the others' diverse interests

and areas of expertise, working together to solve a problem that meets or exceeds the needs of

students and developing a community of learners while meeting accountability requirements.

The standard for collaboration skills according to NSDC: "Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate" (http://nsdc.org/standards retrieved May 20, 2007). Staff development provides one bridge to challenges, but there are other challenges facing collaborating teachers. "Among the challenges to be met are…to work collaboratively and effectively with team members" (Gable & Hendrickson, 2000, p. 15). Collaboration historically encounters barriers created by the lack of appropriate staff development to train teachers to learn to work together (Zepeda & Langenbach,1999). "Collaboration without skill is unsatisfying and will inevitably be abandoned for unilateral and thus more efficient ways of working" (Lambert, 2003, p. 4). Convincing staff members that breaking the tradition of working in silos can improve student achievement is difficult.

Cramer (2006) lists pragmatic and conceptual barriers to collaboration. Pragmatic barriers are inadequate time, language, and lack of administrative support. Conceptual barriers are administrative tone or school climate, power struggles, and credibility of collaborative partners. Factors that tip the balance to more positive collaborative efforts include collaboration topics that meet the needs of many fellow staff members, meeting expectations for team building, measuring what happens in classrooms, time, and technology (Cramer, 2006).

Staff development designed to assist a specific team of teachers with collaboration must include all partners of the collaborative effort in order to establish common communication skills, shared goals, and set the parameters of their partnership. "Professional development for inclusion and collaboration ensures that all participants within the educational organization become students of school improvement and the change process" (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 200, p. 41). Collaboration can exist without staff development, but

that collaboration is more likely to be informal or teacher initiated. An expectation that teachers naturally know how to collaborate is unrealistic.

Lambert (2003) includes the following collaboration steps in the continuum of emerging teacher leadership: "Actively participates in shared decision making. Volunteers to follow through on group decisions. Promotes collaborative decision making that meets the diverse needs of the school community" (p. 104). This continuum includes involving a wider network of district and university collaboration in professional development efforts.

Teachers using collaborative practices allow students to understand the potential power of group work. "Schools that embrace the principle of collaboration for students and faculty increase exponentially the resources and expertise to meet the needs of a more diverse student population that includes students with disabilities" (Falvey, Blair, Dingle, & Franklin, 2000, p. 191). Collaboration occurs across grades, between content areas, within content areas, and in inclusion settings. "To ensure the success of students in the inclusive class educators must establish an alliance that combines general educators' knowledge of *what* to teach with special educators' knowledge of *how* to teach"(Gable & Hendrickson, 2000, p. 16). "For anything of consequence to get done in schools, many people are needed to contribute in a hundred subtle, periodic and reliable ways" (Barth, 2001b, p. 446). Teachers, support staff, related service providers, administrators, parents, and students must all enter the fundamental state of leadership to create truly equitable relationships, which utilize collaboration (Quinn, 2004).

Building on the contribution of all team members within equitable relationships, providing instruction to diverse learners require time, energy and training. "A variety of professionals should collaborate to provide the best possible instruction for all students, particularly those with special learning needs" (Choate, 2000, p. 45). Gee (2000) offers

additional clues for instructionally meeting the needs of diverse learners in an inclusive

classroom. "When successful, positive collaborative relationships in schools have many rewards"

(Cramer, 2006, p. 2). Teachers must have not only opportunity, but also skills and desire to work

together. "Traditionally, preservice programs taught aspiring educators how to work with

children and adolescents- not other adults" (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, &

Williams, 2000, p. 121). Teachers encounter challenges when shifting from pre-service training

models to new paradigms. "Even after personnel receive the necessary training and a

collaborative program is introduced, sustaining the momentum can be difficult"(Gable, Korinek,

& McLaughlin, 2000, p. 451).

The shift to cooperative work with another adult in the classroom requires management

and several authors suggest methods for coping with the change of working closely with another

adult. Keefe, Moore, and Duff (2004) offer the idea that meeting the challenges of co-teaching

includes the four knows: know yourself, your partner, your students and your stuff (curriculum,

skills, communication and day to day routines of the classroom). Friend and Pope (2005) propose

that teachers can ensure students achieve success by enacting self examination of beliefs,

assumption of shared responsibility, examination of classroom practices and a realistic

understanding of the time and effort required to collaborate. Kugelmass (2004) found that

collaboration was both a form of practice and a manifestation of the inclusive values of theses

schools as they attempted to create a community in which all individuals –staff and students-

were valued. Within this context, leadership becomes redefined and distributed, reinforcing a

sense of community and of mutual trust.

Principals must do more than organize teacher teams and hope for the best.

"Collaboration by invitation never works. Principals who function as staff development leaders

embed collaboration in the structure and culture of their schools" (DuFour, 2001, p. 15). Teacher leaders can also fulfill the role of using collaboration to establish more equitable practices in the classroom and the larger learning community (Duke, 2004). Principals must provide the focus, parameters, and support to help teams function effectively (DuFour, 2001, p. 15). Fullan (1997) advises: "What's worth fighting for, then, includes fostering collaborative work cultures which create a generic capacity to manage change on a continuous basis" (p. 30). Leadership must be committed to collaboration and model collaborative practices in daily interactions- functional leadership (Kugelmass, 2004).

Ogletree (2007) found three needs of collaborative teams: communication, professional development, and time. Teachers expressed that the most difficult need to meet was that of time and that keeping the students' needs in mind motivated them to find time and continue working collaboratively. "Inclusion's success in large part relies on collaboration among staff members and with parents and others, and that failures can typically be traced to shortcomings in the collaborative dimension of the services to students" (Friend, 2000, p. 130).

Educational leadership involves facilitating the changes of the school environment and the political landscape that surrounds education (Fullan, 2001; Mondale & Patton, 2001; Udvari-Solner & Keyes, 2000). The evolution of special education law since the early 1960's has been continuously changing practice for special educators. General education teachers have felt deeper effects since the adoption of NCLB (No Child Left Behind) legislation in 2001(Wang, Reynolds & Walberg, 1994; Villa & Thousand, 2005). Reflective principals must begin to shift practices in their buildings to match the demands of the legal and ethical dilemmas before them (Praisner, 2003; Rieck & Wadsworth, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2006; Witt, 2003). Examination of these social, ethical and legal dilemmas is possible using the lens of symbolic interactionism.

Charon (2007) introduces five central ideas of symbolic interactionism:

1. The human must be understood as a social person. It is ongoing constant lifelong social interaction which leads us to do what we do.
2. The human being must be understood as a thinking being.
3. Humans define the situation they are in. Definition results from ongoing social interaction and thinking.
4. The cause of human action is the result of what is occurring in our present situation. Our past enters into our actions because we think about it and apply it to the definition of the present situation.
5. Human beings are described as active beings in relation to their environment (pp. 29- 30).

The idea that humans are active in seeking to overcome forces in the environment drives symbolic interactionism. "To understand human action, we must focus on social interaction, human thinking, definition of the situation, the present and the active nature of the human being" (Charon, 2007, p. 30). Utilization of symbolic interactionism via this author's critical theorist venture "to produce practical, pragmatic knowledge, a bricolage that is cultural and structural, judged by its degree of historical situatedness and its ability to produce praxis or action" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 187) provides a framework for this investigation.

Significance and Limitations

This study examined the relationships between teachers and the principal's role in facilitating that relationship. Students and student achievement in inclusion classrooms could provide an entirely different perspective into this examination. The case study nature of this study limits the applicability to all settings. Generalization to all settings is not possible with the findings. The experiences reported reflect only the experiences of those selected participants in each particular setting. Data presented only represents three urban school buildings, in two urban districts, over one school year, offering a snapshot of selected relationships within each building.

Significance can only be gathered by analysis of the rich thick data proposed to be collected here. Knowing the answer to the research question will assist principals seeking ways

to facilitate relationships among staff members. Comparison of the findings with existing literature will indicate best practices for principals facilitating inclusive settings. Urban principals may add the information to their toolbox to utilize as it applies to their unique situation. Professional development for teachers and principals can be streamlined to meet the needs identified by this study. Existing research will be supported and deepened by the case study nature of this dissertation.

The ethnographic nature of this study opens it to pundits seeking quantifiable evidence to measure success in schools. "The ethnographer is a moral advocate for the public" (Denzin, 2003). Supplying principals with examples from urban schools offers a window to view the educators who struggle with unique and complex issues not seen in all other educational settings. Providing principals with stories about successful urban settings may enable experimentation with inclusion if it does not provide generalization of practices. Further study into the relationship between teachers working collaboratively in inclusion settings should perhaps include some quantifiable measures.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Rau's (2003) study concludes that an effective inclusion program requires more of principals and other district administrators. They must set broad goals that support inclusion, be actively involved in implementing their inclusion model, directly supervise inclusion, and collaborate with staff to facilitate inclusive practices. Artiles, Harris-Murri, and Rostenberg (2006) offer inclusion as a social justice issue. There is common ground among those who seek social justice: "the need to eradicate inequity and racism in public schooling. The local and state public education systems must be at the heart of our hope for an equitable society" (Scheurich & Skrla, 2004, p.46).

Principals represent the heart of leadership within our schools (Barth, 2001a; Sergiovanni, 2006). Servant leadership connects the theoretical framework of critical theory to the administrative practices of principals. Greenleaf's (2003) term servant leadership describes leaders who provide the setting and other resources necessary to allow those being led to perform at the highest possible level and encourages the individuals in the organization to grow personally and professionally while achieving a sense of personal satisfaction. Principals as servant leaders provide teachers with the tools and climate necessary to meet the individual needs of all students including learners with special needs (Hoy & Miskell, 2001; Maxwell, 1993; Shapiro, 2006). This review of literature provides an understanding of the issue of inclusion in the variety of contexts within which it is situated in order to present the body of knowledge that informs the study.

While in the midst of change, addressing teacher dismay, attempting to meet parental demands, and facing higher school achievement expectations, principals must find a way to provide access to the articulated curriculum for all students. Teachers are expected to meet more diverse student needs than ever before and principals must support teachers' efforts. Identifying practices used by principals to support collaborating teachers, who work to establish inclusion programs, is a way to begin addressing the needs of teachers serving students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

This study includes individual interviews with principals and teachers, and group interviews with teams of teachers who work together in inclusive settings. Chapter 2 presents the details of the methodology used to collect data. Triangulation of interview data with observation data and artifacts will be used to identify best practices utilized by three selected principals serving public urban schools. Chapter 3 provides analysis of the data collected. The study

attempts to collect data relevant to relationships and the symbolic interactionism that defines and describes those relationships. Chapter 4 blends the literature review and the findings from the study to provide summary, draw conclusions and present implications for practice and further research.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Investigation of the principal's role in facilitating inclusion requires the use of multiple lenses. The lens selected for this particular study involves qualitative methods. The rationale of the study, the setting description and the selection of sites and participants, including gaining entrée, provide the reader with an overview of the process used to initiate the study. The role of the researcher is offered to better understand the motivation and bias of the author. The theoretical lens of symbolic interactionism and critical theory guide the entire dissertation. Data collection and analysis were completed within the ethical bounds of the institutional review board (IRB).

Methodology

This qualitative study seeks to identify best practices for principals when they facilitate the relationship between general education and special education teachers working together in inclusion settings. Individuals have unique personalities that drive their perceived professional responsibilities and roles. Identifying the role of the building principal in facilitating inclusion may be difficult due to the unique nature of individual school cultures. Thus, identification of the principal's practices directly related to facilitating inclusion drives this study. The study includes individual and group interviews. Triangulation of interview data with observation data and artifacts will be used to identify best practices utilized by three selected principals serving public urban schools.

Due to the unique nature of case study (Patton, 2002) the study attempts to collect data relevant to relationships and the symbolic interactionism that defines and describes those relationships. The connection between relationships and symbolic interactionism appear in the

framework section of this methodology chapter. Each setting, each individual principal and the larger district, which they serve, define the role of the principal. An attempt to describe the role of each principal within the context of their individual building will be included in the data analysis. The nature of the teachers' work in each setting also determines the extent to which the principal can influence teachers' relationships with each other. Personalities and professional commitment enter the scene, and individuality clouds standardization of practice. This study attempts to sift out the individuality and discover commonalities within and between selected sites.

The research question (How do selected urban principals facilitate the relationship between general education and special education teachers in K-12 inclusion programs?) is designed to discover what principals in urban settings are already doing to successfully support inclusion, so that information can be shared with other principals. Meeting the needs of teachers serving students with diverse learning needs presents principals with the challenge of identifying teacher needs for collaborative work and identifying means for best meeting those needs. This study attempts to assist principals in identifying needs of teachers working together in collaborative situations within inclusion programs.

<div align="center">Rationale for the Study Design</div>

Qualitative study enables the researcher to investigate culture (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Patton, 2002). Culture is what enables people to work collaboratively or conversely inhibits collaboration. The purpose of this study is to examine practices specific to inclusion and determine the role of the building principal in facilitating relationships between teachers in successful inclusion settings. The combination of language and behavior defines the culture created by the people in a particular setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Presenting a snapshot of

relationships built in order to create inclusion environments for learning allows the reader to understand the participants' view of their classrooms and schools.

Bogdan and Biklin (2003) suggest that with use of observational case study (in this study collaborating teachers and their principal) a focus on the group provides a window into the organization. The specific group of people within the larger organization either reflects the entire organization or provides a snapshot of the culture in the organization. The idea that a case study can provide a view of the staff regarding the principal's role in facilitating relationships is supported by the snapshot concept of a case study.

Understanding the lived experiences of other people and understanding the meaning that they make of their experiences occurs when the researcher establishes a relationship with participants (Blumer, 1998; Seidman, 2006). Combining observation and interviewing allows the researcher to ask specific questions about practice, gain understanding and then check the understanding by observing the participants in action. "To understand fully the complexities of many situations, direct participation in and observation of the phenomenon of interest may be the best research method" (Patton, 2003, p. 21). This confirmation of behavior and attitude by investigating words then observing actions provides rich thick descriptions of relationship development.

<center>Setting</center>

This study took place in two urban school districts in a metropolitan area of the Midwest. For the purpose of this study urban refers to a high population density area, proximity to a central city, and including or contiguous to the core of a metropolitan area (Rusk, 2003). Athens, which is the larger district, currently has an enrollment of approximately 33,000 students. Rome, the

smaller urban district, has roughly 2,200 students. Each district met the criteria later set forth in the selection of sites for this study.

Athens Urban School District

Declining enrollment in the Athens district has led to restructuring and redistricting for the district's 62 schools. Union driven contract language requires a surplus practice whereby the district reassigns teachers several weeks after school begins in September. The surplus practice moves teachers from buildings with lower enrollment to buildings with higher enrollment in an effort to equitably balance class size and teacher work load.

Several new buildings funded through state improvement funds and smaller elementary schools have been merged to create a total of 16 high schools and 46 elementary schools. The district's mission statement: "Building futures, every student every school, every day" is reflected in the actual construction of many new buildings district wide. Grade configurations vary throughout the district. Most elementary schools serve students in grades kindergarten to eight, and the high schools serve students grades nine through twelve.

The Athens district covers about 90 square miles including all of the city, three villages, parts of three other small municipalities and portions of six townships. Student demographics of the district are as follows: 70.1 % African- American; 0.1 % American Indian; 0.8 % Asian; 23.5% Caucasian; 1.5% Hispanic; 4% Multiracial. There is a reported 66% free/reduced price lunch program participation. Due to a large Appalachian population and older students' hesitation to be identified as poor, this poverty indicator may be lower than the actual numbers. The population of the city is approximately 330,000 with the median yearly income less than $36,000.

There is a center for professional development, which serves all district staff. There have been three superintendents in the last ten years, and the current superintendent has announced the intent to retire at the end of the current school year. Data driven procedures have been implemented district wide as have intervention plans for improving scores in buildings not achieving adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements. Many of the schools in the district have embarked upon initiatives which staff and administration feel meet the unique needs of their population. Use of common testing materials and a centralized recording system for benchmark scores has created some standardization across the district with regard to student performance data collection.

Acropolis is the school selected from the Athens urban district to participate in this study. Acropolis has an enrollment of approximately 700 students Pre-school to 8th grade. The facility is described as a $13.2 million state-of-the–art Community Learning center. The newly constructed building houses one of the district's "schools of choice" and has seen steady enrollment growth due to the beautiful facility, staff commitment, and student achievement. All of the teachers in Acropolis hold at least a Bachelor's degree, 54.4% hold at least a Master's degree. All teachers teaching core academic subjects are properly certified or licensed, 98% are considered highly qualified (HQT) according to No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Student demographics are as follows: 66.7% African American; 5.9% multi-racial; 26% white; 88.9% economically disadvantaged; 23.6% are students with disabilities.

The neighborhood surrounding Acropolis consists of two story homes, some single family, some two family. The hilltop where the building sits offers a view of the surrounding area, and on a clear day, views of the downtown area from upstairs windows are possible. The beautiful new brick building sits in contrast with the multiple colors of aged siding and paint on

the adjoining homes. Parking was ample and signage allows the visitor to find the office and main entrance to the school.

The office of the Acropolis building is large and ergonomically designed to provide numerous foot routes accommodating students, staff, visitors, and parents. The warm colors and student art displayed on dark colored walls welcome adult visitors while simultaneously being child friendly. Security measures such as locked doors, which require a buzz from the office, a swinging gate to gain access behind the reception gate, a computer screen that allows staff to sign in via touch screen, and security cameras displaying multiple sections of the interior and exterior of the building ensure student safety. Ordinarily two people staff the front desk to direct traffic, answer phones, answer teacher calls to the office and coordinate with the security guard.

Each classroom at Acropolis is centered around an open common area designed to create pods. The common area use varies depending on the grade level and teaching teams. The lunchroom doubles as a stage seating area in the cafetorium style of many new buildings in the geographic area. The main entrance to the building is actually on the second floor, which houses the cafeteria, a suite of offices connected to the main office, gym, media center, and other non-classroom uses. The third floor has more classrooms than the other two floors. The first level contains science labs and other non-traditional classrooms and opens at ground level at the rear of the building, eliminating the feeling of being in a cellar.

<div align="center">Rome Urban School District</div>

The smaller urban district, Rome, in the study has had two superintendents over the last ten years. The smaller size of the district (2,200 students) has limited the loss of enrollment; however, student mobility is a factor. The district consists of five buildings (1 high school, 1 middle school, and 3 elementary) and two alternative programs. School based health care, adult

learning, and family/youth services are available to the students and community. Three fourths of the enrollment is considered at risk. The district and each building have issued statements declaring how they ensure educational equity. The district mission is:

> To equip the young men and women of the City of Rome with the intellectual and social skills needed, so when they transition from our care, they will be able to function successfully as wise adult decision-makers in a complex, diverse world.

The Rome district website states: "This is a period of renewal and revitalization both in our community and in our schools. Our goal at Rome is simple – we are working to become the finest small urban school system in the country".

The population of Rome is approximately 17,000 with the median yearly income less than $34,000. Teacher qualifications district wide are 98% HQT, 22.1% Bachelor's degree, 55.2% Master's degree, 22.7% beyond Master's degree. Demographics for the district students: 7.5% African American; 1.73 % Hispanic, 2.65 % multi-racial; 87.88 % white; 82 % economically disadvantaged; 20 % are students with disabilities. Two elementary schools in Rome agreed to participate in the study: Rubicon elementary and Romulus elementary.

Rubicon Elementary houses approximately 300 students in grades K- 5. The teachers hold the following degrees: 9.1% Bachelor's; 66.2% Master's; 22.7% beyond Master's. All classes are taught by teachers who are highly qualified (HQT). The school's public assurance of equity statement follows: "All students are expected to achieve at high levels with the goal of proficiency for all on the state assessments". The school's mission statement is:

> At Rubicon, we believe that learning occurs when each child is loved, nurtured, and respected in a safe, welcoming environment; when there is frequent two-way communication between school and home; and when all members of the community feel responsible for creating an environment that values and nurtures independent life-long learning.

Rubicon student demographics consist of the following: 5.45% African American; 3.89 % multi-racial; 88.72% white; 70% economically disadvantaged; 15% are students with disabilities.

Rubicon sits high atop a hill with a view of a local hospital, a cleared hillside with earth moving equipment changing the landscape, and a major, six lane highway. No other buildings are visually close to the school and the steep driveway from the main road leads the visitor to imagine they are on a road to nowhere. The approach to the building winds by rerouted streets, empty lots, dugout hillsides, and several acres of cleared land displaying signs for the availability of development. A strip mall including several retailers and a Starbucks coffee shop sits across the street from the bottom of the driveway. The driveway leads around the rear of the building along the east side and to the west-facing front of the building where a circular area provides parking for visitors. There is a beautiful panoramic view of the surrounding area.

The small Rubicon building contains traditional style classrooms with glass block and swinging windows. The halls are narrow, yet full of displayed student work. Entry to the building requires a buzzer activated by the secretary. One secretary serves the building so the principal and secretary work together to assure that the office is covered at all times. The teacher workroom with supplies, copy machine, table and chairs adjoins the main office behind an adult size, chest high counter and door. The gym is a newer addition to the building and serves as a connection point for dismissal as well as the cafeteria, and stage.

The second City of Rome school included in the study is Romulus Elementary, which serves approximately 450 students in Preschool to grade 5. Their mission statement is: "Collaboratively, the Romulus Learning Community will assure that ALL students meet or exceed the state and national performance standards and commit to a systematic approach to ensure this success". Their assurance for equity statement follows: "Our school addresses

individual, physical, cultural, socio-economic, and intellectual differences of students and ensures equitable educational opportunities". Teachers' qualifications based on degrees earned are: 19.4% Bachelor's degrees, 67.7% Master's degrees, 12.9% beyond Master's degree. Teachers who meet HQT requirements teach all content area classes. Student demographics are as follows: 6.29 % African American; 2.92 % Hispanic, 1 % multi-racial; 90.56% white; 85 % economically disadvantaged; 20 % are students with disabilities.

Romulus sits in the heart of an industrial zone. The once active factories are largely boarded up and utility work under the streets had several nearby streets closed. Weaving through the utility repairs, abandoned manufacturing facilities and a working milk bottling facility with multiple loading docks and tractor-trailer parking lots, the level of activity distracts the onlooker from readily identifying the school as a school. The rear of the building contains a large blacktop area with some play equipment for children and parking for staff. Railroad tracks run near the rear of the building. Steps and a chain link covered bridge constructed with railroad ties tower over the tracks indicating a need to provide safe passage for students and community members over the rails. Parking is largely on the street at the front and rear of the building.

The Romulus building has undergone several transformations. A gym added nearly 20 years after the original building construction (around 1960), seemingly hangs between two wings of the "u" shaped building. Due to the need for a building computer lab, the recently updated media center was created by merging two classrooms at the end of a hallway leading to an expansion wing. The design creatively blends the green and maroon tile block to form a room that accommodates a computer lab and the traditional feel of a library for students.

The office staff of two, monitors entry to the building via a buzzer and security cameras. Students and parents entering the building must enter via the front doors and directly into the

front office. Other offices in the building are across the hall from the main office. The school currently houses a dental clinic, health clinic, social services offices, and other supports for the students. Classrooms vary in size and shape depending on the age of the wing and the location in the building.

<div align="center">Selection of Sites and Participants & Gaining Entrée</div>

The intent of this study is to examine relationships; therefore, it is important to include all teaching partners in each cooperative inclusion setting. Collaborative team's collective work is examined. The goal is to identify traits, characteristics, and behaviors via triangulations derived from individual and group interviews. "The interview structure is cumulative. One interview establishes the context for the next" (Seidman, 2006). The observations and collection of archival data at each site will add depth to the interview data collected.

Identification of specific schools generated from the identification of participants who collaboratively provide successful inclusion environments to students with disabilities. Discussion with district level officials led to the narrowing of the selection to elementary schools, due to the organizational structure of special education services delivery and administrative responsibilities. Principals at the secondary level in these districts have much less involvement with student services issues relative to identifying the least restrictive environment (LRE) for students with disabilities and teacher/student compatibility. School counselors at the secondary level handle meeting the needs of students with disabilities and coordination with special education services much more than principals of urban high schools in this geographic area.

The chief school improvement officer of the Athens urban district agreed to assist in identifying teachers who collaboratively provide such environments to students. He suggested

that the student services director also be consulted for identification of participants. Several student services managers who serve the district as special education consultants also suggested schools to serve as study sites. A comparison of the recommendations from each official assisted in the selection of the site within this district. Other Athens schools were invited to participate but declined due to the study's timing. Special education teachers were involved in alternative assessment preparation and principals were not willing to commit time to an outside distraction when the time for general accountability testing was so close.

Criteria for selection include: (1) the school meets adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals for students with disabilities, (2) the school has an inclusion program, (3) the teachers who are part of the inclusion program are willing to participate, (4) the principal of the school is willing to participate, and (5) the school is judged by district officials as having a successful inclusion program. Five district officials, from the larger district, independently identified several schools with inclusion programs that met AYP goals for students with disabilities. The recommendation lists were cross referenced and examination of school report cards helped determine the school in this large urban district best exemplify inclusion practices. The concern with only using AYP scores is that often AYP does not reflect inclusive practices due to the use of alternative assessments.

Multiple phone conversations and meetings with district officials narrowed the list of 46 elementary schools to nine. The student services director, who oversees special education services, helped narrow the list from nine to three, ultimately one elementary school agreed to participate. High schools were eliminated after discussions revealed that student services managers were much more highly engaged with teachers and student placement at the secondary level than were the principals.

The selection process for the Rome district's schools was simple. The district was identified by their reputation for supporting inclusion district wide and the academic performance of students who are identified with disabilities in the district. Student achievement scores supported the reputation. The smaller City of Rome district has three elementary schools, each of which met all criteria listed. Each elementary building in the district was invited to participate. Two buildings agreed to participate; the third elementary school principal declined explaining that he did not feel that his building currently met the listed criteria.

Consent Procedures and Confidentiality

The consent forms for teachers (Appendix A) and principals (Appendix B) include the purpose of the study, expected duration of participation, and the procedures followed. After receiving an invitation letter (Appendices C & D), potential participants were given a copy of the consent forms. An introductory phone call occurred with each potential participant soon after the information was sent in order to answer questions and reassure them that confidentiality will be maintained. In some cases, the researcher was able to meet the teachers prior to the first interview. A transcriber who will maintain the confidentiality of the information was utilized to convert the audio tapes to text. The researcher acquired agreement to participate by teaching partners and the principal at each site before beginning the individual interviews to avoid the possibility of one not participating thus wasting the time of those who initially agreed to participate. Multiple phone calls to schools and emails to individual participants facilitated the recruitment process.

Validity and Reliability

Because the sample size of this study is small, the nature of the depth of information collected must be detailed. The rich nature of qualitative work enables the researcher to gather a

large amount of information from a small sample (Patton, 2002). Digging deep into the principal's role in facilitating the relationships of the teachers working collaboratively assists the collection of rich data. Site selection was crucial in assuring validity. Selecting successful sites recommended by district level leaders and the success of the inclusion practices as supported by AYP and other standardized scores will help provide validity to the findings. The student services director described the principal of the school that agreed to participate in the Athens district by stating: "Inclusion is truly her passion. She believes that inclusion is crucial for *all* students to be successful". Other school officials have made similar statements about the principal and this principal was noted to have led another school through adoption of an inclusion model as an assistant principal.

Another principal who was recommended stated that although he believes in inclusion he did not believe that his school was at the point yet where he could open the doors to examination as a model school and referred me to other schools. He was concerned that the best practices he believes are necessary are not yet entrenched at his building. His recommendations for other schools that met the criteria were instrumental in identifying sites.

Reliability was established by the "direct personal contact with and observation of the teams at work" (Patton, 2002, p. 262). The intent is to capture not only the context of the work but also the philosophical underpinnings shared by those working together and the principals who facilitate their collaborative work. First interviewing the participants and then observing their work together, hopefully results in identification of those strategies, which they believe they utilize as well as those they do not. Observations allow the researcher to describe the setting, the people, and the culture of the setting (Patton, 2002). Identification of principal behaviors and

patterns that teachers perceive to be supportive in their collaborative inclusion practices is the ultimate goal of the study.

Purposeful Sampling Plan

Contacting buildings identified as meeting the criteria began the process. Principals of identified buildings were contacted using phone calls, emails and invitation letters (Appendix C). Teachers were recruited based on job assignments of serving either as special education teacher or as general education teacher in a cooperative teaching setting that involves inclusion of students with a disability. A letter (Appendix D) was sent to identified teachers inviting them to participate. Initial contact with individuals identified as possible participants occurred by letter and follow up with telephone calls to set up dates for individual meetings with potential participants. Prior to data collection, the researcher conducted individual meetings with participants to explain the study, the nature of their participation, and acquire signed consent forms.

Because this study involves investigating relationships, it was important to include all teaching partners in each cooperative inclusion settings. General education teachers, who interact with students identified with a disability and participate in inclusion practices of co-planning, co-teaching, or imbedded differentiated instruction with special education teachers serving the same students, were included. Special education teachers, who participate in and advocate for inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms, were invited to participate.

Gaining Entrée

Gaining entrée for this dissertation study presented several dilemmas. The selection of sites utilized informed school officials, school performance records, and educators who were

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willing to share their practice. The selection criteria most important to this study were those of

documentation of success of the school and the use of inclusion practices to contribute to that

success. The plan to identify and contact teachers prior to contacting principals proved to not

work.

Teachers were hesitant to allow the researcher entrée to the building without the

principal's blessing. Principals were hesitant to allow the researcher access to teachers without

first consulting teachers. Ultimately, the principals provided entrée by screening the researcher

and asking questions about time commitment and serving as a first line of defense against

possible invasion by the researcher. Once rapport was established with principals by assuring

them that experiences as a classroom teacher and principal formed the researcher's priorities and

principals found that the researcher's understanding of the demands of urban schools were in line

with their building's needs they were much more comfortable with the plan to investigate the

principal's role via discussion with staff members.

Principals placed the teacher invitation letters in the teachers' mailboxes and asked the

researcher to call each teacher to arrange meetings. When the schedule allowed, the principal

introduced the researcher to the teachers. Phone calls to each identified teacher set the stage for

entrée into the school. Prompt response to questions and provision of consent letters to any

teaching pair who indicated a willingness to participate assisted the researcher in entrée and

establishing rapport with participants.

<div align="center">Role of the Researcher</div>

My objective was to examine the relationship between general education teachers and

special education teachers in inclusive settings and analyze the principal's role in facilitating that

relationship. The intent was to discover best practices for principals in supporting inclusive

school environments. My goal was to chronicle use of the best practices for principals supporting relationships between general and special education teachers. I think one of the weaknesses of my design was that I did not observe teachers and principals interacting over a long period of time. I hoped to discover ways that principals can better serve the needs of the teachers who are dedicated to meeting the needs of the diverse learners in their care.

I began my professional journey as teacher in a small Midwestern city with a definite Eastside versus Westside mentality. There was one racially integrated school and I was assigned to teach first grade there. I began to develop a real life philosophy of education that includes believing in the ability of each of my students and believing that regardless of their socio-economic status, heritage, and parenting, each student deserves an education that will enable him/her to achieve goals. Loss of goals and lack of dreams is the only disabling condition that schools can address in 100 % of cases.

My class consisted of seventeen students during my first year teaching. I know of two who served time in the state penal system, one who was shot, and one who graduated from college. One of the students from that class ended up in the special education cycle under the SBH (severe behavioral handicap) label. DJ is one of the two I found in the state prison system. He brought brass knuckles to school on the day the school psychologist first met with him. That psychologist determined that DJ did not have a learning disability or cognitive disability as a first grader. The psychologist during the MFE (multi-factored evaluation) follow-up meeting shared that he could not rule out environmental influences impeding DJ's learning. By third grade, DJ had become so frustrated and beleaguered by school he ended up spending more time with the principal than in class. The school psychologist that year determined that he qualified for placement in an SBH (severe behavioral handicapped) unit.

My second year teaching I had another student who had educational struggles large enough to receive a MFE. Freddie's scores and performance qualified him for learning disability services. I am not sure if he qualified due to his parents' persistence or his mother making sure that everyone in the community knew she was always "packin" (carrying a gun). I know that I did not do as much groundwork to have him identified since my first year experience was so disappointing to me. A special education teacher, Ann Rothfuss, was assigned to serve as Freddie's tutor and case manager.

Freddie was fully included with his peers because there was no unit for learning disability students in our building and his mother did not want him to get on a bus. Mrs. Rothfuss consulted with me daily about his work, his attitude, and accommodating Freddie's learning needs. She met with Freddie in the hall, in the back of the classroom, and in class while I was completing reading groups with other students. She never ignored the other students; she helped them right along with Freddie, although he was always her focus. I learned so much about meeting student learning styles, modifying lessons, re-teaching lessons, and helping students see their successes from Mrs. Rothfuss, I will always be indebted to her for I believe that without her support I would probably have left education and pursued another career path.

Fast-forward 11 years -my first year as principal of a suburban elementary school serving 550 students. We housed the district special needs preschool (about 25 students that year) and all kindergarten and first grade students. I was young and naïve again in my role. A father brought his first grader to school about an hour late one morning so I escorted the young man down to the special education resource classroom. My intent was to make sure Simon reached his classroom quickly and with no waiting. The exact nature of Simon's disability was never shared with the district or school staff. The label assigned to him was PDD (pervasive developmental disability).

Teachers found that using techniques and strategies much as they used with children with autism were the most effective.

I was about halfway down the upper hall with Simon holding my hand, happy to join his friends when Dad called down the hall: "Where are you going? Mrs. Frissle's class is down that hall", pointing in the opposite direction we were headed. The resource room aide, Ms. Sherrie, had stepped into the hall and Simon broke from my hand to greet her. I turned to meet Dad halfway down the hallway. He was very upset that I had taken Simon to Mrs. Evans' resource room instead of Mrs. Frissle's room.

We had an extensive conversation that included my explanation for why I took Simon where I did, which he did not accept. Three days later, we were in a heated meeting with an attorney representing Simon's family. The accusation was made that we were lying to parents about Simon's placement. Mom and Dad believed that Simon was fully included. I had not been in an IEP (individualized education program) meeting with Simon's parents before let alone a placement hearing. I felt ambushed and confused. My interpretation of the IEP did not indicate what they believed they had been promised. The situation became volatile and the special education supervisor and assistant superintendent in charge of pupil services both attended the next meeting. The attorney did not return with the parents. They brought an advocate who suggested we complete several assessments.

The district consulted with the local special education regional resource center (SERRC) to have a behavior intervention plan (BIP) completed. Neither the advocate representing the child or the consultant from SERRC ever met or observed the child in the classroom. Mrs. Frissle and the parents of other students in the general education room were extremely concerned about Simon spending the entire school day in the classroom with his peers because his inability to

communicate manifested in hitting, scratching, kicking, biting, and swearing at peers and adults. The case eventually ended up in a due process hearing. The mediator who presided agreed that there were some issues in the district that needed to be addressed, but that a first grader who swore could be excluded from the general education room in order to protect peers.

I share these stories because the stark contrast of my teaching experiences and the attempts at using inclusion to meet Simon's learning needs point out the range of possibilities. The implementation of inclusion in this case did not support the learning of the student. Inclusion occurs on a continuum of delivery models with a plethora of options. Best practices do not apply in every setting or with every child. Investigating my options as an administrator uncovered very little research or applicable suggestions. Teachers have a multitude of studies, best practice suggestions, and how to literature for implementing inclusion. Administrators, especially building level principals, have very few sources designed to help them wade through the tricky, rapid waters of inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom. I hope to use this study to provide building level administrators with more tools to support teachers working in inclusive settings.

The researcher for this study has served public schools as a teacher and a principal. The teaching experience took place in an inner city elementary building with 98% free and reduced lunch eligibility for students. The principal experience occurred in a rapidly growing suburban district. Experiences gained by committee work, collaboration with special education teachers, and the evaluation work of a principal combine to provide the impetus for proposing this study.

Framework

The theoretical lens used to examine the question of the principal's role in facilitating the relationship between general education teachers and special education teachers collaborating in

inclusion settings is symbolic interactionism and the researcher's foundation of critical theory.

The symbolic interaction framework (Charon, 2007) fits due to the nature of employer/ employee

relationships and the idea that servant leadership is not as evaluative as a management style of

leadership (Greenleaf, 2003). The lens of symbolic interactionism provides a naturalistic

approach to studying human group life and human conduct. Critical theory guides the

researcher's practice, thus all findings and analysis completed here contain a shade of that

foundation.

Symbolic interactionism refers to the social psychology view that "large scale

organization has to be seen, studied and explained in terms of the process of interpretation

engaged in by the acting participants as they handle the situations in their respective positions in

the organization" (Blumer, 1998, p. 58). Blumer (1998) further recommends that:

> the methodological position of symbolic interactionism is that social action
> must be studied in terms of how it is formed; its formation is a very different
> matter from the antecedent conditions that are taken as the "causes" of the
> social action and is not covered by any specification of such causes (p. 57).

Symbolic interactionism views the organization as interconnected and interdependent people

who are linked due to their actions. Different positions determine different actions. Previous

actions and events provide background for current actions. Those independent actions interact

with each other and with the people who take the actions in symbolic ways. The meanings

derived from these processes are social products.

Humans must face the acts of others and fit their acts into the acts of others. Blumer

(1998) suggests that "it is from the observation of others that we derive the categories that we

use to give conceptual order to the social make-up and social life of a human group" (p. 54). This

study attempts to identify themes and best practices which can be categorized in to conceptual

models. "For symbolic interactionism the nature of the empirical social world is to be discovered, to be dug out by a direct, careful, and probing examination of that world" (p. 48).

Three basic assumptions inform symbolic interactionism. Blumer (1998) tells us that:

1. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.
2. The meanings of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows.
3. Those meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters (p.2).

These assumptions guide the investigation of the role of the principal in facilitating the relationships between general education teachers and special education teachers through the acknowledgement that each individual actor holds a different meaning for the inclusion of students with disabilities. The sets of meaning between the three actors must be melded, through cooperative interpretation, in order to present a cohesive unit to students, parents and each other in the process of building an inclusive environment.

Symbolic interactionism holds recognition that there are levels of interaction which remain hidden (Blumer, 1998). The layers of relationships must be peeled back in order to discover unseen or unrecognized social aspects. The actions taken by people begin to be symbolic interaction when the people engage in the process of changing objects and assigning meaning to those objects. Work place, theory, philosophy, culture and other intangibles represent objects in symbolic interactionism.

Crotty (2004) purports that part of symbolic interactionism involves the researcher putting oneself in the role of those being researched. This researcher has held positions similar to each of the roles being examined, except that of the special education teacher. "This role taking is an interaction" (p. 75). "Only through dialogue can one become aware of perceptions, feelings and attitudes of others and interpret their meanings and intent" (p. 75-76). The process of

interviewing the principals and each teacher individually and the teachers at each site as a group allowed the researcher to enter the interactive process of the collaborative relationships between the teachers and the role ordering between teachers and the principal. "For qualitative research, symbolic interactionism is a diversified and enriching matrix" (p. 76). This diversification opens the window to the heart of the role of the principal in facilitating the relationships between teachers working collaboratively to provide inclusive settings for students with disabilities.

The researcher stands on a base of critical theory. The impetus for researching the general topic of inclusion of students with disabilities emanates from the researcher's belief in a sense of fairness, which may eliminate objectification that could be argued to occur within symbolic interactionism. There exists an interactive context between individual and society in which the individual and social universe are inextricably interwoven. Recognition of the social function of a particular form of knowledge allows the researcher to present findings, which reflect a sense of social justice.

McLaren (2003) asserts, "the dialectical nature of critical theory enables the educational researcher to see the school…as sites for domination and liberation" (p. 70). "For a critical educator, there are *many* sides to a problem, and often these sides are linked to certain class, race, and gender interests" (p. 71). The intent of this study is to identify best practices when facilitating relationships relative to inclusion, yet an awareness that there are more problems with inclusion than one study can possibly encompass enables the researcher to maintain a focus on the area detailed as important in this small picture of the schools. The urban districts selected as the sites for this study hold problems that cannot be solved by one small study. Critical theory assisted the researcher in efforts to maintain a productive knowledge base to frame findings and analyze of the data. In short, critical theory helped to focus both sides of the social contradiction

(McLaren, 2003). The social contradiction occurs in the collaborative working processes of two teachers with different foci, training and traditional roles. The principal entering the relationship between two teachers also presents a social contradiction resulting from the traditional view of principal as manager and not servant leader.

This study intended to observe the teachers' roles, responsibilities, and expectations while simultaneously discovering the principal's role in facilitating the collaborative work that takes place between teachers. There was some expectation that contradiction in the examination might occur when teachers are viewed as subordinate and the principal as superordinate. Authority, positional privilege, possibly race and gender may have entered into the analysis process. Thus, the researcher's stance in critical theory to inform the peeling back of hidden layers when applying symbolic interactionism helped inform the discovery of best practices when facilitating relationships.

Role Negotiation

Role negotiation took place during the gaining entrée process. As observer, interviewer and document collector, the stage was set for the role of researcher through meetings and clarification of the purpose of the researcher's presence. Emphasizing the points outlined in the consent forms helped teachers and principals clearly understand that the researcher was in their building to document success, not to evaluate or judge. Sharing the experience of having been a principal with the principals in the study helped principals understand that the researcher understood the nature of not only the principals' work but also the demands on teachers and the somewhat sacred nature of the teachers' planning time.

Reflexivity

This researcher may be influenced by the nature of the public schools where she worked. Investigating this question in unfamiliar districts, there was concern that her previous experience of being an administrator may cause caution and concern with teachers that she could be a spy for the administration in the school. Explanation of the intent and purpose of the study seemed to relieve the fears of the participants. Transparency in addressing participant concerns and questions was crucial to gaining entrée, displaying trustworthiness and having participants reply to questions candidly. The researcher's experience as an urban educator occurred in an urban setting as a classroom teacher, her experience as an administrator occurred in suburban district with many wealthy residents. The juxtaposition of this researcher's experience may cause some conflicting viewpoints of which she remained mindful.

Trustworthiness

Collecting data during one time interviews and follow up group interviews with teachers will present data accuracy issues due to limited exposure. Completion of observations of the teams working together in meetings both formal and informal may increase accuracy. Patton (2003) advises that "the much smaller sample of open-ended interviews adds depth, detail, and meaning at a very personal level of experience" (p. 17). Becoming a "fly on the wall" was difficult in a setting that only contained two members. Questions were asked without revealing personal biases and offering judgment. Due to the limits of understanding and reflecting what other people say observations contribute additional detail and clarification of the complexities of the relationships examined (Patton, 2003).

Exit Strategies

After completion of the interviews, observations, and follow-up discussion the researcher thanked the participants for their contributions to the body of knowledge. An after school hours visit after completion of all the interviews and observations in each building to thank the participants again included leaving a token of appreciation in the form of a restaurant gift certificate for each participant. Personal contact information for the researcher was provided with a personalized thank you note for each participant as well.

Data Collection Procedures

Interview data and observation data consisting of audio-taped interviews and field notes comprise the bulk of data collected for this study. Collection of archival data such as meeting notes, agendas, shared lesson planning guides, reports to parents or professional development activities that were shared or attended together took place as the researcher interacted with the participants. This qualitative study utilized observations, archival data, individual interviews, and group interviews for data collection.

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggest that the researcher complete all work at each site before moving to the next site in order to avoid cross contamination and to improve collection skills at the next site. Due to snow days, accountability testing measures, teacher illness, and schedule conflicts this was not possible. Most of the data collection at Rubicon occurred first, then Romulus, and finally Acropolis. All of the principal interviews were completed prior to any of the group interviews. Collection of archival data and observations was mixed in with individual teacher interviews and group interviews at each building. Two of the principals suggested documents for the researcher to examine.

Interviews

Principals were individually interviewed about practices that they believe facilitate successful relationships between general education and special education teachers in inclusion settings. These semi-structured interviews were conducted using a prepared set of questions (see principal interview guide Appendix E). Each teacher was individually interviewed about the nature of the relationship between general education and special education teachers in inclusion settings and their perception of the principal's role in facilitating that relationship (see teacher interview guide Appendix F).

Interview guides "list the questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview" (Patton, 2002, p. 343). The major questions are supported by minor questions in order to best extract comparable data from each person interviewed. Fontana and Frey (2003) suggest that the use of interview guides helps with coding, standardization, and neutrality of the interviewer. Individual interviews fit into teacher planning time, with clarification occurring during the group interview time and some email communication. Group interviews took a bit more time due to the teachers entering dialogue with each other as well as the researcher.

The interviews began the process of data collection. The semi-structured, tape-recorded teacher interviews include questions about the climate of the school, the nature of the person's job, and factors that affect their personal level of success in inclusion practices. Principals were interviewed using similar procedures and questions to the teacher interviews in addition to questions about what they believe their role is in facilitating successful relationships between general education and special education teachers in inclusion settings.

The purpose of group interviews was to complete the qualitative comparison (Patton, 2003) of teachers' perception of the principal's role and the principal's perception of his/her role

in the relationship between the general and special education teachers. "Group interviews can be useful in bringing the research into the world of the subjects" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 100). After all individual interviews were conducted at a site and the data was analyzed for commonalities and differences, each teacher was asked to participate in a group interview with teaching partners at their school to examine building wide findings. Content analysis of the individual interviews took less than one week per building so that group interviews could occur within two weeks of the initial interviews.

Each group interview consisted of the teaching team members individually interviewed. Group interviews were audio taped and transcribed. The timeframe for group interviews was less than two hours. Three or four questions from the original teacher interviews were selected based on content analysis of individual principal and teacher interviews. Identifying those questions which best sifted out the information leading to the discovery of patterns in leadership pursues the goal to identify traits, characteristics, and behaviors via triangulations derived from individual and group interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The principal's interview findings were also a driving factor in the questions asked at group interviews in the building.

Observations

Observations were of the interactions between the teachers. Adult interactions were the subject of the observations. The purpose of the observations was to determine if the actual interactions match the perceived interactions discussed in interviews. Observations were conducted to capture the nature of the relationships in action. As soon as the researcher entered the setting observations began.

Most observations were made consisting of the teachers interactions with each other, not including the principal. They referred to the expectations of the principals, district and state

guidelines, and the core content standards in about equal frequency. It would benefit future research to have the observer imbedded in the teaching corps to discover a more accurate picture of what the interactions between the adults look like. There was some impression that the observer's presence might influence the dialogue and increase the discussion relative to inclusive practice, since those being observed were conscious of the researcher's aim at investigating inclusion.

Archival data

Field notes from meetings and gathering artifacts such as planning documents, cooperative lesson plans and guides for cooperative teaching were examined. Other archival data such as reports, district, building, and state report card were gathered using state and district websites and contact with district level officials. Triangulation occurred between the spoken word, the actions, documents, and the articulated mission of the building.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study includes coding, identification of themes and cross-case analysis. The researcher managed data. Some identification of themes quickly emerged as the researcher collected data and listened to the stories of the participants. More immersed themes required the researcher to discover patterns via multiple readings and meticulous examinations of the data.

A transcriber converted the audio-taped interviews into text. The researcher's handwritten field notes created running records of observations. An organized paper file of the notes, interviews, and group meetings supplement the electronic files created. Multiple paper copies of each transcript were used so that cross-referencing occurred when identifying themes and creating data displays.

Coding was completed by repeated readings of the data. Use of multiple colors of highlighter and the highlight feature of Microsoft Word were utilized to code data and identify themes. The "find" feature of the edit section of Microsoft Word assisted in identifying themes and areas that address key concepts. The group interview questions were generated from initial reviews of the individual interviews. Initial readings and listening to the tapes prior to transcription were exploratory in nature, seeking quickly identifiable common themes. Subsequent readings searched for specific themes identified in other sites or areas of previously identified research. Each site was analyzed individually, when collection was completed at each site, the results from each site were compared to the others.

Analysis of data collected was compared to previous research and current legal expectations. Strauss & Corbin (1998) state that "Analysis is the interplay between researchers and data" (p. 13). Seidman (2005) warns that interpreting meaning from interview data requires the researcher to use the subject's words and avoid paraphrasing and inference. Deriving meaning involves seeking verification and possibly contacting the subjects to clarify or expand on statements or observation data. Identification of recurrent themes enables the researcher to investigate the feasibility of generalization within the data.

Triangulation of data within each site was completed to generate site-specific group interview questions. Triangulation of data collected across sites provided the basis for analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend such cross-case analysis "to enhance generalizability" and "to deepen understanding and explanation" (p. 173). Coding strategies such as data displays, theme identification, and contact summary forms were used to manage the raw data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Cognitive maps were employed when participants described the development of their collaborative work relationships. Analysis strategies such as concept mapping,

clustering, matrix creation and cross-case comparative analysis provide the basis for identifying

processes and representing a "well-grounded sense of local reality" (p. 172).

Ethical Considerations

Approval for this study was obtained from the University of Cincinnati Institutional

Review Board (IRB). The Athens district also required application for permission to conduct

research within the district. Confidentiality presented a problem since the responses to individual

interviews were used to select questions for the group interviews. There was a need to keep the

areas of disconnect in each site from being blown out of proportion or misrepresented to either

the teachers or the principal. None of the sites examined had large discrepancies that were not

explained in advance during the teacher or principal interviews. Most practices seemed to be

viewed as equal in value by the team members within buildings.

The nature of the teacher meetings included individual student names and other teachers.

The researcher remained non-judgmental and refrained from interjecting opinions about students

and teachers as well as teaching practices. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) recommends using field

notes to maintain a record of concerns as they occur. This record remained confidential and

enabled the researcher to express concern while keeping personal values removed from the

setting. The field notes assisted in the development and selection of site specific group

interviews.

Responsibility to all subjects must drive the researchers comments while in the setting

(Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Subjects entered the study voluntarily and must not be exposed to

risks that are greater than any possible gain. Special care was taken to preserve the nature of the

existing relationships in each setting. Honoring the superordinate/subordinate relationship

between the principal and participating teachers presented an especially precarious situation.

Constant reassurance was offered that the researcher was seeking the positive aspects that existed in the setting. When participants inquired about researcher opinions care was taken to remain neutral in the response given. When the district officials who made the recommendation of sites inquired about findings the researcher replied that the participants were very willing to help and that the recommendations were excellent. Participant confidences must be kept regardless of the source of the inquiry.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The methodology here is based on qualitative methods of data collection, review and analysis. The answers sought to the question of the principal's role in facilitating relationships between teachers who teach in collaborative settings while meeting the needs of diverse students in an urban setting are valuable to the principals, teachers, and students in these specific settings and may yield useful information for other educators and researchers. The analysis that follows summarizes the findings and presents themes, obstacles, and commonalities discovered.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The investigation of these three sites provided much rich data. Coding, sifting and a focus on the principal's role determined which data were ultimately included. The data presented here attempt to answer the research question: How do selected urban principals facilitate the relationship between general education and special education teachers in K-12 inclusive programs? The unique nature of each school provided a kaleidoscope of practices in inclusive education. The story of each site concludes with the broad themes that seemed to be most prevalent at that particular site according to the individual and group interviews. Discussion about the similarities found at all three sites rounds out Chapter 3.

Site Stories

The three urban schools, which participated in this study, are Romulus, Rubicon, and Acropolis. How the principals facilitate the relationship between the general education teacher and the special education teacher working collaboratively in inclusion settings is revealed in each school site description. We begin with Romulus where veteran teachers are in their first year of inclusion. Second, we visit Rubicon where teachers have been practicing inclusion for as long as they can remember. Finally, at Acropolis a first year special education teacher and her collaborating general education teacher reveal how their principal supports their inclusion efforts. Each principal's story begins the site description followed by the special education teacher, the general education teacher, and themes that surfaced specifically at each site.

Romulus

Romulus Elementary, serves approximately 450 students in Preschool to grade 5. Situated in a deteriorating industrial area, the building has several distinct sections that have been

added over the building's 50-year history. The participating teachers each had over 30 years of education experience and were very willing to share their stories. This is their first year of working together collaboratively in an inclusive classroom.

The collaboration model used at Romulus is one of full inclusion. Both teachers are in the classroom all day, except for a 30-minute period when the special education teacher goes to the second grade classroom to meet the individualized education program (IEP) minutes and goals of the second grade students on her caseload. Observation in the classroom revealed that during reading instruction the teachers were parallel teaching more than collaborating. That is, each teacher directed a different lesson to a specific reading group, from her reading table in a corner of the room. On one occasion, the general education teacher was at the front of the room directing a whole class lesson, while the special education teacher practiced first grade level sight words with an individual student. Observations completed during writing instruction demonstrate a co-teaching model, where one teacher delivered instruction and then both teachers assisted students as they engaged in the assigned writing tasks. Teachers reported that during math instruction, the special education teacher delivered whole group instruction and then both teachers supported students' independent work.

Principal of Romulus

Paul Picard, the principal at Romulus, began in education but took a job as a manager for an airline. While working with the airline, he kept in touch with education by serving as a room dad and part time teacher. "I needed additional money so I started working part-time for the major airline, Rio Airlines. I was offered a management position and decided to leave education". He maintained his teaching credentials and obtained administrative licensure after early retirement from the airline. "All the while I was working at the airlines I stayed in touch,

through the training department at Rio Airlines. I was still in charge of training and supervising

and using a lot of the education skills". As a principal, he stressed the importance of maintaining

visibility and a team approach.

> I have an assistant principal and I have a full-time guidance counselor and
> the three of us really make up the administrative team… A typical morning
> I would say; well there is not a typical morning. If you've been an
> administrator you know. It's whatever can happen is going to happen.
> You just have to be available.

> I think my philosophy is I'm out front; I'm available for whatever
> comes up. I'm very open. If a teacher needs help, or if a student comes in,
> or a family comes in …. As soon as the kids come in, I try to be in the
> cafeteria with them. I'm very proactive in that. If you are out front, you
> are solving a lot of problems before they happen. You see them happening.
> I'm just very big on that…

> You see a problem starting to happen or a potential problem that could
> happen if so and so sat there and you redirect in a very guiding way.
> I'm not a disciplinarian.

The principal of Romulus carries a commitment to ensuring that all students are learning.

He believes that all students can learn and that the ultimate goal for educators is providing a

setting, which supports students learning.

> So I think the goal for it is: no matter what classroom you have, it should be
> an inclusion classroom. This special needs one [teacher] gives you that extra
> help that you might need and you still have the ability. If that child needs
> something additional, well then, we just have to find what that additional is.

Paul introduced the teaching team that participated in the study as rather reluctant to the

inclusion process. According to him and both teachers, he unilaterally told the two teachers, in

May, they would be teaching in an inclusion setting together for the coming school year.

> I have a primary team and it pretty much is inclusional. It is pretty much
> just that. It's an interesting couple and an interesting combination. This
> special education teacher… well she was somewhat resistant to inclusion
> because she's taught for probably 35 years and has had self-contained or
> more pull out. I knew that she could do this, and I knew that she would
> like this. She's always had intermediate so I put her in primary. She's

primary inclusion in third grade working with the regular teacher. The two teachers are always in there and the special needs kids are in that particular classroom.

The person she's teaching with… was always a primary first grade teacher and I decided she needed a change and moved her to third grade. She wasn't very happy about it, but I think she loves what she's doing and she does an excellent job. I didn't just randomly say, like okay I'm going to move you…it was deliberate on my part because I thought that she was burned out on that, and I think she could do and push a little bit further in the third. She seems to like it. She is scheduled to retire this year, but she still doesn't talk if she is or not. So that would be the team.

When discussing another collaborative teaching team that he had placed together, Paul reinforced that he deliberately matched certain teachers together. "The person that I hired had done a few years of special education teaching, but I thought would be a good fit with this person. I thought there would be a good balance". This philosophy is reflected in his response to the question of how the teachers came to work together:

From working with these ladies for ten years I could see they would be a good mix for the kids. It would be good. If somebody is going to give it a good shot, I think they would give it a good shot. To me it's successful.

The principal shared his observation of the classroom selected for this study:

I observed in that classroom yesterday. You can't observe one without observing the other…It was the observation of the regular classroom teacher and its just very good teamwork and I could not go in there right now and tell you who the special education children are.

Observation by the researcher affirmed this statement. The teachers seemed to communicate consistent expectations to students and set limits with students that did not indicate accommodations were being made. Entering the room during a whole class lesson, it was not apparent which teacher served which role. Each teacher supervised small groups of children at learning centers. Each teacher assisted students working independently. Both offered disciplinary

corrections and instruction at an equal pace. The principal described the relationship between the teachers:

> Oh, they were friends but they weren't comrades. They didn't hang around with each other but they were both good solid teachers. Solid foundation and some of the old school that will pick up and do the thing that you're trying. The special needs person especially, she's just passionate about the kids and their learning and doing what's best for these kids. That's why it was a little struggle because she felt that she could still be doing more with pulling some of them out so it will be interesting to see. She's still; well I'll know soon if her intent letter comes back that she wants to stay. She could retire but we haven't talked about it. If she stays then I know she likes it.

Special Education Teacher of Romulus

Betsy Miller, the special education teacher interviewed at Romulus, has been a teacher for over 33 years. She began her career as an elementary teacher and added special education categories as she needed them. Her 30 years at Romulus have been mostly at the intermediate level as a special education teacher. She had previous experiences with inclusion for science and social studies. Currently she serves second graders with the assistance of a paraprofessional and spends all but about an hour of the school day teaching inclusive, collaborative, third grade. She explained her initial response to the news that she would be in a different hall, different grade level and different setting:

> Well I know that Mr. Picard knew that I was very resistant to this. In fact he just called me out of my room one day and took me to another room and said, "This is what's going to happen next year", I cried.

> At that point, that was when I had the feeling that I wouldn't be able to give the kids what they needed. I told him, he used to work for the airlines, and I remember specifically saying this. It's like being the pilot and being told you're the stewardess. At that point that's the way I looked at it. I had made up my mind that this was probably going to be my last year. So I think he understood that and he allowed me that feeling.

Betsy describes her relationship with the general education teacher who shares her third grade students. She references 'my students' indicating the students with disabilities on her caseload.

> It's very good. Neither one of us had done this before. We were really just told this is the way it is. She had a lot of years in first grade and this was only her second year in the third grade. She kind of felt she was still getting her feet wet. Her feet were really firmly planted on the ground. Those first grade skills come in really well because we have a lot of my students' that are functioning closer to that level. So she was a very good resource because I'm not in my classroom. All of my materials are someplace else.
>
> At the beginning of the year it was difficult because I'd be running to my room and it was very hot in here. My room is air conditioned. So for part of the day we took my students; all of the students to my room and then of course what we needed would be down here. It's worked out; well, I feel it's worked out very, very well. She is very, very easy to work with. She is very accommodating. She knows where everything is in here and I don't. I can say, do you have… and she knows exactly where it is. I think it's worked out as well; well, better than I expected that it would.

When the researcher asked Betsy whether her relationship with the general education teacher was social or strictly professional, she responded somewhat wistfully:

> Pretty much strictly a work relationship. I think it comes from; I worked on a different hall for a long time. This is my first time down here. I really had no, other than professional, I really had no contact with Genie because the building is big, we don't have the same lunchtimes or the same planning times so you know you don't really see people if you're not in their team. She has been here for a long time so she has an established group of peers and friends that she socializes with.

The experience level Betsy brings to the classroom includes an understanding of the cyclical nature of educational trends. She describes her previous experience with inclusion:

> Basically for reading, language arts and math if they had that on their IEP they came to me. If it was science and social studies, then I would usually go out with them or she [instructional aide] would go with them, and I would be with someone else that had math that needed to be done or something. So I have had some experience in the classroom. We tried this about 15 or 20 years ago. There was a big push for inclusion. We tried it then, and it lasted about a year. It was very difficult. It didn't last.

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She continues explaining why she thinks the first attempts at inclusion were not successful:

> I think there were a lot of reasons. I think one of the reasons is for about
> 10 or 15 years prior to that we said that regular ed teachers couldn't work
> with special needs kids. I had the certificate. That was my job. We
> pulled them out and then to say now, guess what, you can. You don't have
> any special ed background but we're putting these kids back in your class.
> There is a lot of resistance to it at that point. I was doing resource and some
> diagnostic work at that point…The lady, whose class I spent the most time in,
> was very resistant to having those children, not the kids themselves, but
> it was the idea.
>
> They were in her classroom. It wasn't comfortable. It wasn't a comfortable
> situation for either one of us. It wasn't just us, other people were doing the
> same thing. It just didn't work.

Betsy expressed her reservations and hesitations relative to the current form of inclusion:

> What goes around comes around. I've been in it long enough to see the
> pendulum swing and swing and swing. I think it will stay for a while
> because I think it's what's being required of us. I think in some respects
> it works out well, and I think in some respects it doesn't. I definitely feel
> there is a particular group of students who's needs are not getting met by
> this situation, which is not a fault of the collaboration process as much as
> the fault of resources. …in our particular setting we have a severe profound
> classroom and then total collaboration. There needs to be a little bit more in
> between there. Some of your kids that are your 55 and 60 IQ's need a little
> bit; you know they need more.
>
> They [students with lower IQ] need more of a direct instruction than
> what they can; I don't feel like I can give them as much as they need in a
> total collaboration system. So at this point I see them and they really want
> it to work and we're doing our best to make it work, but personally, I
> still think there are some students who need more than we're able to give
> them. So if they adjust somewhat or fine-tune some things as they see it
> happen then I think collaboration will be here for a while, but I don't know
> always in this form.

She goes on to offer her vision for an alternative service delivery:

> More of a resource setting. They would be included as much as possible
> because there are a lot of things that go on in here that they need. Language
> stimulation, age appropriate models, and they need all of those socialization
> type things, but sometimes they need so much that's below what goes on
> in a third grade classroom. It's very difficult, without embarrassing them,

> to accommodate their needs. When you are so far behind, you really don't gain a lot from what's going on because there's too many steps that have been skipped.

Betsy believes that she and the general education teacher have similar philosophies. She also thinks that the two of them have a similar approach to students, discipline and expectations.

> I think my expectations; I think that's one thing with collaboration. I think my expectations for my IEP students' are higher because of this collaboration setting. Because I actually see what is required to be a third grader. When I was at resource, I worked off the curriculum map of the IEP. I didn't see the nuances and the subtle things that happen all the time. I didn't see that because I wasn't working with kids that had that. Within this classroom there is such a wide difference between what these kids, all of them, what they can do. The things that I would probably have never touched upon get touched upon, which is good. The kids need some exposure to those things.

She described a successful inclusion setting:

> I think it would be; it's one where both of the people involved treat each other as professionals, as peers and that we understand that each one of us has something to bring to the situation. I described it once before I was involved in it as an arranged marriage where nobody really wants to be in there, but somebody already said you had to and so that's the way it was. I think even in an arranged marriage people can learn to get along well, and they can learn to appreciate each other.

> Neither one of us volunteered for this and we came into it with some hesitation, but I think it's worked out very well and I think it's been; well, I don't have anything to compare it to. I feel that it's been very successful. As I said, I think what would make it more successful is a longer time to develop it… over the summer to sit down and really get some things and say, you know this really didn't work as well as we wanted it to. What can we do? I could find out what she has in here in terms of materials.

General Education Teacher of Romulus

Genie Ernst, the general education teacher included in the study from Romulus, taught for several years, stayed home with her children, taught at a preschool and then returned to the

Rome district when her children were in school. She had over 30 years teaching experience, 24

of which were in first grade. This is her second year back in third grade.

When asked about her relationship with Betsy she said "I knew her, but we did not have a

working relationship prior to this year ". Genie described their philosophies of teaching:

> I think they're similar. We were very apprehensive in the beginning of the
> year. We were just thrown into. They said this is what you are going to do.
> We were really apprehensive. We give and take, and I think we've finally
> got it down.
>
> I think that we do compliment each other…she's been a world traveler,
> and she has all this information and all these places that she's been, so
> the kids are benefiting from her experiences.

She continued by explaining how she and Betsy came to work together and describing the

adjustments she had to make when initiating the inclusive classroom.

> I was not used to having anybody in my room. I would have
> maybe, an assistant, for maybe a half hour maybe one day a week. That
> was the only thing I was used to. I had a parent last year who would
> come in one day a week. To have somebody in my room all day everyday;
> I'm thinking, I don't want somebody in there all the time. It's not bad.
> You know, where if you chime in and add to the thing and you've got
> somebody to walk around and help.

When addressing the support provided for inclusion, Genie replied, "I've had no training.

They just said you did a good job last year with this child so you are going to be our

collaborative teacher this year". Later, when speaking about the principal's support, she

expanded by saying:

> Well, it was *his* idea. *He* thinks it's great. *He* thinks it's wonderful.
> I wish I would have had some training before they told me *I* was going
> to do it. They just told me last May this is what you're going to do.

Genie's description of a successful inclusion setting included a focus on meeting

students' individual curricular needs and working as a team:

> Well, I think working as a team, and I think that's what we try to do.

We try to; she has her spelling words for her group and the other children
have the other spelling words. So we give two separate spelling tests.

I think helping and dividing up for the math groups has helped a lot. Our
children who are gifted in math and we have a couple who are very high
functioning in the math. They get what they need on the level that they are.

They've gone on to multiplication and division and we're still working
on counting money. It took us forever with regrouping and addition, and we
don't know that all of them have all of that. We spent a month on
it, and you have to cover something else.

I think working as a team is our strong point. I think we can do that.
I think neither one of us has to be the head. I think we're committed
to both of us working together to do what we can.

Much like Betsy, Genie expressed concern over the issue of class size. "I would want less

than twenty-four children. I think a class with eight IEP students in one class is a lot". When

asked what she would suggest to other principals, her comment centered on her principal's

unilateral changes of teaching assignments:

I would like to see the next person maybe give us the choice if they wanted
to do it or not. I wasn't given the choice of whether I wanted to teach third
grade or not either. After twenty-four years and last year; well the year
before that, and in May he called us all in and he moved everybody around.
He left one person in the grade level. He moved everybody else around.
It upset me greatly. I had twenty-four years of first grade materials and
then all of a sudden it was gone.

How the Romulus Teachers Developed Their Relationship

The principal at Romulus did not elaborate about how the collaborating teachers

developed their relationship. He praised the work they had done and the results he has seen with

students.

I feel that this was a right decision. I feel proud that we have, mainly for
the kids' sake. The kids are happy. The kids are proud. The kids are just
kids and not special needs kids.

Flexibility and compromise added to lots of communication seem to help support Genie and Betsy. Genie, the general education teacher, mentioned communication in several of her answers. Her response to what maintains their collaborative relationship, follows:

> First, we have been teaching for so long, we were pretty [using her hands she formed a box]; we changed. We were able to adjust and change. I think an easygoing personality has something to do with it and not somebody that is; it's this way or no way. So, I think it was just like we learned through compromise.

Betsey, the special education teacher, provided even more detailed thoughts:

> It took a little time at the beginning of the year for the kids to realize that we were both teachers. There had to be; you know as far as the kids are concerned there had to be the teacher and then there had to be somebody that was the helper. For a while I was the helper. Well, after 33 years in the classroom, I wasn't going to be the helper. That bothered me at the beginning. We talked a little bit about that. I said, 'I don't want to step on your toes, and I don't want you to step on my toes but the kids need to understand if I tell them something that means the same as if you tell them something', because they would play us against each other.

> Can I go to the bathroom? No. Then they'd go and ask the other one and we didn't know if you said yes or no so that took a little bit of working out and that was basically give and take more between us. She followed up what I said and I followed up what she said. It didn't take too long for the kids to realize that both of us were teachers.

> Understand right from the beginning that we are a team and that, you know, if I say something that steps on your toes please tell me. I want them to know that I would do the same thing. Basically they're all kids regardless of whether they have IEP or they don't have IEP and I'm going to be willing to work with everybody and I would want her to feel the same way about my students.

> They're our students. It's not my kids and her kids. They belong to all of us. I would want that person, hopefully it would be someone who would volunteer to do it because they have a feeling of, you know they would like to have special needs kids in their classrooms. So that would be the first thing is just to have an understanding of where we are and that we are on the same page about what we want to do for the kids.

Planning at Romulus

Planning at Romulus occurs at each grade level. Each grade level spends early release time every other week working on meeting the district's curriculum map goals. Teams generate detailed plans to assist teachers in meeting the needs of all learners in every classroom. Every day includes a dedicated, uninterrupted, 50-minute period, with two teachers in each classroom providing direct language arts instruction referred to as Reach Outstanding Achievement and Reading (ROAR). This acronym aligns with the theme of the schools mascot the tiger and fits with the tiger paws given as positive behavior support rewards.

The principal explained that all grade levels have common planning time which they use to adhere to the district curriculum map.

> They have their planning time together. Each day they have forty-five
> minutes together and will do their planning from that. They will plan at
> any other time if the kids are at the library or whatever.

The special education teacher explained in detail how the planning process works for the grade level and with her collaborating teacher.

> A lot of that is very informal. When we break these groups down,
> you know, like with the math part of it. We look at what we need to
> do. We figure out how many students we're going to have in that
> group whenever they rearrange it. Then we, as I said, even though
> we know we're going to get X amount of students for time and
> money and we do some kind of pre-assessment to see exactly
> where they go.

> I have my resources, things that I have in my room that I've used before
> and she has things that she's used. We usually just do that informally.
> We'll sit down and we'll say, okay, do you have a good idea of how you
> taught time to first graders. She has some resources that I don't have. I had
> some things that she didn't have, and we kind of just sit and talk things out.
> Then we decide, all right, you are going to do this and I'll do this and I'll
> pull a small group back here and we'll work on these.

> It's the team, the third grade team. They collaborate on their lesson plans.
> I sit in on those team meetings. Then if it's reading it's basically pretty

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much her deal with her kids and mine is for mine. The language arts things we all do kind of the same thing and I'll try to make; I see the lesson plans and I'll make adaptations. I try to do things that I think would help with my students. There are some things that just don't fit, so I plan something individual for that child at that time. At this point, I'm adapting their lesson plans. I'm not writing a different set of lesson plans.

Much of the discussion about planning revolved around materials and teacher "stuff". The special education teacher's stuff was in her room in another wing of the building "I'm not in my classroom. All of my materials are someplace else". The general education teacher had an overabundance of first grade materials but limited third grade items, "It upset me greatly. I had twenty-four years of first grade materials and then all of a sudden it was gone". Both teachers expressed dismay at having accumulated years of material and not having access to items that matched the grade level or needs of their current students.

Professional Development at Romulus

Both teachers at Romulus expressed that some kind of professional development would have assisted them in establishing their inclusion classroom. The special education teacher had attended a one day training on collaboration several years before her inclusion assignment, but the general education teacher received no training or professional development in preparation for the inclusive setting. The principal described his justification for the lack of professional development for the two teachers prior to the school year.

> To be very honest I think two good teachers could get in and don't have to be told what needs to be done in this. You just do it and if it's going to be inclusion that's what it's going to be. It's not: "I'm going to teach you because you have an IEP". I look at it more as team teaching. There are general education kids that need the same skills that some of these special ed kids need. Now the main philosophy was the IEP of the students need to be met but the needs of all the children in the classroom need to be met.

Expressing that inclusion's success in the Romulus building occurred without professional development Paul offered:

It's working without having; I mean it's like what do you need? If there is something then what can I do to help this. Amazingly, it seems just to be working very smoothly and like I said they'll praise kids. Look at our kids. The one [inclusion classroom] last year they made the highest gains in the school.

His theory revolved around the principles of solid instruction and good teamwork:

So there has been training on it. It's the same training that is out there now that one went to and really didn't get a whole lot from it. I think the knowledge is you just have your knowledge base of what it is you do with the kids and how do you do it as a team. I don't think there is a real prescription for it at all. In my role of how I've guided it. I believe that all children can learn at high levels. It may just take different ways of getting there.

The group interview with both teachers yielded more information about their perceptions

and expectations relative to professional development. The district provides one size fits all

training.

Genie: Recently the emphasis has been on reading and discipline.

Betsy: Professional development is based on school wide need. So when we look at school wide need, that will be based on testing results and those types of things…A lot of our professional development for my part, and I'm being honest. It's a waste of time. It's my other special ed acronym, WOT. It's not something that you can actually walk back into your classroom and put into effect.

When questioned about the school system's support providing for inclusion the

conversation again moved to professional development.

Genie: Well I think it would have helped me if I would have had some training before it was said, this is what you're going to do. Just gone to a workshop or something. Maybe visited a class where it was already in place. We had never done it, either one of us. We were just; [her voice fades and she shakes her head] we had to figure it out on our own.

Betsy: I didn't see at those particular workshops, where that was going on, to apply to what I needed to be doing. I think in a lot of respects, most cases, you learn it by doing it because until you actually get in here and start doing it you don't know. A workshop can't really prepare you for something.

> Betsy: It would have been nice, especially in her respect, because I speak
>   special ed and she speaks regular ed. Sometimes the initials don't fit.
>   Even that was just a little bit of learning, the other person's area
>   of expertise.

Final Thoughts from Romulus

Both teachers expressed some discomfort with their grade placements and the way they

were informed of their assignment for the following year. During the group interview the special

education teacher expressed her opinion about the way the assignments were handled. The

general education teacher interjected agreement and nodded her head while Betsey was speaking:

> One thing, and I don't know if I mentioned it before, but I think I did,
> was that I think the people who are going to do the job need to have
> some input on who they are doing the job with. You know. Just to be
> told this is where it's going to be. We worked out fine. I don't know
> how they made the determination. I wasn't privileged to that. They may
> have done a lot of thinking. These two have similar styles or this one
> wouldn't work. They may have done all that. I don't know.
>
> I think it would be nice if the people were somewhat and somehow
> involved. Without hurting anybody's feelings if I could say to the
> principal, I really don't think I could work with this person next year.
> Let them take that into consideration. Maybe that doesn't make the
> final decision. It's their decision. I think that if would have had some
> input. If she had known a little bit earlier it would have made a difference.

The principal changed many positions and grade level assignments in the previous year

and the building test scores increased. The special education teacher expressed her current

feelings:

> I think it's been a good experience. It's opened my eyes to a lot of things
> and I'm glad that it worked out the way it did because it could've been a
> long year if it hadn't worked out as well as it did.

The researcher observed two professional women, joined hesitantly, dedicated to the

success of their students. Their shared professionalism and commitment to students allowed

them to overcome personal feelings of hurt and resistance to provide a stable learning

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environment for all students in their classroom. There were instances of loss, expressed in the interview, but none of that surfaced during observations.

When comparing Paul Picard to Greenleaf's (2003) description of a servant leader as a leader who encourages the individuals in the organization to grow personally and professionally, while achieving a sense of personal satisfaction several points stand out. Picard forced the teachers to grow personally, but it was not clear that his purpose was for them to achieve a sense of personal satisfaction. He expected the teachers to grow professionally, but did not provide an avenue for their development. In this case, the principal seemed to have been the matchmaker, much in the way that Betsy described an arranged marriage. He saw the potential energy that could be created by combining the strengths of these two experienced teachers and put them together. He facilitated the inclusion setting managerially, not in a form of servant leadership as described by Greenleaf (2003).

Rubicon

Rubicon School serves approximately 300 kindergarten to fifth grade students. The small size of the building offers a different perspective of how to meet the needs of urban students. Approximately 70% of the students receive free or reduced lunch. There are 15% of students with disabilities. There is one special education teacher and one administrator. The small number of students requires the special education teacher to serve all of the school's students with individualized education programs (IEP's), with the exception of students with a speech and language only IEP.

The model of inclusion observed at Rubicon is that of the special education teacher as a consultant. Sara Rich, the special education teacher, is in the classroom with the general education teacher for a small percentage of instructional time, about four hours per week. She

assists the general education teacher in creating adaptations and modifications more than she actually delivers instruction in the curriculum at the fifth grade level. The teachers both report that when the lesson objectives allow small group instruction, they each take a group in order to reduce the teacher/pupil ratio.

All of the interviews and observations indicate that a positive school culture exists at Rubicon. The principal and the special education teacher used the same student as an example when asked about building discipline. The special education teacher and the general education teacher both described the same parent meeting when discussing who communicates with parents. The principal describes inclusion in the building as organic.

Principal of Rubicon

Dr. Aaron Knight entered the military, completed college on the GI Bill, worked for a social services agency, United Parcel Service and finally joined the teaching ranks. He began at private schools teaching reading and language arts. Then he became a dean of students and principal. He left his principal position to complete his doctoral studies. He then entered public schools as an administrator. Aaron served urban and rural schools. He has 17 years in private schools and 15 years in public schools. Rubicon, where he has been for the last 10 years, was his first elementary school experience.

Aaron described the Rubicon building: "It doesn't look like anything, but it's just wonderful. It's all home cooking. It all just happens. Organic as it were". During discussion about his typical day he explains:

> All the adults are where they are supposed to be, and if they're not they
> tell me. I meet the kids at the door. They start coming at 7:30. I hold
> the door for them… I'm just looking at the kids and seeing how they
> are doing and seeing how they are dressed. Seeing if there is anything
> they missed. Do they have their backpacks on? Are people missing
> from sibling groups coming in? And then I go to the cafeteria while

they are eating. I talk to the kids and the adults and just observe
what's going on.

The teacher interviews and researcher observations verify that Aaron constantly engages with

students and teachers. The only time the researcher found him seated was when she interviewed

him. He addressed all parents, staff members, and students by name.

The importance of prioritizing and developing relationships within the school community

while maintaining legal expectations and a healthy building climate surfaced in conversation

with the teachers as well as the principal. The principal's comments reflect his efforts to maintain

the Rubicon culture while remaining legally compliant:

> I know the school leader with the discretionary time has to devote time and
> energy to those kinds of things [referring to providing authentic, constant,
> consistent, student/staff recognition]. Otherwise everyone will say it's not
> important. They are not paying attention… So you've got to keep the right
> stuff on the front burner. Special ed is part of that. If we have a gap, and
> our special ed starts getting low scores, then we are screwed.

> You had to close gaps because you couldn't be considered to have achieved
> your proficiency if you had gaps between sub groups. In "No child left behind"
> you don't make AYP [adequate yearly progress] if you have a gap between
> special ed and regular ed. We are gapless.

> You really have to know the rules. I know the rules. I learn the rules
> through experience and through training and through reading and
> family, through application. They come and ask me what the rules
> are; the teachers do. So special ed teachers do [know the rules]. I know
> what the rules are enough to keep us out of trouble. We don't have to
> really worry about trouble because we are doing the job with kids.
> We want to do the right things.

Doing the right things according to Aaron includes taking care of the needs of all

members of the school community. He reflects on his philosophy about people working

collaboratively:

> All kids are gifted and all kids are special needs. So we work hard with
> our special needs kids. I know everyone. We divide them up in classes
> so our resource teacher can get to them in class better. Sometimes we

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group a little bit. I think that's okay because our resource teacher is so
good and our classroom teachers are cooperative. They will do whatever
is needed for the kids.

The physical arrangement of this school and the lack of commodious space
has the adults circulating among one another all the time. Everybody knows
everybody. This is a society of women. These women are kind of conservative
women and not to a fault. They are considerate of one another. They relate
well with one another.

So in a collegial, professional, goal oriented way, people, the classroom
teachers work together with our resource teacher who has; well she's
overloaded. Her caseload is above what it's supposed to be.

The teachers work with one another to work with individual kids. We do
a lot of collaboration on our accountability commitments with the special
subject teachers [art, physical education, music]… We are building on the
experience we had last year. The adults are really good at working together.

When discussing his role in facilitating the relationship between the general education
teacher and the special education teacher he described how the entire staff works to meet the
needs of all learners:

I do special ed stuff all day long. I know where all the special ed kids are.
Our special ed kids score higher, as I told you, on a whole. They score
higher on our standardized test than our regular kids do.

We make sure they [students] get the accommodations that they need.
That's the key thing. Of course you get accommodations for the test
that you get throughout the year. So I'm constantly interacting with the
speech teacher and the resource teacher. The classroom teachers are
solving problems for people.

So we don't just do the special ed thing but we do a lot of things for our kids.
Special needs kids often have needy families… I know these families. That
is the key thing; especially with special ed. You've got to know.

So she [special education teacher] works just as I do. She has conversations
with people. She's been here for … thirteen years. She is known and she
knows the routine. She is very unique. She knows exactly what they are
doing when she goes into class because she's been doing it for years.

Special Education Teacher of Rubicon

Sara Rich, a 21-year veteran special education teacher, once worked in a school that served only students with disabilities. Her experience during the transition with PL-142 was not smooth. She described how she and her students dealt with the change in the early 1970's: "Not only did you have these children that were very low, but you had these teachers looking at you like who are you? You kind of have to sell yourself".

Sara serves Rubicon as diagnostician, resource room teacher for kindergarten through third grade, and inclusion teacher for grades four and five. Her caseload exceeds the recommended limits. Creative scheduling and a supportive staff allow her to meet all the special education needs in the building. One instructional aide supports one student who had a history of behavioral problems in other buildings. Sara describes her typical week:

> Monday through Thursday are my seeing kid days. I start at eight o'clock and I get to children who are what we call intermediate, which are fourth and fifth grade. I go to them because I have more than one in a classroom so I can have however many I have and we have a schedule that I meet with the teachers to see at what time would be the best for me to come in: according to the IEP and what I'm working on with them.
>
> So, I usually do mornings with fourth and fifth grade. I'm in each class for an hour. That way we usually hit reading, written expression and math. We may not hit them all, everyday but we will have them all during the four days. Then I see kindergarten, first, second and third in my office as resource. I will tell you why. I feel that I can get them to pay attention to me and to do work very well. So, by the time they go to fourth grade, they know what my role is and I don't have to say anything and they do real well. My kids do very well.

Sara explained that due to her responsibilities as diagnostician and intervention assistance team (IAT) member she, with the principal's support, leaves Friday open for testing students, parent meetings, and contact with teachers. If her schedule is not full on Friday or a grade level has a special request she sees students. She explained that at the beginning of the year she

discusses overarching plans for the entire year with each grade level, setting up the relationship

and preparing teachers for the needs of the students on her caseload:

> I have a whole core content for kindergarten through fifth grade. I go
> into the teacher and just say what will you be working on for the year.
> Let's sit down to decide what we want to do with reading and math
> and written expression because I can pull something up if they feel
> it's important. So it's best to work on the core content.
>
> We talk about what we have to cover before testing time. We know
> what we have to have covered by testing in April. We want to leave
> a couple of weeks for review and we kind of know. We've been here
> long enough to know what we have to do.
>
> Friday is common planning time. If we have to meet before that we
> may have to rearrange. A lot of times if a teacher in one of my other
> grades if they are going to be on a field trip and we have extra time I
> can go in there.
>
> They have an extra planning period a week. So, we usually meet; well
> we talk daily. Then if we need extra time, like yesterday we met after
> school. If something runs over that we have to meet before school or
> after school we see to it that we have the time to do that.
>
> Sara explains how her relationship with Gail Burns, the fifth grade teacher included in

this study, assists their work on the core content.

> We work together daily. This year she has five of my students. That's a lot.
> So it's daily and I not only work with my students, but if we break them
> into groups, she'll take half and I'll take half. There will be times when
> we switch groups and to what we feel is going to benefit the student the
> best. Not always are my students in my group. Sometimes they will be in
> her group. We work, pretty much talk, about what we're going to be doing
> that day, how we're going to group them, and you know, sometimes I'll do
> just sitting on the side of the room. We go over the projects that we're
> going to do.
>
> When asked if she and Gail share the same philosophy she included not just Gail, but the

entire Rubicon staff. Sara goes on to provide examples of the tight knit culture of the school.

> We [Sara and Gail] talk a lot socially and I'm sure she'll tell you
> she has a daughter who has autism so we talk quite a bit about that.
> We talk about different things that she's doing with her daughter.

I think all of us here want to see our students do well. I think we [Rubicon staff] are all very positive. I don't think we say negative things. We say more positive things. We want the children to feel good about themselves or the students to feel good. I'm sure they like to come to school. I'm sure one of the main reasons is they are treated so well. I really do love them. I like them and I feel great and they are very complimentary and they are just really neat people.

We [Rubicon staff] do some professional development together. We also do some social things together. We go to plays. We have a book club at school and we all read the books and meet at Don Pablo's about once a month to go over the books that we've read. We've gone to see a few plays.

Sara's description of successful inclusion is quite simple. "I think as long as the two

teachers get along well and make the students feel real good about themselves that they are going

to learn." When asked what parts of inclusion she thought she and Gail were best at she focused

on instruction.

We seem to work really good together and we work with the students, my students and hers together. If for some reason one of us isn't getting what we want across, the other one may have a different approach that will be better and the student will understand it better. We just want to see the kids be successful and learning the core content that they have to learn.

When asked what kinds of things the principal does to support their inclusion efforts,

Sara focused on professional treatment of teachers and creating opportunities to praise students.

He'll talk with us about how the students are doing. Of course when they do something very good they go to him and he gives them a gel pen. He tells them what a nice job they are doing. My kiddos, a lot of them don't see me as just for them. A lot of the kids will say Miss Rich can you help me with this. I don't understand that or can you explain this. When he comes in he'll say to the students now you know Miss Burns and Miss Rich are here to help you and they are doing a wonderful job. Especially when he comes in to give them their awards for attendance or they are on the A honor roll. He'll say, you know Miss Burns and Miss Rich. So he doesn't ever not include me and he doesn't treat me like I'm a special ed teacher. He just treats me like one of the other ones.

When he comes in the room, yes, those students have two teachers. They don't have one special ed. teacher and one regular teacher. The kids

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feel that there are two teachers there and they are very lucky to have two teachers because that means you get twice the amount of help. He's always very positive and says that they have two teachers.

It's a real positive situation to be here. The kids like to come. They like the teachers. They like the principal. It's a very positive atmosphere to work in. I think that's the whole thing… The teachers are positive. I can't even *remember* any negative comments… You may get frustrated, but it's always what can I do to make sure that this turns into something positive?

I think we'll always have inclusion here. I can't remember not having it.

General Education Teacher of Rubicon

The general education teacher began teaching in a Catholic school. Gail Burns has been at Rubicon for 17 years. Her 20 years of teaching experience are in fourth and fifth grade. She currently teaches fifth grade language arts and social studies. She and her grade level teaching partner group their students by gender during the second half of the school year to eliminate the distractions that boys and girls create for each other at their age.

Planning for the academically diverse group of students includes meeting the individual needs of students with disabilities. Gail explains how she collaborates with Sara:

She really works with us [fifth grade teachers] constantly on who is where and what they need help with especially when we go by topic. As far as the math topic she talks with us pretty much daily about who needs what. It just depends. It changes daily.

Its just part of what we do. She does whatever we want her to do. I don't want to put it that way but she is just always like what are we working on and she goes with that with the kids… She'll also do that with other kids who aren't really identified but could use the help as well.

I just think she just is part of it. It's not like kids think you are working with them and not us. We try to make her more part of the group. We talk everyday when she comes in. If the kids are working on something we kind of brief each other with what's going on. If she notices something about one kid, you know, we just make sure we keep track of what's going on with this one or that one.

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We never have to chase her down…she'll come and talk to us about specific tested areas to make sure her students are where they need to be.

Now it's naturally done I think. I guess at first until we got to know each other. I can't remember it taking a lot of work. We've always talked together and she comes to our meetings. She's always been great. If it was a fourth grade meeting she came to that meeting. I would say now, it compliments each other because when she comes in it's just like normal for all the kids. She comes in and her group that she works with, we tend to keep on one side of the room. We have other kids mixed in but they're kind of in this area [pointing to the area near the door] and she just goes right in and everyone goes on. No one even notices.

I don't think it would be co-teaching but it's more, well I would think of it as teamwork but I think when she's in here I'm the one that's usually leading yet she doesn't just talk to her students. If there are other students that need help she helps them. They would go over and ask her a question while I'm helping someone else.

She doesn't usually lead the class. It's not like she's an assistant but she's more just working with us and like I said it's kind of effortless. She's in and sometimes I look around and don't even realize she's gone out to her next group. It's just in a flow.

This flow seems to be a natural consequence of the culture of the building, the

relationship between the two women and communication overlaps the areas of collaboration.

Gail explains how they communicate throughout the day:

We email, which is great technology advancement there. I'll send her a note down if we have something and if we need to get together and I've called outside of school and we've talked on the phone or if we think of something over the weekend or in the summer. We talk about kids for the following year. Things coming up and what would be best. We plan ahead as much as we can.

Gail continues the communication thread when describing the nature of their relationship:

We get together outside of school and talk about a lot of stuff outside of school. She always talks to me about my daughter [Gail's daughter has autism]…She has called me many times to talk about her when she sees something on TV about the situation. It's just a respectful and caring relationship. Not just as co-workers but as friends too.

Yea. I think that's great about working with her and she's willing to do that. You have to have people willing to do that and be flexible and realize all

your special needs kids aren't going to be the same. Things aren't going to go smoothly all the time. You have to work with that.

Gail's description of successful inclusion included the element of expectations, student achievement and student comfort:

> I would say the students' performance and when you observe the students they feel comfortable with either of us and talking to either of us if they need help or they know that they are not stressed out when things are expected from them. I feel like we work together with the kids.

> Usually the special ed students are some of the highest scores we have on state assessments. You don't always see that. I think that it is because Sara expects it. They don't feel like I can just sit back and obviously they know if they are identified and if they are getting help with her. I think they know the expectations are there.

> We have the same expectations of the identified student as we do another student who is not identified. We don't say okay you don't have to do as much. We don't unless it is very special circumstances. Typically, I expect as much from you as I expect from this other child. I think they know that and they feel that they have to do just as much. They perform usually within that.

When discussing possible improvements for Rubicon's inclusion efforts Gail offered:

> I wish we had more time. . I wish the students had a little more confidence. Sometimes you have to really boost that. I'd add to their confidence and have her more. I definitely think we could use another person here because she gets spread pretty thin.

> Another person would definitely help. It makes you feel when she's not here you are kind of thin with the students. I have three out of twenty that are identified [as students with disabilities] but they blend in with everybody else. They need a little more encouragement especially when she's not here. I think she gives them that confidence too. I think they just feel, I guess a little less confident when she's not here.

Gail addressed the way Sara meets the needs of all her students. She emphasized that all of the teachers realize that Sara has a large case load:

> I think it takes the cooperation of the regular classroom teachers knowing. I think you can get people complaining sometimes like you're supposed

to be here at this time and this moment and just understanding that there
are going to be days she's here longer and there are going to be days
she's here shorter.

When asked for examples of the principal's support she used the example of grouping the

fifth graders by gender. Her following examples include the ideas of trusting teachers and

leading them to find their own solutions.

First, if you go to him with anything he's very supportive in that. He will
say how will that help you? And if you have a good argument and presentation
he's like let's do it. He's very open to new ideas and very open to let's try it.
He's not afraid to try new things. You know if you go to him and say okay
this isn't working he will toss it.

He trusts you and he's there if you need anything. He also lets you take
control of your class and do what you feel is best. He has a good balance
with that, I think.

He will listen and try to help you in any way he can. He also will toss out
ideas with you, if you are like this isn't working and I don't know why.
He will kind of question you until you come to the answer yourself.

I guess I think he's always very open with what you think will change
that and what do you think would work and he knows that every year
is different with a different group of kids. He's willing to take chances.

The building focus on instruction and the shared belief that together the team of teachers

makes a difference for children is reflected in Gail's closing remarks:

Every child is different. I think being able to work with Sara so closely,
we can talk about each child on a daily basis because things change daily.
What's good for one child might not be the best for another and try to work
within that and not make it one rule for everybody whether it works or not.

Organic Nature of the School and the Organizational Structure

Rubicon, although an urban building, resembles many descriptions of rural school

buildings. Aaron, the principal noted in a follow up discussion that he feels his building is often

not viewed as an urban building even in his district, because of the small size and isolated hilltop

location. The staff has stability that provides an environment for learning and family comfort.

The principal used the word organic to describe Rubicon. When the teachers were asked in the

group interview about Aaron's use of the word organic they offered:

> Gail: Well when you first said organic to me, I thought you may have
> meant more natural because when Sara comes to our classrooms
> it doesn't feel like it's a separate; like okay now we're doing this
> because Sara is here. It's just kind of a flow. That was my
> interpretation of that being organic in more of a natural flow of
> things. What do you think? [turning to Sara].
>
> Sara: I would agree that it would be More natural flow. I think about my
> purposes, not as a special teacher but as another teacher in the
> classroom. I don't think the kids see me as a separate facilitator.
> They see me as just part of the class. If anybody needs help they'll
> ask me they won't wait. They'll come up and say, what does this
> mean or what does that mean. I look at it as a natural way.

The conversation continued to include instruction, planning and communication. Gail, the

general education teacher, describes the special education teacher's interactions in the general

education classroom:

> When she comes in it's not, and like I said, we don't always get a chance
> to talk separately. Sometimes we're in the hall or wherever we meet about
> what we're doing the next day. Usually, when she comes in it's like, here is
> what we're doing and she just picks it up and goes with it. It's a part of
> the room rather than a separate… I think if they were pulled out it would
> be completely different because they wouldn't be hearing the message
> everybody hears. You've got a different take on things and it's just two
> separate rooms.
>
> Sara works the way she does with us and I think we work the way we do and
> we know that she's coming in. Like I said, if we're working on this and she
> came in the door I would just keep talking and hand her a copy or she would
> come right in and look right over the shoulder of one of the students and just
> pick right up. It's not like an interruption or it becomes something separate.
>
> Like I said, the kids don't even really look up. They are used to it and they
> know when she comes in we just go right on and sometimes I don't even
> realize she's left the room until I say all of sudden, she's not here anymore.
> Very quietly she's in there and then she's gone.

Both teachers agreed that the principal supports inclusion by facilitating scheduling, trusting the teachers to do their jobs, and maintaining daily visibility in classrooms and the building.

Gail: The one thing that comes to my mind is scheduling because he doesn't say, put out a schedule and say you have to do this. He lets us work together and we always work out the best schedule for us that meets the needs of the students and the IEP. We just work and work that out among our teams with Sara. He just let's us do that. I think that's a big deal because I think that could be a problem if you were just told, this is your time and that's it.

Sara: We don't have to turn in our time. I know how many minutes each student gets so I know how long I have to be with each group. Whereas if I had to answer to somebody and they would say, now you have to be here in 60 minutes. You only need to be with this one 45. That doesn't seem to be a problem. We've always worked the scheduling out.

Gail: I think he trusts us. He trusts that we are going to do; I mean I think his presence is not overbearing. He's there and he's always around the building and just there but you don't feel like he's checking up on you but you feel like he's part of the school setting. He's there and he knows. I feel trusted by him and he knows I'm going to do what I'm supposed to do and that makes a difference.

Sara: He wanders in the room a lot.

Gail: He'll come in and just look over students and…

Sara: …talk with them.

Gail: They'll sometimes not realize he's in the room for a few minutes and he just keeps a check on kids and let's them know that he's around. I think that makes a difference.

Positive School Culture

During the group interview, the teachers provided examples of how the principal affected the culture of the building. Interactions with the staff, families and students as described by the teachers match very closely with the descriptions provided by the principal himself.

Gail: …how he projects himself with everyone. It's more of a talking
         with you… He just reminds you when you get frustrated or you get
         overwhelmed by things. He brings you back to think about what's
         important here and think about how you do get a little frustrated and
         crazy about things at times. It's his personality and how he's very into
         the psychology thing. After you talk to him, sometimes, you are like:
         I think he just worked that on me, that psychology.

Sara: That's right. I think I've been had [they look at each other
         nodding and grinning].

Researcher: But you're both smiling, you've been had. but you're both smiling.

Gail: He just has this way of making you come back to what's important.
         You know anytime we have discussion or training or whatever he
         always brings you back to what is helpful, why are we doing this,
         this is important and you know just thinking about the kids. He
         always says, you know, in any meeting and his memos to us,
         it's about the kids. You know, we need to change us if there is a
         problem, like our behaviors and the way we react to things or the
         way we're teaching. Figure out what will make them perform the best.

Sara: I think that's why our attendance is so good because our students
         want to come. They really like to come. The atmosphere is so good
         here versus what they may have at home. They feel real good about
         being here. They share a lot of stuff with us. That gives us more
         insight to what really is going on at home.

Gail: A [staff only] field trip at the end of the school year for last year was,
         we took a bus, and this sounds silly but it's really neat. We went
         around Rome and where our students live and looked at actually
         where some of them lived. We saw some of them out. We just
         looked at… We took a bus around the neighborhood and talked
         about things that were changing. A lot of things are changing in
         Rome and where are kids actually live. We just wanted to focus
         on the kids and their families and what they are going through
         individually.

Sara: He knew where everybody lived.

Gail: He did.

Sara: He was like, so and so lives here and so and so lives here and
         we'd say, how do you know all that. How do you know all these kids?

Gail: He does. Sometimes if they call and say we missed the bus and we

don't have a car he goes and picks them up and brings them here.
He's just very involved himself and caring. I think that projects
to everybody else.

Sara: I think parents really enjoy it. They feel comfortable. Kids
really do like it here.

When asked what they believe maintains their level of constancy and consistency the

teachers shared that communication, commitment to student learning, staff members' willingness

to be flexible, small enrollment, and the time Sara has dedicated to planning, meeting and testing

on Friday contribute to their ability to serve student needs.

Gail: I think it's communication.

Sara: We really talk a lot about the special needs students and if we're
meeting their needs. We converse about their parents. Why something
could be changing in their home that could be causing some of their
problems here. If they are doing real well then maybe we are getting
the support that we need. We talk about them all the time.

Gail: I know.

Sara: You know is it that we have so few?

Gail: I was going to say too, also, I guess we have the convenience of the
smaller building and you know, the location of our classroom and
seeing students. We get it quickly. We really chase her down if she's
down the hall. Her willingness, like today, we had a program scheduled,
and I forgot to tell her. So she was like, I'll go to this room first,
then I'll be right back. She's just willing and flexible to rearrange.
The other teachers I'm sure were fine.

Sara: They were fine with it.

Gail: So people are willing and understanding that you switch things
around when stuff comes up.

Communication and content appear woven together in the Rubicon way of doing things.

Each of the individual interviews at Rubicon indicated this as well as Gail, the general education

teacher's comment regarding daily communication.

Gail: What we discuss, content wise, is usually quick. It will be like, what are we doing. Are we doing this? You make sure you do these things. Then you're on. A lot of times our talking occurs when she comes into the room, while we're working, over the room, I'll tell her what we're doing or right before we'll see each other at lunchtime and we'll talk about that sometimes. Sometimes in the mornings. It just depends.

The following clip about change expresses the teachers' shared commitment to content and

communication:

Sara: Things change for everyone. They can change when I'm in the room.

Gail: I was going to say we change things daily. We know all that's coming. Here [pointing to her social studies curriculum guidebook]. We are just trying to get that covered [she flips through showing the breadth].

As the group interview ended, the two teachers reminisced about a time when they did

not have a principal assigned to the building. Sara described the climate, "It really got on thin ice

but the faculty held it together". Gail added: "They [referring to the district office] just kept

sending different substitutes [as principal] for like two weeks". This trip down memory lane led

Gail, the general education teacher, to express her appreciation for Aaron and his respect for

teachers:

It really means a lot for a professional, like you said [nodding at Sara], you feel like he trusts what I'm doing and we can talk together and he knows we're doing what we're supposed to be doing. I just hope it continues.

Aaron repeatedly referred to the professionalism of the staff at Rubicon. The following

snippets from the individual interview with him highlight things he does and does not do to

promote a feeling of trust and safety in the building. The teachers' observations validate his

words.

I don't have faculty meetings. Everybody knows that they are not faculty, but administration meetings. So, I take care of that in writing, as needed,

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so they don't stay after school and bore each other to do calendar or programs. IEP's I do by personal conversations with them.

I know these people that I work with. I know them. I know their families. I know where they come from. You asked earlier about their socializing together. They do that. They have a book club.

I really like coming to school. I not only like the kids but I like the adults too. I like being with them.

Kids love this school. So I think the way the adults treat Sara [special education teacher] in their classrooms is reflected in the way the kids respond to Sara. They accept her completely. Some of the boys get a little embarrassed and they don't want her hanging around but mostly not. She's very soft spoken.

The kids like being in school here because they have good teachers. They like coming to school. They enjoy being here. We have very high attendance: 97.2 %. We are an urban school.

They come because they know they are going to be taken care of and they know they are going to get good food. They know that we want them here. They know that their classes are going to be interesting.

Final Thoughts from Rubicon

When you enter a school, you can often feel the climate created by staff, students, and administrators. Rubicon feels great! The warm welcome from the secretary begins the experience and each member of the learning community contributes additional positive energy. The principal displayed great enthusiasm to share the successes of the building. The special education teacher described the principal as "…just very involved himself and caring. I think that projects to everybody else". Aaron attributed much of their success to; "We have a very clear focus daily on the needs of the kids". Gail, the general education teacher, summed up Rubicon, "Well this whole building is just a wonderful place to work because people care about each other".

Greenleaf's (2003) depiction of a servant leader as a leader who encourages the individuals in the organization to grow personally and professionally, while achieving a sense of personal satisfaction fits with some of the teachers' descriptions of Aaron. Dr. Knight uses the district practice of providing time every other Wednesday for teams to work on professional development. The evidence that he encourages teachers to grow is found in the teachers' description of how he leads them through questioning to find solutions for their own dilemmas. He also treats the teachers as professionals. Aaron refers to the staff as a group of women who care about each other and the students they serve, indicating that a sense of personal satisfaction exists in the staff members of Rubicon.

Acropolis

The Acropolis story differs from the other sites in two distinct ways. Acropolis is in a different district and the principal provides more detail about establishing inclusion in her building. Principal Jones addressed many of the interview guide questions before asked; accordingly, the order of her responses differs from the Rubicon and Romulus principals. She has much more classroom teaching experience than the other two principals do. Her teaching experience provided her with the opportunity to serve as a general education teacher in an inclusive setting. Lanie Jones seems to represent Greenleaf's (2003) description of a servant leader.

During individual and group interviews with the Acropolis teachers, they did not include details about the principal or her leadership style even when probing questions were asked. These two teachers are about the same age as the other teachers in the study but, have much less teaching experience. Both of them entered education as second careers. There are other characteristics that may lead to the difference: the building staff is organized with one special

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education teacher for every grade level team, the principal is female, the building has a substantially larger enrollment than the other sites, and the principal has only five years experience as an administrator.

The model of inclusion used in the classroom observed was co-teaching. The general education teacher presents the lesson, gives the assignment and students begin to work independently, both teachers circulate to the student work groups completing assignment, providing suggestions and asking similar questions. The teachers collaborate by familiarity with each other. Very little cooperative planning occurs; the general education teacher gives the special education teacher a copy of the plans for each week.

The Acropolis facility is brand new, state of the art. The previous building led by Lanie Jones included the majority of staff members currently at Acropolis. Due to Acropolis becoming a school of choice, they have added staff instead of facing the attrition felt elsewhere in the district. This stability seems to ground the faculty as a cohesive unit.

Principal of Acropolis

Gaining entrée to Acropolis created challenges for the researcher. The principal, Lanie Jones fiercely protects teachers' time and energy. Her district wide reputation includes a commitment to student achievement, a passion for inclusion, and an ability to maintain her building's focus on the needs of the students. Only after a mutual friend spoke with Ms. Jones about the value of the study did she agree to participate. Access to staff was not granted until the researcher passed inspection. This forty something African American woman can intimidate an eighth grade student with a look and instantaneously switch the expression to warm kindness and compassion when the student requests her assistance.

Lanie Jones has been in education for over 18 years, as a classroom teacher, assistant principal and principal. She is currently in her fifth year as principal at Acropolis. Lanie begins each day checking emails and meeting with parents. She sometimes meets with teams or team leaders. "No two days are ever alike… Usually I'm in the classrooms everyday". She models her commitment to student achievement by dedicating time twice a week to tutor a group of students in preparation for high stakes testing.

> I work with a group of kids during the day now to get them to prepare for the testing. I have a group of kids that I work with on Tuesdays and Thursdays…That was a need that we had, so, I'm trying to do that to help get the kids prepared.

When describing how the two Acropolis teachers included in this study came to work together, Lanie explained her philosophy. The following illustrates how she led the building to an inclusive school model.

> It was a requirement for us. Not by the district. It was just the best practice for kids…that was the first thing that I looked at when I arrived at the school five years ago. The [students with disability] kids were totally, mostly self-contained. We had a lot of self-contained units. Those kids only went out for lunch and specials. It was a struggle at first because of peoples' mindset.

> I treat everybody's kids like I would my own. If my child had a disability would I be happy with them being with one teacher all day? If that was best for him, yes,
> but how are we determining what's best for those kids?

> We began to look at the kids. It was trial and error for us because one year my whole emotionally disturbed unit (ED), they were out [in general education classrooms]. They were out and then we realized a lot of kids that were in that ED unit couldn't handle it, so we went back to doing that unit pretty much self contained. We looked at the kids that could handle it and we let those kids come out. We just began to make those gradual changes…each year I made those teachers [special education] go into the classrooms [general education] more and more.

> Now the kids are out a little of the time to meet their [individualized education program] IEP goals. Then the teachers are actually in the

classrooms with other teachers during inclusion.

When asked how the shift to inclusion went, Lanie replied:

> For some grade levels it was quick and easy because those people were
> ready and some grade levels it was real hesitant. It was on both parts.
> It just wasn't on the regular ed teachers. The intervention specialist
> struggled with releasing their kids to other people. They feel a real
> ownership to these kids. They have a special need. That's why
> they have IEP's.
>
> My issue is, when are they ever going to get grade level exposure? When
> are they ever going to learn to be a part with their peers ? What they
> [teachers] began to find out is they began to see some of those kids are
> really gifted in some areas.
>
> They [students] may be LD in math but were very good readers. To keep
> them with you all day just because they were struggling in math was unfair.
> So those kids began to excel and do very well. Once the teachers saw it
> they just ran. We ran. They ran with it. It was that they had to see it first.
> They had to see that inclusion really does work for certain kids.

Providing more detail about how the special education teachers and general education

teachers work together she offered:

> They kind of see the kids' strengths and weaknesses and see which kids
> really can master skills and can move on. They are pretty much open now
> that they work together and they are all in teams. They are in teams together.
> The special education teacher is part of whatever [grade level] team they
> are on. They are not a separate entity. When that team meets they [special
> education teacher] meet. So that they can have conversations about their kids.

She explained that specific care is given to the placement of each child with an IEP. "We

respect the IEP but that's not going to determine what we do all day". Lanie goes on to explain

that the change to an inclusion environment continues as teachers adjust.

> I have a very veteran staff and some of them are struggling. They look at
> me like, she's lost her mind. Some of our teachers are like, well it does
> work. If you work then it works. We are headed in the right direction.
> I don't think we've totally evolved. We are heading in the right direction.

As the discussion shifted to planning, Lanie focused on the team of teachers included in the study. Part of the planning process involves which students stay in the general education classroom and which students go to the resource room. For instance, when reading in science is required, the special education teacher pulls her group so they can access the content without being embarrassed about their lower reading skills. She also alluded to differences in the approaches of the different special education teachers, based on student need.

> They all [each grade level] plan together. It's good for us because we're a large school…they have a common planning everyday. So nobody has a special or different time than anyone else [on a team].

> When I go up to my intervention specialist, Mrs. Hayes, who is doing a group of her kids and maybe now some of the regular ed kids. She is teaching eighth grade math to all her kids. So her kids that have IEPs will learn eighth grade math, just in a very slower process. She is really breaking it down.

> I love when I go by there and I see her kids talking about the same thing that my eighth grade math teacher down here is talking about. It's just what they need.

Lanie maintains a focus on content and meeting the needs of all students, not just those identified with a disability. At Acropolis, attention to meeting the demands of the articulated curriculum via the benchmark assessments links content and teacher accountability. Lanie described successful inclusion practices as "…what we are doing right now, and it looks different at each grade level". She explains her vision of the ideal inclusion setting by describing how she is moving Acropolis in that direction.

> [Regardless of the grade level design] their [student's] goals would still be met. They all [classroom teachers] had to write for me plans for their kids, regular teachers and say to me … according to your benchmark tests these kids are strugglers. What are we doing with those kids?...So, what are we going to do to help them get to where they are? So, they are all working towards that goal.

The special education teacher is seeing all the kids and her kids are going to be totally included. So they see that the IEP goal is met but then 90% of their day, well I'll say 85% of their day, they're in with other kids. She is teaching. The best scenario I think though would be what I've seen in the past. I love to see both of the teachers in there working together.

They are co-teaching. I like that…, but that's something that has to be built and teachers are very territorial…You have to have the right combination of people and I think I do at some grade levels where people feel really comfortable with that [special education] teacher.

What was probably ideal was last year, my intervention specialist, which is the one now that I'm talking about. She was in those classrooms, basically all day, except for when she did her pull out…Some days when I would go in there she would actually be teaching and the regular ed teacher would be walking around making sure the kids were on track or she would have a group in the back…most of the time it wouldn't be her kids. It would be whatever kids were struggling.

Lanie described the structure the eighth grade team uses to meet the goals and needs of their students. Creative scheduling allows the special education teacher to combine resource room settings with inclusion. Student achievement determines student placement.

She [Isabel Hayes, special education teacher] does a reading group and a math group to cover the IEP goals and then the rest of the time she is inclusion. She pretty much follows those kids as best as she can, to go into their math, science and social studies.

Now…we've changed it. So now she's teaching all the kids including her kids. So she's doing their IEP goals for the first hour and a half of the day so they'll get what they need from her for their IEP. The rest of the day she is actually going to be, she's like a classroom teacher now. She's part of their circuit. So her kids are dispersed out. She gets them as she sees them. They not only get their IEP goals but they get additional time.

With her and the regular teachers, we kind of look at their [student's] schedule…They get whatever the IEP goals [require] …maybe her pull out twice and the rest of the day they are fully included…She's either in there team teaching or sometimes they have a small group in the back and sometimes the group is not just her kids. It's whatever type of need there is for that content area.

Lanie describes the co-teaching model as her ideal situation for inclusion. She explains how she has orchestrated ideal situations in her building. Matching special education teachers to teams is not an easy endeavor and she shares her experiences establishing good teams.

> I try to put people in a grade level where I think they will fit. Now that I've been here five years I know my people. This year I moved a teacher. I thought he would be a good fit there but he's not. I thought he would be a good fit there because of his work ethic. This is a very high functioning team. He's…too needy for that group. They don't have time for needy people.
>
> So this group is looking at me like? [she makes a puzzled face, tilts her head sideways, and holds her hands palms up]. Now, work part, he works right along with them. If there is something to be done, he has it done. He's on it. He needs too much attention outside of what they normally do. That was not a good move on my part. So, you live and you learn.
>
> My special education teacher … in third grade, she was on my [grades] 4 and 5 team last year. I moved her to my third grade because she's very organized, very high functioning, knows what to do and works with all kids. She is not easily intimidated and I needed that on that team. They are working fine together.
>
> At the beginning of the year it was a struggle, which I knew it would be. Now they are fine. I needed her in there so they could understand. They are a very veteran group and they would say, who's going to work with her kids. They are *all* our kids.

Lanie continued the theme of they are all 'our kids' throughout the interview. One of the district officials who recommended that she be included in the study shared that Lanie's philosophy includes a belief that all the kids deserve the best we have to offer, every day. The teachers interviewed from her school stated that she expects all teachers to accept all students. Lanie continued explaining how she sets the expectation that all teachers see all students as 'our kids'.

> A lot of times in the staff meetings I will let people know that they are all of our kids and they are not going to be saying those kids or I didn't go to school to work with kids with special needs. Yeah, right now, you don't even know it. It's just what you do. It's not about having extra class work

to say that you're an intervention specialist. That makes you a better teacher
to be able to work with all kids.

I don't think one thing could make it work perfect. I have teachers that have
good… pedagogy. They know what to do… but they can't work well with
people. So I think that it has to be where you have all three of those
[classroom management, philosophy, pedagogy] in the mix. You have to
realize who you are putting people with in order to make it successful. I have
some people that don't care what kids they are. They accept them all.

When asked what she would do if she had more time and money she spoke of building

the social capital of students. Her concerns have to do with the lack of family structure and

parent's inability to provide exposure to simple life experiences such as having dinner together

every night. The discussion led to parents and preparation of IEP's. Much like Aaron at Rubicon,

she mentioned knowing the kids and conversing with teachers and other staff members.

I have a lot of conversations so I pretty much know what's going on
because I'm always talking and I know the kids…I don't have to be in on
an IEP to let the school psychologist know what I'm thinking or what I see.
I can just drop by his office and be like, you know what, I was upstairs and
I saw this, this, and this. When you guys do his IEP think about that or…I
pulled his test scores and he's doing well on this, this and this. What are we
doing with that?

I'm always in the loop of what's happening with kids. I always have those
conversations. Not only with him, but, with the teachers. Anytime I sit
down with my teachers I know instruction and I know the kids. So we
can have some good conversation about which direction we are going in. It
[conversation] evolves it [the direction].

A lot of times when I'm working with kids or I'm meeting with parents
I'll say…we probably need to start interventions on this child. Put this child
up for that support. I may have never been in the classroom but I know it.

While discussing the building's IEP process Lanie addressed the issue of parents trusting

the school. "They [parents] trust the school. They trust us. So if they trust us we've got to make

sure we do right". Her closing comments revolved around expectations and teachers providing

the best for all students.

It just becomes second nature to you to want what's best for kids and to reach
their high expectations. It doesn't happen overnight…My first year, my
whole job was just getting to know the job. Now being in my fifth year
I really feel good about where we are and some people have really come
around and they can see that my heart is about kids. It's not about you.
It's not personal. It's about what I expect kids to get through the school.
I'm not accepting anything, but the best for these kids.

Special Education Teacher of Acropolis

Isabel Hayes, special education teacher for the eighth grade team at Acropolis, has been a

member of this team for six years. Prior to entering education, she owned her own business.

When her husband went on disability, she needed to find a more stable form of income with

health insurance. Isabel began as an instructional assistant (IA) and decided that she needed a

degree in special education. She pursued licensure and her degree while serving as an IA for this

eighth grade team. Isabel was able to streamline her program by completing her methods

coursework and student teaching at Acropolis.

Isabel greeted students with a smile and a question. Students sought her out for hugs,

advice, and a quiet place to calm down. When discussing inclusion she was firm in her belief that

students' needs must be met and that achievement must override any factor when determining

placement. Flexibility in grouping, planning, and service delivery describes her most important

trait. The following excerpts display her focus on finding the right combination of services to

meet her students' needs.

We got a writing teacher and it was not a good fit for him so my kids were
struggling down there…I just brought them up here. I am using a
writing/reading intervention bell so I just kind of combine it…It was where
they wanted to be and we talked about it, as a class, about where they [students]
wanted to be and what suited them most.

I find with a lot of special ed children, that a lot of them excel in math. They
do better than with reading…Four of my special ed kids are down there[in the
math class] and in return there is a couple of typical students that are more
struggling due to absenteeism or maybe coming from charter schools or

something that they haven't gotten the background that they need so they come up here. So we do a little switch a roo. That's a constant movement kind of thing.

Three of my kids have never been out of self-contained classrooms, or resource since like the third grade. So just coming into my small group and traveling with me in my travel group is a big enough change. One of them could not handle it and he is back in the self-contained. The other ones are doing remarkably well.

The conversation moved to her relationship with Gwen Evans, the Acropolis general education teacher, included in the study. Isabel described the history of their relationship, which includes other members of the eighth grade team:

We talked last night on the phone for probably an hour and a half…We're more friendly. The staff is wonderful and my team always is together. I'm part of the core leaders group that does Friday fun and once a month the staff goes out. My team is always there. We are always there. They're a lot more closer. There are a couple of them [teams] that are even closer than we are. It just goes.

Gwen Evans, I've worked with since I've been here. It goes much beyond just a professional level. We talked about things like my father's ill and her father's ill.

Miss Rogers [math teacher on the eighth grade team] graduated from Mountain University with Miss Evans. We are all from Mountain University, in fact I went to high school with them too…It's just kind of ironic. I never knew we would get together. Her and I [Rogers] don't see eye to eye as much.

Shared planning and making modifications for students with disabilities created a dilemma for the Acropolis staff. The co-teaching model used seems to work in their situation. Both teachers admit that they do not plan together as they wish they could. Time and distance between their classrooms were reasons given for the disconnect. The special education teacher fulfills all legal requirements for accommodations; here she shares the frustration that occurs in that process.

She [Gwen Evans] does her own planning. I have a copy of her lesson plans that I can go over. Like for a test…I'll get the test ahead of time, I'd like it sooner, but at least I get it that morning or the day before… In the classroom we just walk and I'll we'll co-teach with her and aid anybody. I'm just not aiding my children. I don't sit. We don't lump my kids all together in one place. They are scattered. I help everybody.

They'll be something [come up and] she may have to go. We had a discipline problem last week and it's like, Miss Hayes, the notes are there. We will read out of the book. I'll conduct the class.

I don't write the lessons down there [in Gwen's class]. I don't have anything to do with that. I'll just modify her lessons if I need to. I mean we have one person [student] that has a hard time scribing so I'll make sure another girl's notes are copied and put into his book. They are pretty self-sufficient that way. Yeah, I'll just take over. Whatever it is I'll just take over. She'll tell me what page or where it's at and just go.

Isabel's answer to the question of whether she thinks she and Gwen are successful at

inclusion includes some dismay about creating accommodations with the general education

teachers. The theme of needing more time appears again.

In her room I think it could be more. I think having more time with those tests. I think that's my biggest struggle. I mean kids need accommodations and it is hard to come in that day and like here is the test and to kind of brainstorm. To do that would be nice if I had 24 hours. I know a lot of times these are all teacher made tests so it's hard for her to do that. I'm not willing to go in and take the book tests and modify it that way. That's not the answer either. I just wish I had more time. I think we're successful.

Her definition of a successful inclusion setting relates to the specific goals for each

student and the need for more time.

I think when everybody is learning. As long as their coming out with something. My kids are not going to learn it the same way or the same depth as the typical kids. Now the travel groups that we put all the kids in they are based by ability. So my kids are already into the lower group. That lower group of course comes with behavior issues and that. That's nice to be inclusive in that group because there are always two adults. Our classes are thirty and thirty-two kids. I think more planning time would be nice with us.

Isabel includes adequate use of instructional assistant's (IA's) and the principal's decision making in the management of IA time. She also explains that a more homogenous group of students may help improve student achievement.

> We also have a lot of IA's. We have an IA for each grade level. So a lot of times I know when I was the IA there was the intervention specialist in one room then I would cover that. I don't really like how they do that but that's out of my control too and that's a principal decision as well as a team decision. It's to group our kids in levels. I wish they were mixed. I think it would be more successful. However, as an intervention person it's a lot easier [to have travel groups] because we have three eighth grade classes. We couldn't be in all three so there would always be somebody without getting services.

Isabel expresses that her principal supported the inclusion environment created at Acropolis. She provides her historical perspective of the building's shift to inclusion.

> I think that it's [principal's support of inclusion] mandatory. When she took over this school…we still had some contained special ed rooms. I'm not talking the units. I'm talking they [students with IEP's] were all [in special ed classes]; and she walked in here and said, oh my! She'll openly talk about that, like, what is this? She changed it right away.

> She [Lanie] was saying that she would like to see more total inclusion and I said, I really like that too. Honestly, it's so much easier for me. Transition is hard at this age [eighth grade] and to come up stairs here and be included with fourth graders? [Her face looked like she had just sucked on a lemon, she turned both thumbs down and then extended her right hand in a sweeping motion to display the fact that her resource room space is in the central shared area for the fourth grade team].

> I'm doing the next best thing that I can for them. So yeah she wants it. The only thing that Miss Jones …I'm confused. I've never met with her and said exactly what standards do you want me to cover? How much do you want me to cover? How much do you want me to modify? … [What] do you want me to still teach?

These questions are several that arose in the interview. Other questions such as issues relative to time management, the need for teacher support in the form of a mentor (Isabel does

not have an assigned mentor teacher even though she is a first year teacher), and ways to access

the student data information system expose Isabel's insecurities as a new teacher.

> I'm losing time. It's slipping through my fingers. Where is it? I would like to have that and a person I could go to. Now I've got a typical math teacher who knows what those tests looks like and knows what the percentages are and what are they going to test more on? She's helps me with that. She'll say, no do this. I go to her and I think that should be more of an administration role. Sit down with us as a curriculum and just pull all the intervention [teachers]. We don't have that.

> We don't have intervention personnel meetings. That's hard…We did [get together] for alternative assessment, which by the way, see these twenty-five gray hairs on this side? Thirty came from that. It was huge for me.

> Somebody in administration should say; just sit down with us…I don't have a mentor teacher. I don't have anybody like that that I can go to and say what do I do here? Where should I go? That's hard. It's frustrating being a first year teacher but where are more priorities?

> Insecurities and challenges aside, Isabel is committed to providing the best education

possible for her students. Her closing thoughts about inclusion mirror Lanie's philosophy.

> I think it's great. I think it's what needs to be, however with my kids, I think the little nest thing, to lose that would be hard on them. What I think inclusion should do is I think it should be total but I think it should start with kids coming through like first grade math. I don't think you should wait until eighth grade when they've been in self-contained rooms and say now you're included. I think it should be something started in first grade that your whole classmates are used to and it's a trend that starts then not now. Start now.

> Start at the beginning and then I think everything would be fine. They would know what the expectations were. They would know what the rules and everything were. If you wait until now that's hard. They're embarrassed. They never want to read out loud because they are lower. My kids up here fight to read out loud. They want to read out loud but to read with typical kids, you couldn't make them. I think that's unfortunate but if they had started with the first grade they would have done it.

> I think total inclusion would allow them to hear the vocabulary, to hear the content because not all intervention specialist, and I know

this for a fact, are following the curriculum map that's set up by the district. I just had this conversation with another teacher, well my kids do that and we're going back to them getting what they need.

Well you can't keep doing that. When are they ever going to advance? When are they ever going to hear seventh and eighth grade vocabulary words if you're not going to introduce them to them?

I just think they need to hear it [vocabulary] and I think it needs to be around them. I think it needs to be explained. So that's my frustration. I think it's a new concept. When I first started teaching I thought; I want total [resource] classroom. You know I just want contained classrooms. I think I can do it better. Then now, I don't think that works for the kids. I think there is more to children these days, especially these children, than just education. I think these kids come in very needy. They don't have what we feel the typical kids have. So we have to be more than just a teacher. You know you've got to give thirty hugs a day.

General Education Teacher of Acropolis

Gwen Evans teaches eighth grade science. She has been teaching for seven years and feels very grounded in her content area. Her experience has all been with the Acropolis community in seventh and eighth grade science. She holds a grades 1-8 elementary license. She attributes her success with teaching to remaining in the same position over her seven-year tenure.

I'm very lucky…just because people move around a lot in Athens Public… You have to be flexible. The fact that I've been, this school was previously Washington, so you know the fact that I've been here has been just great. I've worked with the majority of my team…all that time.

Gwen shared her belief that students contribute to her inclusion success. She begins explaining the students' role and moves into the development of her relationship with Isabel.

The kids have been very, very flexible. They've really been great because we've really had a lot of schedule changes so it has worked out well but, sometimes they get a little antsy.

In the beginning our relationship was; Isabel was an IA in the classroom and she would assist…with activities, labs and any kind of little tutoring… Maybe a couple of students in a small group but she was great at just naturally knowing what to do. I didn't have to tell her what to do, which is an incredible gift to have.

She [Isabel] would just listen and come in and read what was on the board and get a feel for what's happening and talk to me about what's going on that day…what are we doing and what do you need? I would [say] just circulate or she would just naturally fit in with where she thought it was appropriate. She's really good at it…then she was in school [Mountain University] and now she's graduated and she's a special education teacher.

Gwen shares that open, honest communication maintains her working relationship with all team members.

…good communication and we're honest…I mean we are very honest. No matter what; my whole team is that way. We are not all the same and we may not agree…when you're dealing with 140 students you are going to disagree about kids.

No matter what we don't get upset with each other. We're like, okay this is how I feel and this is how *I* feel, but this is what we're going to do. You may not agree with that but you have to go with it. I think that is really important. We're not a nitpicky group. We get it out. We say what we want to say and we move on whether we agree or not. I think that that is our thing.

The co-teaching model used by Gwen and Isabel is flexible. Observation verifies what Gwen explains in describing the work and using students' needs to determine what instruction looks like on any given day. Her words echo Lanie's emphasis in regards to the idea of 'our kids' not 'her kids' and 'my kids'.

We'll do separate groups within the classroom or you know I might be attending a one on one with a child and she'll just teach for twenty minutes. We are very flexible. There are times when…we take groups within the classroom. It's not just her kids, my kids, kind of thing. We try to avoid ever, [identifying students with disabilities to other students]. I'll say the hardest part for me is when we dismiss [to change classes].

When asked if she and Isabel share the same philosophy Gwen replied: "Well I think that would be a necessity…There has to be some connection there or we wouldn't have that relationship". The following sections address Gwen's impressions of why she and Isabel are successful in their inclusion practices. She frequently refers to other team members. Her

impressions include frustration about student performance, behavior issues, and expectations.

There is very little reference to the principal's role in their relationship.

> I think probably the hardest thing for teachers and inclusion specialist is you have to really know each other and I think that's when it's successful. Isabel and I know each other. We really do. We know our personalities, we know our teaching styles, and we respect each other as educators. That's half the battle.

> I feel fortunate. It's great for the kids because they pick up on when you are not jiving. We jive. We don't jive every day…I might be having a crummy day. I'm fortunate to have a great relationship with Isabel.

> The hardest right now I think is all the variation of needs. But that…is in any classroom, whether it's inclusion or not. The most frustrating thing is to meet every students' needs. It's really challenging and sometimes it's like, oh my gosh, am I doing enough for that child? Do I let this child just sit there when I know they can pick up a pencil?

> Gwen describes her vision of the ultimate successful inclusion setting. Her final words

about the ultimate situation include the principal's support.

> The ultimate thing for me would be to start with the planning together so you know exactly what you're doing every day. Then what the goal or the outcome is for different students within the classroom and according to their IEP needs. Then what they're assessment is going to be…It would be very clear and exactly written out for each student. My gosh, I can't imagine how much time that would take.

> Figuring out what each child is going to accomplish that day, that's really huge. I could see it for five but, when you have eleven? I hate to say it, but it's really almost an impossible goal.

> So you might have to group those kids…That might be one solution. I know they are pretty close so this could maybe be their goal for the day. Then I know this group is capable of this.

> Then, of course, communicating that and having a clear idea and right now I haven't delved into their IEP enough. I have…20 seventh and eighth grade [students with IEP's]. I know a little bit about each child but I really [she shakes her head no]. I think we depend on our inclusion, Isabel and Brian in seventh grade, think we depend on them to know their students, the IEP students, better.

Ultimately, I would like to have more time to know [students]; but I also have 110 kids over here that I'm still trying to get to know. Numbers is just; you know, if I had fifty kids and eight inclusion that would be way more reachable than what we have.

We had to put them all [students on Isabel's case load] in one classroom because we only have one intervention specialist…She can't be every place so we had to put them all in one room.

I think probably like I mentioned earlier being able to just not treat the classroom community as her kids and my kids…We're kind of in a group so we're more spread out, like two here and two there. I think we're really good at being able mesh and to blend those classes together and being able to constantly be on the move, of course. Being able to meet those needs.

Miss Jones [principal] is always asking us how it's going. She's completely supportive. We know that it can work. It's not easy but we know that it can work and she's very supportive about inclusion. That's never a concern.

Gwen describes her principal's support. Her examples also include the principal's weekly examination of lesson plans and frequent visits to each classroom.

She communicates with us continually about what's happening and she wants to know. We have team meetings with her and she wants to know what's happening in my room. She wants to know what's happening in Miss Sorenson's room. Those are the two primary areas. It's just meeting and you know she's always peeking in…Oh yeah. She's very visible.

Gwen explains that building level professional development helps sustain her relationship with Isabel, and the entire eighth grade team. "We do all kinds of professional development. We'll be doing one on Friday…Certainly professional development". She believes that some district level training is not as valid as she expects. Her ideas for gathering pedagogical information present interesting options.

I would like to go to another classroom…Watch where it's really successful and it may be something that we're not doing that we can improve on and talk with other people and say, okay, what are you guys doing that works? What do you see as an improvement area? That would be helpful.

It's baby steps, every year it's different. So I would like to converse with other people in the same [district], but not people from [elite suburbs], we'd want Athens Public (APS).

People in my same type of school with the numbers that we have...training and the dialogue between the people in the same situations would be great. Even when I come together for science training, it's great. We get to talk to people from APS at science training and it's wonderful.

I've never gone to anything district that is inclusion. That would be great if they would even have a meeting for all inclusion people, where not just inclusion people go, where the regular ed teachers that are science and social studies especially. She [Isabel] teaches her children math, reading and writing primarily. I don't know if that's true in other schools or not. Here primarily full inclusion is science and social studies for these kids.

Miss Jones [principal] has bought us several books and things that we do read though. So I will say that she is very supportive of buying us materials that we can review but there is not training. I want to add that. I forgot about that. I'm looking over there and seeing a couple of books that reminded me. *Inclusion, A Fresh Look*…she is really good about that. We've never really had a meeting, even in the school, about inclusion, with the regular ed teachers. We certainly should have one on a district level too.

Some of Gwen's suggestions for improvement in other areas are included in the next section of the Acropolis site story. Both teachers at Acropolis focused on their own practice and seemed to agree that their principal expected them to meet the needs of all students. The following sections provide a deeper investigation of their individual interviews and the group interview relative to information about their shared dilemma surrounding grading and planning and their principal's treatment of teachers as professionals.

Grading and Planning

Both teachers, during individual interviews, expressed the need for providing test accommodations and reaching agreement about what the specific learning goals are for each student with an IEP. Determining the appropriate grade for student report cards also caused concern. The district focus on improving accountability test results and preparing students for

statewide assessments drives instruction. The team continues to struggle with planning for

instruction and assessment.

The following passage about grading relates what Isabel, special education teacher,

shared in her individual interview:

> There is grading, and that's a really iffy tough thing to do in special ed
> because if they were in her class [general education teacher] they would
> be failing. I cannot fail my child as long as I'm working. I'm one of the
> intervention specialists that follow the standards to the tee. We just may
> not get to them all.
>
> I co-teach with two [teachers]. With both of my co-teachers we sit down
> with grades …We sit down as a team and say, have they done the best
> they can, did they try, did you see that they underlined or were they really
> working?…I base it more on effort and Miss Evans is the same way.
> We … say here are their grades, here is their percentage…what do you
> want to do? So it's a joint effort with those two [teachers].

Both teachers expressed concern about not having the opportunity to plan together. The

words of Gwen, the general education teacher, best represent the issue of planning faced by the

Acropolis teachers.

> We do not plan together. We always have discussions about…she knows
> what's going on of course, but we don't sit down and plan together, not yet.
> I know that's the ultimate goal. It's all about time. Really, it's a time thing…
> I would like that. I think we both would like that.
>
> When I give a test… She'll say, I need the test a couple of days before. I say,
> I know and I do have it ready but the thing is time. We are so busy. I say, you
> know what, truthfully, just look over the test and you decide what you know
> they're capable of because you know them better than I do.

Their principal recognizes these teachers' level of commitment and their efforts to

provide the best instructional environment possible for students. Part of Lanie Jones' rationale

for recommending this inclusion team was her belief that their model of inclusion most closely

resembles the textbook versions of inclusion. The principal's pride in the professionalism of this

specific team and the majority of Acropolis staff members was observed. Daily announcement

notes, a large white board message center in the main office, and the principal's use of the public address system contain evidence of the principal's support of the positive efforts of Acropolis staff.

The Principal's Treatment of Staff

The Acropolis teachers included in this study confirmed the principal's statement that her "heart is about the kids". They discussed how she involves herself in the work of the team by attending their formal meetings. Another example given here is how she assisted the team by removing disruptive students who create interruptions in learning.

Gwen: It's kind of weird because she knows that we iron things out ourselves. I think she respects that about us.

Isabel: We're a team.
Gwen: She's secure in that.

Isabel: Right.

Gwen: She knows we're all friends and I think she has security and we know she's there if there is a problem but we really don't need her.

Isabel: Mrs. Jones attends our team meetings though. We do have formal team meetings.

Gwen: Yeah.

Isabel: That's where anything will be brought up or say I had gone to Ms. Jones about an issue or Gwen had gone and said this is it. That would be a time when that would be brought up. She consoles that. Ms. Jones's kind of a leader that is, fine as long as everything is working good, fine, and she's in our classroom all the time.

Gwen: Yeah she pops in constantly to make sure.

Isabel: There is administration or someone all the time. So I get all three of them [building level administrators] at least once a day…I always have people in my room.

Gwen: Miss Jones asked each team for behavior concern children that are

> continually botching it up. Interrupting. Then we…put them
> throughout the building   at different grade levels … A couple
> of our babies are in first grade… Miss Jones is always very supportive
> about, okay, you guys have been patient with this kid since August.
> This kid's either been expelled or suspended or a gazillion DTs,
> okay, we're to step twenty-five.

Later, when discussing what Ms. Jones does that they would want to continue, they

agreed that Miss Jones listens to them and treats them with respect.

> Isabel: I think Jones listens. I think if we went to Jones with any problem
> and any concern or issue she will do her best to get it done or she'll
> talk to you about it. I think that's really admirable. She's not the
> type of principal that is always breathing down your neck. She looks
> at us as professionals. I know other schools that, my girlfriend's
> principal reads their lesson plans every weekend and critiques them.

> Gwen: Oh my gosh. She has a sense of respect of our professionalism. She
> knows that we're doing our job and we're doing our best.

> Isabel: Right.

> Gwen: She knows we're busting tail. You know.

> Isabel: We're here for the kids.

> Gwen: Yeah. She knows that.

> Isabel: That's the main thing. Ms. Jones no matter what has the best intention
> for kids. That's her soft spot and not all principals are like that. She is
> one that is for the kids.

> Gwen: Yeah. Absolutely. Everything she does.

> Isabel: She calls them her babies…She probably treats more than we would
> treat and she gives more incentives that we might think are worthy.
> She feels these are her babies and it's a much more personal
> level with these kids.

Final Thoughts from Acropolis

Professional development is organized in a unique way at Acropolis. The building

participates in the Teacher Advanced Placement Program (TAPP), which embeds professional

development in their daily practice. A representative from the state department of education and a representative from the district professional development team lead teams through weekly examinations of their practice. The principal referred to the embedded nature of TAPP professional development but neither teacher mentioned it. Gwen said "We do all kinds of professional development". The special education teacher spoke about going to meetings on Wednesday due to being a school participating in the program. There did not appear to be a connection between the work done through TAPP and the professional development the teachers felt they needed to improve inclusion.

Both teachers referred to a perceived lack of district support for their efforts. They also both spoke about the need to have time to meet, plan, and discuss grading of student work. Despite these issues they both express that Acropolis is a satisfying place to work and that working together provides students with the best instruction possible. Gwen, the general education teacher spoke of the team:

> We are really lucky. I mean we got really lucky with the team of teachers
> that we work `with. We all get along. If there is a problem we'll call each
> other up and say, hey, what was that all about? We don't harbor. We don't
> harbor feelings. It just works out well.

Each of them repeatedly referred to the team of eighth grade teachers more than just their relationship with each other or the principal's role in their inclusion work. One thing that all three Acropolis participants reiterated was that their students are needy, and they take responsibility for meeting their children's needs.

Principal Jones fits Greenleaf's (2003) definition of a servant leader as a leader who encourages the individuals in the organization to grow personally and professionally. She supported Isabel's efforts to become a special education teacher by allowing her to complete her methods course practicum and student teaching at Acropolis in coordination with her IA

position. There is building wide participation in embedded professional development with TAPP. Lanie Jones provides opportunities for multiple teachers to lead within the building, for example, on the social committee and as grade level leaders. Each teacher receives new books with pertinent new information supporting current building wide professional development activities. Her focus on meeting students' needs is less in line with Greenleaf's (2003) component of individuals achieving a sense of personal satisfaction.

<div align="center">Themes Discovered Across Sites</div>

The purpose of this study is to identify practices that principals utilize in order to facilitate successful inclusion. The hope is that each theme provides principals with points to examine in their own building and ideas to implement while building inclusion programs. The following ten themes emerged at all three sites included in the study: concerns about teacher/pupil ratio, time, team stability, communication, flexibility, philosophy, professional development, planning, high expectations for student achievement, and principal visibility. What is included here are the most compelling comments about each theme that arose during the interviews.

<div align="center">*Teacher/Pupil Ratio*</div>

Most of the teachers voiced concerns about teacher/pupil ratio. Teachers felt they could better meet individual student needs if they had fewer students in their care. Gwen Evans, general education teacher at Acropolis shares her concern: "I…have 110 kids over here that I'm still trying to get to know. Numbers is just [rolls her eyes and shakes her head as if in disbelief]; …if I had fifty kids and eight inclusion [students] that would be way more reachable than what we have". The group interview at Romulus led to the special education teacher, Betsy's disclosure:

There is only so far you can spread yourself. We're spread very thin in here. If money was no option then give us a smaller class size. Even if we weren't stepping all over each other, put another person in here because there are a lot of students in here who are needy. They need some individual attention that we can't always give them.

Principals mentioned caseload of special education teachers but were not as concerned with the numbers as teachers were. Dr. Knight, principal at Rubicon, discussed the special education teacher: "Her caseload is above what it's supposed to be", but continued by sharing how the other teachers help her…"in a collegial professional goal oriented way people, the classroom teachers' work together with Sara Rich". In his words, the need to work together appeared to surpass the barrier of class size.

Time

The issue of time addressed the need for frequent teacher conversations, time spent with individual students, planning and grading. Gail Burns and Sara Rich discussed time during the Rubicon group interview:

Gail: I just think, of course, it'd be nice to have more individual time with students. You just don't have enough…As far as with the two of us, it would be nice to be able to talk in more detail than going, here's what we're doing…It would be nice to be able to talk in more detail together and be able to plan more together and get ideas off of each other more…Usually if I'm walking by the door she'll stop me and we'll look at this paperwork quickly. You just learn to do it that way. It would be nice to…

Sara: …It would be nice to be able to sit down and go over it rather than run in and say, we really have to do this. We have to do it today and we need your signature. Please give me the signature and I'll get out of your way.

Gail: It would be nice to together look at student work as far as when they finish because a lot of that's done separately. We'll talk about, how are they [students] doing with test and it's just kind of briefly. We really don't get time to sit down and go through assessment together and look at it. Sometimes quickly I'll say look at what they wrote

and how they wrote it. Again, we're trying to do that quickly with
the time we have.

Time arose not just as hours in the day, but also duration of time that teachers worked together. The teachers at Acropolis and Rubicon had worked together for more than 5 years. Time together seems to help teachers feel more successful. Betsy, special education teacher at Romulus responded to the question about what would make she and Genie more successful:

…more time doing it because it was new to both of us. As we continued
throughout the year we've worked out things that worked better and I think
a whole year under our belt would make it really better for next year.

All teachers referenced time as something they would like to be able to find more of, yet principals did not mention time as an issue.

Team Stability

Principals seemed to see team stability as a contributing factor in building positive school culture. Team stability was a factor mentioned in response to why the teachers at Acropolis and Rubicon felt they were successful. A comfort level with having another teacher in the classroom seems to develop when teachers know the other adult. Betsy's comments about time reveal that their shared experiences have provided them with the ability to work together more productively. The principal at Acropolis stated, "that's something that has to be built and teachers are very territorial…You have to have the right combination of people and I think I do at some grade levels where people feel really comfortable with that [special education] teacher".

Team stability provides the collaborating teachers with an understanding of each other and the ability to communicate without extended conversation. Isabel, special education teacher at Acropolis relates that when she and Gwen are teaching together, "We can compliment each other like this. We don't really need to communicate because we kind of just look. She'll just get up and say I'm doing this".

Communication

The need for communication appeared in every interview. Principals and teachers agree that communication is crucial to any relationship. Gail Burns, general education teacher at Rubicon, described how she and Sara Rich communicate. "We really talk a lot about the special needs students and if we're meeting their needs. We converse about their parents...We talk about them all the time".

The Acropolis general education teacher Gwen Evans shared how principal Lanie Jones supports her staff with communication. "She communicates with us continually about what's happening and she wants to know". Isabel, special education teacher at Acropolis, agrees "I think Jones listens. I think if we went to Jones with any problem and any concern or issue she will do her best to get it done or she'll talk to you about it". Lanie Jones herself said "Normally I have a lot of conversations so I pretty much know what's going on because I'm always talking and I know the kids". The means of communication were different for each team, but all three had developed ways to communicate with each other.

Flexibility

Flexibility from the principal, between teachers, and within the greater structure of the school supports teachers in inclusion settings. The Acropolis teachers included students in their discussion about flexibility. Gwen, the general education teacher remarked, "The kids have been very, very flexible. They've really been great because we've really had a lot of schedule changes". Rubicon teachers used the example of scheduling to highlight how Aaron is flexible. Gail said:

> The one thing that comes to my mind is scheduling because he doesn't…put out a schedule and say you have to do this. He let's us work together and we always work out the best schedule for us that meets the needs of the students and the IEP. We just work and work that out among our teams with Sara. He

just let's us do that. I think that's a big deal because I think that could be a problem if you were just told, this is your time and that's it.

When the teachers from Romulus discussed flexibility, Genie's body language, nodding and quiet affirmations indicated her agreement with Betsy's words.

...even though we have a lesson plan we know what we're supposed to be doing on this time, this time and this time. Nothing ever goes exactly as planned. I really believe in the teachable moment. So, when something comes up that we need to address at that point, whether it's in the lesson plan or not, I think we need to be flexible enough to go ahead and address that issue.

There is constantly a shift in the schedule. Somebody wasn't there and they want to know if they can come in and do this at this time or change something around. That's again flexibility and if you can't deal with that then you would

be crazy because it happens all the time. Then there is flexibility between us, give and take.

Learning each other's philosophy fits with the give and take that Betsy mentioned.

Shared Philosophy

The interview question about philosophy provided evidence that teaching collaboratively requires teachers to share philosophical ideology. The general education teacher at Acropolis best represents the teachers' responses: "Well I think that [similar educational philosophy] would be a necessity...There has to be some connection there or we wouldn't have that relationship". All three principals' responses indicate that they believe that teachers needed to have common philosophy of education to create successful inclusive environments.

Professional Development

Although professional development arose at all sites there were different interpretations of what it should consist of, who should provide it and whether it should be building wide or specific to the teacher's needs. One teacher said, "A lot of our professional development for my part, and I'm being honest. It's a waste of time… It's not something that you can actually walk

back into your classroom and put into effect". The Rubicon team agreed that the professional development available to them met their group and individual needs. Perhaps their ten years of working together offered them this level of satisfaction. The Romulus and Acropolis principals felt they were providing sufficient professional development but the teachers felt that what was provided did not meet their specific needs relative to inclusion.

Both teachers from Romulus expressed a desire to have some kind of training relative to inclusion. Paul Picard, principal at Romulus offered his view:

> Miss Miller, she had done a professional development, the special needs
> teachers had done a special development on collaboration in the classroom
> or inclusive classroom. Now Miss Ernst[general education teacher] had not
> had that. It just didn't fit in to have it so we looked at; I mean I took the
> training myself also. To be very honest I think two good teachers could
> get in and don't have to be told what needs to be done in this.

When asked how the principal supported inclusion, Genie, general education teacher, responded, "I wish I would have had some training before they told me I was going to do it". During her final comments in the individual interview, Betsy, special education teacher, opined "I think in order to facilitate that [implementing inclusion], if you know earlier you would [seek each other out], and there are opportunities for different kinds of professional development and things like that that teachers could go to". The Romulus teachers and principal viewed the issue of professional development from different perspectives.

The teachers at Acropolis offered ideas for professional development that would support their inclusive efforts. Isabel wanted to meet more with other special education teachers. She said she would like for Principal Jones to "… just pull all the intervention [teachers]. We don't have that. We don't have intervention personnel meetings. That's hard". Gwen, general education teacher, offered the following: "I've never gone to anything district that is inclusion. That would be great if they would even have a meeting for all inclusion people". Principal Jones spoke about

school improvement efforts that include professional development that is embedded in the

teachers' workday, which focuses on increasing academic improvement in all classrooms.

Planning

The three principals shared the impression that teachers spent quite a bit of time planning

together. Teachers felt that they needed more time for planning and conversely that planning was

one of the areas they could save time by dividing the task instead of discussing and working

together. The Romulus team plans together by using the district curriculum guide in cooperation

with the other third grade teachers during staff development time.

> Betsy: Because we have the curriculum map we know what we're suppose
> to be addressing at the certain periods of time. Then within that you
> have to do your differentiation because of the levels and variability's.

> Genie: It's much more involved. I mean I used to write lesson plans that
> had two or three words. I knew exactly what I was doing.

> Betsy: This lesson plan is much more written for a substitute and to show
> that you have covered the curriculum. There is much more there
> than we need.

When discussing her role in the grade level planning process the special education

teacher, Betsy shared:

> A lot of that is very informal. When we break these groups down…like
> with the math part of it…We look at what we need to do…it's the team,
> the third grade team. They collaborate on their lesson plans. I sit in on
> those team meetings.

Principal Paul Picard stated that the schedule allows the grade levels to plan together.

> They have their planning time together. Each day they have forty-five
> minutes together and we'll do their planning from that. They will plan at
> any other time if the kids are at the library or whatever.

Picard's organizational level support in the form of ensuring that teams have common planning

time every day confirms that he values teachers collaborative work. He ensures that all teachers

in a grade level are available to each other. The third grade teachers have dedicated Thursday's planning period to their grade level planning.

The teachers at Rubicon discussed plans on the day of the lesson or even when the special education teacher entered the general education room. Sara, the special education teacher, reported that she plans with the fourth grade team more than the other grade levels. Principal Knight shared that the special education teacher "does most of her planning with the fourth grades". She and Gail have worked together long enough to feel comfortable being more informal in their planning process.

> Gail: As far as planning I think we meet sometimes during this planning time but it's more during the early release time because usually during this time I'm with my other fifth grade partner…With Sandy its more early release and she comes down here usually we are in our teams and she'll either come with fourth or fifth. She has to do primary too because she is our only fill in person. She'll either come meet with us or we track her down and we've got things we do.
>
> When she comes in daily usually as she comes in if we are working on something I'll just kind of say here is what we're doing and this is what we are working on over the next several weeks and she goes to her mode with her students or with the group she is with at that time. It's kind of an ongoing thing.

> Sara: Friday is common planning time. If we have to meet before that we may have to rearrange. A lot of times if a teacher in one of my other grades if they are going to be on a field trip and we have extra time I can go in there. They have an extra planning period a week. So we usually meet; well we talk daily. Then if we need extra time, like yesterday we met after school. If something runs over that we have to meet before school or after school we see to have the time to do that.

> Sara: We can always have more time to plan. That's always good. Plus, I forgot to mention that on Wednesday every other Wednesday we get…early [student] release. That's a time we can do a lot of planning.

Sara, the special education teacher, uses Friday to complete testing, meet with parents, and meet with each grade level team. She serves all six grade levels at Rubicon and in that process she must meet the needs of not only diverse learning styles but also age groups. The principal and the general education teacher both expressed that teachers in the building understand that she is spread thin, but maintains contact with all teachers and her students in order to meet individual student and curricular needs.

Gwen, the general education teacher at Acropolis gave the special education teacher a copy of her plans each week. Gwen reports, "I plan everyday. I don't even do a weekly plan". Principal Lanie Jones said, "They all plan together…they have a common planning everyday". Her words indicate that she intends for the teachers to use their common planning time for collaborative work. The teachers however hold a different view. This excerpt from the group interview illustrates their reality.

> Gwen: To be able to plan with the inclusion specialist and be able to… feel more connected on the planning part. Isabel is great at this. She's always been good at coming in and get going into the mold and understanding what to do without being told.
>
> One thing …about having planning time together. We can never do that because we're always [she spins her hands in Tasmanian devil swirls]. I would like to talk to her more.
>
> Isabel: On Mondays.
>
> Gwen: Right.
>
> Isabel: We should get together and say this is our section and this is what I'm doing.

It seems that the Acropolis team of teachers understands that planning together would make their practice stronger. The principal has used the schedule to support the team's ability to plan

together. However, they do not commit to spending planning time together as the other two sites reported doing.

Visibility of the Principal

Each group of teachers discussed the need for principal visibility. Teachers believe that the principal's daily interaction with students and teachers in classrooms represent support for teachers. Gwen Evans spoke of Principal Jones' visibility: "We have team meetings with her and she wants to know what's happening in my room. She wants to know what's happening in [everyone's] room…she's always peeking in". The principals did not use the same words as the teachers but all three expressed that they felt it necessary to be engaged in meaningful interaction with teachers and students. Paul Picard said "I'm very proactive… if you are out front you are solving a lot of problems before they happen". Observation of the principals validated that all three of them are "air borne, not chair borne".

High Expectations

All three principals set high expectations for student achievement. The teachers all provided support that not only do their principals set high expectations for student achievement, but they also set high expectations for teachers to meet the needs of students. Paul, principal at Romulus, refers to the Rubicon principal when expressing the importance of student achievement, "I learned this from Doc…You have to talk the academics. You've got to be academics". Paul explained how he led the Romulus staff to believe that their students could achieve higher levels of academic success.

> My focus is there are children that are getting their best. They are getting
> their IEP needs met by not just the special education teacher but both…
> I believe that all children can learn at high levels. It may just take different
> ways of getting there… We need to change. We need to look at if we
> believe our kids are not going to succeed because they're poor and they
> can't read. You are enabling them. You are accepting that. So we've

got to change that philosophy. They can read as high as and do as well as the kids in [the rich neighborhoods]. They just have a lot more challenges that they have to face… I really think we're talking academics finally rather than, there is no toilet paper in the bathroom.

Betsy said, "I think my expectations for my IEP students' are higher because of this collaboration setting. Because I actually see what is required to be a third grader". Paul's matchmaking has clearly raised expectations at least in the third grade inclusion class.

Dr. Aaron Knight said, "We have a clear focus daily on the needs of kids, educating every child". The Rubicon teachers report that the staff shares the focus. Gail tells of Aaron's focus on the students.

He just has this way of making you come back to what's important…Anytime we have discussion or training or whatever he always brings you back to what is helpful, why are we doing this, this is important and…just thinking about the kids. He always says…in any meeting and his memos to us, it's about the kids…We need to change us if there is a problem, like our behaviors and the way we react to things or the way we're teaching. Figure out what will make them perform the best.

Dr. Knight's commitment to student achievement emanates from him and affects not only his staff but also his peers in administration.

According to the Acropolis teachers, their principal refers to students as her babies. Her commitment to each student as one of her babies provides teachers with high expectations for all students. Principal Jones remarked, "It just becomes second nature to you to want what's best for kids and to reach their high expectations". She ended the interview by relating what she believes will help other principals trying to implement inclusion; "It's about what I expect kids to get through the school. I'm not accepting anything but the best for these kids".

Each of the principals in the study display areas where they mirror Greenleaf's (2003) definition of servant leadership, however none of them allow personal satisfaction to supersede student needs and achievement. They all maintain their daily focus on the needs of the students

they serve. Paul Picard, principal at Romulus, when explaining what he perceived his role in inclusion to be said: "I don't know what the principal's role is in guiding it". He paused for a moment, deep in thought and then continued, "It's not any different than it is in guiding any other classes that I have. I don't look at it as any different".

The title of this dissertation, *Servant leadership: The urban principal as inclusion facilitator,* assumes that servant leadership is necessary in order to facilitate inclusion. The concept of servant leadership described by Greenleaf (2003), places the principal at the center of the school as a moral and educational leader. These three principals and the teachers who were interviewed agree that the principal is the leader of the building and central to the decision making that takes place. The final chapter will present findings, discussion, and implications from the data collected.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study, findings, discussion, and implications for practice and research. The summary of the study revisits the literature review and methodology. The findings include a review of the site stories and themes. A discussion of conclusions relative to the identified themes leads to implications for practice, which include useful information for practicing principals and teachers, leadership and teacher preparation programs, and staff development planners. Implications for research consist of several possible research questions. A summary of the information presented in Chapter 4 completes this dissertation.

Summary of the Study

Principals must find ways to support teachers working together in collaborative, inclusion settings because No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Adequate Yearly Performance (AYP) requirements for subgroups of students with disabilities have increased the curricular demands placed on teachers, students, and schools. The purpose of this study was to determine the principal's role in facilitating the shared success of general education and special education teachers collaborating to include students with special needs in the general education classroom and curriculum. This study focused on the research question: How do selected urban principals facilitate the relationship between general education and special education teachers in K-12 inclusion programs?

Literature Review

The literature presented supports the notion that inclusion is a successful practice. Historical and legal aspects accompany evidence regarding the nature of the work of urban principals and urban teachers. "In its early days, special education embraced the

diagnostic/prescriptive model characteristic of modern medicine, and disability was viewed as

pathology" (Sailor & Roger, 2005, p. 504). Beginning with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

in 1973, which states that evaluation and placement must be nondiscriminatory, students with

disability entered public schools in the United States. The passage of The Education for All

Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) in 1975 supported the inclusion movement by requiring

all states to provide free and appropriate public education to every child. In 2001, the Elementary

and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, PL 107-110), commonly known as "No child left behind"

or NCLB addressed the expectation that schools close the achievement gaps reported between

students with disabilities, minorities, and poor children and their higher achieving peers.

The following excerpt from Mastropieri and Scruggs (2004) provides the definition of

inclusion used for this study.

> Although many definitions have been used to describe inclusion, the term is
> generally taken to mean that students with disabilities are served primarily in
> the general education classroom, under the responsibility of the general
> classroom teacher. When necessary and justifiable, students with disabilities
> may also receive some of their instruction in another setting, such as a resource
> room. Additional support can also be provided within the general education
> classroom, by paraprofessionals or special education teachers. Although this
> is similar to mainstreaming, a critical difference of inclusion is the view of the
> general classroom as the primary placement for the student with disabilities,
> with other special services regarded as ancillary (p. 7).

This definition exposes the complexity of inclusion.

Accountability demands placed on schools, teachers, and school leaders increased the

need to create inclusive classrooms (Kluth & Straut, 2001; Scheurich, Skrla, & Johnson, 2004).

Principals are charged with simultaneously meeting the needs of diverse learners and supporting

the teachers who deliver instruction to students with and without disabilities. A variety of

inclusion models allows teachers to meet the needs of multiple students. Three such delivery

models are: co teaching (2 teachers), team teaching (3 teachers), and special education teacher as consultant (4 or more teachers) (Brown, Kluth, Suomi, and Jorgesen, 2002).

Urban principals face unique challenges such as: high rates of family poverty; high student mobility; inadequate teacher preparation to deal with urban settings; racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity; funding; and the lack of coherent financial and curricular planning due to "patchwork" management (Cooke, 2007; Flessa, 2005). Add to these challenges the issues of school culture (Barth, 2006), social justice (Scheurich & Skrla, 2004) and meeting accountability demands while providing motivation and a moral compass for the school community (Sergiovanni, 2005) and it becomes clear that a principal's role in facilitating relationships between collaborating teachers contributes to the success of the school's inclusion program. Use of what Greenleaf (2003) describes as servant leadership, provides the setting and other resources necessary to allow those being led to perform at the highest possible level and encourages the individuals in the organization to grow personally and professionally while achieving a sense of personal satisfaction. Principals must assume responsibility for all aspects of the school culture and provide adequate resources for teachers to collaborate in order to meet the diverse needs of their students.

Examination of the nature of urban teachers' work and how teachers perceive inclusion illuminates a gap between how general education teachers and special education teachers training creates difficulties for establishing successful collaborative settings (Zuna & Turnbull, 2004). Teachers' training (or lack of training) in the area of collaboration adds to the difficulties faced by teachers attempting to implement inclusive practices. Collaboration focuses on the need of the people involved in the delivery of instruction to work together to meet physical, social, and academic needs of students. Tillman and Johnson (2003) report that meeting the needs in this

span of diverse learners causes wider gaps for teachers to close. It is here that the principal's need to assume a role in facilitating the relationship between collaborating general education and special education teachers becomes apparent.

Design and Methodology

In this qualitative study, individual interviews, group interviews, observations, and archival data were collected and analyzed using; coding, theme identification, description of the sites and comparison of data collected within sites as well as cross case analysis. Schools were selected based on having an inclusion program, meeting adequate yearly progress goals for students with disabilities, willingness of teachers and principal to participate, and district officials recommended the school due to successful inclusion practices. Triangulation of interview data with observation data and triangulation of interview data at each site provide the lever for extraction of the themes that emerged from the data during analysis.

The principal and teachers from each site describe the role of the principal within the context of their building. The site stories provide detailed descriptions of the inclusion model used by the participant teachers. The teachers were asked about how the principal supports their collaborative work within the inclusion program. The principals' descriptions centered on the culture of the building as well as the relationship between the teachers included in the study. Collectively these descriptions provide a snapshot of the participating schools' cultures.

The study took place in a Midwestern metropolitan area. For the purpose of this study, urban refers to what Rusk (2003) describes as a high population density area, proximity to a central city, and including or contiguous to the core of a metropolitan area. Criteria for selection include: (1) the school meets adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals for students with disabilities, (2) the school has an inclusion program, (3) the teachers who are part of the inclusion program

are willing to participate, (4) the principal of the school is willing to participate, and (5) the

school is judged by district officials as having a successful inclusion program. Three schools

(Romulus, Rubicon, and Acropolis) were selected from two districts to participate.

Romulus sits in the heart of a deteriorating industrial area and serves approximately 450

students in preschool to grade five. The building encompasses an entire city block, is bordered

by railroad tracks, a main street, and factories to the east and west. Student demographics are as

follows: 6.29% African American, 2.92% Hispanic, 1% multi-racial, 90.56% white, 85%

economically disadvantages, 20% are students with disabilities. The district's severely

handicapped unit is at Romulus thus contributing to the high number of students identified with

disabilities.

Rubicon serves approximately 300 kindergarten through fifth grade students. The small

building sits high atop a hill with a view of a local hospital, a cleared hillside with earth moving

equipment changing the landscape, and a major, six-lane highway. Rubicon student

demographics consist of the following: 5.45% African American; 3.89 % multi-racial; 88.72%

white; 70% economically disadvantaged; 15% are students with disabilities.

Acropolis houses approximately 700 students, in pre-school to eighth grade. The facility

is described as a $13.2 million state-of-the–art Community Learning center. The neighborhood

surrounding Acropolis consists of two story homes, some single family, some two family

dwellings. Student demographics are as follows: 66.7% African American, 5.9% multi-racial,

26% white, 88.9% economically disadvantaged, 23.6% are students with disabilities. Becoming a

"school of choice" due to the school's ability to successfully serve district students with

disabilities contributed to the seemingly high percentage of students with disabilities.

Identification of the sites led to identification of the participants. Principals, who agreed to include their building in the study, placed invitation letters from the researcher (Appendix D) in teacher mailboxes. The researcher followed up the letters with phone calls to teachers. Gaining entrée presented some challenges due to the nature of investigating relationships. Initial contact with teachers required assurance that confidentiality would be maintained. Multiple phone calls and face-to-face discussions with teachers assisted gaining consent as well as the completion of individual and group interviews.

The role of the researcher was to examine the principal's role in facilitating the relationship between general education and special education teacher. The intent was to identify best practices for principals supporting the collaboration of teachers working together in inclusion settings. As a former urban elementary teacher who had worked in inclusion settings and a former suburban principal who supported inclusion settings, the need to determine best inclusion practices grew from personal and professional experiences. Using the lens of symbolic interactionism to examine the relationships permitted the examination to reach into what Blumer (1998) calls the hidden layers of the social interactions at each site.

Symbolic interactionism views the organization as interconnected and interdependent people who are linked due to their actions. This study attempts to investigate the relationships and hidden levels of interaction which occur between teachers in inclusion classroom settings. The limited number of participants at each school may have masked some of the hidden levels of interaction since all school levels relative to inclusion were not fully revealed.

This qualitative study utilized observations, archival data, individual interviews, and group interviews for data collection. Observations occurred during the school day, prior to the school day, and after students left school. Archival data included lesson plans, memos from the

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principal, and weekly newsletters from the principal. Interview guides (Appendices E & F) directed the individual principal and teacher interviews, which were audio taped and transcribed. Each principal was interviewed first and then individual teacher interviews were conducted. After all individual interviews from a site were completed the group interview took place. Group interview questions were generated from investigation and initial analyses of the individual interview from that site. Explanations, clarification and deeper probing of themes and issues found across each site were sought.

After the completion of each group interview, transcription data from each site were analyzed using coding and triangulation to identify themes running throughout the interviews from that site. Following the individual site examinations, cross case analysis yielded ten themes that ran across all three participating sites. These site specific themes and the ten common themes comprise the information presented in the findings.

Findings

Each site offered a unique approach to facilitating inclusion settings. Collaboration between special education and general education teachers happened in fluid, dynamic ways. The principals trusted the teacher teams to design inclusion settings that best facilitate their work together and the needs of the students they serve. Each principal has adopted practices that support high expectations for student achievement. Within these elevated expectations for student achievement, each principal adopted practices and methods, including inclusion, to raise the school wide level of student performance.

Paul Picard, principal at Romulus, has been a principal in the Rome district for eight years with 19 total years in education and 18 years in airline management. The participating teachers each have over 30 years of solo classroom teaching experience. This is their first year

working together collaboratively in an inclusive classroom. They both remain in the classroom with students except for a thirty-minute block of time when the special education teacher enters a different grade level class to meet with other students on her caseload. They each direct their own students' reading instruction. The general education teacher conducts whole class writing instruction, the special education teacher conducts whole class math instruction, and they collaborate for the other content areas. The areas of interest indicated from data collection were: resistance to the co-teaching situation; the need for teachers to speak the same language, for example the use of acronyms both teachers understand; use of "her kids" and "my kids"; and the teachers' development of a shared sense of teamwork.

Paul Picard uses the Romulus building mission to drive his decisions relative to inclusion. His commitment is to student achievement and raising teacher expectations of student performance. His background in business management creates transparency issues with staff. He demonstrates servant leadership by providing the setting and other resources necessary to allow those being led to perform at the highest possible level. His methods often shake up the schoolhouse. The teachers interviewed respect him even though he forced them to create an environment they did not believe best served the needs of students. The teachers now agree that they are better able to meet the needs of the students with disabilities and those who score at lower levels of the achievement tests.

The second school site from the Rome district is Rubicon. Principal, Aaron Knight has a doctoral degree in educational administration and 32 years experience in education, 25 of which are in administration. Each participating teacher has about 20 years of teaching experience. The special education teacher serves as a consultant to the general education teacher. They are together in the classroom during instruction for about an hour, four days a week. The principal

places great faith and trust in teachers to make decisions, and then supports them with tools, resources and power to implement their decisions. The other areas of interest indicated from data collection at Rubicon follow: communication in the building revolves around students and curriculum; staff share a child centered focus; the school culture has an organic nature; and there is a pervasive staff focus on instruction.

Dr. Knight exhibits servant leadership characteristics as well. He believes teachers must find their own solutions to problems and the teachers indicated that he uses questioning techniques while guiding them to discover the best means to address their problem. He finds ways to address the needs of students and teachers. Aaron and the teachers report that teachers find their work at Rubicon satisfying. Dr. Knight supports teachers' efforts to improve. Aaron knows the students, teachers and the community. He focuses attention on the culture of the building and insists that academics drive all school activities. Inclusion at Rubicon appears to be a function of the school's organizational structure.

The third school in the study is in the Athens district. Acropolis principal, Lanie Jones, has 18 years experience in education, 11 as classroom teacher, two as assistant principal and five as principal. The special education teacher, Isabel, is in her first year teaching but had served as an instructional aide in the classrooms where she currently serves as intervention specialist. The general education teacher, Gwen, has seven years of teaching experience. They utilize co-teaching, team teaching, and special education teacher as consultant, in a blend of the inclusion models. The areas of interest indicated from data collection included: teachers attempt to communicate constantly about individual student behaviors, grading, and planning; teachers desire to improve their ability to meet the needs of individual students; teachers expressed concern over the ability to meet the demands of the content standards.

Servant leadership at Acropolis appears in the form of teachers growing professionally each week through their embedded staff development initiative which addresses student achievement. Principal Jones tutors a group of Acropolis students twice a week. Staff members are required, through recruitment or buy in, to embrace inclusion practices. When the teachers were asked what role Principal Jones played in their relationship, their answer was simple.

Isabel: Just by placing us together.

Gwen: Right…she knows who works well together and she knows who works well with these groups of students and this age of students. That's the biggest thing.

Lanie Jones' passion for inclusion and her expressed agenda to raise expectations permeates all the work that occurs in her building.

The following ten themes emerged across all three sites during data analysis: shared philosophy; concerns about teacher/pupil ratio; time; planning; communication; professional development; flexibility; principal's visibility; team stability; and high expectations for student achievement. Using these themes to address the principal's role in facilitating the relationship between general education and special education teachers in K-12 inclusion programs provides practitioners with issues to consider and address when planning, establishing, and maintaining successful inclusion settings. At least one teacher or the principal in every site mentioned each of these themes.

All nine participants agreed that shared philosophy for the teachers was necessary. Only teachers voiced concerns over teacher/pupil ratio. When the teachers discussed teacher/pupil ratio during group interviews, space in the classroom was as much of an issue as the teachers' ability to meet the larger number of student academic and emotional needs. Teachers seemed to yearn for the ability to better know their students as individuals and learners.

Time, planning, communication, and professional development are grouped together here based on participant responses. The relationship between time, planning, communication and professional development, became clearer as each interview built on the next interview. Teachers need time to plan, time to communicate and time to access professional development. Principals understood that teachers working collaboratively have far greater time needs for communication and planning than do teachers teaching individually. There was a deliberate effort by principals to schedule simultaneous planning time to support the teachers' collaborative work.

Providing common planning time does not always provide sufficient time for teachers to collaboratively plan. Teachers need additional time to adequately plan together or they will not plan together as displayed in the Acropolis site. Teachers need to have common time for attending professional development or they will not attend relevant professional development as demonstrated in the Romulus site. The special education teachers at Acropolis and Rubicon had the authority to design their schedule to meet the needs set forth in student individualized education programs (IEP). The authority granted to teachers to design their schedules allowed them to be creative and meet with students in a variety of settings.

All three teaching pairs spoke of using various modes of communication; telephone, notes sent via students, shared lesson plans, eye contact or facial expression, email, and face to face catch you in the hall or lunchtime conversation. They found time to communicate, indicating that time and communication modes must be provided for teachers working collaboratively to be successful. The principal's role in creating communication resources appears to be minimal. However, according to teachers, each of the principals communicates with individual teachers and teams on a regular basis in a variety of means. The teachers assume responsibility for communication with each other. The links between the principal's role and

communication rest on scheduling time during the workday to communicate, principal's visibility and training to speak the same language.

Principals acknowledged that time was an issue, however they felt the teachers had time built into their work schedules to plan together. Some way of polling teachers to understand what kind of time they need may assist principals in providing more time for planning. It seemed that teachers made time for communication, for example the Acropolis team meeting during their lunchtime and the Romulus team's ability to communicate over the heads of their students.

Principal flexibility and visibility link together as characteristics that all three principals displayed. Flexibility related to teachers as well as principals. Principals felt that teachers must be flexible in their approach to students and to each other. Teachers felt that their principals were flexible in a variety of ways, such as scheduling, grouping students, and allowing teachers to make decisions for improving instruction. Teachers felt that the principal being visible in the building, appearing in classrooms during instruction, and interacting within the community support the overarching goal of increasing student achievement. All three principals adamantly insisted that being in classrooms observing instruction every day was crucial to their success.

This need for visibility ties to the high expectations for student achievement by ratcheting up the pressure on teachers to increase time on task, to teach the articulated curriculum, and to clearly identify objectives for every lesson. Thus, it appears that principals maintain visibility as a tool to meet accountability demands, as well as establish positive relationships with teachers, students and other staff. The teachers viewed the visibility as evidence that the principal cares about and trusts them.

Team stability provides increased communication, alignment of shared high expectations, and comfort with roles and responsibilities on the team. The principal at Romulus disturbed team

stability in order to implement changes. Rubicon's principal expressed concern that the stability in his building would shift due to multiple retirements. The principal at Acropolis tried to organize teams in order to maximize the strengths of staff members. When Isabel, the special education teacher, was hired as a teacher Principal Jones purposely placed her on a team that already knew her in order to maintain stability.

The two experienced teachers, working together for the first time at Romulus, both stated that they felt as if next year would be better since they knew each other and they had learned each other's strengths. The special education teacher at Romulus was looking forward to learning more about the computer from her partner. During the group interview, they discussed how they were learning classroom management and pedagogical skills from one another; they have more than 65 years of experience between them and still appreciate improving their craft!

All three principals held the final theme, high expectation for student achievement. Not only did the principals hold high expectations for achievement, but also their teachers reported the reciprocal expectation that staff embrace elevated expectations of high achievement for all students. The daily focus of each leader was to meet the academic needs of students. Meeting those needs included provisions of food, clothing, and safety. Improving achievement scores was important but learning was more important. All of the teachers hold the high expectations set forth by principals. The teachers expect their students to make measurable academic gains while improving social skills and increasing self-esteem. Student achievement, principal focus on raising achievement levels, and teacher expectations appear to be linked in these sites. This constancy of purpose seems to be the glue holding all other elements of inclusion together.

Discussion

The findings indicate that servant leadership is helpful when administering inclusion settings, but not necessary. This section will discuss conclusions derived from each of the ten themes: shared philosophy; concerns about teacher/pupil ratio; time; planning; communication; professional development; flexibility; principal's visibility; team stability; and high expectations for student achievement.

Principals interested in establishing inclusive settings must first focus on creating teams who share a philosophy including high expectations for student achievement. When planning who will work together collaboratively, this shared philosophy must transfer into matching teachers with compatible pedagogical and classroom management styles. Teachers in the study agreed that shared philosophical foundations support their collaborative work and that working so closely with a person who did not share their philosophy would not be rewarding or successful.

Lowering teacher/pupil ratios may make it easier for teachers to create inclusive environments. Teachers hold the perception that lowering teacher/pupil ratios makes a difference in the quality of instruction they provide and their ability to meet the needs of individual students. Principals may best facilitate the issue of teacher/pupil ratio by considering class sizes, caseloads of special education teachers, and space available in classrooms intended for inclusion.

Principals who build in common time in order for teachers to plan and communicate support the processes of inclusion. Allowing teachers to organize their own schedules maximizes their ability to collaborate. Time and collaboration were elements listed by Voltz, Sims, Nelson, and Bivens, (2005) in their framework to build strong school communities. Teachers expressed the need to plan together in order to best deliver collaborative instruction. The principal's role in

planning may be as simple as providing uninterrupted time for the teachers to develop lesson plans.

The theme of communication crossed all sites and was a focus for each principal. Multiple sources, including this study, reinforce the importance of communication. Keefe, Moore, and Duff (2004) include communication as one of the keys to successful collaboration. Friend and Cook (2003) believe that communication is so important that they dedicate an entire chapter to interpersonal communication, outlining what teachers need to understand in order to collaborate successfully. Supporting positive communication facilitates the relationship between the collaborating teachers.

Professional development must be provided for teachers. The teachers had suggestions for models of professional development and two of the principals reported that they felt practice could be improved when teachers received appropriate training in inclusion. Providing time and means for communication, planning and professional development by being flexible supports the collaborating teachers' work.

Flexibility, relative to organizational and structural demands, ties to the teachers as well as the principals. One team of teachers even remarked that their students had learned to be flexible. Teachers, who are flexible, understand that schedules change and that all members of the collaborative team have strengths and weaknesses. Principals, who are flexible, listen to teachers and students needs while discovering ways to support their efforts. The theme of principal's visibility relates to the need for the school community to have a visible, recognizable head of the school. Visibility supports the principal's mission by providing school community members access to leadership (Barth, 2006).

The importance of team stability cannot be underestimated. Principals and teachers shared the belief that when the team had time to develop relationships, procedures, classroom management, and communication methods the inclusion effort worked effectively. Time is needed to develop team stability and many of the other themes described here. Matching teachers with similar teaching styles is not as important as matching teachers with similar philosophy and high expectations. Granting teachers the authority to create inclusion settings that meet the needs of their students while holding teachers responsible for high levels of student achievement supports the building's overall success.

The most important theme seems to be a shared purpose that relates directly to high expectations for student achievement. Principals and teachers trust each other and understand that focusing on student achievement supports all areas of their work. The principal, who holds high expectations for student achievement, is visible to staff and students throughout the building during the school day, supports team stability, and is flexible, seems to have the necessary building blocks to move a building toward creating successful inclusion settings.

Implications

The implications for practice include useful information for practicing principals and teachers, leadership and teacher preparation programs, and staff development planners. Implications for research consist of several possible research questions. The ten themes identified in this study (shared philosophy; concerns about teacher/pupil ratio; time; planning; communication; professional development; flexibility; principal's visibility; team stability; and high expectations for student achievement) address implications for practice and preparation programs.

Implications for Practice

The ten themes identified as findings for this study support the original purpose of the study. The purpose of this study is to determine the principal's role in facilitating the shared success of general education and special education teachers collaborating to include students with special needs in the general education classroom and curriculum. The principal's role involves elevating teacher expectations for student achievement and providing teachers with the support necessary to work together in collaborative classrooms. The implications provided here address teachers and principals in concert with each other as they serve all students together. Leadership and teacher preparation programs are also presented together due to the connected nature of preparation programs. Staff development planners design workshops and improvement programs for teachers and principals. Urban school principals seek staff development for teachers and for self improvement.

Principals and Teachers

Inclusion requires at least two teachers, one special education and one general education, to collaborate in order to provide the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities. This involves providing instruction aligned with the articulated curriculum, adopting appropriate assessments, sharing physical space, and establishing a classroom environment, which socially and academically blends students identified with disabilities and same age typical peers. The principal's role includes supplying the structural and organizational elements of shared time, appropriate space, matching teachers with similar foundations of educational philosophy, and high expectations for student achievement.

The information gathered here helps inform the practice of principals by providing increased awareness about factors that support successful inclusion and teachers in collaborative

settings. Sustaining teams of teachers, charged with meeting the needs of diverse learners, supports the demands of No Child Left Behind and the accountability measures for all students. Principals in this study held the belief that higher expectations result in higher student achievement. This single common factor is perhaps the largest implication drawn from the study, these principals believe that all of their students can and will learn when provided quality instruction from teachers who believe the students can learn.

Principals who manage resources that support teachers' efforts to create inclusion environments provide more intangible resources than tangible ones. Creating time and providing opportunities for professional growth matter more to the teachers than tangible resources. The overall culture of the building (students and parents who trust the school, teachers who like each other and enjoy working together, teachers who hold high expectations for all students) supports teachers working in inclusion environments as much as the principals do. Therefore, fostering a positive school climate aids in the development of successful inclusion programs.

Since principals frequently are responsible for providing professional development, attention should be given to the nature of the professional development. Teachers were interested in observing and interacting with other teachers who were deemed successful in their inclusion practices. Urban schools, designated as professional practice schools, could provide a forum for teachers to improve their craft while sharing techniques and approaches that they have found to be successful. Embedding professional development in the daily work of teachers provides opportunities to implement the new learning and to examine existing practices.

Flexibility as a theme for practice permeates each setting in a different manner. Flexibility ranges from structural or organizational flexibility to being laid back and open to changes in the daily routine. Flexibility for teachers in collaborative practice must be learned and

negotiated with teaching partners. Flexibility for the principal involves examining policy and procedures to reorganize as needed to create inclusion classrooms. Principals, who are flexible, enable teachers to step out of traditional roles and enter into more collaborative relationships with each other.

The principal's visibility seems to have to do with the principal being available when teachers and students need him/her. Visibility also allows the principal to interact within the daily constructs of instruction provided to students. These principals' daily classroom visits create opportunities for the principals to see and feel the classroom environment. Reading each teacher's lesson plans and observing the implementation of those plans offer the principals two distinctly different perspectives of daily classroom interactions between intended objectives and instruction.

The basics of servant leadership support teachers working collaboratively in inclusion classrooms. A servant leader is a leader who encourages the individuals in the organization to grow personally and professionally, while achieving a sense of personal satisfaction (Greenleaf, 2003). Holding high expectations for students' achievement encourages individuals to grow. Principals who understand the difficulty in closing achievement gaps as accountability pressures rise must find means and ways to support teachers, while increasing expectations for increased student academic performance.

Personally, teachers have to challenge the belief which one principal referenced, as "these poor kids do not have a chance" and provide the means for students to have success regardless of race, family situation, poverty level, or IQ scores. Professionally, teachers have to learn to work collaboratively outside of the traditional one room, one teacher model. Personal satisfaction comes from observing students making gains while the other teacher in the room becomes a

colleague and resource for improving practice. Principals who can support this growth will be rewarded with successful students and a positive school culture.

Leadership and Teacher Preparation Programs

My personal experiences with leadership and teacher preparation programs are limited to three institutions of higher learning. Within those institutions, the professors and instructors provide information from books and practicum experiences, which support technical aspects of leading and teaching. Although I have studied change, the changes I experienced as a principal during the initial years under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), were overwhelmingly vast and sweeping. The teachers and principals in the study agree that the extent of the accountability measures, relative to NCLB, necessitate deep changes. Veteran teachers report that all the changes are cyclical in nature and will eventually fade into new, old expectations. Future teachers and leaders need to understand the change process as much as they need to learn how to keep up with the changes.

There is a documented divide between preparation of special education teachers and general education teachers. The "do not cross" lines between special education and general education are currently drawn in red ink. Preparation programs must soften the lines between special education and general education programs in order to teach pre-service teachers to begin collaboration efforts.

There are also lines between teacher preparation and principal preparation. Teachers are sometimes prepared to view administrators as barriers to providing special education students with services and the least restrictive environment. Administrators must be portrayed to pre-service teachers as bearers of arms for all students, with their responsibilities balanced between the entire student body, parents, the school board, and taxpayers. Teachers should be prepared in

such a way that they expect principals to hold high expectations, are supportive, and are knowledgeable about serving students with disabilities. New teachers need to enter the teaching force prepared to negotiate within the constraints of school policies and state laws in order to meet the needs of their students.

Pre-service general education teachers must not see the other adult in the room as a threat, but as a resource. Pre-service general education teachers must also develop an understanding of how inclusion can strengthen their pedagogical expertise. Placing pre-service special education and general education teachers together in multiple methods courses with the objective to understand the elements of collaborative work prepares them for future collaboration. Providing more instruction for general education teachers to understand the nature of students with disabilities could decrease the fear of not being trained to work with "those kids".

The circle of change relative to increasing student achievement has been broken and become a vector moving toward increased student performance and higher expectations. Teachers need to understand that improving student achievement will not fade or be replaced by a new initiative. Methods will continue to circulate and resurface with new names; however increased expectations and efforts to close the existing achievement gaps will most likely remain as a demand on educators.

Principal preparation programs must provide opportunities for aspiring leaders to understand the need to develop a school culture that centers on raising expectations for student achievement. Programs must also offer instruction regarding principals' provision of support for teachers supporting students in inclusive settings. There is a need for presenting aspiring principals with the continuum of services that are possible when adopting inclusion practices.

Preparing principals includes providing them a realistic view of the spectrum of inclusion models. This view should include an understanding that you need to know your students and know your staff in order to foster positive relationships within the school.

Principals need to support teachers in the wake of demands for accountability. Inclusion is one means of supporting student achievement, but teachers need to embrace the practice within their context of expecting increases in student achievement. The ten themes identified by this study can help preparation programs prepare aspiring leaders by painting a picture of how principals with different leadership styles employ the same components to be successful leaders.

Staff Development Planners

Staff development for principals does not come in "one size fits all" packages. Online delivery of staff development allows connection with other principals and enables principals to remain head learner (Barth, 1990). The idea of common staff development for all administrators often requires the district to operate without key leadership personnel in schools for a day. Online delivery of professional development allows principals to access the information while remaining at the helm. Principals need to discuss the themes that support inclusion efforts with other administrators in order to transfer the information to their practice. This can only occur if principals are provided with a forum in which to interact.

The teachers interviewed for this study voiced the need for applicable professional development. They asked the researcher for resources and hints to lead them to the best ways of practicing inclusion. All three teams of teachers expressed an interest in attending trainings together as a team. Several of the teachers expressed a desire to observe or interact with other teachers working collaboratively in inclusion settings. Staff development for teachers working in

inclusion environments could be as simple as providing opportunities for teachers to network with other inclusion teachers.

Professional development satisfaction ranged from 'what we do is great' to what we do is 'not relative to my teaching situation and needs to be more tied to our school's needs'. Professional development embedded in the daily practice of the collaboration teams' work would best fit the needs of the teachers and principals in the study. DuFour (2005) supports this notion saying: "Principals who function as staff development leaders embed collaboration in the structure and culture of their schools" (p. 15). Investigating professional development models relative to implementing inclusion could provide district level planners with valuable information to create professional development for teachers and principals that is better suited to their needs.

<p align="center">*Implications for Future Research*</p>

This study raises questions about the ten themes identified in the three school sites. Further research would be required to state that any of them are critical for leaders to implement in inclusion settings. Longitudinal information could be gathered by conducting an embedded, action research study, initiated at the end of one school year continuing into the beginning of the next school year to watch the development of time spent, negotiation of relationships, development of role definitions, and principal actions. A question about the ten themes identified could be crafted to investigate each theme in either a mixed methods study or a quantitative study to identify which themes are actually crucial for leaders wishing to create successful inclusion settings.

Further qualitative data gathered relative to the ten themes in other urban settings or extending to suburban and rural sites may lead to the ability to prioritize the factors necessary to

facilitate inclusion. Deeper investigation into each of these themes would increase their applicability to practice and generalizability to other sites. Longitudinal data gathered via action research or embedded observation might provide increased validity of the themes. The findings here indicate that more information should be gathered relative to school culture and increasing teacher expectation for student achievement.

The principal at Romulus initiated sweeping changes, which are described in the Romulus site story. Many teachers switched positions and grade level assignments in the previous year and the building test scores increased. It would be interesting to investigate the effect of such sweeping changes using action research strategies.

The theme of high expectation for student achievement warrants deeper investigation. Identifying ways principals elevate teacher expectations in these times of higher accountability may assist principals who work to increase achievement in lower performing schools. Such a study might include school culture and student achievement investigated within the new NCLB and adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements to determine how principals raise the bar for student achievement by increasing teacher expectations.

A question that arose during the analysis stage of this research is whether there is a relationship between school culture and the nature of the collaboration in inclusion or even in other situations where schools utilize collaboration. Another question is whether a collaboration culture exists in school that supports inclusion. There are also questions relative to providing professional development for teachers and principals. As practice improves and the body of knowledge regarding inclusion gathers more research, there will likely be more questions than answers surrounding the principal's role in facilitating inclusion.

These observations elicit the following questions:

1. Which of the listed themes are crucial for leaders to implement when supporting to teachers working collaboratively in inclusion settings? (shared philosophy; concerns about teacher/pupil ratio; time; planning; communication; professional development; flexibility; principal's visibility; team stability; and high expectations for student achievement).

2. Can we prioritize these themes to determine factors necessary to facilitate inclusion?

3. What is the relationship between school culture and increasing teacher expectation for student achievement?

4. How does reassigning most teachers on staff to different teams, grade levels and subject areas increase achievement scores in an elementary school?

5. How do principals create a school culture which elevates teacher expectations in these times of higher accountability?

6. How do principals create a school culture in which student achievement supersedes all other goals of staff members?

7. What, if any, is the relationship between school culture and the nature of collaboration practiced in schools that utilize collaboration?

8. Does a collaborative culture exist in schools that support inclusion?

9. Which models of professional development are most appropriate for principals relative to facilitating inclusion? Which models best meet the needs of teachers practicing inclusion?

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The purpose of this study was to examine the specific relationships between general education and special education teachers and the principal's role in facilitating their shared

success relative to inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom and curriculum. A summary review of literature helped describe that principals must find ways to support teachers working together in collaborative, inclusion settings because No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Adequate Yearly Performance (AYP) requirements for subgroups of students with disabilities have increased the curricular demands placed on teachers, students, and schools.

The intent of this study was to use the qualitative methods of collecting interview, observation and archival data to identify general themes of practice that assist urban principals in facilitating the relationships between collaborating teachers in inclusion programs. The ten themes extracted from the data are: shared philosophy; concerns about teacher/pupil ratio; time; planning; communication; professional development; flexibility; principal's visibility; team stability; and high expectations for student achievement. These ten themes factor into the principal's role in facilitating the shared success of general education and special education teachers collaborating to include students with special needs in the general education classroom and curriculum.

Discussion about the ten themes led to presentation of the implications for practice. Principals, teachers, teacher and leaderships preparation programs and staff development planners benefit from the information presented. Questions to guide further research offer suggestions for deeper investigation of inclusion practices. The hoped for result is that all students will receive quality instruction which challenges them and prepares them to reach the heights of their dreams and beyond!

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Appendix A

Teacher Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
Teacher

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
University of Cincinnati
College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services
[Ann Ogletree]
[513-312-2608, ogletral@email.uc.edu]

Title of Study: Servant leadership: The principal as inclusion facilitator

Introduction: Before agreeing to participate in this study, it is important that you read this consent form and understand the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study as well as your right to withdraw from the study at any time. Please note that no guarantee or assurance can be made as to the results of the study.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to determine the role of the building principal in facilitating relationships between teachers in successful inclusion settings. Teachers will be interviewed about the nature of the relationship between general education and special education teachers in inclusion settings and the principal's role in facilitating that relationship. Observations will occur when you and your teaching partner interact. You will be one of 8-14 teachers in the study.

Procedures and Duration: The investigator will conduct an individual semi-structured, tape-recorded interview where you will be asked questions about the climate of the school, the nature of your job, and the factors that affect the level of your success in inclusion practices. The interview will last no more than two hours and will be conducted at a time and location that is most convenient for you. After all participating teachers in your building have been interviewed individually you will be asked to participate in a group interview examining building wide findings. Planned observations will take place. You may be asked to share planning documents and information guiding your work together. You may refuse to release any information. You and your teaching partner will invite the observer to join you for meetings related to your shared obligations.

Risks/discomforts: You have the right to decide whether or not to remain in the study. There are no expected risks, but if discomfort is experienced you may contact the investigator Ann Ogletree, (513)-312-2608, the investigator's advisor Dr. Nancy Evers, (513)-556-6623, or you may call the University of Cincinnati's Institutional Review Board for Social and Behavioral Sciences, (513) 558-5784.

Benefits: There is no direct benefit for you. Findings may be used to develop recommendations for improving principal's skills in facilitation of teachers' relationship development with each other, especially in inclusion settings of urban public schools.

Confidentiality: Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality. The investigator will not allow anyone to read interview transcripts or listen to audiotapes of interviews or group interviews. Field notes and notes from observations will be treated in the same way. The data from the study may be published and presented at conferences; however, you will not be identified by name. To further ensure confidentiality, field notes, observation notes, artifacts collected, interview and group interview audiotapes and transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet and destroyed after the study is completed. Consent forms will be stored in a secure place for three years after the end of the study and then will be destroyed.

Compensation: You will receive a gift certificate to a restaurant after the study is over.

Right to refuse or withdraw: Your participation is strictly voluntary. You may refuse to participate or may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your withdrawal from the study may be for reasons related solely to you (for example, not following study-related directions from the investigator) or because the entire study has been terminated.

Offer to answer questions: If you have any other questions about this study, you may call Ann Ogletree at 513-312-2608 or Dr. Nancy Evers at 513-556-6623. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the University of Cincinnati's Institutional Review Board for Social and Behavioral Sciences at (513) 558-5784.

Legal Rights: Nothing in this consent form waives any legal right you may have nor does it release the investigator, the sponsor, the institution or its agents from liability for negligence.

I HAVE READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE. I VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM FOR MY INFORMATION.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature and Title of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Appendix B

Principal Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
Principal

<div style="color:red; text-align:center">

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
University of Cincinnati
College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services
[Ann Ogletree]
[513-312-2608, ogletral@email.uc.edu]

</div>

Title of Study: Servant leadership: The principal as inclusion facilitator

Introduction: Before agreeing to participate in this study, it is important that you read this consent form and understand the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study as well as your right to withdraw from the study at any time. Please note that no guarantee or assurance can be made as to the results of the study.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to determine the role of the building principal in facilitating relationships between teachers in successful inclusion settings. Principals will be interviewed about what they believe facilitates successful relationships between general education and special education teachers in inclusion settings. Observations of meetings that take place relative to the relationships studied may occur. You will be one of approximately 3 principals in the study.

Procedures and Duration: The investigator will conduct a semi-structured, tape-recorded interview where you will be asked questions about the climate of the school, the nature of your job, and the factors that affect the level of your success in inclusion practices. The interview will last no more than two hours and will be conducted at a time and location that is most convenient for you. Observation of meetings relative to the collaborative work between teachers in the study may occur.

Risks/discomforts: You have the right to decide whether or not to remain in the study. There are no expected risks, but if discomfort is experienced you may contact the investigator Ann Ogletree, (513)-312-2608, the investigator's advisor Dr. Nancy Evers, (513)-556-6623, or you may call the University of Cincinnati's Institutional Review Board for Social and Behavioral Sciences, (513) 558-5784.

Benefits: There is no direct benefit for you. Findings may be used to develop recommendations for improving principal's skills in facilitation teachers' relationship development with each other, especially in inclusion settings of urban public schools.

Confidentiality: Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality. The investigator will not allow anyone to read interview transcripts or listen to audiotapes of interviews. Notes from observations and site visits will not be shared. The data from the study may be published and presented at conferences; however, you will not be identified by name. To further ensure

confidentiality, all field notes, interview audiotapes and transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet and destroyed after the study is completed. Consent forms will be stored in a secure place for three years after the end of the study and then will be destroyed.

Compensation: You will receive a gift certificate to a restaurant after the study is over.

Right to refuse or withdraw: Your participation is strictly voluntary. You may refuse to participate or may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your withdrawal from the study may be for reasons related solely to you (for example, not following study-related directions from the investigator) or because the entire study has been terminated.

Offer to answer questions: If you have any other questions about this study, you may call Ann Ogletree at 513-312-2608 or Dr. Nancy Evers at 513-556-6623. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the University of Cincinnati's Institutional Review Board for Social and Behavioral Sciences at (513) 558-5784.

Legal Rights: Nothing in this consent form waives any legal right you may have nor does it release the investigator, the sponsor, the institution or its agents from liability for negligence.

I HAVE READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE. I VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM FOR MY INFORMATION.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature and Title of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Appendix C

Principal Invitation Letter

Date

Dear Principal Name,

      I am Ann Ogletree, a candidate for the doctoral degree in the Urban Educational Leadership program at the University of Cincinnati. I am completing a dissertation which allows me to conduct observations and interviews in order to gather information.

      I would like to invite you to participate in a qualitative study, investigating the role of building principal in facilitating the relationship between special education and general education teachers working cooperatively in inclusion settings. I would like to invite you to participate since you supervise teachers working collaboratively in an inclusion classroom. I am interested in discovering your views and perceptions about your role in facilitating the relationship between cooperating partners. Your participation in the study would involve an individual interview with me and possibly meetings with inclusion teachers in your building.

      Participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time you experience discomfort with the study activities you may withdraw from participation with no negative consequences. You may contact my university advisor, Dr. Nancy Evers, if you have questions or concerns regarding me as the researcher. I have listed all of our contact information below. Please feel free to contact me or the University of Cincinnati faculty member listed to answer questions or voice concerns.

Sincerely,
Ann Ogletree

Ann Ogletree, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
7140 Edwards One
University of Cincinnati
513-312-2608
ogletral@email.uc.edu

Nancy A. Evers, Ph.D. Professor
Advisor of Doctoral Candidate
College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services
Urban Educational Leadership and Educational Leadership
EDWARDS 1 7140B
P. O. Box 210049
Cincinnati OH 45221
513-556-6623

Appendix D

Teacher Invitation Letter

Date

Dear Teacher Name,

I am Ann Ogletree, a candidate for the doctoral degree in the Urban Educational Leadership program at the University of Cincinnati. I am completing a dissertation which allows me to conduct observations and interviews in order to gather information.

I would like to invite you to participate in a qualitative study, investigating the role of building principal in facilitating the relationship between special education and general education teachers working cooperatively in inclusion settings. I would like to invite you to participate since you work cooperatively in an inclusion classroom. I am interested in discovering your views and perceptions about your principal's role in facilitating your relationship with your cooperating partner.

Your participation in the study would involve an individual interview with me and participation in a group interview discussion with your cooperating partner and other inclusion teachers in your building. I would also like to observe a planning session in which you and your partner design lessons or discuss instructional techniques. I may ask to use your planning documents as evidence of the work you complete cooperatively.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time you experience discomfort with the study activities you may withdraw from participation with no negative consequences. You may contact my university advisor, Dr. Nancy Evers, if you have questions or concerns regarding me as the researcher. I have listed all of our contact information below. Please feel free to contact me or the University of Cincinnati faculty member listed to answer questions or voice concerns.

Sincerely,
Ann Ogletree

Ann Ogletree, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
7140 Edwards One
University of Cincinnati
513-312-2608
ogletral@email.uc.edu

Nancy A. Evers, Ph.D. Professor
Advisor of Doctoral Candidate
College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services
Urban Educational Leadership and Educational Leadership
EDWARDS 1 7140B
P. O. Box 210049
Cincinnati OH 45221
513-556-6623

Appendix E

Principal Interview Guide

Principal Interview Questions

My name is Ann Ogletree. I am a researcher from the University of Cincinnati who is studying the principal's role in facilitating the relationship between teachers working in inclusion settings.

Your responses to the following questions will be tape recorded, transcribed and stored in a locked file cabinet. You may refuse to answer questions, turn off the tape recorder, or withdraw from the interview at any time. Your name will be changed in any transcripts, publications and other written materials in order to assure anonymity.

I would like to begin by getting to know your professional background.

Why did you become an educator?

What degrees do you have and where did you get them?

What licenses do you hold?

Tell me about the positions you have had over your career.

How long have you been at this school?

How long have you been a principal?

Why did you become a teacher?

Describe your typical day here at school.

I am interested in gathering information about the role of the principal in facilitating the relationship between general education teachers and special education teachers who work together to create inclusion settings. I have (or will) interviewing Teacher G and Teacher S to gather information about how the nature of their relationship. These questions are directly related to the relationship between Teacher G and Teacher S.

Describe the relationship with the general education and special education partners.

How did the two of them begin to work together?

What was their relationship like in the beginning?

What helped their relationship develop?

What do you believe maintains their relationship now?

Describe how the general education and special education teacher came to work together.

How are their philosophies about teaching similar? Different?

How is their approach with students similar? Different?

Describe how the general education and special education teacher interact.

Are there any other activities they do together? Like professional development?

Do they co-teach?

Do they socialize together?

Do they talk on the phone after school hours?

Do they interact at all over the summer or breaks?

Do they plan together?

How do they find the time to do that?

Do they have common planning time?

What time is provided in their work day to plan together?

What is your relationship with the two of them like?

How often do you meet with each of them?

How often do you meet with them together?

What are the barriers to meeting with them together?

What are the benefits of meeting with them together?

Do you feel that the two teachers are successful in their inclusion practices?
> What is your description or definition of a successful inclusion setting?
> What parts of that do you feel you this team is best at?
> What parts of that definition do you feel they need help or need to improve in?
> What do you need to make that improvement happen?
> How do they create the inclusion environment at the beginning of the school year?
> What do you feel would help them be even more successful?

Are there other teachers in this building who co-teach or share inclusion students?
> How many?

Do your students interact with paraprofessionals or instructional aides?

Do these co-teachers interact with paraprofessionals?
> How?
> Who has the primary role in communicating curricular and legal expectations to the paraprofessionals?

Do you feel you are supportive in the teachers' efforts to create an inclusive setting?
> What do you do to support their working relationship?
> What examples of your support do you have?
> How could you as an administrator help improve the inclusion efforts?
> What do you wish you could or would do more of?
> What do you wish you could change about your role and responsibilities?

What is your role in preparing student IEP's (individualized education plan)?

Who contacts parents?
> How do each of them communicate with parents?
> How often do they communicate with parents?
> What format do they use to communicate?
>> (Email, notes, communication books, or phone calls)

What sort of district support exists for working together?

Is there any district policy in regards to inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom?

Do you have any final comments or information that you think will be helpful to me in my research?

Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate the opportunity to interview you.

Appendix F

Teacher Interview Guide

Teacher Interview Questions

My name is Ann Ogletree. I am a researcher from the University of Cincinnati who is studying the principal's role in facilitating the relationship between teachers working in inclusion settings.

Your responses to the following questions will be tape recorded, transcribed and stored in a locked file cabinet. You may refuse to answer questions, turn off the tape recorder, or withdraw from the interview at any time. Your name will be changed in any transcripts, publications and other written materials in order to assure anonymity.

I would like to begin by getting to know your professional background.

Why did you become a teacher?

What degrees do you have and where did you get them?

What licenses do you hold?

Tell me about your teaching positions over your career.

How long have you been at this school?

How long have you been a teacher?

Why did you become a teacher?

Describe your typical day here at school.

I am interested in gathering information about the role of the principal in facilitating the relationship between general education teachers and special education teachers who work together to create inclusion settings.

Describe the relationship with your (general education OR special education) partner.

How did the two of you begin to work together?

What was your relationship like in the beginning?

What helped your relationship develop?

What maintains your relationship now?

Describe how the general education and special education teacher came to work together.

How are your philosophies about teaching similar? Different?

How is your approach with students similar? Different?

Describe how you and the general education (special education) teacher interact.

Are there any other activities you do together? Like professional development?

Do you co-teach?

Do you socialize together?

Do you talk on the phone after school hours?

Do you interact at all over the summer or breaks?

Do you and your co-teacher plan together?

How do you find the time to do that?

Do you have common planning time?

What time is provided in your work day to plan together?

Do you feel that you and your co-teacher are successful in your inclusion practices?

What is your description or definition of a successful inclusion setting?

What parts of that do you feel you and your co-teacher are best at?

What parts of that definition do you feel you and your co-teacher need help or need to improve in?

What do you need to make that improvement happen?

How do you and your co-teacher create the inclusion environment at the beginning of the school year?

What do you feel would help you be even more successful?

Are there other teachers in this building who co-teach or share inclusion students?

How many?

Do your students interact with paraprofessionals or instructional aides?

Do you and your co-teacher interact with paraprofessionals?

How?

Who has the primary role in communicating curricular and legal expectations to the paraprofessionals?

Do you feel your principal is supportive in your efforts to create an inclusive setting?

What does he/she do to support you?

What examples of his/her support do you have?

How could an administrator help improve your inclusion efforts?

What do you wish he/she would do more of?

What do you wish he/she would not do?

What is your role in preparing student IEP's (individualized education plan)?

Who contacts parents?

How do each of you communicate with parents?

How often do you communicate with parents?

What format do you use to communicate?

(Email, notes, communication books, or phone calls)

What sort of district support do you have for working together?

Is there any district policy in regards to inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom?

Do you have any final comments or information that you think will be helpful to me in my research?

Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate the opportunity to interview you.