A Qualitative Case Study of Assistive Technology Use in Inclusive Education Programs in Selected Central Florida Schools

by

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DEDICATION

To My Fur Babies,

Always in my mind and my heart, the one and only original, Rylee Jay. Always by my side, Flintstone. My goal in life is to be as amazing as my fur babies already think I am!

Mommy loves you!

To My Mom,

I dedicate my foundation to you. All my life you have kept me grounded. You have been there through the good and the bad, the best decisions and the worst decisions. Most of all, no matter what, you have been my mommy and my best friend, accepting and loving me for me. I cherish your love and friendship always.

I love you Big Momma!

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this collective case study is to explore the role in the integration of Assistive Technology, for teachers and leaders, in the inclusion of ESE students at selected Central Florida schools. This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- What knowledge and skills do leaders and teachers bring to the role in supporting the inclusive program?
- How are leaders supporting the use of Assistive Technology to support effective inclusion?
- How are teachers using Assistive Technology to support effective inclusion?
- How do leaders and teachers address ethics of justice, critique, care, and professionalism in the successful use of Assistive Technology in inclusion?

An in-depth collection of multiple sources of information, including interviews, documents and reports were collected and analyzed to develop a case description, case categories and case themes. Additional themes will be introduced by individual participant role.

The implications of putting this research into practice could have a major impact on successful inclusive education programs. In addition, putting this research into practice could have a significant impact on the implementation of Assistive Technology in inclusive education programs. Lastly, implications of putting this research into practice could have direct impact on individual category roles identified in this study, for both leaders and teachers.

The role of any school personnel is vitally important. The role of a special education school leader and teacher are even more vitally important. Whether it be elementary, middle, high, charter school, center school, private school, or an inclusion setting, the role of any individual involved with students with special needs can be challenging.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Researchers have focused on the challenges and dilemmas faced by special education leaders. As it stands, the role of a school administrator is vitally important, and the role of a special education school administrator is even more important. Regardless of the level or type of school, elementary, middle, high, charter school, center school, private school, or an inclusion setting, the role of an administrator working with students with special needs can be challenging. Special education leaders must be prepared to be good leaders and have specialized knowledge of the legal responsibilities of the inclusive environment; however, they often feel unprepared. Moreover, an explosion of litigation has required public school principals to have a better understanding of the law as it relates to Assistive Technology (Goor & Schwenn, 1995).

Administrators are charged with the daily responsibility of operating their schools within legal boundaries and must have an essential understanding of school law. School law includes all areas of jurisprudence that bear on the operation of public elementary and secondary schools in the United States. “School law” as a field of study is a generic term covering a wide range of legal subject matter, including the basic fields of contracts, property, torts, constitutional law, and other areas of law that directly affect the educational and administrative processes of the educational system (Alexander & Alexander, 2001).

With the rise of students with disabilities being served in mainstream education programs, assistive technologies are now blurring with educational technology (Schaffhauser, 2013). Teachers are implementing technology into everyday classroom use. Every student now has his or her own special need and differing learning style, encouraging the use of Assistive Technology. What happens when teachers have a student with a disability and there is uncertainty about providing access to the technology needed or implementing accessible technology? Additional research explores education issues and trends in technology that

consider how and why technology helps students with disabilities (Schaffhauser, 2013). Just as Maor, Currie, & Drewry conclude, further research must be done in the area of Assistive Technology in special education.

Special Education

Leading up to the 21st century, schools have become an integrated system for all students, fostering a rigorous learning environment. Special education has evolved from self-contained or segregated classrooms to integration across school campuses. Michael DiPaoloa, Megan Tschannen-Moran, and Chriss Walther-Thomas (2004), suggest that in order for the integration of special education to be implemented effectively, educational leaders must shift from general policies and law to specialized knowledge related to exceptional students.

Assistive Technology

With regard to Assistive Technology, Dalton and Roush (2010) identify available Assistive Technology and educational technology literature as it relates to standards and teacher competencies. In their findings, they categorize that literature in relation to Sweeney's (1999) definition of standards and Davies' (1999) Evidence Based Practices (EBP) hierarchy. Dalton and Roush (2010) defined various terms prior to presenting various literature that has been reviewed, focusing on literature that included standards and teacher competencies that relate to Assistive Technology.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this collective case study is to explore the role in the integration of Assistive Technology, for teachers and leaders, in the inclusion of ESE students at selected Central Florida schools. This study will identify teachers' and leaders' knowledge of ethics in education and ESE policy as it relates to Assistive Technology in the inclusive classroom.

Further, this study will collectively explore the attitudes, experiences, and decision-making processes of those involved in implementation and use of Assistive Technology in the inclusion of ESE students. At this stage in the research, the role of Assistive Technology implementation and its use in inclusion will be defined by the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about ESE inclusion of those involved in the implementation and use of Assistive Technology.

Problem Statement

The effectiveness of principals implementing Assistive Technology (AT) in the inclusive classroom while meeting the mandates of special education policies and laws results in conflicts between ethical compliance and providing the most effective AT for each individual student. Successful inclusion and use of Assistive Technology depends on principals who are knowledgeable in the law and regulations of special education as they relate to Assistive Technology (Dalton and Roush, 2010). Technology is rapidly changing and "it is difficult for researchers to keep up with new technology that could assist students" (Maor, et. al., 2011).

Significance of Problem

The significance of this study is the apparent gap in the literature regarding the intersection of Assistive Technology and the inclusive classroom. Further, the ultimate goal of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is for students to be included in the Least Restrictive Environment with the supports needed to be successful. Therefore, the use of technology for educational purposes must have guidelines for proper use and integration (Dalton & Roush, 2010).

Dalton and Roush (2010) identify possible challenges to research in the effective use of Assistive Technology in the inclusive classroom, including the many variables involved in the overall dynamic of special education. Given a lack of knowledge by educators and researchers of

the effective implementation of Assistive Technology, it is necessary to develop research models that consider the needs of the inclusive environment, including the perspectives of students, teachers, and administrators (Dalton & Roush, 2010).

For students with disabilities in the general education setting, Assistive Technology supports provided as a part of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) is more than an educational tool. Technology for students with disabilities can provide full access to their learning environment. Providing the development of standards and policies for proper use of AT leads to a more effective instructional environment for students with disabilities. According to Dalton & Roush, there are no clear evidenced-based practices in the literature to guide in the effective implementation of AT while meeting the mandates of NCLB (2010).

Effective inclusion depends on principals who are knowledgeable in the law and regulations of special education as it relates to inclusion and Assistive Technology. However, special education leadership continues to face challenges and is a subject that requires constant attention and updating. Policy and law continues to grow and change due to the requirements for social justice as well as meeting the professional standards set forth for administrators by districts, states, and the federal government.

Theoretical Framework

Multiple Ethical Paradigms.

The theoretical framework that serves as the foundation of this study is Shapiro and Stefkovich's Multiple Ethical Paradigms, as cited in Stockall and Dennis (2015), including Theory of Justice, Theory of Critique, Theory of Care, and Theory of Professionalism. These theories intersect and can be individually described as they relate to AT in the inclusive classroom.

The Theory of Justice focuses on fairness in individuals with rights established by the law and society. The Theory of Justice viewpoint is focused on governing laws, asking questions such as: “What are the laws that govern state-mandated tests for children with disabilities” (Stockall and Dennis, p. 332, 2015)? Special education is intersecting more and more with the general education population. Legislation has been focused on not only protecting the rights of students with disabilities, but also the rights of students in the general education population not receiving special services. Yell reports (as cited by Stein & Sharkey, 2014), “although students with disabilities need to receive an appropriate education, this did not mean that it was acceptable to ignore a student’s behaviors or the impact on the education of other students (p. 170).” Current laws based on court rulings determine that the inclusion of one student cannot be at the expense of another student's access to education (Stein & Sharkey, 2014).

The Theory of Critique focuses on the justness of laws, and in this theory, an issue is challenged and sought to be redefined. Education, whether general or special, is faced with following educational law given specific guidelines. Ethical deliberation provides the intimate relation of laws and ethics to be seen as distinguishable. Through ethical deliberation, teachers and administrators in special education are able to deliberate the special duties and dangers in the field through both legal and ethical perspectives. Howe and Miramontes provide that there is no right answer to ethical deliberation. Everyone who faces deliberation in cases can bring their own subjective view on the results to be yielded. At the start of ethical deliberation, the use of an ethical code as a guide along with the laws and legalities within the field can ultimately yield the best decision during deliberation (Howe & Miramontes, 1991).

The Theory of Care focuses on relationships. Responsibilities and relationships are emphasized, not rules, rights, or laws. Special education leaders are champions (DiPaola, et. al.,

2004). Effective special education leaders provide improvement and stability (Leithwood and Louis, 2012). Special education leaders are invested in their working relationships to foster implementation of research-based instructional programs to make a difference in the academic lives and performance of students (DiPaola, et. al., 2004).

The Theory of Professionalism focuses on the best interest of the student. One's individual values and beliefs come into play when addressing complex issues where a conflict is present in professional ethics and personal ethics (Stockall and Dennis, 2015). Ethics in education is magnified in special education. Special education was designed to meet "the ethical requirement that all individuals be provided with access to a decent public education, regardless of how they might differ from the general population with respect to various skills, abilities, and powers that affect school performance" (Howe & Miramontes, p. 7, 1991). Special education today goes against the traditional structure of special education, moving towards mainstreaming, which can present the most ethical challenges.

A Decision-Making Framework.

Developed from the existing theoretical frameworks of justice, critique, care, and professionalism, each of these ethical theories can be used to balance conflicting values in specific contexts for teachers and leaders of special education. Stockall and Dennis state, "Each of these [theories] represents a perspective or way of seeing a particular problem or dilemma" (p. 331, 2015). Each of these four theories intersects one another; however, each can be viewed independently as well when dealing with AT in the inclusive classroom.

The use of a framework in conjunction with a professional code of conduct provides a team guidance to work together to uncover and organize details. In combination with Shapiro

and Stefkovich's Multiple Ethical Paradigms, Stockall and Dennis also present the use of a decision-making process framework (Stockall & Dennis, 2015).

The decision-making framework in this study, guided by the ethics of justice, critique, care, and professionalism, includes seven steps:

1. Describe the context of the situation.
2. Describe the issues involved.
3. Pose questions from each ethical perspective that might affect the issue [Ethic of Justice, Ethic of Care, Ethic of Critique, Ethic of Professionalism].
    a. Guiding Questions:
        i. What are the team's beliefs about the role of [AT] in the education of students with disabilities?
        ii. What is the value of education for students with disabilities?
        iii. Why does the issue matter?
        iv. What consequences are the members willing to take to uphold their own values or beliefs?
        v. What are the laws related to this issue?
        vi. What is the district's policy regarding this issue?
        vii. Who has the authority and power to make this decision?
        viii. How will our decision maintain or challenge the status quo?
        ix. Who will benefit from the decision we make in this situation?
        x. What will be the short and long-term consequences of our decision for the student and other stakeholders?

xi. What effects will this decision have on other students in the same or other marginalized groups?

xii. How does the student feel about the issue?

xiii. How do the parents and family of the student feel about this issue?

xiv. What does our professional code of ethics direct us to do?

4. Identify alternative decisions for each issue.
5. Identify consequences for each alternative.
6. Rank order alternatives and decide who will be affected by the decision and who needs to be represented in the process.
7. Monitor and modify the decision when needed (Stockall & Dennis, p. 335-341, 2015).

In special education leadership, as supported by Shapiro and Gross (2013), legislation has determined the final decision on ethical dilemmas to be placed at the top of the hierarchy, which includes principals and superintendents. Tension can arise between the special educator facing a dilemma and the top of the hierarchy when making decisions; however, using a distributive leadership approach can make solving dilemmas a more effective process (Shapiro & Gross, 2013).

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- What knowledge and skills do leaders and teachers bring to the role in supporting the inclusive program?
- How are leaders supporting the use of Assistive Technology to support effective inclusion?

- How are teachers using Assistive Technology to support effective inclusion?
- How do leaders and teachers address ethics of justice, critique, care, and professionalism in the successful use of Assistive Technology in inclusion?

Definitions of Key Terms

The following key terms have been identified for this study:

Special Education

Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) online provides information from Section 1003.01(3)(b), Florida Statutes (F.S.), defining "special education services as specially designed instruction and related services necessary for an exceptional student to benefit from education." Related services are further defined by FLDOE under Title 34, Section 300.34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), as "services required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education." FLDOE further defines exceptional students as children who have special learning needs, including those who are gifted and those with disabilities (FLDOE, 2017).

Assistive Technology (AT)

Dalton and Roush (2010) define Assistive Technology as "any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities" (p. 30).

The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE, 2017) defines Assistive Technology, in three ways: Assistive Technology Device, Assistive Technology Service, and Types of Assistive Technology.

> The term "Assistive Technology device" is defined as "any item, piece of equipment or product system – whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized – that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities

of a student with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted or the replacement of that device."

The term "Assistive Technology service" is defined as any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition or use of an Assistive Technology device.

The definition of Assistive Technology device intentionally avoids the inclusion of specific types of technology, leaving it up to the IEP team to determine what Assistive Technology is for a student. As a result, many types of technologies have been identified as assistive technologies over the years by various IEP teams. Examples include simple or low technology, mid technology, and high or complex technology. (FLDOE)

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Beginning at the superintendent or district level of leadership in the school system, legislative knowledge is of crucial importance, and as laws and legalities change, leaders must remain current. Rapid changes in education include leaders working with students, teachers, and parents. The history of special education presents events beginning with early development from individuals and groups leading up to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. Each of these events has had an impact on public schools. Early on, access to education was the issue, whereas in recent years, the issues have focused on the quality of education. Knowledge of these events, their historical importance, and meaning today fall directly on special education leaders' knowledge base to best meet the needs of all students.

Legislation

Paving the way for special education was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Developed in 1965, ground breaking and seminal to federal legislation, ESEA provided educational interventions for all students (Jennings, 2015). As a result of ESEA, additional policies and laws followed, including yearly student testing, preschool ESE programs, Title I, and ESOL English classes. After 50 years, ESEA had an impact on many milestones possible in education (Jennings, 2015).

Following ESEA, two subsequent lawsuits, Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania of 1971, and Mills v. Board of Education of District of Columbia of 1972, laid the foundation that ultimately furthered legislation leading to Section 504, Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). As a result of PARC v. Pennsylvania (1972) and Mills v. D.C. Board of Education (1972), a civil rights law, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), became important because it provides services that are free and appropriate to students with disabilities in

public schools. Implementation of Section 504 falls at the K-12 school-based level as it is a civil rights law. Due to years of delays and protests, Section 504 was virtually ignored in public education. For over a decade, however, it provided the template for the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In the 21st-century classroom, Section 504 has received increased attention (Shaw & Madaus, 2008).

Following Section 504, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law of 1974, which protects privacy of student education records (USDOE, 2015). Under FERPA, parents are given privacy rights to their student's records, which are then transferred to the student upon the age of 18; however, rights are transferred to students upon matriculation to college no matter what their age. Parents are given the right to inspect as well as request changes to inaccurate records.

Not long after FERPA, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA) was passed into public law and ensured that students with disabilities were receiving a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. Results of this law brought forth procedural safeguards for parents of children with disabilities (Public Law 94-142, 1975). EAHCA was amended and renamed as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Protigal, 1999).

Following the passing of EAHCA, Yell (1990) explains that the law did not address relief for parents in the recourse actions against a school district. HCPA was signed into law, permitting parents to seek attorney fees and clarify other aspects of EAHCA (Yell, 1990).

Alongside HCPA, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1992 protects individuals with disabilities, primarily against discrimination or exclusion. Weber (2010) suggests that the ADA provides equal opportunities in five areas for individuals with disabilities:

employment, public services, public accommodations, telecommunications, and miscellaneous (p. 7-8).

In the era of IDEA, more students are being protected under Section 504 and ADA rather than IDEA. However, children must still have their needs adequately met within the same schools as students qualifying under IDEA. ADA, amended in 2008, defines disability as something that "shall be construed in favor of broad coverage of individuals" with "the primary object of attention in cases brought under ADA should be whether entities covered under ADA have complied with their obligations" (Weber, 2010, p.6). Amendments to ADA amendments have come under some scrutiny in elementary and secondary education; however, they have grown stronger in helping obtain employment and in higher education.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) & No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

After numerous lawsuits and amendments to EAHCA, we now have the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Lusk defines IDEA as an establishment "to ensure that students from ages three to twenty-one have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living" (2015, p. 292). Two main goals of IDEA are mainstreaming and integration of students with disabilities in the general education as much as possible and in the least restrictive manner. The reality schools today face is a strong difference between what should be available under IDEA and what really is made available (Lusk, 2015).

IDEA provides that school districts follow a process when a student is believed to have a disability. Part of this process involves assessment tools and strategies to classify a student with any of eleven disabilities under IDEA. When classified, a student is entitled to free and

appropriate public education (FAPE). The process of FAPE involves a team-based approach. School districts are required to provide the appropriate educational services for students identified as eligible for services (Sadao, 2010). IDEA (2004) states that FAPE must "(a) be provided at public expense, (b) meet the standards of the state educational agency, (c) include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school education, and (d) conform with the Individualized Education [Plan]" (Sumbera, et. al., 2014).

Further, FAPE provides the certainty of access to a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities through procedural safeguards. Students with disabilities are protected in the area of behavior and suspension, under IDEA and FAPE. IDEA and FAPE provide that if a student's behavior is a "direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or … the conduct in question was the direct result of the local education agency's failure to implement the IEP" (Lusk, 2015, p. 296). Services provided to students must comply with the development of the IEP and be specifically designed to meet the individual needs of the student in the most free and appropriate educational placement starting with the least restrictive environment (Sadao, 2010).

For a classified student, FAPE includes the provision of special education and related services that are provided free of charge, including all levels of schooling, ranging from preschool to secondary school education (Lusk, 2015). Following evaluation, assessment, and identification, students are then provided with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and further services based on the student's individual needs and abilities (Lusk, 2015).

In 2001, the Bush administration sought to bring accountability to our nation's schools. This led to the authorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. NCLB was the reauthorization of the ESEA, and it placed assessment requirements directly on the states. NCLB

was originally put into place to promote achievement in all students, including students with disabilities. Further reauthorization required that special education teachers be certified as highly qualified and that paraprofessionals also be qualified (Moe, 2014).

In 2004, IDEA was reauthorized under the Bush administration to preserve the basic structure of the original law, but made significant changes to student placement instruction and teacher qualification. IDEA requires special education teachers to be "highly qualified," meaning that they must hold a special education certificate, or be licensed as special education teachers, in addition to a bachelor's degree as well as demonstrate subject matter competency. IDEA requires students must be provided the least restrictive free and appropriate public education (FAPE). IDEA also requires that instruction is research-based. Success with IDEA and response to intervention (RTI) through the RTI tier method is being used across many districts in order to best provide the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities (IDEA 2004).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

In December of 2015 the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law, reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) enacted in 2002. Young, Winn, and Reedy (2017) summarize the two primary goals of ESSA: [1] To require states to align their education programs with college and career ready standards; and [2] to extend the federal focus on equity by providing resources for poor students, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities (p. 706).

As requirements of NCLB and IDEA became unworkable for school systems, ESSA law was built upon previous versions of law, including the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). As the Obama administration began granting flexibility of NCLB in 2012 to states, the development of ESSA began. Specific provisions were outlined to ensure the success for all students.

Provisions include protection for disadvantaged and critical needs students, requiring all students be taught in preparation for success in college and career readiness, annual state assessments to measure student progress, support for evidenced-based practices, increase in access to pre-schooling, and maintaining accountability for lowest-performing schools and students (Every Student Succeeds Act, n.d.).

Inclusion

With federal law providing students with the least restrictive environment and a free appropriate public education, no specific law directly identifies the term "inclusion." Only in Florida law is the language paralleled to generalization of the specific term "inclusion" (Moore, Gilbreath, & Maiuri, 1997*).* Assistive Technology can reduce the barriers students with disabilities may face with the higher standards required under NCLB (Dalton & Roush, 2010).

As of July 2013, new legislation took effect in Florida pertaining to inclusion. Florida legislation defines inclusion to mean"a student with a disability receiving education in a general education regular class setting, reflecting natural proportions and age-appropriate heterogeneous groups in core academic and elective or special areas within the school community" (*Best Practices for Inclusive Education (BPIE) Assessment School Level* [PDF], 2013). In addition to defining inclusion, Florida Statutes further define legislation pertaining to inclusion and Best Practice for Inclusive Education (BPIE). BPIE is an assessment conducted once every three years within each school and school district. This assessment is conducted with a Florida Inclusion Network facilitator and is designed to include short-term and long-term goals for exceptional student education: "BPIE is an internal assessment process designed to facilitate the analysis, implementation, and improvement of inclusive educational practices at the district and school

team levels" (*Best Practices for Inclusive Education (BPIE) Assessment School Level* [PDF], 2013).

Legislation acknowledges inclusion as more than just placement of students with disabilities in a general education classroom setting. Legislation provides that all students, with or without disabilities, have a civil right to be included for instruction and learning. With legislation changes as of 2013, the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) revised BPIE from its original form (2007) to its current form.

Least Restrictive Environment

Federal law provides that students with disabilities are provided a Free Appropriate Public Education. The new Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, requires students with disabilities to be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) (Conflicts Over LRE and FAPE, 2001). LRE begins with students attending the school that they would attend if they did not have a disability, with the most restrictive placement considered a residential school or a home bound setting (Conflicts Over LRE and FAPE, 2001). Parallel to the language stated in IDEA 2004, the state of Florida states in Florida Statute Section 230.22(2)(2).F.S., "special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of exceptional education students from regular classes shall occur only when the nature or severity of the handicap cannot be satisfactorily accommodated with supplementary aids and services in the regular classroom" (Moore, Gilbreath, & Mauiri, 1997).

Emphasis on special education and the Least Restrictive Environment focuses on the regular classroom being the first placement option. For students whose most appropriate LRE is the regular classroom, the use of supplementary aids and services are then considered and outlined in the Individualized Education Plan to allow the student to be most successful in the

regular classroom. For some students, based on an individual case-by-case basis as outlined in each student's Individualized Education Plan, placement in the regular classroom is not the most appropriate LRE (Moore, Gilbreath, & Mauiri, 1997).

Currently, no law uses the term *inclusion.* IDEA (2004) outlines the legal terms of FAPE and LRE, which has come to be known and recognized as *inclusion* (Moore, Gilbreath, & Mauiri, 1997). Additional legislation, like No Child Left Behind (NCLB), supports the *inclusion* of all students and the application of educational expectations upon all students, including those with disabilities (Sapon-Shevin, 1999). Research, as supported by Staub & Peck (1994), provides evidence that points to the rewards of inclusive schooling.

According to Florida Inclusion Network (2006), although many Florida districts have implemented inclusive practices, there is limited increase in the number of students with disabilities receiving services in the regular classroom. Further, implementation and effort is required to continue. *F.A.C.T. Folio* states that sustaining and expanding inclusive schools, the following factors must be considered: Collaboration amongst team members, creative use of existing resources, valued inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classrooms, variety of approaches and strategies in instruction and curricular adaptations designed to meet individual students, ongoing professional development for staff, and inclusion of students with disabilities in school-wide planning and data accountability (2004).

Focus in today's inclusive classrooms has moved away from students accessing only the curriculum and classroom to the quality of the education students are receiving. As students with disabilities access the general education curriculum, they are also required to participate in state and district-assessments. Instruction for students with disabilities in the regular classroom is provided by highly qualified teachers.

Supplementary Aids & Services

With an increase in the number of students with disabilities receiving instruction in the regular classroom and the exploration of classroom interventions through the process of RTI, educators need to have a working knowledge of supplementary aids and services like accommodations, modifications, and interventions. Research provides that teachers are often confused about these terms.

Supplementary aids and services that include accommodations and modifications are outlined in each student's Individual Education Plan. Fisher and Frey (2016) define an accommodation as a curriculum support that "does not change the instructional level, content, or performance criteria for meeting the standards, but rather provides the student with a different way to meet the standards" (p.86). An accommodation doesn't alter the learning outcome or teach new skills; rather, accommodations even the playing field for students with disabilities (Conderman, Liberty, and DeSpain., 2017). "A modification, on the other hand, is a change in what a student is expected to learn or demonstrate" (Fisher & Frey, 2016, p. 86). A modification is a change in the curriculum or assessment, changing the expectation to below-or above-the grade level expectation (Conderman, et. al., 2017).

Conderman, et.al., (2017) provides a list of Do's and Don'ts regarding accommodations, modifications, and interventions. Teachers should focus on accommodations, modifications, and interventions to individualize for students and situations; assess the student's needs at least annually; use across instruction and assessment; provide a rationale for each use; involve a team in discussing decisions and use; research and reflect on evidence-based practices; and document use and effectiveness. Teachers shouldn't focus on accommodations, modifications, and interventions to assign based on the child's disability label; automatically use based on use from

the previous year; use for the first time in high-stakes assessments; use every possible accommodation available; assume the knowledge or understanding of others and the purpose for use; assume they are correctly implementing without researching specific implementation procedures; and rely on memory solely for details (Conderman, 2017, p. 71).

The success in the curriculum support is only as good as the curriculum and instruction that surrounds them. Some curriculum support is presented in the form of technology. Technology support has changed over the years, becoming easier to access (Fisher & Frey, 2016). Guiding inclusion in K-12 education is Best Practices for Inclusive Education (BPIE) Assessments.

Technology in the Curriculum

Technology is becoming a trending practice in education, but it faces many monsters like assessment, funding, and parent support. Aside from these everyday classroom challenges, the curriculum often guides the instruction. So how do we overcome these challenges to successfully integrate technology as a part of the curriculum and instruction?

Integrating technology, as stated by Levin, is to "simply employ technology as a tool for school improvement or merely believing in or even acting on the principles of distributed leadership and systems thinking is not enough" (2014, p. 660). Integrating technology has two points of focus: the teacher and the student. Kervin & Montei (2010) connect technology with teaching from both perspectives. From the teacher's perspective, factors such as the individual teacher's philosophy, technology aptitude, and student knowledge all come in to play. From the student's perspective, students should be encouraged to direct their own learning, including what technology they will use to learn (Kervin & Montei, 2010).

Successful integration of technology into the curriculum provides that "technology should support rather than become the learning" (Kervin & Montei, 2010). 21st century curriculum and instruction should not focus on the learning of new 21st century technology, but rather on the technology as a part of the curriculum learning process. Changes in 21st century curriculum and teaching focus on knowledge, skills, and assessment are what drive curriculum selection as well as the instruction of that curriculum (Levin & Schrum, 2014). We must move towards finding 'new' ways to use 'new' and 'old' technology without using 'new' technology in 'old' ways (Kervin & Montei, 2010).

Technology offers choices. Technology can provide new ways to learn new material and demonstrate the learning of new material. For the guidance of instruction, technology can provide ways to differentiate instruction and even assessment. Assessment guides what we teach, but not how we teach it (Levin & Schrum, 2014)

As we informally assess students, we often come across aspects of "hidden curriculum." Hidden curriculum is the informal learning that happens in school. This includes unofficial and unintended lessons communicated through academic, social, and cultural messages, as well as what is needed to support the learning that cannot be taught (Edwards, 2015).

Hidden curriculum in technology can be viewed much differently than one may think. The hidden curriculum, as supported by Edwards in his article, is often present in technology (2015). Technology can be the tool that enhances teaching and supports the learning; however, there can be hidden areas where unplanned instruction is necessary. More often than not, students learn things at a hidden level through the integration of technology. Students may not think they are gaining knowledge or building skills, but curriculum is being instructed in a hidden form (Edwards, 2015).

Lamb & Johnson (2011) provide a guide in the successful use of technology for curriculum and instruction. When teaching, focus must be on technology security, student interests, and of course the driving force in curriculum, standards-based infusion. Once teachers have been introduced to what technology they are going to integrate, it is often left up to them to determine how they are going to integrate the technology (Lamb & Johnson, 2011).

Lamb & Johnson present four areas where technology can be impactful in curriculum and instruction. Daily embedded practice in communication, connections, collaboration, and creativity can have an impact on students. Lamb & Johnson also recommend teachers take the time to explore technology, model technology, and then infuse the technology. This planning is an extension of the leadership planning process, as teachers are leaders of knowledge in their own classrooms (Lamb & Johnson, 2011).

As teachers become successful integrators of technology within their curriculum to support instruction, Lamb & Johnson provide 12 example approaches to technology use: rediscovering classics; sharing useful resources; creating supportive atmosphere; nurturing tech-savvy teachers; encouraging technology that supports instruction; connecting technology to school initiatives; exploring applications of technology tools; weaving technology into the curriculum; creating synergy with resources and tools; focusing on digital citizenship; building school to home connections; and stressing interdisciplinary, project-based approaches (2011).

Along with Lamb & Johnson's examples, Levin & Schrum also give examples for technology use, including online research, software use, drill and practice activities, communication, and much more (2014). Specific examples in curricular areas include science games/simulations, real-world business applications for mathematics, language text tools for

English/language arts, Google Earth for social studies, and various Web 2.0 tools (Levin & Schrum, 2011). Technology can assist and support learning when implemented effectively.

Assistive Technology

Legislation

As with the legislative history in special education and law, Dalton and Roush (2010) reference the legal policies and laws that relate to Assistive Technology or educational technology in various sub-topics, including state standards, Assistive Technology, standards, and Evidence Based Practices (EBP). Upon review of various literature, it is clear that Evidence Based Practices in the United States lack evidence to support teacher standards and competencies in the fields of Assistive Technology and educational technology. "The field of Assistive Technology is a process of establishing educationally relevant standards in the pursuit of [Evidence Based Practices]" (Dalton & Roush, 2010).

Legislation began focusing on Assistive Technology in 1988 with the Technology-Related Assistance Act for Individuals with Disabilities (Tech Act, 2004). This act defined Assistive Technology as "any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities" (Tech Act, 2004). These definitions were later adopted by the Education of All Handicapped Children Act in 1990, which also connected Assistive Technology programs and services for children with disabilities. By 1997, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provided that Assistive Technology be considered for all students provided with an Individualized Education Program. Little is written in the law to guide in the implementation of Assistive Technology for teachers or students, although the law provides its importance (Dalton & Roush, 2010). Sadao & Robinson (2010)

summarize laws requiring consideration of Assistive Technology for children, citing IDEA 2004 and Assistive Technology Act, in Table 1.

Table 1 Assistive Technology Laws (Sadao & Robinson, 2010, p. 12)

	Definition	Law
Assistive Technology	"Each public agency must ensure that Assistive Technology devices or Assistive Technology services, or both, as those terms are defined in 300/5 and 300/6 respectively, are made available to a child as required as a part of the child's special education, related services, or supplementary aids and services. On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased Assistive Technology devices in a child's home or in other settings is required if the IEP team determines that the child needs access to those devices in order to receive FAPE."	IDEA 2004
AT Device	"An Assistive Technology *device* is defined as 'any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such device."	IDEA 2004
AT Device	"Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities."	Assistive Technology Act
AT Service	"Any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an Assistive Technology device. The term includes: a. The evaluation of the needs of the child with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary environment; b. Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of Assistive Technology devices by children with disabilities; c. Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing Assistive Technology devices; d. Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with Assistive Technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs; e. Training or technical assistance for a child with a disability or, if appropriate, that child's family; and f. Training or educational assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services), employees, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of that child"	IDEA 2004

Requirements for inclusion (IDEA) supports are needed for proper use and integration of Assistive Technology in the classroom. As a part of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), states are required to establish standards for academic performance. As students with disabilities are included in schools' Adequate Yearly Progress, and as students with disabilities are being included in the general education setting, it is imperative that Assistive Technology and educational technology implement standards for teachers to support students in the use of technology to enhance student performance. The use of Assistive Technology reduces barriers experienced by students with disabilities placed in the general education setting as a result of NCLB (Dalton & Roush, 2010).

Development and implementation of the law provides for changes to the educational system for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are not only educated in the Least Restrictive Environment, but are also often provided with assistive technologies to aid in the ability to participate without barriers. Some professional groups have developed Assistive Technology standards; however, these standards are not nationally implemented standards educationally. Instead, educational technology standards and nationally supported and implemented, mostly in the general education system for use of technology by students, teachers, and administrators. Assistive Technology in inclusion is defined by the end user. Thus, there is a pressing need for nationally developed and implemented standards to guide the true inclusion of students with disabilities in the 21st Century classroom (Dalton & Roush, 2010).

Petcu, Yell, and Fletcher support that over the last decade, Assistive Technology devices and services are becoming an important part of education for students with disabilities (2014). Lee and Templeton (2008), as cited by Petcu, Yell, and Fletcher (2014), "argued that the increase in the use of AT is driven by legislative initiative and technology evolution." Legislative

mandates include the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988. With the development of IDEA has also come the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Petcu, Yell, and Fletcher examined court decisions on IDEA compliance of AT from 2005 to 2013 (2014).

Day & Huefner (2003), as cited by Petcu, Yell, and Fletcher (2014), provided the approach for classification of AT involved in the court cases identified. Of the nine years reviewed, in only one year did more parents win court cases over schools. Most commonly found in court cases was "Failure to address AT needs and to provide AT assessment, No provision of AT devices or services as specified in student's IEP, Improper and inconsistent implementation of AT services, and Individualized education services" (Petcu, Yell, & Fletcher, 2014).

Currently, issues still persist in the provision and compliance of Assistive Technology not only in the IEP, but also in the implementation of Assistive Technology. More legal guidance is provided now on the provision of AT in an IEP and in the implementation of AT. Ultimately, IEP teams must meet the requirements of IDEA and FAPE. As policies and laws continue to change, so must the IEP development team.

In order to keep up with the constant change in education, specifically the provision and implementation of AT in IEPs and their implementation, districts should remain on top of the legal policies and such changes. In order for teachers, who are on the forefront of the implementation and often the development of the IEP, to remain current, the process must begin at the administrative level and move further up the hierarchy. IEP teams, those involved in the development of the IEP, face challenges not just in the development process, but also throughout

the entire implementation process. Ongoing research and training must be done as ongoing legal developments and policies emerge. What follows are types of Assistive Technology that have arisen in research.

Types of Assistive Technology

First presented in IDEA (2004), an Assistive Technology device is "any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with disabilities" (Messinger-Willman & Marino, 2010). According to the National Center for Technology Integration, assistive technologies were designed initially for the disabled but are increasingly recognized as presenting solutions for wider populations of students (Stansbury, 2009).

Currently, assistive technologies are trending in three particular areas: Low-Tech, Mid-Tech, and High-Tech. A growing literature base presents the five most significant areas of focus when implementing Assistive Technology, including convergence, customizability, research-based, portability, and interoperability (Stansbury, 2009).

Technology integration, for students both with and without disabilities, begins at the low-tech Assistive Technology level. McLeod (2010) states that low-tech Assistive Technology and adaptations are inexpensive and easy strategies that families and educators can use to increase participation in daily activities and routines. Examples of low-tech include large print text handheld magnifiers, pencil grips, highlighting pens and tape, planners, and slant boards. The Assistive Technology Network, as cited by Hopkins (2006), defines mid-tech Assistive Technology as simple electronic/battery-operated items that require little training. Examples of mid-tech include tape recorders, calculators, simple AAC Voice Output Switches, Spell check,

Word Processor, audio books, lights, screens, and visual timers. Hopkins further cites the Assistive Technology Network, defining high-tech Assistive Technology as things with motors or multiple electronic parts and these devices usually require some practice/training (2006). Examples of high-tech include power wheelchairs, Dynamic Display AAC Devices, computers, word prediction software, text readers, text-to-speech, iPads, tablets, and cellular devices (Hopkins, 2006).

Technology integration, for both students with and without disabilities, begins at the low-tech Assistive Technology level. McLeod (2010) states that low-tech Assistive Technology and adaptations are cheap and easy strategies that families and educators can use to increase participation in daily activities and routines. The Assistive Technology Network, as cited by Hopkins (2006), defines mid-tech Assistive Technology as simple electronic/battery operated items that require little training. Hopkins further cites the Assistive Technology Network, defining high-tech Assistive Technology such as equipment with motors or multiple electronic parts and these devices usually require some practice/training (2006). Two popular high tech-Assistive Technology initiatives benefiting students with disabilities in the mainstream classroom include Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and Computerized Learning Environments (Schaffhauser, 2013).

BYOD

Santosh (2013) defines BYOD as "the policy of permitting students to bring their personally owned technological mobile devices such as smart phones, tablets, and laptops" into the classroom for instructional purposes. Macpherson (2015) cites the benefits to BYOD: (1) Students choose the device that fits them best; (2) Students can download the apps they need; (3)

Students are forced to be responsible; (4) Differentiation becomes more manageable; and (5) Students can work at their own pace.

Computerized Learning Environments

Computerized Learning Environments provides an approach for students to access their education through various forms of instruction. Students can access their education anytime, at home, school, or even in the community (Schaffhauser, 2013). Computerized Learning provides an effective way to customize instruction based on the individual learner (Shamir & Margalit, 2011).

In addition, computer use provides additional ways to support curriculum and can be considered a gateway for learning. Computer use provides a means to increase students' "cognition, social development, and independence" (Sadao & Robinson, 2010, p. 157). In a world of digitization, computers and technology have become a part of life. As cited by Sadao & Robinson (2010), Vernadakis et al. (2005) reviewed several studies on the use of computers with children and found that computers provide a range of academic skills; given the interactive nature of teaching skills, computer use prompted some teaching skills beyond traditional educational approaches (p. 157).

Currently, there is little research on the effectiveness of computers with children. A small amount of research has been done and provides gains in academic skill development through computer use. Current research does provide that the use of computers should be considered to support children with disabilities in an inclusive setting (Sadao & Robinson, 2010).

Assistive Technology Principles

When selecting, purchasing and implementing Assistive Technology, the IEP team is often under pressure for the educational accountability of device(s). Recommending specific

Assistive Technology device(s) for a student(s) begins with a rationale for the necessity of the device(s). When the purpose and use of the device(s) are understood by the IEP team, including at the administrative and district level, funding for purchase and implementation is most likely (Sadao & Robinson, 2010).

Sadao & Robinson (2010) explain that "to avoid the pitfalls of selecting, purchasing, and implementing AT devices, teams should adhere to sound AT guiding principles that are known to all members, including the family, administrators, and other personnel" (p. 13). Overall, these nine guiding principles focus on those involved in the selection, purchase, and implementation of AT devices to stay abreast of technology available and work together so that AT use happens in the home and classroom environments to be most beneficial for students. Each of these nine guiding principles is summarized in Table 2 along with literature to support each principle (Sadao & Robinson, 2010).

Table 2 Nine Guiding AT Principles (Sadao & Robinson, 2010, p. 14)

Guiding Principle	Supporting Literature	Recommended Practices
1. Families are involved in developing and implementing AT devices for young children.	Parette and Brotherson (1996)	Families and professionals collaborate in planning and implementing the use of AT.
2. AT devices are infused in the child's daily routines across the home, childcare, and other settings.	Dugan et al. (2004); Judge (2002); Lane and Mistrett (2002); Mistrett (2001, 2004); Stremel (2005)	Professionals utilize AT in intervention programs for children.
3. AT tools are easy to use and can be adapted to the environments of the child and family.	Judge (1998); Sadao et al. (2009)	Service programs and professionals consider the least intrusive, least expensive, yet effective low-tech devices in making decisions about AT for individual children.
3. Families are able to obtain AT devices from providers or a lending library or receive directions for using the equipment of activity.	Milbourne and Campbell (2008)	Families and professionals use technology to access information and support.
4. AT assessment and intervention is addressed in a team-based collaborative manner with the family as an integral member of the decision making team.	Judge (2002); Long et al. (2003); Mistrett (2004)	Professionals' use and selection of AT is based on a family's preferences within assessments, implementation, and evaluation activities.
5. AT is a consideration for every child during the development of the IEP.	Hanline et al. (2007); Stremel (2005)	Training and technical support programs are available to support technology applications.
6. AT is a strategy to foster learning and independence.	Long et al. (2003); Sullivan and Lewis (1995)	Service programs and professionals consider AT applications to increase children's ability to function and participate in diverse and less restrictive environments.
7. Families and professionals have access to ongoing training opportunities to increase their knowledge and awareness of AT use and benefits.	Sadao et al. (2009)	State agencies, service programs, and personnel training programs infuse technology at the preservice and in-service levels to increase competencies of service providers, families, and administrators in assistive, instructional, and informational technologies.
8. Families and professionals have information on potential funding sources for AT devices.	Judge (2000)	Service programs and professionals have knowledge of sources for funding and consider procedures to coordinate resources for funding and reuse.

Assistive Technology & Universal Design for Learning

As IDEA 2004 promotes the placement of students with disabilities in the general education, this is more than just physically being placed in the classroom. Access to the general curriculum in the general education classroom is key to successful inclusion of students with

disabilities. Universal Design for Learning promotes the access, participation, and progress for all students, including students with disabilities, in the general education classroom (Sadao & Robinson, 2010). As cited by Sadao & Robinson (2010), "Lieber, Horn, Palmer, and Fleming (2008) emphasized two principles of IDEA 2004 that reinforce applying Universal Design for Learning with children with disabilities in general education settings: 1) access to the context in which instruction is presented and 2) active engagement with the curriculum" (p. 29).

Sadao & Robinson (2010) define Universal Design for Learning "as a research-based framework for designing curricula-that is, educational goals, methods, materials, and assessments-that enable all individuals to gain knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for learning" (p28). In Universal Design for Learning, supports are increased and barriers are decreased for all learners. The achievement of standards is set high for all learners, with all learners being accommodated at all levels of curriculum: design, implementation, and evaluation. The goal of Universal Design for Learning is based on three key principles for student learning in the learning environment: access, participation, and progress. In conjunction with these principles, Universal Design for Learning is provided through three primary multiple means strategies: multiple means of representation, multiple means of engagement, and multiple means of expression (Sadao & Robinson, 2010).

Assistive Technology provides the tools necessary for all students with disabilities to increase their participation in the general education classroom. Since Assistive Technology is a bridge for students with disabilities in the learning environment, the learning environment and context provided in the learning environment is a critical component in the successful implementation and use of Assistive Technology. Given trends in inclusive education, "the compatibility of Universal Design for Learning with Assistive Technology is immediately clear

because Assistive Technology has the potential to provide a range of tools to enable students with complex needs to gain access to, participate in, and progress in the general curriculum (Sadao & Robinson, 2010, p. 28-29).

Universal Design for Learning branches further from IDEA 2004, with a goal of eliminating barriers to learning for all learners, beginning with curriculum planning. Universal Design for Learning begins with teachers being prepared to meet the diverse needs of all students and the individual accommodations of Assistive Technology for students with disabilities is a part of the planning and preparing process. The planning process of Universal Design for Learning and the relationship to special education services planning provide the potential to support and improve access to learning for all students (Sadao & Robinson, 2010).

Assistive Technology and Universal Design for Learning provide a reciprocal dynamic and influence on access, participation, and progress for all students in the inclusive education classroom. Assistive Technology resources for students with disabilities become a part of planning and design for classroom instruction. Existing Assistive Technology for students with disabilities builds upon Universal Design for Learning, enhancing learning based on research-based practices in a wide perspective to include technology for learning. Learning for all students can be successfully achieved through planning, designing, and implementing Assistive Technology in the general education classroom for all. For example, “rather than adding AT elements such as pictures to increase communication tools for children with limited speech, picture symbols can be placed in all learning centers to emphasize key vocabulary and concepts that are core and words that are fringe” (Sadao & Robinson, 2010, p. 30).

Role of Leadership

Leadership Defined

Understanding what educational leadership is can better guide our understanding of how important this role is in any school setting. Looking for a specific definition of educational leadership can lead to no "correct" definition (Gunter, 2004). In his book, Tony Bush (2011) identifies three key elements that can build an understanding of educational leadership, including: influence, values, and vision. Leithwood and Louis (2012) identify educational leadership in two parts: providing direction and exercising influence. Interpreting both authors' defining elements, there still is no clear definition of educational leadership. However, the value of educational leadership draws in responsible, trustworthy, collaborative, and personally invested leaders who focus on student achievement (DiPaola, et. al., 2004).

Current leaders and future leaders can apply leadership models in order to be effective leaders. One of the easiest ways to guide current leaders into effective special education leaders is for leaders to use their resources. Help is often closer than one thinks and utilizing support within the school can make for an effective leader who is able to meet the needs of students.

Participative Leadership

Of Bush's (2011) ten leadership models, the Participative Leadership model is the one that many past and present leaders are finding themselves using. In this model, leaders provide staff members the opportunity to engage in the process of decision-making within the school. Bush adds that participative leadership "assumes that the decision-making processes of the group ought to be the central focus of the group" (p. 87 2011).

Although Participative Leadership involves the participation and commitment of all participants, ultimately the formal leader remains accountable for all decisions made and carried

out. Following a democratic perspective, the use of Participative Leadership brings all staff together and can lessen the burden of leadership functions. Often, leaders attempt to lead through a Distributed Leadership Model, but end up ultimately in a Participative Leadership Model.

Distributive Leadership

Of Bush's (2011) ten leadership models, the Distributed Leadership model is one that current or future special education leaders can use to lead. Within this model, leaders can collectively work with staff to lead a school. Bush (2011) supports that through the Distributed Leadership model, "leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed." Expertise should be engaged at all opportunities.

Adopting this or any other leadership model can be difficult for leaders who are already going through a change in dynamics within their school. The Distributed Leadership model can be easily accepted within a school, following a gradual progression from a more Participative Leadership model to the Distributed Leadership model. Distribution of tasks and assignments is at the discretion of the head leader. How much is distributed and how gradual is up to the leader. Special education and school leadership can present challenges and opportunities. Leadership models are a guide for effective leadership and do not have to happen overnight.

Special Education Leadership

Whether special education leaders are school-wide administrators or specialized leaders, challenges can be faced. According to Philip Garner and Fiona Forbes (2013), school leaders must possess the confidence to be role models for staff and students. In their study, Garner and Forbes (2013) sampled school principals from across Australia and surveyed them in two parts. Part one of the study was demographical information and part two of the study was a set of

individual questionnaire items. Results of this study revealed that a small percentage of leaders had knowledge and understanding of special education policy and procedures. School leaders must gain a deeper understanding of pedagogical knowledge and law through professional development opportunities. Revealed in the study, school leaders express their own individual desire to understand how to meet the needs of students with special needs (Garner & Forbes, 2013).

One of the most important requirements for a special education leader is the deep pedagogical knowledge and understanding of students with special needs. What goes along with understanding students with special needs comes the understanding of the laws and legalities that have lead special education to where it is today. Special education leaders can start with a general understanding of administrative processes, as provided by Leo Connor (1963) in his article, "Preliminaries to a theory of administration for special education." Connor (1963) writes that administration includes decision-making, programming, communicating, controlling and reappraising. Administration also functions through policy, resources and execution. In addition, administration must consider the administrator, the on-going process, its own structure and the community in which it functions. Lastly, administration is interaction and achievement within the environment of the institution and is substantially the same in educational, industrial, governmental or military organization (p. 433).

In the field of special education, administrative roles are increased. Research should continue to focus on the attention of special education administration. Special education leadership 82 years later is still struggling, both at the school-wide administrative level and with special education leaders (Connor, 1963).

Leadership & Inclusion

Moving into the 21st century classroom, new laws and regulations are prompting changes for special education. Put simply by WrightsLaw.com, "To understand the battles being fought today for children with disabilities, it is important to understand the history and traditions associated with public schools and special education." At the helm of these changes comes the move towards the inclusive classroom. Despite the inclusion of special education students in the regular education classroom, leadership support for this movement is lacking. The inclusion of special education students starts with a knowledgeable special education principal. As laws and regulations are changing, the traditional special education framework is becoming less and less aligned with the traditional school principal.

Over the years, as the history of special education has developed, so has the administrator's role. Various characteristics and standards have been developed to guide educational leaders in maintaining the effectiveness of their role within the school. Lynch (2012) identifies seven characteristics of what he calls "the contemporary principal." In addition to Lynch's characteristics, The Florida Department of Education provides Principal Leadership Standards (Appendix A) that "set forth in rule as Florida's core expectations for effective school administrators" (The Florida Principal Leadership Standards, n.d.). Additional policy standards were set forth, including "the approval of the Educational Leadership Policy Standards; ISLLC 2008 (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium)," as well as the NPBEA (National Policy Board for Educational Administration) with an ELCC (Educational Leadership Constituent Council) plan to provide standards for the NCATE (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education). Review of Lynch's characteristics and the policy standards in relation to special education administration result in the necessity to provide preparation to future

educational leaders for their role as special education administrators. (See Appendix B for specific characteristics and policy standards.)

"The events that have driven the gradual and progressive evolution of special education serve as a backdrop to understanding the field and its ever changing nature" (Esteves and Rao, 2008). Knowledge of the history and evolution of special education is critical for the effectiveness of the special education administrator, whether solely as a special education administrator or a general education administrator meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Overall, little is known about the role an administrator takes when meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Preparation begins early on in college coursework (Raske, 1979).

David E. Raske (1979) wrote in his article about the results from a study on the role general school administrators play in special education administrative duties. With the implementation of EAHCA and the continuum of legalities and reauthorizations leading up to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, administrators must shift their time more and more to special education duties. In results from a questionnaire distributed to "administrative positions including superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors of general education, and principals," general school administrators stated they spend 14.6% of their time on special education administrative duties (Raske, 1979). As of 1979, duties performed yield 15 specific special education administrative duties that take up a range of 18.2% of time to 1.4% of time, including: participating in individual education planning (IEP) meetings and filling out special education forms; reviewing referrals for special education services; supervising and coordinating the annual review, individual education plan, and follow up system processes; providing special education communications, either in written form or by telephone; attending special education staff meetings outside the local district school;

attending special education staff meetings within the local school district; preparing and monitoring the special budget; observing special education instruction in the entire local school district; interviewing prospective special education personnel for employment purposes; reviewing special education purchase orders, conference and field trip requests, and so forth; arranging special education transportation; evaluating special education staff; and arranging special education in-service programs (Raske, p.646, 1979).

Raske's results yielded a recommendation that "at least one course in special education be taken by all general school administrators" (Raske, p.646, 1979). Lynch (2012) supports Raske that from 1979 to 2012 principal preparation programs are still failing to prepare graduates for the role of special education in the general education setting. Providing supporting results from a survey by Davis in 1980, Lynch reports that 50% of principals surveyed stated they had no formal coursework in special education administration. Lynch further reports that in 2010 a similar survey found that 53% received no formal special education administration instruction. Additional information provides that less than 30% received any type of formal instruction on learning characteristics of student with disabilities.

Moving forward from Public Law 94-142 in 1975 through the era of Raske in 1979, legislation has continued to change, affecting the role of the general education administrator. Jeremy Lynch continues to support Raske in his article (2012): "No Child Left Behind (2001) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) brought the principal's role as instructional leader to the forefront of public education in the U.S.," both in general education and special education (Lynch, p. 40, 2012). As a result of IDEA, more students with disabilities are receiving services in the least restrictive environment, resulting in placement in the general education setting.

SENCO

Liasidou and Svensson (2014) present an example of a special education leadership role in England and Wales as related to SENCOs. SENCOs are special educational needs co-ordinators working within the context of educational leadership.

With the move in education to a more inclusive classroom dynamic, SENCOs are becoming prominent in special education leadership. Liasidou and Svensson (2014) present SENCOs as the strongest advocates and leaders that lead schools through specific special education inclusion responsibilities duties. A lack of SENCOs on leadership teams is stifling the vision of the role as well as its implementation in practice. The pressure is on schools to incorporate the use of SENCOs to lead change in the schools alongside formative educational leaders (Liasidou and Svensson, 2014).

As with any leadership role, SENCOs are leaders who obtain professional levels of education. SENCOs are highly qualified teachers who are a part of the leadership team and pursue ongoing training opportunities to better themselves as special education leaders. SENCOs are specialized educational leaders and are just one dynamic of a special education leader; however, there has been no research supporting the adoption of this model in the United States.

Technology Leadership

When preparing for technology integration, leaders often have to bridge a gap. Educational leadership roles have become invaluable and cannot be underestimated. Levin and Schrum (2014) write that there is "... a gap in how well school/district leaders are prepared to lead technology initiatives" (p. 641). Preparation begins within the leaders and their self-efficacy as well as their collective efficacy of their staff.

Levin and Schrum guide leaders in ways to bridge the gap, leading towards overcoming technology integration barriers. They present seven factors to guide leaders in utilizing technology as a positive lever of success in curriculum and instruction improvement. Factor one involves leaders having a clear vision and mission and the principal's use of distributed leadership. Factor two focuses on the leader creating structures and processes for technology infrastructure and support. Factor three is for leaders to provide ongoing high-quality professional development that is not one-size-fits-all. Factor four reminds leaders to revise the curriculum to promote 21st-century and student-centered instructional practices. Factor five focuses leaders on improving school culture. Factor six is for leaders to identify realistic and sustainable sources of funding. Lastly, factor seven reminds leaders to build partnerships with parents, families, and community members, as well as businesses, industries, and colleges or universities (Levin & Schrum, 2014).

The leader plays a key role in the success of the inclusion of students with disabilities. Carter & Hughes (2006) explain that inclusive delivery models that support Assistive Technology integration require buy-in from all staff, especially administrators. Alquraini & Gut (2012) found in reviewing literature that administrators can be best supportive through "joint problem solving, maintaining data, facilitating staff development programs, providing emotional support in tough times, modeling collaborative traits and communication, providing resources, providing advocacy, providing time for staff to engage in collaboration, and assessing program efforts" (p.52). Administrators who play an active role in the support and collaboration of the inclusion process can lead to the most successful integration of Assistive Technology in the inclusion classroom (Alquraini & Gut, 2012).

Of the eight variables found by Ritchie (1996) to foster the identification and implementation of technology, the most critical would be the lack of administrative support. Without the support of the school administrator, seven other variables are likely to follow: (1) inadequate staff development; (2) low quantity, quality, and access of technologies; (3) nonexistent plans for adopting and implementing technology (4) failure to allocate a technology coordinator; (5) a lack of funds and personnel; (6) continual assessment of content acquisition; and (7) dstablishment of a broad participatory clientele to establish a technology culture (Ritchie, 1996).

Leadership Steps to Technology Integration

The first step in the leader's role in technology integration begins with the planning process. Planning for technology is not just about the technology. Overbay, Mollette, & Vasu (2010) encourage leaders to focus on those who will be integrating and using the technology (both teachers and students). When planning, include others in the integration planning process. Before even purchasing new technology, ask: What do the teachers know? What do they need to know? What will they actually use? What technology investments make sense for your school (Overbay, Mollette, & Vasu, 2010)?

Designing a plan is individual to each school. While one school may be successful at integration technology in one way, that does not make it universally successful in all school settings. One school in Overbay, Mollette, and Vasu's study had to ask permission to plug anything additional into an outlet because of an antiquated electrical system (2010). Technology integration planning starts with the school infrastructure as a guide when meeting the faculty and instructional needs. Once the needs to be met are determined, realistic goals can be formulated that include both long-term and short-term goals that are flexible (Overbay, et. al., 2010).

As a part of the planning process, leaders must look at the financial aspect of integrating something new. Funding can be difficult in today's schools, especially for things seen as 'extras' like technology. Leaders can include in their planning process goals to gain support from various people and groups. Levin suggests gaining support from the school board, community members, district financial officers, fundraisers, and local business partners. Some leaders get creative and use infrastructure funding, building funds, and even textbook funds to make purchases not otherwise supported. Moving forward in the planning process begins with securing the funds to secure the technology (Levin & Schrum, 2014).

Once a plan has been designed and funding has been secured through various avenues, leaders must build professional development. Professional development will give teachers the time to become comfortable with new technology prior to the actual implementation within the curriculum and instruction. Professional development should be included in the technology plan as well as the school's budget (if necessary). Most successful technology professional development is ongoing and based on the individual needs of teachers, not the faculty as a whole (Overbay, et. al., 2010; Levin & Schrum, 2014)

Some teachers will be more comfortable with technology integration or even just technology in general. To support those unfamiliar teachers and build on the strengths of those familiar teachers, technology can become a collaborative process. By working together, teachers can share and construct learning. Peers working together can build on one another's strengths while gaining the understanding of and thus successfully integrate technology (Overbay, et. al., 2010).

The more people involved in the implementation of technology integration, the more likely it will be successful. Collaboration can prevent turnover and lead to district support, as

well as a distributed leadership model. Levin & Schrum support the use of a distributed leadership model for technology integration (2014). In their study, not one school improved alone, and improvement required that the leadership take responsibility for shaping the improvements. Changing what a school is integrating, or even how it is integrating an existing item, often requires the use of a distributed leadership model to foster support and strength (Levin & Schrum, 2014).

Technology integration not only focuses on the distribution of technology tools, but also on the integration and the way in which learning is acquired through the use of assistive devices to aid in the learning process. Administrators of schools with inclusion must develop a Best Practices in Inclusive Education assessment in order to develop goals for successful integration and inclusion (*Best Practices for Inclusive Education (BPIE) Assessment School Level* [PDF], 2013). The implementation process does not happen overnight. Implementation starts with the leader before it ever moves into the hands of a classroom teacher. With proactive leadership, planning, developing, learning, and guiding technology, integration in the curriculum can be successful.

Leadership Behaviors

Ethics Defined in Education

Ethics in education, particularly special education, receives little attention during study and application. Little research exists on ethics in special education, which can make setting and operating universally adopted ethical standards a challenge. As defined by *Merriam-Webster*, ethics is simply defined as “rules of behavior based on ideas about what is morally good and bad; an area of study that deals with ideas about what is good and bad behavior: a branch of philosophy dealing with what is morally right or wrong; a belief that something is very

important" (Ethic, n.d.). Ethics plays an important role in education, providing a foundation for decision-making.

Ethics is a complex understanding of decisions to be made. According to Ronald Rebore (2014), ethics is a part of human conduct and distinguished from human behavior. Rebore defines conduct as having a choice in a course of action, whereas he defines behavior as the actual human activity. Ethics is a discipline to be studied and taught in colleges and universities among all academics (Rebore, 2014).

Feeney & Kipnis (as cited in Sileo, et. al., p. 44, 2008) define professional ethics as "a system of moral principles and values that relate to individual behaviors, a class of human actions, or a specific professional group; a set of reciprocal processes, which facilitate critical reflection pertaining to professional obligations and behaviors." Often, educators face ethical issues on a regular basis, whether it be curricular, assessment, student, or resource issues. When facing ethical issues, laws are often of thought as law and ethics are closely related.

Laws & Ethics

Laws dictate behavior; however, laws may not always result in ethical conduct. Laws may be seen as blunt instruments; however, at times they need some refining to be put into best correct practice. Take for instance, as Howe and Miramontes present, the Rowley case of 1982. In this case, Amy was a first-grade student with a hearing impairment and an IEP. Her parents requested Amy be provided an interpreter while in school; however, the district refused to provide one. Ultimately, Amy's parents sued, believing that Amy was not being provided an equal educational opportunity to do much better academically had she had an interpreter. The courts decided in their favor, that is until the Supreme Court overturned the court's decision.

In the decisions made by the court, the court had to interpret its understanding of "free and appropriate education" as well as "maximizing potential." The court had to decide what conception of equal educational opportunity (a decision with unavoidably ethical dimensions) would be made legally binding. Ultimately, a decision was made on ethics rather than the law. Law and ethics can be summarized in four ways: (1) Existing laws can be subject to ethical criticism due to external principles to the law; (2) Laws are general. To be implemented equitably, they may need ethical deliberation; (3) Law leaves room for interpretation, interpreting with ethical content; and (4) Settled laws require ethical commitments (Howe & Miramontes, 1991).

Law and ethics cannot be completely separated. Most of the time the legal decision will also be the ethical decision, but not always. The interpretation of laws is open and can be impacted by ethical deliberation (Howe & Miramontes, 1991).

Kenneth R. Howe and Ofelia B. Miramontes (1991) present an ethical definition of special education, including a framework for ethical deliberation. The importance of ethics in education is magnified in special education. Special education was designed to meet "the ethical requirement that all individuals be provided with access to a decent public education, regardless of how they might differ from the general population with respect to various skills, abilities, and powers that affect school performance" (Howe & Miramontes, p. 7, 1991). Special education today goes against the historical structure of special education, moving towards mainstreaming, which can present the most ethical challenges. Ethics in special education has received little attention as a field of inquiry or a topic in teacher preparation.

Guiding the ethics in special education are various sets of codes. Beginning with the knowledge of law and the codes of ethics in special education can lead to a knowledgeable

teacher and/or administrator in special education. Complying with laws in special education falls not only on the administrator, but also on the special education teacher as a *de facto* interpreter (Howe & Miramontes, 1992).

Sam Savage (2007) writes that there is no common board to deem the ethical or unethical behavior in education. Education can be guided by written codes of ethics by numerous organizations. Organizations to best guide special education ethical dilemmas include: Council for Exceptional Children (Appendix C), National Association of Special Education Teachers (Appendix D), and National Education Association (Appendix E). Ultimately, as summarized specifically by Parkay (2004) (as cited in Savage, 2007), "Behaving ethically is more than a matter of following the rules or not breaking the law-it means acting in a way that promotes the learning and growth of students and helps them realize their potential." The ultimate goal of teaching is to do what is in the best interest of the student to best need their educational needs.

Ethics in 21st Century Leadership

Moving into the 21st century school dynamic, it is important to understand the urgency for a change not only in the classroom but also in the administration. Young, Winn, and Reedy (2017) support "a growing body of research [that] has consistently demonstrated that leadership is one of the most important school-level factors influencing a student's education" (p. 707). Leadership focus begins within federal policy. Ethical leadership drives school improvement and student achievement (Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017).

Donald Chalker (1992) provides ways to break the mold in the 21st century leadership role. Chalker (1992) identifies the principal's role as advocate and role. Principals must model effective teaching and learning and be prepared to bring out the best in teachers, understanding new initiatives in teaching and supporting staff development activities. Principals must become

clinical supervisors who diagnose teacher behavior and seek improvement. Clinical supervision has been available for some time, but teachers claim little use by principals. Peer supervision is also a worthy clinical idea that should be more effective. Better supervision of teachers should result in improved teaching but also in removal of ineffective teachers, a necessity for improvement. Principals must master shared decision-making and consensus. Principals are said to spend half their time on decision-making. Rapid information retrieval will enable principals and teachers to make better, faster decisions. Principals must be researchers, consuming effective school research and initiating site-based research. Future principals must be highly visible site-based leaders. Legislated learning is not producing expected results, and the local unit should become the instructional decision maker. Future principals will lead a professional model of school governance less affected by politics (Chalker, p.5-6, 1992). In the 21st century, the principal's role takes on a whole new level of advocating and role modeling. Special education is changing the role of leader.

Beginning at the superintendent level (district level) of leadership in the school system, legislative learning is where it all begins. As laws and legalities are changing, leaders must remain current. Additionally laws are established with no federal or state guidance on how to be implemented. With all the time consuming work of a school administrator, it is the role of the district level administration to provide the opportunities for continued professional development so that leaders are growing and learning as times are changing.

Twenty-first century leaders are working with a rapidly changing educational system. Rapid changes in education impact leaders working with students, teachers, and parents. Cooperation across all levels is the best way to overcome obstacles and meet the needs of students. William Frick, Susan Faircloth, and Karen Little (2012) provide that principals play an

important role in the leadership and education of students with disabilities. In contrast to Frick, Faircloth, and Little (2012), Chalker (1992) supports that the assistant principal is just as important in the leadership and education of students with disabilities. Everyone must understand the success of students and the best interest of the students (Frick, et. al., 2012).

In their study, Frick, Faircloth, and Little (2012), found by interviewing thirteen principals that there are areas of administrative struggle. Administrators struggle with the success of students based on the students' best interests, the study body as a whole, ethics, and equality. As the 21st century classroom brings us to the 21st century administration, more and more leaders are becoming special education leaders.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative

A qualitative case study was used to explore inclusive education programs in select Central Florida schools. An in-depth collection of multiple sources of information, including interviews, documents and reports, were collected and analyzed to develop a case description, case categories and case themes. Additional themes will be introduced by individual participant role.

This study explored the administrator's role in the integration of Assistive Technology in the inclusion of ESE students at selected inclusion schools. In addition, this study explored the teacher's role in the integration of Assistive Technology in the inclusion of ESE students. This study also explored the administrator's knowledge of ethics in education and ESE policy and law as they relate to Assistive Technology in the inclusive classroom. Further, this study collectively explored the administrator's and teacher's attitudes, experiences, and decision-making processes of the role in implementation and use of Assistive Technology in the inclusion of ESE students.

Purposeful sampling.

Population

As defined by Creswell (2013), the use of purposeful sampling allowed for the study to include the school site(s) and individual(s) that can "purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem in the study." Identification of district participation focused on a district providing learning opportunities, consultation, information, and support to educators, families, and community members resulting in the inclusion of all students. The individual schools to be studied were informed by the District Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Senior Managers from the identified district as schools implementing inclusive education programs within the district. The recommended inclusion schools were all invited to participate in this research. A

total of six inclusive programs were invited to participate, with four agreeing to participate. Therefore, the population from which the sample was selected included all inclusion schools within the district.

Sample

Individual participants within the school sites purposefully sampled included, but were not limited to, the Principal, Assistant Principal, ESE Inclusion Teacher, and General Education Classroom Teacher(s). It was assumed that individuals in these positions would have the responsibility of meeting the mandates of NCLB and IDEA as they relate to Assistive Technology and Inclusion, as well as use Assistive Technology ethically and successfully to support inclusive programs. It was expected that these individuals would have the knowledge of Assistive Technology and Inclusion within the district.

Within the individual school sites, the identification of Inclusion Teacher and General Education Classroom Teacher(s) to be interviewed were identified by the school site Administrator. Interviews were not limited to one individual Inclusion Teacher and one individual General Education Classroom Teacher, unless solely identified and requested by the school site Administrator.

Advantages

- Purposeful information regarding the research problem in the study.
- Increase implementation of Inclusive education across Florida districts.
- Multiple sources of information.
- Field engagement data collection.

Limitations & Weaknesses

- District and/or School to be studied unable to participate.
- Limited sample to be studied.
- The assumption that individuals participating have the responsibility of meeting the mandates of NCLB and IDEA as they relate to Assistive Technology and Inclusion, as well as use Assistive Technology ethically and successfully to support effective inclusion.
- District recommendation and school site recommendation for classroom participation differ.
- Interviews limited by individual, time, or quantity.

Data Collection & Analysis

Data collection was an extensive process, drawing on multiple sources of information to be analyzed with prolonged engagement in the field. A holistic analysis was completed on the data collected using triangulation. Drawing on multiple sources, methods, and investigation strategies, data was analyzed to find themes within the case using a coding process. Coding identified common characteristics or themes. Theming categories were completed in multiple stages. As needed, major, medial, and minor themes were identified and coded.

Once completed, data collected were reported directly back to the school site for member checks. Data were common and clearly reported. Information was impartial and reports both common themes and negatives found through interviews. Privacy and anonymity was ensured throughout the entire research process using Pseudonym coding. Coding was only shared with individuals upon request and was only provided for specific code identifier used in the study. All data were stored in a secured file.

Procedure

In order to present an in-depth understanding of the case, the researcher was the key instrument in the research process. Data were collected in the natural setting, collecting various forms of data and details. In the field, the researcher reviewed documents as they relate to inclusion of students with disabilities and the integration of Assistive Technology in the inclusive setting. Additionally, the researcher conducted forty-five minute to one-hour interviews with administration and classroom teachers to focus on their individual perspectives, meanings, and views of Assistive Technology in inclusion.

Prior to the study, the school site to be studied was identified, selected, and permission gained through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) as well as at the district level and school site to conduct research. In order to develop rapport with the school site, information was shared as to why the specific site was chosen for study, what would be done during the research study, the time involved in the study, how the research would be reported, and what the participants would gain from the study (Creswell, 2013). Informed consent was obtained prior to any collection of data at the school site.

Instruments.

Interviews

Interview data were collected using an unstructured, open-ended interview process. Initial interview questions were developed (See Appendix F) and not shared with the participants unless individually requested prior to a scheduled interview. Interviews were conducted using a forty-five minute to one-hour, one-to-one, interview format. Follow up questions were presented within individual interviews as needed for clarification or further discussion.

All interviews were tape recorded, unless at the request of the individual participant. A total of sixteen interviews were conducted, fourteen of which were tape recorded and two that were not recorded at the request of the participant. Recorded interviews were sent electronically to a transcription service to be transcribed into print. Different types of interviews, face-to-face and telephone, were conducted as necessary at the request of the individual participant. Pseudonyms were used maintain the anonymity of the participants and student confidentiality.

Table 3 Research vs. Interview. This table is a comparison of which interview questions answer the described research questions.

1. What knowledge and skills do leaders and teachers bring to the role in supporting the inclusive program?	• What is your current role and experience in education? • What is your current role as it relates to exceptional student education? Inclusion? The IEP team/process? • What is your background in exceptional student education? Inclusion? • What knowledge and skills do you bring to the role in supporting the inclusive program? • How would you define exceptional student education? • What can you tell me about exceptional student education legislation? • How would you define inclusion? • What is Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)? • What is the FAPE process at your school? • How is this provided for all students, both students with and without disabilities? • What is the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)? • What placements are available to students with disabilities at your school? • What is the process in determining a student's LRE? • What are supplementary aids and services? • What is the difference between an accommodation and a modification? • How would you define Assistive Technology? • What can you tell me about Assistive Technology legislation? **Leadership Specific Questions** • How would you define leadership? • How would you define yourself as a special education leader? • How would you define yourself as an inclusion leader? • What is your role as a technology leader? • SENCOs are special educational needs coordinators working within the context of educational leadership. The pressure is on schools to incorporate the use of SENCOs to lead change in the schools alongside formative educational leaders. How does your school incorporate SENCOs or those of the like within leadership roles specific to exceptional student education? • How does your school try to increase inclusion for students with disabilities? • In what ways do you, as a leader, support inclusion for: Students, Teachers, and Families

2. How are leaders supporting the use of Assistive Technology to support effective inclusion?	• How are leaders supporting the use of Assistive Technology (AT) to support effective inclusion? • What steps are taken when developing a student's IEP regarding AT? • What is specified on the IEP about AT? • Are the types of learning environments specified? How? • Are the uses for specific AT are specified? How? • What guiding principles, if any, are used during the selection and implementation of AT during the IEP process. • How are families involved in the developing and implementing AT devices? • What types of AT tools are written in students IEPs? • How are they implemented in the classroom? • How are AT devices infused in a student's daily routine? • How often are they implemented? • What is their purpose? • What types of additional AT tools are available for use in your school? Low-tech? Mid-tech? High-tech? • How are the types of AT tools used in your school? • How do you evaluate computer use for students in the classroom? • How do you evaluate specific software use for students in the classroom? • Do you use and/or implement BYOD for students in the classroom? • If so, how do you evaluate use for students? • What barriers are faced when implementing AT in inclusion? Including funding, training, knowledge, support, student population, demographics, administrative/district support, etc. • How do you overcome these barriers? • What is your role as a technology leader? • How do you integrate technology in the classroom? • How do you determine the purchase and/or integration of AT in the classroom? • How do you evaluate what teachers know, what they need to know, what will they actually use, and what investments will need to be made on behalf of the school as a whole?
3. How are teachers using Assistive Technology to support effective inclusion?	• How are you using Assistive Technology to support effective inclusion? • What steps are taken when developing a student's IEP regarding AT? • What is specified on the IEP about AT? • Are the types of learning environments specified? How? • Are the uses for specific AT are specified? How? • What guiding principles, if any, are used during the selection and implementation of AT during the IEP process. • How are families involved in the developing and implementing AT devices? • What types of AT tools are written in students IEPs? • How are they implemented in the classroom? • How are AT devices infused in a student's daily routine? • How often are they implemented? • What is their purpose? • What types of additional AT tools are available for use in your school? Low-tech? Mid-tech? High-tech? • How are the types of AT tools used in your school? • How do you evaluate computer use for students in the classroom? • How do you evaluate specific software use for students in the classroom? • Do you use and/or implement BYOD for students in the classroom? • If so, how do you evaluate use for students? • What barriers are faced when implementing AT in inclusion? Including funding, training, knowledge, support, student population, demographics, administrative/district support, etc. • How do you overcome these barriers?

4. How do leaders and teachers address ethics of justice, critique, care, and professionalism in the successful use of Assistive Technology in inclusion?	• How do leaders and teachers address ethics in the successful use of Assistive Technology in inclusion? • How does ethics play a role in your leadership decisions in regards to students with disabilities and inclusion? • How are the laws and ethics in education related? • Could you recall a scenario where your ethics have been challenged because of a legally binding law, as it relates to exceptional student education? Could you summarize what the ethical dilemma was and what was the outcome in the end? • How do you uphold the Code of Ethics? • How do you uphold the Educational Leadership Standards?

Documents

Personal documents were obtained for each participant for background information, including, but not limited to, individual philosophy on education and personal resume/vita. Participants were encouraged to reflect on the research process following participation. The researcher maintained an individual reflective journal of the process for research purposes.

School site documents were analyzed as a part of the research process. Documents included, but were not limited to, school improvement plans, Best Practices for Inclusive Education Assessment, and students with disabilities' Individualized Education Plans. Pseudonyms were used maintain the anonymity of the participants and student confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis included multiple stages. Data was recorded during live interviews (unless at the request of the participant) transcribed, and then analyzed for themes. Interviews were recorded using an Olympus VN-541PC digital recorder. Interviews were then transcribed using an online transcription service. One interview had to be transcribed by the researcher using the audio recording and a Word Processer due to the difficulty of the audio. Two interviews were transcribed live during the interview at the request of the participants.

Throughout the interview process, interview questions were analyzed in order to provide clarity for both the participant and the researcher. This analytical process included re-wording of

questions, adding new questions, and even omitting questions that had already been answered when responding to presented interview questions.

The direct analyzation phase of data began once interviews were completed. Triangulation began with the auditory review of fourteen interview recordings. Once reviewed, audio recordings were sent to be transcribed into writing.

Categorization.

Triangulation continued with the organization of the data collected. Organization began using the written transcription of interviews to complete a series of coding, categorizing and theming stages. This step consisted of six stages. Stages included:

- Reading and revising transcriptions
- Reading and highlighting information in transcriptions
- Coding frequent phrases
- Grouping codes into categories
- Develop categories into themes
- Refining themes by reviewing data and checking with participants

The process of data collection and data analysis yielded a summary of the research design and methods used to explore the role in the integration of Assistive Technology, for teachers and leaders, in the inclusion of ESE students in an inclusive program. Chapter Four contains a summary of the data and the themes that emerged from the data. Data is presented initially as a case-by-case introduction for each inclusive education program and is then presented by categories of participant roles. The results of this study will provide leaders and teachers with an opportunity to develop further research models that consider the needs of the inclusive

environment, including the perspectives of students, teachers, and administrators (Dalton & Roush, 2010).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this collective case study was to explore the role in the integration of Assistive Technology for teachers and leaders in the inclusion of ESE students at selected Central Florida schools. This study identified the knowledge of ethics in education and ESE policy and law of teachers and leaders, as they relate to Assistive Technology in the inclusive classroom. Further, this study collectively explored the attitudes, experiences, and decision-making processes of those involved in implementation and use of Assistive Technology in the inclusion of ESE students. At this stage in the research, the role of Assistive Technology implementation and the use in inclusion were defined by the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about ESE inclusion of those involved in the implementation and use of Assistive Technology.

Organization of this chapter begins with a case-by-case description of each inclusive education program. In addition, each individual participant is introduced within his or her individual program. Following this, data is presented from individual participants within the school sites purposefully sampled by themes found under categories of participant roles, including Leaders, Teachers, and Additional Perspectives. Research questions will be addressed and collectively responded to based on the individual participants' data analysis. Finally, a summary of the chapter will lead into the discussion of conclusions and recommendations in Chapter V.

Data

Coding within the text began with reading and revising transcripts while listening to the audio recordings of interviews. Following this revising process, transcripts were read once more and responses to interview questions were highlighted, with key quotations being notated. Once the questions and responses were highlighted, code words were then identified within the

transcripts. Once code words had been identified, code words were then organized and categorized.

Code words were grouped together based on two major categories of leaders and teachers. Within the two major categories, code words were then further categorized and refined into themes. Within the each category, both leadership and teacher, major themes and minor themes were identified.

Once data was coded, categorized, and themes were developed, the final stage was data analyzation. The themes identified were used to identify the knowledge of ethics in education and ESE policy and law of teachers and leaders, as they relate to Assistive Technology in the inclusive classroom. In addition, themes were used to identify the attitudes, experiences, and decision-making processes of those involved in implementation and use of Assistive Technology in the inclusion of ESE students. Themes found were organized into Figure 1 and were used to answer research questions. The final data stage was the creation of a figure that summarizes and represents the overall presentation of themes found (Figure 1).

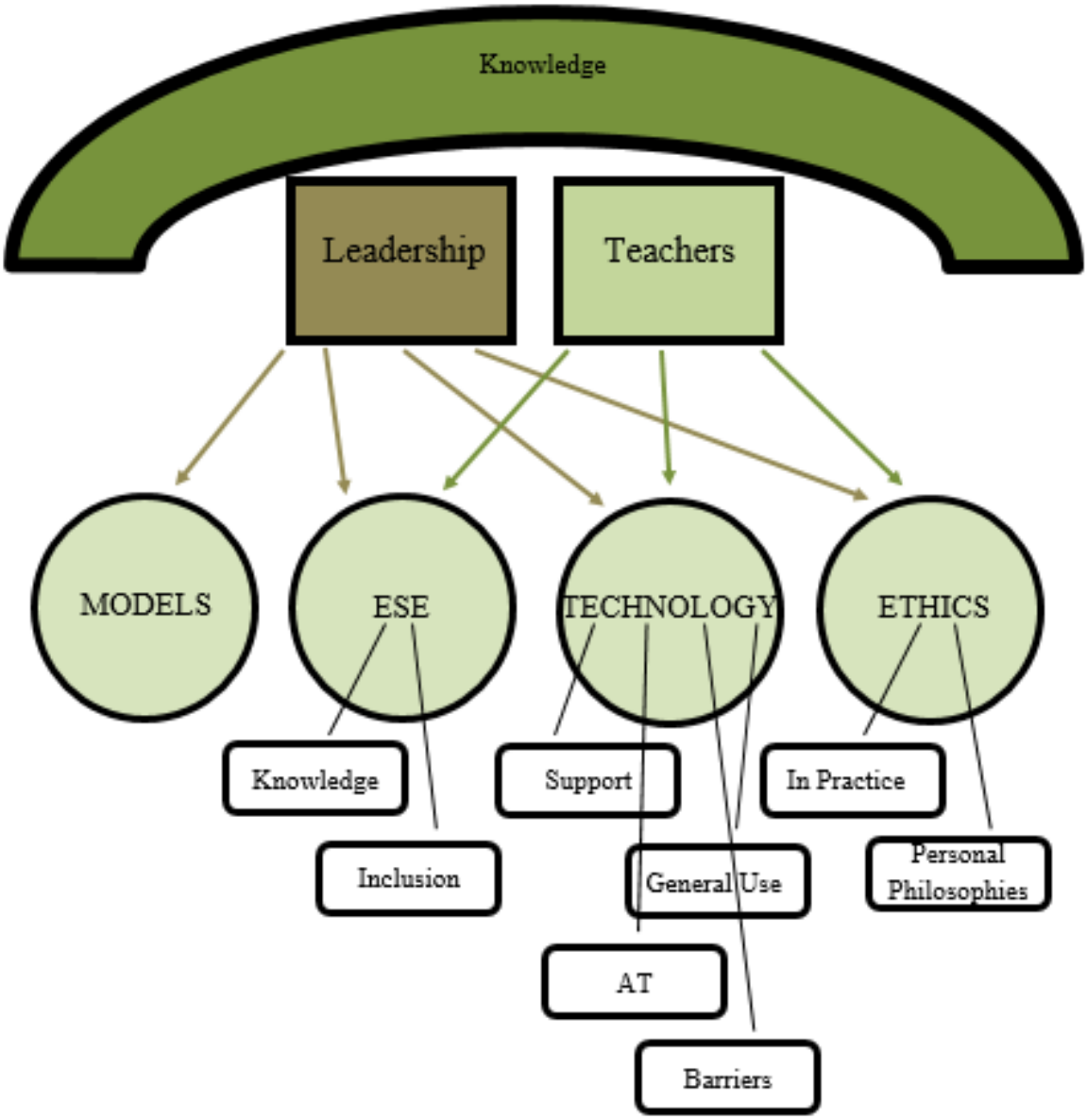

Figure 1 Integration of AT in the Inclusion of ESE Students for Leaders and Teachers. This figure displays the findings by overarching theme that arose was that of the Knowledge of two main categories of participants and the themes found within categories.

Participants

District Demographics

Identification of district participation focused on a district providing learning opportunities, consultation, information, and support to educators, families, and community members resulting in the inclusion of all students. The identified district, referred to as District 35, at the end of the 2017-2018 school year had a current student enrollment of over 104,136 students. Of these students, approximately just under 50% of students were female and just over 50% of students were male. Student Race/Ethnicity ranged from the majority of students being White and decreasing in range to Hispanic, Black, Two or More Races, Asian, American Indian, and Pacific Islander. Student enrollment included 12.5% of students with disabilities and 10.3% of students as English Language Learners (ELLs). In addition, 52.2% of students were Economically Disadvantaged.

Within the identified district, District Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Senior Managers provided six schools as implementing inclusive education programs within the district, with a total of four schools agreeing to participate. In addition, an ESE District Coach was identified, invited to participate, and agreed to participate. No additional recommendations or participation were provided beyond the identified schools and ESE District Coach. The District Coach Participant will be referred to using the pseudonym of ESE District Coach. School site participants were discussed using the follow pseudonyms: School 1, School 2, School 3, and School 4. A summary of school sites can be found in Table 4, 5, and 6.

Table 4 School Site Demographics

School	Enrollment	Females	Males	Students w/ Disabilities	ELL Students	Economically Disadvantaged	ESE Inclusion Teachers
1	792	50%	50%	11.4%	7.1%	38.4%	4
	Students in the inclusive education program are ability grouped, thus placed with one or two teachers per grade level.						
2	777	50%	50%	17.8%	14%	54.4%	5
	Students in the inclusive education program are equally dispersed amongst all teachers per grade level.						
3	546	50%	50%	11.4%	17.6%	65.8%	2
	Students in the inclusive education program are dispersed amongst all teachers per grade level.						
4	535	50%	50%	16.1%	9%	60.4%	4
	Students in the inclusive education program are ability grouped, thus placed with one or two teachers per grade level.						

Table 5 Inclusion Service Design

School	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
1	K-2nd			3rd	4th	5th
2	K-1st		2nd	3rd	4th	5th
3	A	A	B	A	B	B
4		1st	2nd-3rd		4th	5th

Table 6 Participants

School	Principal	Assistant Principal	General Education Teacher	ESE Inclusion Teacher	Local Education Agency (LEA)	ESE District Coach
1	✓	✓	✓	✓		
2	✓		✓	✓	✓	
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	✓	✓		✓		
ESE District Coach						✓

School 1

School 1 at the end of the 2017-2018 school year had a current student enrollment of 792. Of these students, approximately 50% of students were female and 50% of students were male. Student Race/Ethnicity ranged from the majority of students being White and decreasing in range to Hispanic, Black, Two or More Races, Asian, American Indian, and Pacific Islander. Student enrollment included 11.4% of students with disabilities and 7.1% of students as English Language Learners (ELLs). In addition, 38.4% of students were Economically Disadvantaged.

School 1 has an instructional staff consisting of 2 administrators, 7 Kindergarten Teachers, 7 First Grade Teachers, 7 Second Grade Teachers, 7 Third Grade Teachers, 6 Fourth Grade Teachers, 6 Fifth Grade Teachers, and 7 ESE Teachers. Individual participants within the school site included the Principal, Assistant Principal, one Fourth Grade General Education Inclusion Teacher, and one Fourth Grade ESE Inclusion Teacher. Selection of ESE Inclusion Teacher and General Education Classroom Teacher were identified by the school site Principal.

Currently, School 1 has an inclusive education program that includes an ESE Inclusion Teacher for grades K-2, an ESE Inclusion Teacher for Third Grade, an ESE Inclusion Teacher for Fourth Grade, and an ESE Inclusion Teacher for Fifth Grade. Students within each individual grade level are grouped by ability, thus placing the majority of students in the inclusive education program with one or two teachers per grade level.

In the lower grades, K-2, students are ability grouped among two different teachers in each grade level. The ESE Inclusion Teacher for grades K-2 floats among the teachers who have students in the inclusive education program in order to meet individual student needs. Ability grouping students allows for the ESE Inclusion Teacher to meet the needs of students as well as collaborate with the General Education Teacher.

In the upper grades, 3-5, students are ability grouped amongst two teachers who departmentalize content (i.e. one teacher teaches English Language Arts/Social Studies and one teacher teaches Math/Science). The ESE Inclusion Teachers for each grade level, 3-5, are able to float among the two departmentalized teachers in order to meet individual student needs. In addition, these ESE Inclusion Teachers are able to participate in collaborative planning.

Within the individual school site, participants interviewed will be referred to using the following pseudonyms: Principal 1, AP 1, GE 1, ESE 1.

Principal

Principal 1 has been in education for a total of nineteen years, beginning his career as an ESE Teacher. As an ESE Teacher, he taught inclusion and understands the partnership between the General Education Teacher and the ESE Teacher. He states that his philosophy on ESE education begins with his own personal viewpoint:

> If I have a negative viewpoint of how ESE should look, I might have more self-contained and more resource kids, versus being a model…as more inclusion and less self-contained. So being the principal, I weigh a lot. I can impact…a lot by my different philosophy on how I think education should be for students with disabilities.

Principal 1's personal viewpoint supports the research of Philip Garner and Fiona Forbes (2013), demonstrating the confidence school leaders must possess to be a role model for the school site.

Assistant Principal

AP 1 has been teaching for total of nine years, beginning at the middle school level for his first six years of teaching. He has spent the last three years teaching at the elementary school level, with this year being his fourth year. This is his first year in a leadership role as an Assistant Principal. Overall, AP 1 states:

> My role is definitely education for all. My role is to care and see that every student on this campus is getting a quality education. But my role is to grow these teachers into better professionals and potentially teacher leaders themselves, some of them. So my

> overall goal though, is to promote education. I mean we are in the field of education to promote education, to promote learning, and that's not just for students, that's for teachers and students. So, I'm here, just like teachers, to facilitate learning for staff and students.

AP 1 appears focused on facilitating relationships, much like those that are the foundation in the Theory of Care.

General Education Inclusion Teacher

GE 1 has been teaching for a total of twelve years. She began her teaching career following graduation from college with a degree in Family & Consumer Sciences. Her teaching career began as a first grade general education teacher for three years. She then moved into fourth grade, teaching only reading for two years. For the last seven years, she has been teaching fourth grade English Language Arts and Social Studies as a general education inclusion teacher.

In addition to her twelve years of teaching, she also has personal ties to students with disabilities. Her son has an IEP and she sees students from both the parent perspective and teacher perspective. She states that her son having an IEP provides her with a different viewpoint, one where she takes the time to look more into her students' IEPs than she has ever done before.

ESE Inclusion Teacher

ESE 1 began her career in education as a physical education paraprofessional. She then spent time as an ESE paraprofessional as well as an English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) paraprofessional. Following her time as a paraprofessional, she took a year off to finish her teaching degree and soon became a regular education first grade teacher. Very quickly, she realized that her heart was in ESE and she was offered the opportunity to do general education inclusion. She obtained her ESE certifications and began her current position as a fourth grade ESE Inclusion teacher.

School 2

School 2 at the end of the 2017-2018 school year had a current student enrollment of 777. Of these students, approximately just under 50% of students were female and just over 50% of students were male. Student Race/Ethnicity ranged from the majority of students being White and decreasing in range to Hispanic, Black, Two or More Races, Asian, American Indian, and Pacific Islander. Student enrollment included 17.8% of students with disabilities and 14.0% of students as English Language Learners (ELLs). In addition, 54.4% of students were Economically Disadvantaged.

School 2 has an instructional staff consisting of 2 administrators, 6 Kindergarten Teachers, 6 First Grade Teachers, 7 Second Grade Teachers, 8 Third Grade Teachers, 5 Fourth Grade Teachers, 4 Fifth Grade Teachers, and 12 ESE Teachers. Individual participants within the school site included the Principal, Local Education Agency Representative, one Fifth Grade General Education Inclusion Teacher, and one K-1 ESE Inclusion Teacher. Selection of ESE Inclusion Teacher and General Education Classroom Teacher were identified by the school site Principal.

Currently, School 2 has an inclusive education program that includes an ESE Inclusion Teacher for grades K-1, an ESE Inclusion Teacher for Second Grade, an ESE Inclusion Teacher for Third Grade, an ESE Inclusion Teacher for Fourth Grade, and an ESE Inclusion Teacher for Fifth Grade. In addition, there are three ESE support paraprofessionals to assist the five ESE Inclusion Teachers.

Students within each individual grade level are placed with an approximate equal number of students in the inclusive education program among all teachers per grade level. In the lower grades, K-1, the ESE Inclusion Teacher for grades K-1 floats among all twelve teachers who

have students in the inclusive education program in order to meet individual student needs. In grades 2-5, students are placed with an approximate equal number of students in the inclusive education program among all teachers per grade level. Teachers in these grade levels departmentalize content (i.e. one teacher teaches English Language Arts/Social Studies and one teacher teaches Math/Science). The ESE Inclusion Teachers for each grade level, 2-5, are able to float among all teachers within their assigned grade level in order to meet individual student needs.

In addition to meeting the needs of students in the inclusive education program, ESE Inclusion Teachers also pull out students who are in the resource education program, or both the inclusive education program and the resource education program. School 2 also has a self-contained program with about 13 classrooms. Within these classrooms, students with severe handicaps, behaviors, cognitive impairments, and/or physical impairments are educated.

Within the individual school site, participants interviewed will be referred to using the following pseudonyms: Principal 2, AP 2, GE 2, ESE 2.

Principal

Principal 2 has been in education for a total of twenty-four and a half years, with fourteen years as a principal. He does not have any specific ESE background, just training from the state and district levels as an administrator. He states the following about his philosophy as a 21st Century leader in terms of education and ESE:

> I am data based. I will get a lot of data when it comes down to how all students are performing. I am research based. If I don't have answers, I know to go look online…at the scholarly articles. I am a self-directed learner. I don't wait to be told. I take action and look for information.

Principal 2 reports a philosophy that supports the study of Garner & Forbes' (2013) findings, in that school leaders must gain a deeper understanding of pedagogical knowledge and law through professional development opportunities.

Local Education Agency Representative

The Local Education Agency Representative (LEA) started her career as a business education teacher at the middle school level. Following this experience, she went to teach ESE at the high school level, where she then obtained her ESE certification. Later, she moved to the middle school level and taught language arts and inclusion, as well as co-teaching.

Her current role is as LEA facilitator, with this being her second year in the position. As LEA, she is responsible for coordinating with the general education teachers, making sure their students are getting proper accommodations and services. In addition, once IEP meetings are completed, whether she attends the meeting or not, it is her role to make sure the students' minutes and services are updated within the school database to reflect on their individual schedules.

In addition to her IEP role, she is responsible for student scheduling. She currently coordinates the inclusion schedules for students receiving services and for the ESE Inclusion teachers so that both schedules match. In years past, she has allowed for the ESE Inclusion teachers to develop their own schedules; however, this practice often led to revisions, rewriting, and could even have led to non-compliance.

School 2 has such a high population of ESE students receiving services that even some students have one-to-one paraprofessionals assigned to them. It is also the LEA's role to coordinate these assignments and scheduling. When one of these individuals are absent, for

example, it is her role to make sure there is coverage to remain in compliance with the student's IEP.

Her overall goal in her position is to make sure that everything ESE related is in compliance. She states that her overall role as a leader as it relates to practice every day is to "support people." Her vision is, "For people to say, when people talk about our school, this is the best ESE department. They want their kids to come here."

General Education Inclusion Teacher

GE 2 has been in education for a total of twenty years. Originally, she was not an education major in school, but more focused on business. She always knew she wanted to teach, so she got a later start in her career. Currently, she teaches fifth grade English Language Arts and Social Studies as a departmentalized team teacher. She has taught first, second, third, and fifth grades, stating that every year she falls in love with what she is doing.

Her first encounters with students receiving ESE services was early in her career. She explained how students would be pulled out for services and return to class with "baby work." Knowing her students could do better, she promised herself she would see her students excel. As a 21st Century educator, in order to meet the needs of all students, she states, "You have to have a lot of flexibility. There are things we do anyway, but for the people that don't do it anyway, it is nothing that's out of reach to do what meets their needs."

ESE Inclusion Teacher

ESE 2 is in her twenty-seventh year of teaching, currently teaching as an ESE Inclusion teacher for kindergarten and first grade. She has been in this position for the last two years, with the goal being to move up with these students as they move forward in their education. Her ESE experience has only been over the last five years. Previously, she taught fifth grade for eleven

years and fourth grade for several years. She also spent five years teaching a strictly specialized district-adopted reading curriculum to students in ESE at the elementary level.

Her current position is something she chose to move into following her time as a fourth grade teacher. She states, "I wanted out of the classroom." Trying something different allows her to see something different every day. In describing her overall goal when working with students and technology in an inclusive dynamic, she states:

> I want all of my students to make gains. I want them to make progress, whether it's a lot of progress, whether it's even a small amount of progress. That's where I just want to see progress. They maintain, they've come up. They know more now than they did at the beginning of the year or when I started with them.
>
> The innovational technology, using that to help promote the success in whatever areas that they need to be in. I want to make a difference in whatever area that I can, and I'll do what I need to do to try to be the one that goes to the classroom.

Apparent in ESE 2's response is her focus on aligning each of the four parts of the Multiple Ethical Paradigm in her role.

School 3

School 3 at the end of the 2017-2018 school year had a current student enrollment of 546. Of these students, approximately 50% of students were female and 50% of students were male. Student Race/Ethnicity ranged from the majority of students being White and decreasing in range to Hispanic, Black, Two or More Races, Asian, American Indian, and Pacific Islander. Student enrollment included 11.4% of students with disabilities and 12.6% of students as English Language Learners (ELLs). In addition, 65.8% of students were Economically Disadvantaged.

School 3 has an instructional staff consisting of 2 administrators, 3 Kindergarten Teachers, 5 First Grade Teachers, 5 Second Grade Teachers, 6 Third Grade Teachers, 4 Fourth Grade Teachers, 4 Fifth Grade Teachers, and 4 ESE Teachers. Individual participants within the school site included the Principal, Assistant Principal, one Fourth Grade General Education

Inclusion Teacher, and one Fourth Grade ESE Inclusion Teacher. Selection of ESE Inclusion Teacher and General Education Classroom Teacher were identified by the school site Principal.

Currently, School 3 has an inclusive education program that includes two ESE Inclusion Teachers: an ESE Inclusion Teacher for Kindergarten, First Grade, and Third Grade; and an ESE Inclusion Teacher for Second Grade, Fourth Grade, and Fifth Grade. Students within each individual grade level are not grouped by ability, instead placing students in the inclusive education program with multiple teachers per grade level.

Students within each individual grade level are placed with an approximate equal number of students in the inclusive education program among all teachers per grade level. The ESE Inclusion Teacher for Kindergarten, First Grade, and Third Grade floats among the teachers who have students in the inclusive education program in order to meet individual student needs. The ESE Inclusion Teacher for Second Grade, Fourth Grade, and Fifth Grade floats among the teachers who have students in the inclusive education program in order to meet individual student needs.

In the upper grades, 3-5, teachers departmentalize content (i.e. one teacher teaches English Language Arts/Social Studies and one teacher teaches Math/Science). The ESE Inclusion Teachers for each grade level, 2-5, are able to float among all teachers within their assigned grade level in order to meet individual student needs.

Within the individual school site, participants interviewed will be referred to using the following pseudonyms: Principal 3, AP 3, GE 3, ESE 3.

Principal

Principal 3 has been in education for a total of thirteen years, beginning her career as a middle school physical education teacher. She then transferred at the middle school level into

administrative assistant, assistant principal of administration, and assistant principal of curriculum. Three years ago, she made the transition from the middle school level to the elementary level as a principal.

She does not have any specific ESE background, but has received training on strategies that work for ESE students with regard to behavior management and extensive training in the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) training from the state and district levels as an administrator. She states that education has changed over the last few years, noting:

> Customer service is what it has turned into now more than ever. Because of an amendment in 2017-2018, any child can transfer to any school in any county. If a parent is upset, they can apply to transfer their child to go to another school whether zoned for that school or not. Customer service is what it is about.

When asked to elaborate on her view of education as customer service, Principal 3 recalls multiple examples where showing care and justness can provide the foundation for all things in education. Something as simple as greeting students, staff, families, and visitors with a smile can go a long way.

Assistant Principal

AP 3 has been in education for fourteen years, beginning her career as a newly hired teacher during her senior internship as a permanent substitute teacher for 3rd grade. She continued her career teaching sixth grade math for six years and then became an Academic Intervention Facilitator at the elementary level, where she assisted classroom teachers in developing their mathematics instruction and remediation strategies. Following this position, she moved into a Title I Program Facilitator position at the elementary level.

Her current position is her most recent transition into the role of assistant principal. She states, “Education is very important to [me] and has always been [my] passion.” Her philosophy

on education stems from a quote from Malcom X, stating, “Education is the passport to the future. For tomorrow belongs to those who prepare today.”

General Education Inclusion Teacher

ESE 3 has been teaching for a total of two years. She spent thirteen years as a primary educational interpreter and six years as a paraprofessional prior to becoming a teacher. Following nineteen years in education, she got tired of what she was doing. She had seen a lot going in and out of classrooms, both as an interpreter and a paraprofessional, and decided, “I’m going back to school. Why am I not doing this?”

In addition to her professional experiences in education, she has extensive personal experience as a parent of not one, but two daughters who received ESE services during their school years. Her oldest daughter had an IEP from beginning until the end, being born completely deaf. Her youngest daughter began her education with an IEP and moved to a 504 plan, being born hearing impaired. She is able to see both the parent side of ESE and the education side of ESE, all from multiple viewpoints. Overall, she states feels for the most part things are going well.

ESE Inclusion Teacher

GE 3 is currently an inclusion teacher for second, fourth, and fifth grades. He has been teaching ESE for a total of thirteen years. He started out in a self-contained classroom for students with disabilities at the high school level and then moved into inclusion. Following his time as an inclusion teacher at the high school level, he then moved into inclusion at the middle school level, and now is in inclusion at the elementary school level.

School 4

School 4 at the end of the 2017-2018 school year had a current student enrollment of 535. Of these students, approximately just under 50% of students were female and just over 50% of students were male. Student Race/Ethnicity ranged from the majority of students being White and decreasing in range to Hispanic, Black, Two or More Races, Asian, American Indian, and Pacific Islander. Student enrollment included 16.1% of students with disabilities and 9.0% of students as English Language Learners (ELLs). In addition, 60.4% of students were Economically Disadvantaged.

School 4 has an instructional staff consisting of 2 administrators, 4 Kindergarten Teachers, 4 First Grade Teachers, 4 Second Grade Teachers, 4 Third Grade Teachers, 4 Fourth Grade Teachers, 4 Fifth Grade Teachers, and 4 ESE Teachers. Individual participants within the school site included the Principal, Assistant Principal, and one Fourth Grade ESE Inclusion Teacher. Selection of ESE Inclusion Teacher was identified by the school site District ESE Coach.

Currently, School 4 has an inclusive education program that includes an ESE Inclusion Teacher for First grade, an ESE Inclusion Teacher for Second and Third Grade, an ESE Inclusion Teacher for Fourth Grade, and an ESE Inclusion Teacher for Fifth Grade. Students within each individual grade level are grouped by ability, thus placing the majority of students in the inclusive education program with one or two teachers per grade level.

In the lower grades, K-2, students are grouped among different teachers in each grade level. The ESE Inclusion Teacher for First Grade floats among the teachers who have students in the inclusive education program in order to meet individual student needs. Ability grouping

students allows for the ESE Inclusion Teacher to meet the needs of students as well as collaborate with the General Education Teacher.

In the grades 2-5, students are ability grouped among two teachers who departmentalize content (i.e. one teacher teaches English Language Arts/Social Studies and one teacher teaches Math/Science). The ESE Inclusion Teachers for each grade level, Second & Third and Fourth & Fifth, are able to float among the two departmentalized teachers in order to meet individual student needs. In addition, these ESE Inclusion Teachers are able to participate in collaborative planning.

Within the individual school site, participants interviewed will be referred to using the following pseudonyms: Principal 4, AP 4, GE 4, ESE 4.

Principal

Principal 4 has been teaching for twenty years. She began her career teaching elementary school for two years. She then moved into middle school for a little over eight years. She has been back at the elementary level for the last six years, currently in the role of principal. Her focus as a leader is remembering that, "I'm still a learner of it. I'm still learning."

In addition to her professional experiences in education, she brings personal knowledge and understanding to ESE. Having a child with an IEP, she feels she is able to understand students, the IEP paperwork, and the overall understanding of the IEP in ESE. As a 21st Century leader, she maintains the mindset that, "We're a work in progress."

Assistant Principal

AP 4 has been in education for a total of eleven years; this her first year in a leadership role. She began her career teaching mathematics in grades ranging from fourth to eighth grades.

She also spent time following her years teaching mathematics as a math coach. She states that as a 21st Century leader:

> I'm doing my best to build in capacity because one day I'll be gone, and one day the teachers will be gone. Not only should we build the capacity as a profession for our teachers, but also recovering the capacity for students as well to be independent.

She wants a strong foundation for a leadership role not only for teacher, but for students as well.

ESE Inclusion Teacher

ESE 4 has been teaching for a total of thirteen and a half years. He spent ten years in 6th-8th grade self-contained ESE behavior at a public middle school teaching all subjects. He has also spent two years teaching at a private school. Currently, he has spent a year and a half teaching ESE inclusion at a public elementary school. As an inclusion teacher, his role is to assist teachers and students with reading, written language, and mathematics.

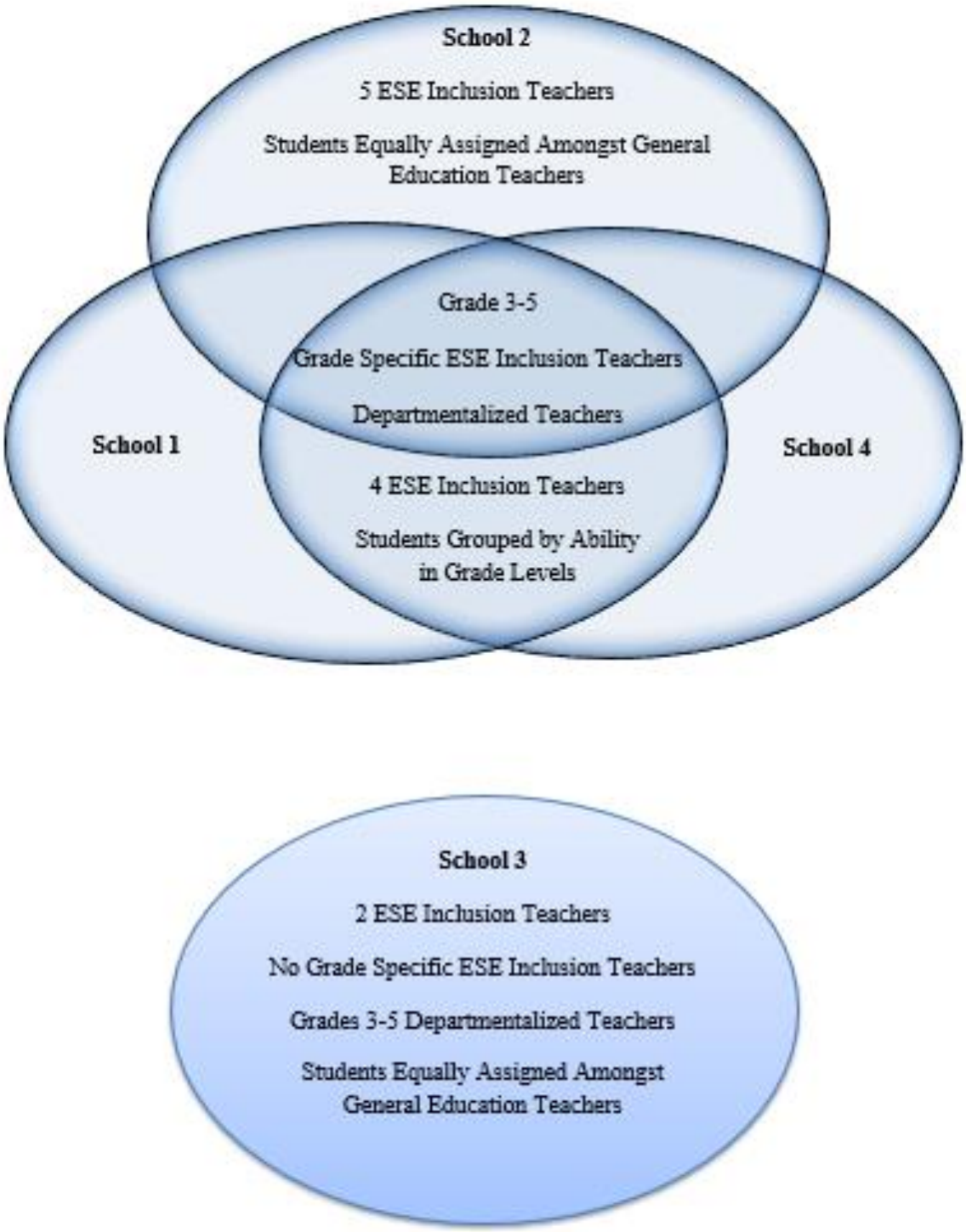

Figure 2 Visual Representation of School Sites Similarities & Differences

Additional Perspectives

Additional perspective was sought from an ESE District Coach upon the completion of all school site interviews. Participant will be referred to using the pseudonym of ESE District Coach. The ESE District Coach position was developed three years ago in order to develop ESE teachers in the separate class and inclusion models. The ESE District Coach supports teachers who work with students with disabilities to close the gap between the General Education students and the ESE students.

ESE District Coach has been teaching for eleven years, with one year in her current position. Previously, she has taught in a K-2 Separate ESE Classroom and has taught K-5 Inclusion. Her philosophy on ESE education begins with his own personal viewpoint, stating that as a 21st Century Leader, her role is to "promote a positive environment focused on meeting each student's unique needs."

Support is provided to promote student achievement for ESE students as well as to allow more collaboration between General Education teams of teachers and ESE teams of teachers, both at the school sites and at the district levels. Inclusion is promoted through collaborative teams, with the ESE District Coach supporting and assisting in the scheduling based on students' Least Restrictive Environment to help promote inclusion through various co-teaching support models. As a leader, the ESE District Coach is an advocate for students and teachers. Her focus is on promoting a positive environment that is focused on meeting each student's unique needs.

Data Results & Analysis

Leadership

The value of educational leadership draws in responsible, trustworthy, collaborative, and personally invested leaders who focus on student achievement (DiPaola, et. al., 2004). When

asked to define leadership, each individual leader provided his or her own personal philosophy on leadership, rather than a clear definition. However, research supports that there is no clear definition of leadership (Gunter, 2004).

Results indicate differences in attitudes and beliefs about what leadership is. The interviews yielded some apparent differences among all leadership participants. To summarize each leader's definition, code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of leadership:: "Leadership is communicating your vision with a team of people you are working with while developing collaborative relationships that builds leaders as followers, all who are not experts." All leaders identified how they are always learning alongside their team of teachers and staff.

Leadership Models

Bush (2011) supports that through the Distributed Leadership model, "leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed." Leadership is not about being the boss. Leadership is about having relationships with staff so that staff are not being told what to do, but rather buying in to a common vision and goal.

Principal 1, for example, referenced a Shared Leadership model, which is an overarching concept of Distributive Leadership. He provides different tasks to get others who desire more involvement to participate in the process of creating change in the school. At the end of the day, it is about moving the school forward as a whole, not as one person standing over everything.

Principal 2 best explained the Distributive Leadership model by identifying the difference between distributing and delegating: "Delegating is just a task. Distributive leadership really involves the development of another person's leadership skills." Distributive leaders are more about developing than leading.

Leadership participants provided unclear guidance on their direct leadership model; however, analyzation of sharing leadership and not just delegating leads to an overall Distributive Leadership model across each school. Findings are substantiated by the work of Bush (2011). As a leader, the title provides the guidance for the vision towards the overall goal, cultivating others from behind, within, and in front of. Principal 2 reminds us, "You're not leading if no one's following" and leadership does not make you the "expert," as supported by AP 3.

ESE Leaders

According to Philip Garner and Fiona Forbes (2013), school leaders must possess the confidence to be role models for staff and students. Currently, aside from one individual circumstance, all administrators play the role in providing support for teachers and helping facilitate decision-making for students with disabilities. With the main overall role to provide support for all teachers, it is a key factor in leading as ESE leaders.

Currently, Principal 1 is working directly with meetings, scheduling, and anything ESE related due to the absence of a guidance counselor. Typically, he states that he is not always as involved as he is currently. Most of the time his role is much like that of all other administrators, in that he is kept informed on students with ESE services as well as students with potential ESE services.

In addition, APs provided that one of their specific roles at the school site is discipline. Each AP provided, in their own response form, that much of the discipline and/or referrals for assistance are directly correlated to students with ESE services of some sort. Whether it be assisting with taking the time to calm a student or providing teachers with behavior management

interventions, it is important for teachers to understand how a student's behaviors may be a result of their disability.

Principals report that the AP is an integral part in the daily implementation of services for students and teachers to be most successful. Utilizing resources, like the AP, supports Distributive Leadership to provide the support necessary for effective inclusion of students with disabilities. Direct support, whether it be assisting with behavior management or curriculum development, provides for success given the many variables involved in special education.

Local Education Agency Representative (LEA)

At School 2, leadership participation included the Local Education Agency Representative (LEA). An LEA is a district and school site example of Special Education Distributive Leadership. LEA 2's focus is to make sure that everything related to students with ESE services, IEPs, and 504 Plans are all in compliance with mandates and legalities, a direct alignment with the Theory of Justice. In years past, she sat in on every IEP meeting held at her school, but this year she is not attending as many meetings and is focusing on distributing her leadership roles, building more teacher leaders within departments to provide the support for IEP meetings.

All leaders noted that they play a key role in making sure students with ESE services are being serviced properly and that they are included in the identification of other students that may need ESE services through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process. Related to the leadership role in ESE, there exists a very small body of research. In order for leaders to close the gap in current research, leaders must continue to gain knowledge in the law and regulations of special education, best done through direct participation and practice (Dalton and Roush, 2010).

Teachers

In this study, each individual teacher brings their own background, knowledge, and experiences into their role in ESE. At the frontline of inclusion are the General Education Teachers and the ESE Inclusion Teachers. Two different perspectives arose based on the role of individual participants, with clear differences in roles presented.

General Education teacher participants expressed the willingness for support and assistance from ESE Inclusion teachers. General Education teachers provide all their students with the same access to materials, learning, and support from themselves. General Education teacher participants do their best to try and meet student needs based on individual needs. Data supports that General Education teachers support the inclusion of students with disabilities.

As for ESE Inclusion teacher participants, each expressed how their role is unique to their school site, supporting the differences in each inclusion model included. Each school site has a different number of ESE Inclusion teachers and the program model is set up differently at each school.

Most teacher participants were not able to articulate clearly their own philosophy of inclusive education, indicating differences in attitudes and beliefs. However, two were able to share personal comments on inclusion barriers. Of all seven teacher participants, data collection only included two ESE Inclusion teachers who feel strong barriers are faced in the inclusion of students with disabilities.

ESE 3 provides his experiences in inclusion, sharing what he feels inclusion is and what it ought to be:

> When you walk into a classroom for a 30 minutes session, because of scheduling, you may walk in during a whole group instruction which means that your student will be in a whole group. Therefore, inclusion is nothing other than keeping kids on track and making sure they're focused and on task.

> On the other hand, I've had situations where you walk in a room in a whole group, and a teacher says all of the ESE kids go to the table and sit, while everybody's in a whole group, which therefore in my opinion segregates students. I haven't seen a successful model of inclusion, other than that one time in middle school. It was actually co-teaching.
>
> What it is supposed to be I think from what I hear from administration over the years, is they are expecting that an inclusion teacher works directly with the regular teacher in planning. However, when you have several different grades and several different classrooms, there's not enough time in the day to plan with every teacher.

In addition, ESE 2 provides her experiences in inclusion, sharing what she feels are the biggest barriers faced:

> For a general comment, a lot of times I have more students than I'm able to see. A lot of times scheduling is a big problem with having so many students and then not enough me to go around. That's an issue that I have.
>
> Then, because I'm having to put students together that are different levels and students that would rather have one-on-one because I know I could make a better difference one-on-one than with them in a small group. I can't focus on specifically what they need so it's more of what everybody needs. I want to be more specific with them.
>
> I would rather have them one-on-one rather than in a group because it frustrates me that I can't direct all my attention on that student to their specific needs.

It could be assumed that barriers would be faced mostly by General Education teachers; however, the data provided otherwise. Through their experiences, ESE 2 and ESE 3 have developed individual philosophies of what does and does not make inclusion effective, based on how the current inclusion model is designed at their school site. This personal philosophy could lead to the development of what components make for successful inclusive education programs.

Leadership Support

When increasing inclusion for students with disabilities, the role begins with leadership and the knowledge they bring to their role in supporting ESE inclusion at the school site. When

asked specifically, “How would you say leaders are supporting the inclusion model at your school?” apparent differences arose based on differing inclusion models at each school site.

GE 2 shared that leaders strongly support ESE as a whole program at her school. Whether seeking an item or personnel support, leadership does it’s best to listen and see the whole picture. GE 2 feels as though leadership is very supportive of providing feedback to encourage and support the best for teachers and students as a whole.

ESE 3 shared a different perspective, in that he feels there is very little support for ESE in general, as well as Inclusion. Given that he feels there is very little support, he doesn’t see it as a bad thing as one would think. He likes what he does and feels that leadership is happy with what he is doing and how his students are performing. As for making the school seen as a “model” for ESE or Inclusion, he does not feel leadership is focused on that. His relationship with leadership is strong; however, he feels the lack of support comes from lack of knowledge and experience in ESE.

Only two teachers provided specific inclusive and/or ESE related responses. Most responses were not directly related to their leaders’ role as an ESE leader. Each of the two teacher responses were opposite of one another. The assumption could be made that leadership support is left to be interpreted by the individual; however, additional teacher responses could provide that there is or isn’t leadership support. The data is unclear to assume.

ESE Knowledge

Each individual participant brings their own background, knowledge, and experiences into their role in ESE. At the leadership level, not one leader reported any specific educational training and/or background in ESE. Leaders reported only training from the state and district on crisis management. Additional leadership training has been provided in the Multi-Tiered System

of Supports (MTSS) within the district level. The only educational preparation leadership has shared receiving were few topics related to ESE covered during undergraduate and graduate education courses. The data provides a lack of leadership knowledge in ESE.

Leadership Supporting Inclusive Programs

When increasing inclusion for students with disabilities, the role begins with leadership and the knowledge they bring to their role in supporting ESE inclusion at the school site. When asked specifically, "What knowledge and skills do you bring to the role in supportive the inclusive program?" very few leaders provided specific inclusive and/or ESE related responses. Most responses were directed more at the participant's role as an ESE leader.

Ultimately, all leaders try to support all teachers, students, and families respectfully and equitably. Although clear differences were reported based on each school site, support continues into the receptiveness of students' needs and teachers' needs. Sometimes all it takes is someone to listen and building relationships among all involved and treating everyone the same. Principal 1 summarizes it well: "For me, everyone's going to be supported the same way."

In addition, the ESE District Coach was asked specifically, "What knowledge and skills do you bring to the role in supportive the inclusive program?" Her response was aligned with that of other leader participants. She states, "I help promote inclusion through collaborative teams, assist in scheduling based on students least restrictive environment, help promote inclusion through the various co-teaching models, and support collaborative planning."

Working at various school sites, she supports students, teachers, and families. As a student advocate, she promotes students in their LRE and supports them based on their individual needs. For teachers, she provides support, collaborates with them, and shares

expertise. With families, she provides information and support for families about services in the school, District, and community.

Leadership & IEP

Just as results indicate differences in attitudes and beliefs about what leadership is, results further yielded apparent differences in the leader's role in the IEP process. The leader's role often does not involve the participation in the IEP process. For Principal 1, this year he has been involved more than he has ever been due to the absence of his guidance counselor. At School 2, the LEA is more involved than any leader is in the IEP process. The involvement depends on the individual leader; however, the majority of leadership participants have no direct role or knowledge of the IEP process.

Most leaders do not currently sit in on IEP meetings, unless specifically at the request of the teacher, parent, etc.; however, even then, there is no specific role in the meeting. The majority of leaders indicate that they are kept informed of student placements, changes in placements, and what services are to be provided. In addition, leaders are a part of the RTI process for General Education students through collaborative planning efforts to maintain student success. If leaders are a part of these processes, it could be assumed they have just as active a role in the IEP process.

Principal 4 states that, "I don't ever limit it to just the IEP, it's whatever makes that child successful. It's an ongoing conversation." Recommendations, supports, and strategies for student success are not just a once a year conversation at the annual review of the IEP. Principal 4 feels that just because she is not directly involved in the IEP does not mean that is the only place an individual can be involved in the success of a child.

Leadership as an LEA has placed LEA 2 sitting in on every IEP meeting in years past. This school year is the first year she is not currently sitting in on every IEP. Unlike other leadership roles, like guidance counselor, assistant principal, and principal, the LEA is not involved in the prior process of RTI that could lead to the development of an IEP and ESE services. When an initial placement is taking place, she is involved in this IEP process and does review data collected during the RTI process.

Similarly, all leaders make sure that the services are provided to the students as outlined in their IEPs. Whether leaders are participating in ESE team meetings, providing support for General Education teachers, or even advocating for additional staffing, their goal is to make sure the needs of all students are being met. Leaders' non-participation in the IEP process provides that leaders actively implement Distributive Leadership Models. Leaders distribute roles to others, thus eliminating their role in such processes like IEPs.

Teachers & IEP

The teacher's role in the IEP process is independent of one another and dependent on their individual teacher assignment. The majority of General Education teachers state their participation begins with the completion of a questionnaire and providing the ESE Inclusion teacher with test scores and documents related to the student's academic performance. In addition to assisting with providing information to support the IEP process, General Education teachers stated that they are invited to and participate in the IEP meeting with a committee of individuals developing the IEP.

Similarities arose among all ESE Inclusion teachers stating that their participation begins with their relationship with the General Education teacher and collecting information to draft the IEP prior to the IEP meeting. The ESE Inclusion is the person responsible for the student with

the IEP as their case manager. The ESE Inclusion teacher is responsible for the IEP process from start to finish.

Working within the same school district, the IEP process is the same across all schools and findings are similar across schools. Parents are notified about the IEP meeting about two weeks in advance, at least twice. If there is no response in regards to parents' plan to attend or not, either the ESE Inclusion teacher or the General Education teacher reaches out via telephone. Following the initiation of the IEP meeting, the ESE Inclusion teacher begins drafting the IEP and working with the General Education teacher to collect data and supports for the student.

At the meeting, aside from specific circumstances, the ESE Inclusion teacher is the evaluation interpreter and the one leading the meeting. The district requires that three professionals working directly with the student be present when at all possible. At some schools, in some instances, a school site LEA is brought in alongside the ESE Inclusion teacher and the General Education teacher if the student does not receive services from any other professionals (i.e. Speech Pathologist, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, a second General Education Special's teacher, etc.).

The teachers' role in the IEP process from start to finish is a direct example of leaders actively implementing Distributive Leadership Models. Teachers become the leaders in this process, leading fellow teachers as well as school site administrators in the IEP process. Ultimately, teachers directly involved in the IEP process are directly responsible for upholding and leading others in upholding the individual student IEPs.

Terminology

Leaders and Teachers were all asked to define and/or identify Exceptional Student Education (ESE), Inclusion, Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), the Least Restrictive

Environment (LRE), and Supplementary Aids & Services (Accommodations & Modifications). Results indicate differences in attitudes and beliefs about what each term represents. The interviews yielded apparent differences across all participants, even within similar participant categories. Overall, individual participants often provided their own examples rather than specific definitions that identify the terminology, with a variety of responses. Direct responses to terminology can be found in Appendix G.

The Florida Department of Education defines Exceptional Student Education (2015) as, "Children with disabilities who need specially designed instruction and related services are called exceptional students. The special help they are given at school is called exceptional student education (ESE)." Each individual participant provided their definition of Exceptional Student Education (ESE).

In comparison to the FLDOE definition, leaderships' differing definitions tended to elaborate on the simplicity of the "special help" students are given at school. Leaders' definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of ESE as an "education experience using an instructional model using different types of supports and access to learning, for students who learn differently to succeed."

Additionally, teachers' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of ESE as a "Quality education in the least restrictive environment for students who are delayed or advanced (gifted students included) where learning provides differentiation for student success." In contrast, ESE 4's definition can stand alone: "Education for children with disabilities which is designed to provide specific instructions and services to enhance the academic success of special needs children."

As for Inclusion, there is no specific reference or definition for Inclusion in legislation. IDEA does not supply a definition for the term "inclusion." Florida Statute Section 1003.57 provides a definition for inclusion:

> A school district shall use the term "inclusion" to mean that a student is receiving education in a general education regular class setting, reflecting natural proportions and age-appropriate heterogeneous groups in a core academic and elective or special areas within the school community; a student with a disability is a valued member of the classroom and school community; the teachers and administrators support universal education and have knowledge and support available to enable them to effectively teach all children; and a student is provided access to technical assistance in best practices, instructional methods, and supports tailored to the student's needs based on current research.

In comparison to the Florida Statute, participant definitions differed but all tended to relate more specifically to inclusion in practice. Leaders' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of inclusion as an "accepting educational setting providing an equal opportunity for all students that combines a blend of different learning styles in the General Education/Regular Education classroom environment that provides ESE students with support they need to be successful." Teachers' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of inclusion as a "regular education classroom where students with IEPs and ESE services are included and receive assistance from an ESE teacher that comes into the regular education environment to meet the needs of students so they are able to make gains on their level."

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) appear to go hand in hand when asking participants to provide a definition. Each participant provided their definition of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Lusk (2015) defines FAPE (free appropriate public education) as:

> Special education and related services that have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; meet the standards of the State educational agency; include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the State involved; and are provided in conformity with the individualized education program required under section 1414(d) of [the Individuals with Disabilities Act] (p. 295).

LRE begins with students attending the school that they would attend if they did not have a disability, with the most restrictive placement being that of a placement considered a residential school or a homebound setting (Conflicts Over LRE and FAPE, 2001).

In comparison to Lusk's definition of FAPE, participant definitions tended to lean more towards defining what the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is. and all differed. Most important, what was left out of defining FAPE, with the exception of one leader, was that services are provided at the public's expense without charge to the student. Leaders' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of what they feel FAPE is: "Free access to education that is appropriate based on the child in the Least Restrictive Environment that goes hand in hand with anything we would need to provide them according to their plan in the general education classroom with supports."

Most significant in teachers' differing definitions of FAPE in comparison to leaders' definitions was that services are provided at the public's expense without charge to the student or free. Teachers' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of what they feel FAPE is: "Free access to all things in education that is that includes students in the Least Restrictive Environment providing whatever each child needs to be successful and not be singled out."

Leaders' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of what they feel LRE is: "A blended classroom with flexibility that promotes success for all students and starts with General Education Inclusion that provides

students with an experience that is the same experiences as that of their peers. It promotes success for all without putting limitations or restrictions on students, where students can learn and grow through positive experiences; however, it keeps in mind that what is least restrictive for one is not always least restrictive for another."

Teachers' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of what they feel LRE is: "Goes along with FAPE, providing a free and appropriate education where support services are provided to students to be in an environment that most successfully gives them what they need no matter what. It ranges from the most restrictive with a specific paraprofessional, through self-contained, resource, and inclusion."

Lastly, supplementary aids & services that include accommodations and modifications are outlined in each student's Individual Education Plan. Accommodations are changes that are made in how the student accesses information and demonstrates performance (Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(a), Florida Administrative Code [F.A.C.]). FLDOE states, "Modifications are changes in what a student is expected to learn. They may include changes to content, requirements, and expected levels of mastery. Modifications may include partially completing a course or program requirement or getting instruction in the access points for students with significant cognitive disabilities."

When asked to define Supplementary Aids and Services, all participants were unable to respond with "Accommodations and Modifications." In comparison to the FLDOE definition, participant definitions differed and tended to be very unclear on what an accommodation and a modification were. Often, responses were stated in the form a question, seeking clarity in their understanding of the differences.

Leaders' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of an accommodation: "We are keepers of the accommodations where students are all learning the same material and provided access to what all the students are doing and trying to accommodate them with providing extra time, smaller setting, reading questions to them, or transcribing." In contrast, teachers' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of an accommodation: "Doing what you can to help the child learn and be successful; assisting or providing something else to help students meet curriculum expectations (i.e. giving extra time)."

Leaders' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of a modification: "Modifying the assignment where the expectation might be different in terms of matching the standard and we are changing the criteria in a separate classroom." In contrast, teachers' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of a modification: "Modifying the assignment where there is a change in the curriculum, changing what is taught or what is expected to be learned (i.e. less work)."

All participant responses demonstrate a lack of knowledge and understanding of ESE terminology. However, much different than the responses of other leadership participants, the ESE District Coach provided more definition-like responses than examples that identify the terminology questioned. As a District level leader, her knowledge of ESE terminology is clear. Moreover, she exhibits a different level of knowledge in the field of ESE terminology in comparison to leaders and teachers at the school base level.

Leaders and teachers all expressed the need for further education and training in ESE, as their responses support. Principal 2 strongly supported the "need for additional explicit training with real-life scenarios." He further asserts:

> The training that we get from the state and district often is regarding following state and federal guidelines, procedural, state laws, things of that nature. More compliance by itself, not necessarily dealing with specific behaviors and specific exceptionalities. I think training needs to center more around, 'If I have an autistic student, this is what we might give them, these are some strategies,' and doing that with all of the major disabilities, or major exceptionalities. That type of training, I would say, a principal should have. Currently, that is not the case.

Principal 1 felt the district support has become much better over the years in relation to ESE. The district provides behavior support, area ESE managers assigned to specific schools, as well as district ESE coaches assigned to specific schools. Participants' data supports that they are still learning and evolving as education is changing, especially ESE education.

Legislation

Legislative knowledge is where it all begins, and as laws and legalities change, leaders and teachers must remain current. As leaders are expected to stay up to date in laws and legalities, teachers are too expected to remain current. Participants were all asked, "What can you tell me about Exceptional Student Education Legislation?" A generalized response was expected and then each individual piece of legislation as it relates to the evolution of ESE was presented. It was expected that all participants would have basic knowledge of ESE Legislation in general, as well as a basic understanding of the purpose and/or history behind each individual piece of legislation. Results indicate differences in knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about ESE legislation. The interviews yielded apparent similarities in the lack of knowledge of ESE legislation amongst participants. Direct responses to legislation can be found in Appendix F.

With the exception of Principal 2, no specific pieces of Legislation were mentioned. Principal 2 referenced going "way back to IDEA," but was unaware of the numerous pieces of legislation and lawsuits prior to IDEA. When asked about each piece of legislation, only Principal 1 and Principal 3 were able to provide responses.

Principal 1 provided a response when asked directly about IDEA. He referenced that it has been continuously revised because we are a changing environment and society. The overall perception of students with disabilities has gone away from putting a student in the back hallway to embedding students. Acceptance is the reason for the consistent change.

Principal 3 provided a response when asked directly about FERPA. She referenced parents' right to know what is happening in their children's education. She also explained how student information cannot be shared with just anyone. In addition, she stated that she referred to legislative acts as needed based on an individual case-by-case basis.

Three teachers mentioned specific pieces of legislation; however, only ESE 3 was able to reference understanding of the piece of legislation he mentioned, No Child Left Behind. Four teachers were unable to provide a basic response to what they could share about ESE Legislation. GE 1 and ESE 1 requested starters to help in responding about Legislation. ESE 2 and ESE 4 provided no response or request.

When asked directly about specific pieces of Legislation, as requested, GE 1 and ESE 1 were able to provide basic statements listed below:

- ESEA: "I don't even remember."
- PARC v. Pennsylvania and Mills v. Board of Education: "Oh God. Brown v. Board of Education?"
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: "504s came from that"

- FERPA: “That’s the procedural safeguards for parents?”
- EAHCA: “Started IDEA?”
- HCPA: No response
- ADA: “Compliance”
- IDEA: “IEP and it’s been rewritten probably every year. How am I supposed to know that I am supposed to research these laws yearly to keep up with them? Who or what is keeping me up with all this information as it is changing? It’s like a constant wheel that changes and we can’t keep up with it.”
- NCLB: No response.

Even when directly provided with specific pieces of legislation, responses were often presented in the form of a question. No clear understanding was shared even when given each piece of legislation one by one.

When asked directly about specific pieces of legislation, ESE 4 was only able to provide a response to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, IDEA, and NCLB. He explained that Section 504, “is against the law to discriminate against people with disabilities.” As for IDEA, he stated that “Students with a disability are provided with a Free Appropriate Public Education.” Lastly, in response to NCLB, he stated, “Federal law that provides money for extra educational assistance for poor children in return or improvements in their academic progress. A law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities and the public provides public accommodations for people with disabilities.”

In response to knowledge of ESE Legislation, the ESE District Coach explained:

> All the legislations are to promote students in the Least Restrictive Environment, as well as protect the rights of a student with disabilities to ensure that they receive the same quality of education as their peers, in addition to services that are needed to ensure student success.

Of all leadership participant responses, this was the most concise response that included terminology as it relates to ESE. No specific pieces of legislation were mentioned. When asked about each piece of legislation, the ESE District Coach was only able to provide a response to three.

A generalized response was provided for FERPA, NCLB, and IDEA. The ESE District Coach identified FERPA as an Act in which "parents and students have the right to view their school files at any time, as well as dispute any items that are in the file." In response to NCLB, she offered a basic explanation: "All students are entitled to a quality education." Lastly, in response to IDEA, she was once again very basic, stating that, "Education provided is based on student's needs."

In addition to ESE Legislation, participants were also asked if they were able to identify any Assistive Technology Legislation. All leadership participants were unable to share any knowledge in this area. Responses include, "I am not aware of any." "No, I do not." "Oh Lord." Many were unfamiliar with the existence of any specific AT Legislation. Just as all other leadership participants responded, the ESE District Coach was also unable to share any knowledge in this area. Her response was, "I would have to research this."

Just as leader participants were unable to share any knowledge in this area, so were teachers. Responses often included the answer, "No," or a head shake of no. Many were unfamiliar with the existence of any specific AT Legislation.

All participant responses demonstrate a lack of knowledge and understanding of ESE terminology. Once again, the ESE District Coach provided the most concise responses to legislation. As a District level leader, her knowledge of ESE legislation is clear. She also

demonstrates a different level of knowledge in the field of ESE terminology, in comparison to leaders and teachers at the school base level.

As policy and law continues to grow and change due to the requirements for social justice, participants' data supports a need for further education and training in ESE legislation. Participants are still learning and evolving as education is changing, especially ESE education. Findings are substantiated by the necessity for education and training to consider the needs of the inclusive environment, including the perspectives of students, teachers, and administrators (Dalton & Roush, 2010).

Technology

Technology in the classroom begins with knowing what is available to students or knowing how to get what is needed for students. Leaders are at the forefront of helping build confident 21st Century classrooms successful for all students. School 4, for examples, has even implemented an initiative to put technology in the hands of every one of their students, an identified initiative that it appears every leader shares the same desire to do.

Findings are substantiated by research that technology initiatives begin with leaders and their self-efficacy as well as the collective efficacy of their staff. As leaders, building a collective efficacy regarding technology starts with all classrooms having technology and teachers increasing technology use. All schools provide all ESE classrooms with the same amount and types of general technology that the General Education classrooms have. Within the school sites, leaders use distributive leadership to identify teachers who are technology expert teachers. These "Tech-sperts" guide their colleagues, and even leaders at times, on successful technology implementation.

From the leadership perspective, few leaders were able to identify specific use of specific technology in their individual school site. All leaders were able to similarly identify basic classroom technology set-ups, including: SMART Boards, Document Cameras, Surround Sound Systems, Projectors, etc. In addition, all classrooms have their own type of computer set up, whether it be desktops and/or laptops, laptop carts, or iPad carts. Similarly, all schools provide a one-to-one computer ratio for students in the upper grades, third through fifth.

Computers

Computerized learning environments provide an approach for students to access their education through equally diversifying instruction. Students can access their education anytime, at home, school, or even in the community (Schaffhauser, 2013). Computerized learning provides an effective way to differentiate instruction based on the individual learner (Shamir & Margalit, 2011).

When leadership participants were asked about computer use and determination of computer use, the overall response was similar and directed at district mandates for use. Ultimately, schools do not decide whether or not to use computers and/or specific software, as the school district mandates software required for use as well as software recommended for use. Currently, across all schools, a computerized learning environment called iStation is being used. Additional programs being used in schools include: TenMarks, STAR, ReadingWonders, and Reflex Math.

In addition, computers in general are used for school-based labs as well as placement of a few in each teacher's classroom. Principal 2 stated that their school in particular has four computer labs, and classrooms also have laptops and iPads available for students. Almost all leaders stated that classrooms have access not only to classroom computers, but also to laptop

computers so that students in third through fifth grade have their own assigned classroom computer/laptop.

When the ESE District Coach was asked about computer use and determination of computer use, the response was simple. At the District level, she is not familiar with or involved in computer use at her specific school sites, nor has she had any experience with or seen the implementation of BYOD at any of her school sites.

When teacher participants were asked about computer use and determination of computer use, the overall response was the same as leaders and directed at district mandates for use. Ultimately, teachers similarly responded that they only get to decide on computers and/or specific software for purposes like upper grades research projects. All teachers identified a computerized learning environment called iStation is being used across their school, as the district mandates.

Bring Your Own Device

Santosh (2013) defines BYOD as "the policy of permitting students to bring their personally owned technological mobile devices such as smart phones, tablets, and laptops" into the classroom for instructional purposes. Macpherson (2015) cites the benefits to BYOD: (1) Students choose the device that fits them best; (2) Students can download the apps they need; (3) Students are forced to be responsible; (4) Differentiation becomes more manageable; and (5) Students can work at their own pace.

All participants interviewed responded to "Does your school implement any kind of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)?" with the summative answer that schools do not currently implement any kind of BYOD. AP 3 was able to reflect on prior years of experience where she worked at one school in which one teacher used a form of BYOD because the school's

technology ratio was not one-to-one and the teacher used Google Classroom for instruction. AP 1 summarized well the challenges faced with BYOD by responding that in his experience when a school attempted to try it, very few students often have their own devices. Often, “parents didn’t have the ability to afford that technology” for students to participate in BYOD. No single teacher was able to identify any experience or knowledge of BYOD.

Evaluation

All schools implement the same district-adopted required programs as well as most of the district-adopted recommended programs. Technology use among all schools is used by leaders for data collection purposes and progress monitoring. Through implementation of consistent computerized learning and use, leadership is able to review program usage, student progress, classroom progress, as well as use it for evaluation purposes of teachers. All leaders’ responses were similar in their observations that the receptiveness of computerized learning and program use comes with the accountability piece that provides student specific data and progress monitoring.

Technology use among teachers varies depending on the differing teacher role and individual access to technology. Teacher participants explained that they evaluate the use of technology with their students based on specific factors, depending on their role. Only one teacher identified not using technology. ESE 3 states:

> I strongly believe that if they want to use that, that's fine, but I teach the kids at the level that they...Let me rephrase this. I don't necessarily agree with giving kids all those things. They need to learn with them if they actually need them. I haven't had any students that really need those things. I don't use a lot of technology, and I don't have a lot of technology available. If I have, it would be a smartboard when I'm in the classroom, but I was instructed not to be in the classroom. I don't have technology other than sometimes I bring my computer and show the kids something on a computer, but for the most part I use graphic organizers and things like that, that I can bring with me.

ESE Inclusion teachers, in contrast to General Education teachers, evaluate use based on time and access. Most ESE Inclusion teachers reported that they do not have access to all the technology that General Education teachers do because they are constantly on the move in and out of various classrooms. In addition, ESE Inclusion teachers are often limited in their instructional time with students they are servicing, specifically one-on-one implementation of technology.

As for General Education teachers, all similarly reported that their evaluation is based on knowledge and purpose. Most General Education teachers have access to the technology, but some of them reported lack of knowledge in how to use it best instructionally. Given this factor, if the teacher is unfamiliar with or unsure of how to use technology or integrate technology as an instructional technology, the purpose for use can be unknown. Some General Education teachers report they are still learning how to use technology as an instructional tool beyond the district mandated computer programs or as reward time for students to 'play.'

Leadership Support

Findings are substantiated by research supporting that technology initiatives begin with leaders and their self-efficacy as well as the collective efficacy of their staff. Teacher participants feel that leaders all support technology in their schools. Teachers agree that leaders push for the implementation of technology, technology-based programs, and for teacher implementation and use of technology. All teachers report they feel comfortable reaching out to their leaders for support in the area of technology, given they provide evidence, proof, and/or research to support their desires. The goal for all teachers seems to be to try and increase technology use in the classroom as guided by their leaders.

Assistive Technology

AT is used to increase, maintain, or improve learning for students with disabilities. Participants were asked to define "Assistive Technology." Just as with ESE Terminology, individual participants often offered their own examples of AT rather than specific definitions that identify the terminology provided, with a variety of responses. Results indicate differences in knowledge about AT. The interviews yielded some apparent differences across all participants.

Leaders' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of Assistive Technology as: "technologies that help bridge the gap for students, helping them succeed in the classroom and assisting them in accessing the learning at their level, while promoting student success at the same level as other students." In comparison, teachers' differing definition code words and phrases were combined to formulate an overarching definition of Assistive Technology as: "technology that helps students to learn, providing them additional support for them in being successful; technology that is set up in a special way to assist learning including highlighters, pencil grips, fidgets, and readers."

At the District level, reported by the ESE District Coach, involvement in the implementation and use of Assistive Technology is mostly at the supportive level. To build an understanding of her knowledge of AT, she was asked to define what Assistive Technology is. She defines AT as "the tools use to assist a child in accessing and manipulating the information presented in class."

Her role is to support and encourage schools in the investment and use of resources, whether they are AT resources or other resources that meet the needs of students. In most cases she has encountered at the school sites she supports, teachers are implementing low-tech AT.

Unless specific items have been required based on an individual student's IEP, mid-tech and high-tech devices have not been observed in use.

AT & IEP

As the leader's role often does not involve the participation in the IEP process, most leaders were not familiar with the steps in specifically identifying AT in the IEP. Most leaders were also unable to identify students with AT specifically identified in their IEP. Principal 3 even stated, "I assume there are specific steps and we have to have the data to support it, but we have no students with it written into their IEP on paper." Principal 1 was aware of the steps and able to identify them and was able to relate that they are familiar with at least one student at their school who specifically has an AT device written into their IEP. Principal 2 was also able identify that they are familiar with at least one student at their school who specifically has an AT device written into their IEP.

Currently, the ESE District Coach reports that she does not have a role in the IEP process. She has a direct involvement at the school site with the classroom teacher and has made suggestions and/or supported teachers in the IEP Process. Specifically relating to AT in the IEP, her only experience has been in her years as a classroom teacher. As a classroom teacher, she is familiar with the evaluation and assessment process when it comes to determining AT for students.

Participants report that when directly written into the IEP, AT has been written in under the teacher input using specific details, including frequency of item use. At times, AT is written in the Accommodations section of the IEP. Families are included in the IEP process, including the discussion and documentation of AT. In her experience, the ESE District Coach has seen

various types of AT written into student's IEPs, including basic tools like highlighters and word processors.

As the teacher's role in the IEP process is independent of one another and dependent on their individual teacher role, most teachers were not familiar with the steps in specifically identifying AT in the IEP. Teachers were also unable to identify students with AT specifically identified in their IEP. However, teachers were able to identify Assistive Technology in use in their classrooms, no matter their role.

Use

Findings report similarities across participants when it comes to AT use. Participants were unfamiliar with the range of devices considered AT until presented with the research. Not one participant referenced the varying levels of AT, including no-tech, low-tech, medium-tech, and high-tech. Examples mentioned range from no-tech to high-tech; however, none were identified or labeled as such.

Teachers report that when AT is written into a student's IEP, the implementation is often daily. Items such as pencil grips, spacers, highlighters, voice amplifiers, timers, sound boxes, specialized keyboards, and many others are used to assist students in the classroom and allow them to receive or be presented with the same content provided in the classroom as other students.

All General Education teachers were able to identify AT used in their classrooms. Few ESE Inclusion teachers identified AT that they use or know their General Education teachers use. Not one teacher identified varying levels of AT, including no-tech, low-tech, medium-tech, and high-tech. Examples mentioned range from no-tech to high-tech; however, none were identified or labeled as such. AT items identified include: Visual Schedules, Highlighters, Pencil Grips,

Line Readers, Raised Lined Paper, Elevated Tables, Alternative Seating, Yoga Balls, Microphone, AlphaSmarts, Laptops, iPads, and SmartBoards.

Differing from teachers, leaders mentioned student use of no-tech assistive devices like picture symbols for all areas, mostly communication. Moving up the technology ladder, leaders mentioned the use of low-tech devices like highlighters and pencil grips for student use when reading and/or writing. In addition, they also use medium-tech devices such as alternative seating options and "bouncy rubber-band-type item on the student's chair legs." At the high-tech level, leaders identified iPads, AlphaSmarts, and Tablets for student use.

When the varying levels of AT were reviewed, all participants were then able to realize the realm of AT that was currently in use within their school. In addition, participants were able to understand the purpose behind the range of AT.

In her specific role, the ESE District Coach tries to stay aware of current technology available that will best assist teachers and students. In the classroom, she helps integrate technology to reinforce skills, reward students, promote reading, close achievement gaps, and minimize the ways students can and cannot access information.

Barriers to Technology

Technologies can present issues for leaders and teachers and findings are substantiated by Kelly (2001). Kelly's research explained the possible link between educational issues affecting and/or leading to professional issues: Lacking Assistance for Successful Participation; No Opportunity to Use Given; No Changes in Usage when Implemented/Provided; Need to Understand and Integrate Technology; Little Incentive or Leadership in Technology; Educators in Unknown; and Educational vs. Professional.

When leaders were asked what barriers are faced in their schools for implementing both general technology and Assistive Technology, the first assumption would have been cost and/or funding; however, this assumption did not result to be completely true. Although Principal 1 did state that cost was the only thing he could think of, he noted, "If a teacher asked me or something and they could provide evidence that they're going to utilize it, I'm going to buy it." If he is unable to make the purchase for the teacher, he will provide and assist in a variety of avenues in order to go about obtaining funding to cover the costs of technology. Principal 2 has committed thousands of school dollars towards technology and is making sure that all students have the same amount of and same access to all school technology. The confidence in costs and/or funding not being an issue was not the main concern for leaders.

At the forefront of barriers for leaders was the teaching use, teacher familiarity, and teacher use. In order to overcome these barriers with teachers, leaders at schools have identified those "technology leaders" for all staff. Not only are these "technology leaders" using and implementing technology successfully in their classrooms, but also they are there to assist teachers and even teach the teachers. School 4 uses early dismissal days to have what they call a "round table" to allow for discussion time between teachers and "technology leaders" of ideas and tips for different technology pieces. School 3 places an emphasis on teaching the teacher first and then the student, making sure the teachers are not using technology to replace teaching.

Another barrier briefly discussed among leaders was parent and home support. District identified programs are designed to be used both at school and at home; however, students may not or do not have access to them at home. In addition, parents may not always be able to support their student directly at home. At times, parents are doing the best they can and sometimes are unable to help with the schoolwork or provide the technology needed to access for various

reasons. Leaders all focus on eliminating or at least lessening the presence of barriers to technology in today's 21st Century schools.

When the ESE District Coach was asked what barriers she faces in her school sites with implementing both general technology and Assistive Technology, the first assumption would be the same as when asking other leadership participants: cost and/or funding. Once again, this assumption did not result to be true. Instead, ESE District Coach referenced her generalized experiences with teachers failing to abide by student IEPs as the main barrier. With regard to technology, teachers are often not comfortable with some of the devices written in for use in the IEP. In addition, students often refuse to use their identified devices, in fear of differences. There is an inconsistency present with both teachers and students in their reluctant use of technology and AT.

When addressing these barriers, the ESE District Coach begins with maintaining awareness of student differences, both for students with and without IEPs. As a direct support leader for teachers and students, she provides assistance in the implementation and use of devices as identified for student use. She helps in the training, practice, and instructional implementation of devices.

Similar to leaders, when teachers were asked what barriers they face in their schools with implementing both general technology and Assistive Technology, the first assumption would be the same as with leadership: cost and/or funding. However, this assumption did not result to be true. The confidence in costs and/or funding not being an issue was not the central issue for teachers. Teachers stated that they feel confident approaching their leaders when they are seeking support.

At the forefront of barriers for teachers when it comes to ESE as a whole was time and training, similar to leaders' identified barriers. Teachers feel that at the District level, more training could be provided in ESE. Teachers find inconsistencies in trainings offered, whether it be a training that is irrelevant to their position or a training that could be extended due to its relevance. Through this experience, teachers have shared their curiosity in what their leadership knows in in regards to presented topics, based on their own knowledge of these topics.

Ethics

Ethics is a complex understanding of decisions to be made. Results indicate similarities in attitudes, beliefs, and experiences about Ethics in education. The interviews yielded some apparent similarities amongst participants.

As the 21st century classroom brings us to the 21st century administration, more and more leaders are becoming special education leaders. Findings are substantiated by the research. Participants were asked how ethics plays a role in their leadership decisions, specifically regarding students with disabilities. After the completion interviews, three key phrases stood out:

- Ethics plays a major role.
- There is no doubt in my mind you have to remain ethical in everything you do…
- I just try to practice what I preach.

Participants report ethics begins with preparation. Focus begins with how one comes to work and how prepared one is for the day. Everything in education has to be approached and performed ethically. Ethics is not just about doing what is supposed to be done, or not doing it in the manner in which it supposed to be done. Particularly for leaders, ethics is about modeling the expectation within the school site.

Participants often referenced that they take every situation into account from two perspectives: a parent's perspective and the societal perspective. AP 3 stated it very well:

> Every conversation and thought is that is someone recording me right now or if this were my child how I would feel if my child was being spoken to? It's about seeing a child as your child, a human being with their own personal ethics.

Participants agree that the laws are the guiding principles to remaining ethical in decisions. LEA 2 states, "I think if you're ethical, you're abiding by the law, so they're interrelated." Although one cannot be had without the other, the laws guide us in what we are allowed to do in education. Laws provide a clearly defined line, whereas ethics is not quite as clear. Principal 2 describes a good representation of the battle between law and ethics:

> The ethics is where you can really tell when their heart is with the students and their mentality, but the law, of course, is clear. We can have a conversation and that's probable at the ethics level. Then when we have a second conversation about an issue, we're at the law level.

Decisions must be made under the clarity of the ethical thing to do versus the legal thing to do. At times, the laws can challenge personal ethics.

As a leader, the ESE District Coach is always mindful of responsibilities as a professional. In addition, she is mindful of the rights of students and families. With laws at the foundation of ethics, she maintains a level of standard in demonstrating and upholding professionalism, whether dealing with a General Education student or students/teachers in ESE.

Ethics in Practice

Participants were asked to identify a scenario in which their personal ethics may have been challenged because of a legally binding law as it relates to exceptional student education,

but not every leader was able to. One principal, Principal 3, could recall a scenario but was not comfortable sharing her scenario as it involved making an ethical decision that could be seen as unlawful.

Principal 1's example was a general scenario that could have resulted in a challenge, but did not represent any legal infraction or ethical infraction. There was a misunderstanding in administration communication to a parent about a student requiring a doctor's note to return to school from an illness. The parent was under the impression that their student, who happened to be ESE, was being suspended beyond the ten-day allowance.

Principal 2 provided the general basis of a scenario he encountered when a student's safety was jeopardized three different times. He spoke with the "adult" on a Friday afternoon and explained how the situation could have turned deadly very quickly. He gave the "adult" the weekend to think about the situation and the "adult" contacted him later that evening and resigned. Ultimately, the "adult" knew that they could resign or they would be terminated on Monday.

When the ESE District Coach was asked if she could recall a scenario where her personal ethics have been challenged because of a legally binding law, she was unable to identify such a scenario. She upholds the code of ethics and remains abreast of the expectations of her role when carrying out her daily routine. As a leader, upholding ethics is done through daily practice and routine that reflects on her as an ethical leader who encourages and develops potential leaders.

In contrast to leaders, teachers were not able to recall or identify specific scenarios when their personal ethics may have been challenged because of a legally binding law. Teachers report they are included in regularly scheduled Ethics training, as outlined by the District and their

school site leaders. Teachers report that they are guided by their leaders and are required to uphold the code of ethics and remain abreast of the expectations of their role.

Summary

The purpose of this collective case study was to explore the role in the integration of Assistive Technology, for teachers and leaders, in the inclusion of ESE students at selected Central Florida schools. Specifically, the researcher attempted to identify participants' knowledge of ethics in education and ESE policy and law, as they relate to Assistive Technology in the inclusive classroom. Further, a variety of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and decision-making processes arose among participants. It was clearly evident that while inclusive programs existed within the select Central Florida schools, these schools did not truly implement the use of Assistive Technology or demonstrate knowledge of ESE policy and law. In the following chapter, the implications of these findings in relation to the research questions, the literature, and best practice will be explored thoroughly.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section is an exploration of the findings in relation to the research questions with presentation of limitations to this study. In the second section, the findings are related to the literature. The third section includes personal reflections on the findings and informal data conclusions with implications for leadership in practice. The fourth section includes personal reflections on the findings and informal data conclusions with implications for teachers in practice. The fifth section presents recommendations, including recommendations for future research. The sixth section presents concluding remarks.

Findings as Related to Research Questions

Research Question 1

The first research question explored what knowledge and skills leaders and teachers brought to the role in supporting the inclusive program. Leaders and teachers demonstrated similar knowledge; however, they demonstrated differing skills based on their individual attitudes, beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences. One major trend was evident across categories and themes as interviews were conducted based on the lack of knowledge of ESE among leaders and teachers. In addition, given a variety of skills based on individual participants, two major trends arose, one in each category.

Lack of Knowledge

Findings are substantiated by the unclear responses provided by each individual participant when asked to identify specific knowledge, define terminology, legislation, and specific ESE processes. Participant responses across all categories and themes demonstrated no clear knowledge of ESE terminology, legislation, or processes. Collectively, all participants expressed the need for further education and training in ESE. Examples of participant responses can be seen in Table 7 and 8.

Table 7 Leader Knowledge of ESE Legislation. This table summarizes the opinions and statements made by leaders when asked about exceptional student education legislation.

Principal 1	It came from being very restrictive, very isolated, to now more include. When I started with ESE, we were always separate from the regular kids and we were on the back wing, but now when you see more of your ESE classrooms and ESE kids they're included in the general education process and that's how it's supposed to be. As we move forward, it's going to be more blended where you're going to lose more titles and it's just going to be kids learning and not have multiple teachers in there, but they teach multiple different ways to be more effective for all students in the classroom.
AP 1	I'll be honest with you, I don't know enough about it. I would just truthfully say over the years we've probably gained a lot more knowledge as to what particularly constitutes disabilities, probably classified more disabilities. So I would honestly just go along those lines. I don't know the exact verbiage to rattle off.
Principal 2	It goes way back to IDEA and a little bit before. It just really means, the gist of all legislation is that these are humans, these are students and they have the same rights as anybody that does not have a disability. The legislation all just deals around or deals with making sure that educational and life experiences are as equal and as equitable as we can make it for individuals that may have a disability.
LEA 2	I think it's evolving. It's not where it needs to be. You change the words, you change this, you can't…It's not where it needs to be. Like I said, we're evolving. The acceptance and our understanding is going to forever be evolving.
Principal 3	I would tell you that I know that the laws protect students with disabilities. Schools are not allowed to turn any student with a disability away. They will require the school to accommodate each student's disability. When it comes to discipline, ESE students can only be suspended from school up to ten days. After the ten day threshold you must have a hearing to ensure the behavior the student is being suspended for is not part of a manifestation of his disability. Even if you do get alternative education, those students can only be in that setting for up to forty-five days before they must return to the home school.
AP 3	I cannot tell you, well I think it started as just allowing students with disabilities access to free education but then has turned into protections for ESE students that don't take the best interests of the school or other students into account.
Principal 4	Legislation, I think in some way or another I understand is to have a different thin. I understand legislation's goal is to move everybody to inclusion, move these certain children out of self-contained and put them into mainstream. I understand the ideas behind that. I think legislation deals with one size fits all and you and I both know no rule, no building, no school is one size fits all. I think they have taken it into their hands to do that not out of malice or not. Just acknowledging that they know that we have that capacity, that some way or another trust has been lost. That's how I feel about legislation in ESE.
AP 4	I was going to say where if we put into place, we are held to the fact that we need to actually be providing those services for the children. In terms of the advocating side of ESE, I don't know. I don't know much about it.

Table 8 Teacher Knowledge of ESE Legislation. This table summarizes the opinions and statements made by teachers when asked about exceptional student education legislation.

GE 1	No general definition provided. Requested specific starters (i.e. Legislation).
ESE 1	No general definition provided. Requested specific starters (i.e. Legislation).
GE 2	All I can say is I don't know a lot of it. I don't know possibly any of it. What I have heard is there is a bigger movement for…What is it called? I just had it. People with Disability Act? Is that it? Individuals with Disability Act? The little that I know is that there is a push more to have students be included in regular education rather than pulling them out.
ESE 2	That I don't know.
GE 3	Let's see. Since my kids got out of high school, I haven't had to deal with it much. IDEA came along, and then we've got the ADA. All that started maybe back in the '70s. As far as where we're at today, not a whole lot. Even though I graduated not very long ago, those classes aren't very detailed. They're not very in depth. You don't come out with a lot of knowledge.
ESE 3	Personally, looking back at the history of ESE and where it's at now, I don't think that we've come very far. I still think we have a lot of issues with whether the kids get proper placement, proper services. A lot of times, in most schools I've been in, they're still focused on what they have available and how many students should be using services and how much services. I think that No Child Left Behind has created problems in the sense that they won't let ESE students fail because they are ESE students. From what I saw and learned from school from the 1980s and 90s and so on, I don't think we've come very far.
ESE 4	No general definition provided.

Leadership Skills

At the LEA level, at School 2, her goal as an ESE leader within the school, specifically for students receiving Inclusion services, is to make sure the students are accepted in the general education classroom. Just as all students are to be safe, comfortable, and included while at school, students with ESE services should be made to feel the same as well. When building the capacity for General Education Inclusion teachers, it is also about building the capacity for students with Inclusion services. She maintains an open-door policy for all teachers, both General Education teachers and ESE teachers. Her hope is to be able use her role as a leader to provide support that teachers need. If teachers are supported, then students are supported.

In the Principal role, Principal 4 brings her personal experience to her role. She had a child with an IEP and brings the understanding of the Individualized Education Plan. She states that it is important for leaders to know not just the paperwork requirement of ESE, but also to understand it. She brings her own personal knowledge and experiences of what the inclusion models should look like and the expectations for students with disabilities.

Working alongside Principal 4, AP 4 states that she doesn't "believe we disclude them." She explains that students should start in the General Education classroom with support as needed. Even for students currently in the self-contained setting, the goal is to begin pulling them into the General Education setting. Often this process starts with one subject area, then two, and ultimately a complete transition into the Inclusion program. In just the first few months of the school year, her current placement has followed this model with self-contained students and moved them successfully into the Inclusive program.

Principal 3 brings specific knowledge in curriculum that supports ESE students. She believes that students able to be successful in the inclusive program should remain in that program. In addition, she believes that students in the self-contained setting should be working their way back into the General Education setting if at all possible. Her specific knowledge and skills in supporting successful inclusion with curriculum comes from working with district coaches in directly supporting her school. She relies on using district support that provided to strengthen ESE at her school site and works towards providing quality education to her ESE population.

Principal 1 brings his experience as an ESE teacher who taught inclusion into his role supporting inclusion at his school. He understands a partnership between the General Education and ESE Teacher is important. He uses his experience and understanding to make sure that as a

principal he has collaborative planning for his teachers so that ESE Teachers are a part of the whole team. Working collaboratively as a team helps move students in the right direction.

Teacher Skills

General Education teacher participants understand and support the individual needs of all students in their classrooms, not just their students with ESE services or IEPs. GE 3 looks at each of her students just like they are her own children. She is focused on making them feel welcome and like they should be a part of her class. GE 2 provides a classroom environment built for all levels.

ESE 1 goes into the General Education classroom every day and works with all students, but makes sure she is pulling the students on her caseload and tracking their minutes in their IEPs to remain in compliance. ESE 2 goes into the General Education classroom based on her daily schedule and at times pulls students into a teacher pod area to work with those students on her caseload. ESE 3 maintains that as an Inclusion teacher, his role is to service students in the General Education classroom, not pull them out. Aside from ESE 1, ESE Inclusion teachers have found that General Education teachers lack the tools necessary to work with all of the individual differences on grade level, below grade level, above grade level, and even English Language Learners.

Research Question 2

The second research question explored how leaders are supporting the use of Assistive Technology to support effective inclusion. Leaders demonstrated similar lack of knowledge of Assistive Technology, thus limiting their responses on how they are directly supporting AT. One major trend arose across leaders based on their confusion between general classroom technology and ESE Assistive Technology.

Findings are substantiated by the unclear responses provided by each individual leader participant when asked to identify specific knowledge of defining Assistive Technology, and participant responses across all themes demonstrate no clear knowledge of Assistive Technology.

When asked to define "Assistive Technology," many leaders provided examples of AT in their definition of AT. Not one leader referenced the varying levels of AT, including no-tech, low-tech, medium-tech, and high-tech. Examples mentioned do range from no-tech to high-tech; however, none were identified or labeled as such.

Leader participants were unfamiliar with the range of devices considered AT until presented with the research. When reviewed, leaders were then able to realize the realm of AT that was currently in use within their school. In addition, leaders were able to understand the purpose behind the range of AT.

Leader participants all support technology in their schools. As leaders, the consensus is they are the first hand advocates for their schools to get technology. Leaders push for the implementation of technology, technology based programs, and for teacher implementation and use of technology. The goal for all leaders is to have teachers increase technology use in the classroom.

Research Question 3

The third research question explored how teachers are using Assistive Technology to support effective inclusion. Teachers demonstrated similar lack of knowledge of Assistive Technology, thus limiting their responses on how they are directly using AT. One major trend arose across teachers, just as it did with leaders, based on their confusion between general classroom technology and ESE Assistive Technology.

Findings are substantiated by the unclear responses provided by each individual teacher participant when asked to identify specific knowledge of defining Assistive Technology, and participant responses across all themes demonstrate no clear knowledge of Assistive Technology.

When asked to define "Assistive Technology," many teachers provided examples of AT in their definition of AT. Just as leaders did, teachers were unable to reference varying levels of AT, including no-tech, low-tech, medium-tech, and high-tech. Examples mentioned range from no-tech to high-tech; however, none were identified or labeled as such.

Teachers with backgrounds in ESE report using items such as pencil grips, spacers, highlighters, voice amplifiers, timers, sound boxes, specialized keyboards, and many others. Teachers provide access to these items for all students to assist them in the classroom. These AT devices allow students to access, receive, or be presented with content.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question explored how leaders and teachers address the ethics of justice, critique, care, and professionalism in the successful use of Assistive Technology in inclusion. Leaders and teachers all report that they remain aware of their responsibilities as professionals. In addition, at the forefront are the rights of students and families. With laws at the foundation of ethics, leaders and teachers report the focus to maintain a level of standard in demonstrating and upholding professionalism, whether dealing with General Education students or students in ESE.

The Theory of Justice focuses on fairness in individuals with rights established by the law and by society. Given the lack of knowledge of legislation, leaders and teachers do not demonstrate the knowledge of rights as established by the law. However, leaders and teachers,

are familiar with societal rights that have been established in education through their individual backgrounds, skills, and experiences.

The Theory of Critique focuses on the justness of laws, and in this theory, an issue is challenged and sought to be redefined. When faced with ethical decisions, most of the time leaders and teachers make those decisions as guided by legally binding laws. Law and ethics cannot be completely separated, however. Most of the time the legal thing to do will be the ethical thing to do; however, this is not always the case. Laws are open and require ethical deliberation (Howe & Miramontes, 1991).

The Theory of Care focuses on relationships. Responsibilities and relationships are emphasized, not rules, rights, or laws. Participants address relationships in how they view every ethical scenario faced, especially explaining that they report taking every situation into account from different perspectives. AP 3 states it well: “It’s about seeing a child as your child, a human being with their own personal ethics.”

Principal 3 believes education is about customer service. She asserts that showing care and justness in all scenarios can provide for the most ethical decision to be made no matter how big or small the scenario. Teachers report that showing a little care through a listening ear or a simple smile can go a long way, whether it is reciprocated among school staff or students and families.

The Theory of Professionalism focuses on the best interests of the student. One’s individual values and beliefs come into play when addressing complex issues where a conflict is present in professional ethics and personal ethics (Stockall and Dennis, 2015). Guiding personal ethics in education is the Code of Ethics. Upholding the Code of Ethics begins with the leader, as reported by all participants. Both leaders and teachers report modeling the Code of Ethics. In

contrast to teachers, all leaders report providing regularly scheduled Ethics training for their teachers, as outlined by the District. Principal 2 has gone one step further and created his own school wide Code of Ethics based on the FLDOE Code of Ethics for Teachers. Upholding the Code of Ethics is "very black and white" as stated by AP 1.

When addressing the Code of Ethics and individual scenarios, participants report that it all begins with a conversation. Often times, this corrects matters; however, in the event it does not, it is followed by another conversation and/or written documentation. Participants report that these conversations can be from leader to teacher or teacher to leader. In particular, leaders shared that addressing the Code of Ethics in conversation often results in no further action needed. However, in rare cases, it has resulted in resignation or termination beyond this discussion and/or documentation. Similarly, teachers shared that when addressing the Code of Ethics in conversation, it too often results in no further action needed.

Findings as Related to Literature

Table 9 Predictions vs. Actual Findings

Topic	Prediction	Findings
ESE Knowledge	Leaders will be more involved and knowledgeable about special education than those they lead.	No, teachers are more involved and knowledgeable about special education than their leaders.
Leadership	Seems to be that most leaders use a Distributed Leadership style.	Leaders and teachers seem to use a Distributed Leadership style.
Technology Integration	With leaders and teachers, multiple factors work together to successfully integrate technology.	Same finding as predicted.
Technology Use	Technology use by teachers will be driven by teachers research and exploring various models.	Teachers tend to use technology only as driven by leadership.

This study attempted to highlight factors that are essential for successful use of Assistive Technology in inclusive education programs at select Central Florida schools. Literature provides that there is a gap in the intersection of Assistive Technology and the inclusive

classroom. With the goal of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for students to be included in the Least Restrictive Environment with the supports needed to be successful, the use of technology for educational purposes must have guidelines for proper use and integration (Dalton & Roush, 2010).

Dalton and Roush (2010) identified possible challenges to research in the effective use of Assistive Technology in the inclusive classroom, including the many variables involved in the overall dynamic of special education. The present findings are substantiated by the literature, given a lack of knowledge of educators and researchers about the effective implementation of Assistive Technology.

ESE Knowledge

The history of special education presents events beginning with early development from individuals and groups leading up to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. The knowledge of these events, their historical importance, and meaning today fall directly on the special education leaders' knowledge base to best meet the needs of all students.

Given the research of Garner and Forbes (2013), the present findings substantiate their results of small percentage of leaders having knowledge in special education policy and procedures. This study supports that leaders and teachers have similar levels of knowledge in special education policy and procedures as found in the works of Garner and Forbes (2013). The literature further supports gaining a deep pedagogical knowledge and understanding of students with special needs.

Since the implementation of Public Law 94-142 in 1975 and the continuum of legalities and reauthorizations leading up to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the present investigation does not substantiate literature

findings. Literature supports that administrators must shift their time more and more to special education duties; however, the present findings demonstrate that leaders are not as involved in special education duties as teachers are.

Leadership

Through versions of Bush's (2011) Distributive Leadership Model, leaders are shifting special education duties onto teachers. Participants included a Local Education Agency Representative and an ESE District Coach. These participants represent much like the literature findings of Liasidou and Svensson's (2014) study on SENCOs.

The role of the LEA and the ESE District Coach require the same higher level of professional levels of education as SENCOs. Within the school site, leaders distribute duties to school site LEAs. At the district level, leaders are distributing duties to regional ESE District Coaches. These identified leaders remain a part of the leadership team and are just two dynamics of a special education leader found in this study.

Technology

The present research substantiates the literature of Kervin & Montei (2010). From the teacher's perspective, aspects such as the individual teacher's philosophy, technology aptitude, and student knowledge all come in to play in successful integration of technology. Though there is limited direct research on effective implementation of Assistive Technology in inclusive education, current research does provide some suggestions for components that could be effective in making implementation successful.

As participants report that technology available and technology use is equally provided and accessible to all classrooms, it is found used solely for district-mandated purposes. Participants do not substantiate recommendations in the literature, recommending teachers take

the time to explore technology, model technology, and then infuse the technology (Lamb & Johnson, 2011).

Literature provides nationally supported and implemented technology standards for education. Research findings have continued to substantiate gaps in technology literature, supporting the works of Dalton & Roush (2010) and the need for nationally developed and implemented standards to guide the true inclusion of students with disabilities in the 21st Century classroom.

Ethics

Shapiro and Stefkovich's Multiple Ethical Paradigms, including Theory of Justice, Theory of Critique, Theory of Care, and Theory of Professionalism intersect one another in their relationships to making legal and ethical decisions about AT in the inclusive classroom. Research provides findings that correlate ethics, ethical decisions, and ethics in practice in all theoretical scenarios to law and ethics.

Findings are substantiated by the research of Howe & Miramontes (1991), with participants agreeing that the laws are the guiding principles to remaining ethical in decisions. Ethics in education is at the forefront of literature and research. Ethics in education can be guided by written codes of ethics by numerous organizations as provided in literature and appendices.

Ethical Deliberations

Benjamin and Curtis (1981) (as cited in Howe and Miramontes, 1991) define ethical deliberation as seeking to answer one question. In simple terms, ethical deliberation may be: "What ought to be done in a given set of circumstances, all things considered?" (Howe &

Miramontes, p. 8, 1991) Although a seemingly simple thought, ethical deliberation is actually exceedingly complex, uncertain, tentative, and often personal or subjective.

Howe and Miramontes assert that there is no right answer to ethical deliberation. Ethical deliberation provides the intimate relation of laws and ethics to be seen as distinguishable. Through ethical deliberation, teachers and administrators in special education are able to deliberate the special duties and dangers in the field through both the legal and ethical perspectives. Everyone who faces deliberation in cases can bring their own subjective view of the results to be yielded. At the start of ethical deliberation, the use of an ethical code to guide along with the laws and legalities within the field can ultimately result in the best decision during deliberation (Howe & Miramontes, 2015).

Education, whether general or special, is faced with following educational law given specific guidelines. When it comes to the identification, assessment, and services of students with disabilities, parents are given their own rights when it comes to the compliance of the law to meet the individual student's needs. Stein and Sharkey introduce "Andres," a first grade student who received special education services in kindergarten; however, in first grade his parents' have now chosen to revoke special education services. For educators, facing a situation where parent(s) have chosen to revoke special education services for their student comes with both legal and ethical implications that schools must follow (Stein & Sharkey, 2014).

Parents are involved in the special education process from the start, beginning with the assessment and evaluation process. Parents remain a part of the process as participants in the Individualized Education Plan and are given the right to determine whether or not they agree with the services offered to their student. If a parent chooses to refuse or revoke special

education services based on their individual student, schools are often limited in their rights and further actions (Stein & Sharkey, 2014).

Special education is intersecting more and more with the general education population. Legislation has been focused on not only protecting the rights of students with disabilities, but also the rights of students in the general education population not receiving special services. Yell reports (as cited by Stein & Sharkey, 2014), “although students with disabilities need to receive an appropriate education, this did not mean that it was acceptable to ignore a student’s behaviors or the impact on the education of other students” (p. 170). Current laws based on court rulings determine that the inclusion of one student cannot be at the expense of another student's’ access to education (Stein & Sharkey, 2014).

Parents have the right to refuse or revoke special education services. Schools must comply with the parents request; however, now the student must be treated like every other general education student. One of the most notable differences is in the area of discipline: “Because the mission of school is to educate students and to become productive citizens, expelling a student whose behavior is the manifestation of a disability creates an ethical dilemma, even when the expulsion is legally permissible” (2014, p. 171). For “Andres,” ethical and legal tensions have become clear. To be treated like every other general education student, “Andres” disruptive classroom behaviors, although clearly an effect of his disability, can lead to general discipline protocol, including expulsion. Ethical implications are quite complicated when a parent chooses to refuse or revoke a student’s special education services (Stein & Sharkey, 2014).

Ethical principles can guide ethical practice. Principles include: autonomy, self-determination, privacy rights, and fair treatment. In “Andres” case, his school began to

implement interventions much like the Response to Intervention Tier system to support him while in the general education classroom in an attempt to limit the disruption of other students' education as well as increase his access to the general education. General education services can be used to support students who are not or no longer receiving special education services. Ethically, the response to refusal or revoking isn't certain. The ultimate goal is to work towards what is best for all students (Stein & Sharkey, 2014).

Limitations

Previously assumed limitations and weaknesses as well as additional limitations arose throughout this study, including:

- Desired District to study was unable to participate in the timeline in which this study was conducted.
- All desired school sites recommended were unable to participate in this study.
- Sample of participants in the school site were not all recommended and/or able to participate in this study.
- Not all participants were able to participate in face-to-face interviews.
- Not all participants were willing to have their interview tape recorded for data analysis purposes.
- It was assumed that individuals participating have the responsibility of meeting the mandates of NCLB and IDEA as it relates to Assistive Technology and Inclusion, as well as use Assistive Technology ethically and successfully to support effective inclusion.
- It was assumed that individuals participating would have basic knowledge of ESE and AT as it relates to inclusive education.
- Not all schools sampled included the same inclusive education program model.

Implications

As will be discussed below, the implications of putting this research into practice could have a major impact on successful inclusive education programs. In addition, putting this research into practice could have a major impact on the implementation of Assistive Technology in inclusive education programs. Lastly, implications of putting this research into practice could have direct impact on individual category roles identified in this study, for both leaders and teachers.

The role of any school personnel is vitally important. The role of a special education school leader and teacher are even more vitally important. Whether in an elementary, middle, high, charter school, center school, private school, or an inclusion setting, the role of any individual who works with students with special needs can be challenging.

One of the prominent trends in research is the lack of preparation, ultimately leading to a lack of knowledge. Individuals working in schools with students with special needs are lacking the preparation and knowledge to be successful special education leaders and teachers. Throughout the years, expectations have changed; however, the educational preparation programs seem to be lagging behind in this change. Special education leaders and teachers must be prepared not only to be good leaders, but also to be specialized in knowledge and law.

In any education role, it is essential to keep up with trends in education. Technology is becoming one of those trends. Success starts with support at the leadership level and involves collaboration and support among leaders and teachers. Educators have to take the time to explore and plan for technology integration. If the planning is not completed, then professional development will be generalized, leaders and teachers will be lost, and students will be as well.

Building a strong foundation in the knowledge and use of technology will allow for technology to become a support to learning not a part of learning.

In addition to ongoing trends, all educators face moral and ethical dilemmas. Often the focus must remain on the overall educational well-being of the student, not a personal feeling towards a situation. Given any situation faced, having a strong ethics education background can be a guide to making successful and positive ethical decisions. Preparation programs should be designed with an ethics focus infused throughout all curricular courses as well as taught through a single ethics course. Although course work may just be practice, it can come in handy when faced with a real ethical dilemma. Other times, ethical dilemmas that cannot be practiced are presented to educators, and having a strong knowledge of law and an ethical knowledge base will guide in the ethical decision being made.

Jenny Steinnes (2001) describes a philosophical view on ethics as it relates to special needs education. She states that “Educating teachers for special needs education is a responsibility to be taken seriously, maybe even more so than educating teachers in general” (p. 458, 2001). James Paul, Peter French, and Ann Cranston-Gingras (2001) further elaborate on the need for education teachers for special needs:

> Special education teachers, researchers, teacher educators, and policy-makers need more education and training in ethics to be able to address current moral dilemmas in assessment, instruction, curriculum, work with families, instructional competence, philosophy of service delivery, funding and research. The articulation of ethical theory needed to support practice and policy development are critical to the future of special education. (p. 1, 2001)

The future of special education is dependent on the knowledge and preparation of future teachers and administrators in the field. The basis of law knowledge as it relates ethics can be difficult to teach and practice. As in the Rowley case, laws are often legally binding, yet not always ethically correct. Ethics and legalities are equally distinguishable among individuals. Building a strong foundation in the knowledge of laws can guide ethical deliberation and decision making for special education.

Moving forward in education, special education preparation should be ongoing and continue beyond pre-service programs, focusing on the law and ethics. Many theorists, authors, and research contend that there is little to no focus of formal ethics teaching. Ethics instruction in the pre-service program along with special education law history can build a foundation for strong teachers and leaders in the 21st Century.

Recommendations

While interviewing participants, one factor was overwhelmingly obvious. Participants, both leaders and teachers, lack the knowledge base and understanding of students with special needs. Yet special education leadership is becoming the new form of educational leadership in the 21st century. Consequently, it is incumbent on districts to provide ongoing workshops, in-service round tables, and other meetings or trainings focusing on students with disabilities and the AT tools available at all technology levels. District-provided opportunities not only enhance learning about special education students, but also make learning accessible to all students.

Preparation

Educating and training future leaders and teachers in special education starts with an effective leadership program. Leadership should be provided at all stages of career preparation and beyond. Quality programs are designed around basic components. Programs focus on the

practice and field-based experiences where working with other professionals provides for real world experiences. Programs also include mentorship and internship opportunities as a staple to guide future educational leaders. A truly sound program is designed as a cohort model using a sequence of study (Milligan, et. al., 2012).

Special education leading and teaching are as complex, unique, and as diverse as the students in special education. Along with higher education preparation, continued pre-service leaders and teachers require specific experiences and mentoring to put into practice what they have learned in their higher education. Research states that there must be a correlation among higher education preparation programs, pre-service programs, and continued professional development for special education leaders and teachers (DiPaola, et. al., 2004).

Beyond the undergraduate and graduate level of preparation, preparation can continue through ongoing efforts, such as mentoring. Smith and Arsenault (2014) provide a detailed understanding of the importance of mentoring in education: “A mentor is a trusted and experienced supervisor or advisor who by mutual consent takes an active interest in the development and education of a younger, less experienced individual” (p. 461). As a part of any new teacher or leadership program, mentoring is an effective way to develop a beginning teacher or leader.

Mentoring relationships have been embraced by many universities and districts. Mentoring has become a priority for educational development programs to stimulate practice, role clarity, and technical context socialization. Although mentoring is becoming a part of education teacher and leader development, little research focuses on the importance of mentoring in special education teacher and leader development (Smith & Arsenault, 2014).

Technology

The first step in technology integration begins with the planning process. Designing a plan is individual to each school. While one school may be successful at integrating technology in one way, that model may not be universally successful in all school settings. Technology integration planning starts with the school infrastructure as a guide to meet faculty and instructional needs. Once the needs to be met are determined, realistic goals can be formulated that include both long-term and short-term goals that are flexible (Overbay, et. al., 2010).

As a part of the planning process, leaders must also consider the financial aspect of integrating something new. Funding can be difficult in today's schools, especially for things seen as 'extras' like technology. Leaders can include in their planning process goals to gain support from various people/groups. Sometimes it means getting creative and using infrastructure funding, building funds, and even textbook funds to make purchases not otherwise supported. Moving forward in the planning process begins with securing the funds to secure the technology (Levin & Schrum, 2014).

Once a plan has been designed and funding has been secured, building professional development can begin. Professional development will give teachers the time to become comfortable with new technology prior to the actual implementation within the curriculum and instruction. Professional development should be included in the technology plan as well as the school's budget (if necessary). Most successful technology professional development is ongoing and based on the individual needs of teachers, not the faculty as a whole (Overbay, et. al., 2010; Levin & Schrum, 2014)

Some teachers will be more comfortable with technology integration or even just technology in general. To support those unfamiliar teachers and build on the strengths of those

familiar teachers, technology can become a collaborative process. By working together, teachers can share and construct learning. Peers working together can build on one another's strengths while gaining the understanding of technology to successfully integrate it (Overbay, et. al., 2010).

The more people involved in the implementation of technology integration, the more likely it will be successful. Collaboration can prevent turnover, lead to district support, as well as a distributed leadership model. Levin & Schrum support the use of a distributed leadership model for technology integration (2014). Changing what a school is integrating, or even how it is integrating an existing item, often requires the use of a distributed leadership model to foster support and strength (Levin & Schrum, 2014).

The implementation process does not happen overnight. Implementation starts with the leader before it ever moves into the hands of a classroom teacher. With proactive leadership, planning, developing, learning, and guiding technology, integration in the curriculum can be successful.

Ethics

Knowledge of ethics in education begins with teacher preparation. Sileo, Sileo, & Pierce (2008) present that addressing the preparation of school personnel in ethics and morality. "Many teacher preparation programs may not equip teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to make moral judgements and decisions necessary to provide high quality education for all students" (Sileo, et. al., p. 43, 2008). Teaching is a profession that is and should be guided by ethical principles.

Ethics in special education has received little attention as a field of inquiry or a topic in teacher preparation (Howe & Miramontes, 1991). Preparation for teachers to resolve ethical

dilemmas with the right sensitivity is essential. Preparation begins with ethics education. Ethics education should focus on knowledge, skills, and dispositions of ethics. As of Sileo, et. al.'s report, teacher education plays a prominent role in ethics education to prepare future teachers; however, there is much debate about how to accomplish effective ethics preparation. Bebeau, et. al., (as cited in Sileo, et. al., p. 45, 2008) provide instructional strategies that can enhance teachers' abilities to understand and explore ethics in education, including: case studies, field experiences, journals, role-playing, simulations, and videotaping with reflection. Studies focused on analyzing the effects of teacher preparation programs on ethical knowledge in education can provide answers to ethics, ethical dilemmas, and ethics in practice in special education.

Recommendations from Sileo, et. al.'s, study reveal that ethics education should be infused throughout educational studies, rather than delivered through one course. Additional research can be founded upon recommendations are presented by Sileo, et. al. for teacher preparation programs to better prepare teachers to work through situations, much like "Andres" in Stein & Sharkey's (2014) article:

> 1. Teacher educators may wish to examine the extent to which programs address ethical and professional practices and standards to ensure teachers' ability to make moral judgements and decisions.
> 2. They may wish to scrutinize current ethical and professional practices and standards within their departments and universities.
> 3. Teacher educators may wish to consider the ethical and professional practices and standards teachers bring to university settings.
> 4. They may wish to work closely with local education agencies to identify ethical issues teachers face on a daily and weekly basis. (Sileo, et. al., p. 53, 2008)

Future Research

At the conclusion of this study, a legitimate question arises as to what makes for successful and/or effective inclusive education programs. A secondary question rises as to what makes for successful and/or effective implementation of AT in the inclusive education program. Several possibilities exist for future research based on the preliminary literature findings further supported by research findings.

Inclusion

Preliminary research found it necessary to develop research models that consider the needs of the inclusive environment, including the perspectives of students, teachers, and administrators (Dalton & Roush, 2010). Research findings support that future research continues to be necessary. In addition, research should continue on the attention of special education administration (Connor, 1963).

Several possibilities exist for future research focused on the design of inclusive education models and the effectiveness. This study reported findings of various model designs of inclusive education programs; however, the design was not the focus. The perceptions of participants designing and working directly in the inclusive dynamic focusing on the model could provide further answers to effective inclusion that this study did not. In addition, the opinions of what is effective and what is not could provide for areas of improvement for leaders and teachers in special education. The opinions of participants would be a valuable piece to the development of an effective inclusive education program for use in all Central Florida Schools.

Many of the participants spoke about prerequisite knowledge, skills, and preparation programs when working in Exceptional Student Education. A study of the components of teacher preparation programs, leadership preparation programs, and district provided trainings would

ensure that new ESE teachers and leaders, as well as current ESE teachers and leaders, are more prepared for effectively leading and teaching.

Technology

Just as Maor, Currie, & Drewry conclude, further research must continue to be done in the area of Assistive Technology in special education. Technology is rapidly changing, and "it is difficult for researchers to keep up with new technology that could assist students" (Maor, et. al., 2011). Future analysis should move further into qualitative studies on theoretically sound use of educational technologies and the effectiveness on student learning.

Another study could explore the generalized use and the effectiveness of educational technology for learning purposes for all students. The study would consist of both qualitative and quantitative data collection. The process would begin with surveying the differing types of technology available as well as the differing uses for technology across content areas for both teachers and students. In addition, the study would consist of interviewing teacher participants to gain personal attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and opinions of technology for learning purposes. Lastly, the study would consist of observing teachers and students on the direct use and purpose of technology for learning.

Just as many of the participants spoke about prerequisite knowledge, skills, and preparation programs when working in Exceptional Student Education, many also spoke about the lack of knowledge and training in technology use. In addition to a study on the components relating to ESE, components of integrating technology through teacher preparation programs, leadership programs, and district provided trainings would ensure that teachers and leaders are successfully implementing and using technology.

Future research yields a focus on whether or not specific technology integration has been successful or consistently supported by research. So where do we go from here? How can educators integrate technology in the curriculum using new technology in new ways while also meeting content area standards? How can educators integrate technology using a teacher-directed, student-centered instructional approach? The process has only just begun.

Preparation

With all participants expressing the desire for more education and training due to a lack of knowledge, future research should focus on pre-service programs in undergraduate and graduate education. A qualitative study would focus on undergraduate and graduate education and practice in the field of special education through interviews and observations. Data collection would focus on the design of programs and content presented.

Results from such a study would further the development of pre-service programs to meet ever changing 21st Century education and the need for the implementation of new undergraduate and graduate programs for special education. Pre-service undergraduate and graduate programs need to be designed to educate future educators in the field of special education. Moving forward from undergraduate and into graduate programs, research and re-design yields ongoing study and evaluation of programs.

Conclusions

In reporting of these research findings, both in this study and directly back to participants, leaders and teachers reciprocally were surprised to find that there existed such consistency not only within their individual school sites, but also across multiple school sites. Taken together, the data paint a compassionate image of dedicated people who might be missing supports, not just for AT as it relates to ESE inclusion, but AT as it relates to Universal Inclusion. Given the

variety of inclusive education program models, it is clear that no amount of or lack of knowledge is a dependent variable to inclusive education.

Special education leadership continues to face challenges. Challenges begin with higher education and move through into pre-service practice with continued professional development. Becoming an effective special education leader starts with a good leader: “Effective leadership does not happen by accident” (Milligan, et. al., 2012).

Future educational leaders must begin their educational process with a focus on law, ethics, and politics in education. Graduate programs can be designed to focus on special education leadership, like Project LEAD, as well. Once graduates move out of the educational studies, they must move into pre-service practice and experience. One way of growing as an educational leader and gaining the experience necessary to become an effective educational leader is to go through a mentoring process. If a leader has a desire to focus on special education leadership, but not whole school administration, some areas offer special education leadership roles, like SENCO. No matter the role or dynamic, it all begins with a good higher education base.

Applying research findings and prior studies, future studies can be done on 21st century special education leaders. As inclusion becomes a part of 21st century schools and classrooms, educational leaders are going from being experienced to inexperienced. Research can be done to determine how current educational leaders can gain the expertise needed to lead in the up-and-coming field of special education leadership. Further research can be completed based on current leaders’ education and training experiences, as well as their level of law knowledge. Are our current leaders prepared to lead? Will our future leaders be prepared to lead?

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Florida Principal Leadership Standards

The Florida Principal Leadership Standards. (n.d.). Retrieved December 5, 2015, from http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/professional-dev/the-fl-principal-leadership-stards

Student Achievement

Standard 1: Student Learning Results. Effective school leaders achieve results on the school's student learning goals.

Standard 2: Student Learning as a Priority. Effective school leaders demonstrate that student learning is their top priority through leadership actions that build and support a learning organization focused on student success.

Instructional Leadership

Standard 3: Instructional Plan Implementation. Effective school leaders work collaboratively to develop and implement an instructional framework that aligns curriculum with state standards, effective instructional practices, student learning needs and assessments.

Standard 4: Faculty Development. Effective school leaders recruit, retain and develop an effective and diverse faculty and staff.

Standard 5: Learning Environment. Effective school leaders structure and monitor a school learning environment that improves learning for all of Florida's diverse student population.

Organizational Leadership

Standard 6: Decision Making. Effective school leaders employ and monitor a decision-making process that is based on vision, mission and improvement priorities using facts and data.

Standard 7: Leadership Development. Effective school leaders actively cultivate, support, and develop other leaders within the organization.

Standard 8: School Management. Effective school leaders manage the organization, operations, and facilities in ways that maximize the use of resources to promote a safe, efficient, legal, and effective learning environment.

Standard 9: Communication. Effective school leaders practice two-way communications and use appropriate oral, written, and electronic communication and collaboration skills to accomplish school and system goals by building and maintaining relationships with students, faculty, parents, and community.

Professional & Ethical Behavior

Standard 10: Professional and Ethical Behaviors. Effective school leaders demonstrate personal and professional behaviors consistent with quality practices in education and as a community leader.

Appendix B

Characteristics

Lynch, J. M. (2012). Responsibilities of Today's Principal: Implications for Principal Preparation Programs and Principal Certification Policies. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 31(2), 40-47.

"1st: As managers of personnel, the principal ensures the hiring of qualified professionals, which directly affects hiring and mentoring practices.

2nd: As managers of students, the principal influences the moral character of students by implementing discipline procedures.

3rd: Through government and public relations, the principal influences both the state and community level perceptions of the school.

4th: As manager of external development, the principal serves as the school's advocate by securing resources and promoting the public image of the school.

5th: As a manager of finances, the principal is now responsible for tasks once assumed by central office staff, such as balancing the school budget, cutting costs, and raising funds.

6th: The principal develops long-term plans to promote the school's vision, mission, and goals.

7th: As a manager of instruction and academic performance, the principal heavily influences the development of learning environments that contribute to increased academic performance" (Lynch, p.41, 2012).

Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 as adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) on December 12, 2007.

Council of Chief State School Officers. (1996). Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards for school leaders. Washington, DC. Available at http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2008/Educational_Leadership_Policy_Standards_2008.pdf

Standard 1:

An education leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.

Standard 2:

An education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Standard 3:

An education leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Standard 4:

An education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Standard 5:

An education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Standard 6:

An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Educational Leadership Program Standards-Building Level-2011

Educational Leadership Program Recognition Standards (ELCC). (n.d.). Retrieved December 5, 2015, from http://www.npbea.org/ncateelcc/

ELCC Standard 1.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by collaboratively facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a shared school vision of learning through the collection and use of data to identify school goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and implement school plans to achieve school goals; promotion of continual and sustainable school improvement; and evaluation of school progress and revision of school plans supported by school-based stakeholders.

ELCC Standard 2.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning through collaboration, trust, and a personalized learning environment with high expectations for students; creating and evaluating a comprehensive, rigorous and coherent curricular and instructional school program; developing and supervising the instructional and leadership capacity of school staff; and promoting the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning within a school environment.

ELCC Standard 3.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by ensuring the management of the school organization, operation, and resources through monitoring and evaluating the school management and operational systems; efficiently using human, fiscal, and technological resources in a school environment; promoting and protecting the welfare and safety of school students and staff; developing school capacity for distributed leadership; and ensuring that teacher and organizational time is focused to support high-quality instruction and student learning.

ELCC Standard 4.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources on behalf of the school by collecting and analyzing information pertinent to improvement of the school's educational environment; promoting an understanding, appreciation, and use of the diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources within the school community; building and sustaining positive school relationships with families and caregivers; and cultivating productive school relationships with community partners.

ELCC Standard 5.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner to ensure a school system of accountability for every student's academic and social success by modeling school principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior as related to their roles within the school; safeguarding the values of democracy, equity, and diversity within the school; evaluating the potential moral and legal consequences of decision making in the school; and promoting social justice within the school to ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling.

ELCC Standard 6.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context through advocating for school students, families, and caregivers; acting to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning in a school environment; and anticipating and assessing emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt school-based leadership strategies.

ELCC Standard 7.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student through a substantial and sustained educational leadership internship experience that has school-based field experiences and clinical internship practice within a school setting and is monitored by a qualified, on-site mentor.

2014 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders

Council of Chief State School Officers. (2014). Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards for school leaders. Washington, DC. Available at http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2014/Draft%202014%20ISLLC%20Standards%2009102014.pdf

Standard 1: Vision and Mission

An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by ensuring the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a childcentered vision of quality schooling that is shared by all members of the school community.

Standard 2: Instructional Capacity

An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by enhancing instructional capacity.

Standard 3: Instruction

An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by promoting instruction that maximizes student learning.

Standard 4: Curriculum and Assessment

An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by promoting robust and meaningful curricula and assessment programs.

Standard 5: Community of Care for Students

An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by promoting the development of an inclusive school climate characterized by supportive relationships and a personalized culture of care.

Standard 6: Professional Culture for Teachers and Staff

An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by promoting professionally normed communities for teachers and other professional staff.

Standard 7: Communities of Engagement for Families

An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by promoting communities of engagement for families and other stakeholders.

Standard 8: Operations and Management

An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by ensuring effective and efficient management of the school or district to promote student social and academic learning.

Standard 9: Ethical Principles and Professional Norms

An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by adhering to ethical principles and professional norms.

Standard 10: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by ensuring the development of an equitable and culturally responsive school.

Standard 11: Continuous School Improvement

An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by ensuring the development of a culture of continuous school improvement.

Appendix C

Council for Exceptional Children

Special Education Professional Code of Ethical Principles

"Professional special educators are guided by the CEC professional ethical principles, practice standards, and professional policies in ways that respect the diverse characteristics and needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families. They are committed to upholding and advancing the following principles:

1. Maintaining challenging expectations for individuals with exceptionalities to develop the highest possible learning outcomes and quality of life potential in ways that respect their dignity, culture, language, and background.

2. Maintaining a high level of professional competence and integrity and exercising professional judgment to benefit individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

3. Promoting meaningful and inclusive participation of individuals with exceptionalities in their schools and communities.

4. Practicing collegially with others who are providing services to individuals with exceptionalities.

5. Developing relationships with families based on mutual respect and actively involving families and individuals with exceptionalities in educational decision making.

6. Using evidence, instructional data, research, and professional knowledge to inform practice.

7. Protecting and supporting the physical and psychological safety of individuals with exceptionalities.

8. Neither engaging in nor tolerating any practice that harms individuals with exceptionalities.

9. Practicing within the professional ethics, standards, and policies of CEC; upholding laws, regulations, and policies that influence professional practice; and advocating improvements in the laws, regulations, and policies.

10.Advocating for professional conditions and resources that will improve learning outcomes of individuals with exceptionalities.

11.Engaging in the improvement of the profession through active participation in professional organizations.

12.Participating in the growth and dissemination of professional knowledge and skills.

Approved, January 2010"

http://www.cec.sped.org/~/media/Files/Standards/Professional%20Ethics%20and%20Practice%20Standards/Ethics%20Translations/CEC_Ethics_English.pdf

Appendix D

National Association of Special Education Teachers

Code of Ethics

“The Code of Ethics of the National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET) established principles and guidelines to enhance practice and inspire professional excellence. Members of NASET must recognize a responsibility to children with special needs, their parents, the community, to other professionals, and to themselves.

NASET adheres to the idea that a commonly held set of principles can aid in the individual exercise of professional judgment. The Code of Ethics speaks to the core values of the profession.

The term "NASET Members" as used throughout represents all members of the National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET)

The following Six Principles adopted by the National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET) are not laws, but standards of ethical behavior and conduct. Adherence to this Code of Ethics is a binding condition of membership in National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET)

Principle 1: NASET Members nurture the academic, psychological, physical, and social potential of children with special needs

1-A. NASET Members promote growth in all students through the integration of academic, psychological, physical, and social learning.

1-B. NASET Members respect the inherent dignity and worth of the children with whom they work

1-C. NASET Members help children with special needs to value their own identity, learn more about their disabilities, and help them reflect on their own learning and connect it to their life experience.

Principle 2: NASET Members apply their professional knowledge to create a professional and supportive environment for children with special needs.

2-A. NASET Members apply their professional knowledge to promote student success.

2-B. NASET Members develop and implement programs based upon a strong understanding of human development and learning theory.

2-C. NASET Members advocate for necessary resources for students to achieve their highest level of success

2-D. NASET Members strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources for children with special needs.

Principle 3:NASET Members commit to their own learning in order to develop their professional development.

3-A. NASET Members recognize that professional knowledge and development are the foundations of their practice.

3-B. NASET Members know their subject matter and respect the reciprocal nature of learning between themselves and the children with whom they work.

3-C. NASET Members engage in a variety of individual and collaborative learning experiences essential to develop professionally, drawing on and contributing to various forms of educational research to improve their own practice.

3-D. NASET Members practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

3-E. NASET Members pursue knowledge of new developments and maintain competence in their respective fields through education, training, or supervised experience.

Principle 4: NASET Members respect, support, and collaborate with colleagues and other professionals in the interest of children with special needs with whom they work.

4-A. NASET Members encourage and support their colleagues to build and maintain high standards.

4-B. NASET Members respect fellow professionals and work to maintain a collegiality with the individuals in their respective professions.

4-C. NASET Members shall not maliciously injure the professional reputation or practice of colleagues.

4-D. NASET Members shall not make false or malicious statements regarding a colleague's competence, performance, or professional capabilities.

Principle 5: NASET Members collaborate with parents of children with special needs and community, building trust and respecting confidentiality.

5-A. NASET Members cooperate with community agencies in using resources and building comprehensive services in support of children with specials needs.

5-B. NASET Members partner with parents of children with special needs and other members of the community to enhance programs for children with special needs.

5-C. NASET Members understand how cultural diversity, family dynamics, gender, and community shape the lives of the individuals with whom they collaborate.

5-D. NASET Members understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change.

5-E. NASET Members respect the private nature of the special knowledge they have about children and their families and use that knowledge only in the students' best interests.

Principle 6: NASET Members advance the intellectual and ethical foundation of the learning community.

6-A. NASET Members recognize the obligations of the trust placed in them.

6-B. NASET Members are confidantes, mentors and advocates for growth and development.

6-C. NASET Members recognize that they are role models for children, youth and the public.

6-D. NASET Members are continually aware of the mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of NASET, and practice in a manner consistent with them.

6-E. NASET Members always seek to maintain the highest level of professionalism, integrity, and competence when working with children, youth parents, professionals, and all other members of society."

http://www.naset.org/2444.0.html

Appendix E

National Education Association

Code of Ethics

Preamble

The National Education Association believes that the education profession consists of one education workforce serving the needs of all students and that the term ‘educator’ includes education support professionals.

The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of the democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards.

The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession indicates the aspiration of all educators and provides standards by which to judge conduct.

The remedies specified by the NEA and/or its affiliates for the violation of any provision of this Code shall be exclusive and no such provision shall be enforceable in any form other than the one specifically designated by the NEA or its affiliates.

PRINCIPLE I

COMMITMENT TO THE STUDENT

The educator strives to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator--

1. Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning.

2. Shall not unreasonably deny the student's access to varying points of view.

3. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress.

4. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.

5. Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.

6. Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, or sexual orientation, unfairly--

Exclude any student from participation in any program

Deny benefits to any student

Grant any advantage to any student

7. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.

8. Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

PRINCIPLE II

COMMITMENT TO THE PROFESSION

The education profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service.

In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment, to achieve conditions that attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education, and to assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified persons.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the profession, the educator--

1. Shall not in an application for a professional position deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications.

2. Shall not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications.

3. Shall not assist any entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute.

4. Shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a professional position.

5. Shall not assist a noneducator in the unauthorized practice of teaching.

6. Shall not disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

7. Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague.

8. Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or action.

Adopted by the NEA 1975 Representative Assembly

http://www.nea.org/home/30442.htm

Appendix F

Interview Protocol

Research Interview Questions

Introductory Questions

- What is your current role and experience in education?
- What is your current role as it relates to exceptional student education? Inclusion? The IEP team/process?
- What is your background in exceptional student education? Inclusion?

Topic Based Questions

- What knowledge and skills do leaders bring to the role in supporting the inclusive program?
- How are leaders supporting the use of Assistive Technology to support effective inclusion?
- How are teachers using Assistive Technology to support effective inclusion?
    - How would you define exceptional student education?
    - What can you tell me about exceptional student education legislation?
        - Elementary and Secondary Education Act
        - PARC v. Pennsylvania and Mills (1972) v. Board of Education (1972)
        - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
        - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
        - Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA)-P.L. 94-142
        - Handicapped Children's Protection Act (HCPA)
        - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
        - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
        - No Child Left Behind
        - IDEA
    - How would you define inclusion?
        - What is FAPE?
        - What is the FAPE process at your school?
            - How is this provided for all students, both students with and without disabilities?
        - What is the Least Restrictive Environment?
            - What placements are available to students with disabilities at your school?
            - What is the process in determining a student's LRE?
    - What are supplementary aids and services?
        - What is the difference between an accommodation and a modification?
    - How would you define Assistive Technology?
    - What can you tell me about Assistive Technology legislation?

        - Technology-Related Assistance Act for Individuals with Disabilities (Tech Act)
        - IDEA
        - No Child Left Behind
    - What steps are taken when developing a student's IEP regarding AT?
        - Who is involved in the developing of a student's IEP in regards to AT?
        - Are assessments used? If so, who conducts them and what types are conducted?
            - What is done with the results? How are they analyzed, who analyzes them, and how do they guide in the development of the IEP?
        - What is specified on the IEP about AT?
            - Are the types of learning environments specified? How?
            - Are the uses for specific AT are specified? How?
        - What guiding principles, if any, are used during the selection and implementation of AT during the IEP process.
            - How are families involved in the developing and implementing AT devices?
    - What types of AT tools are written in students IEPs?
        - How are they implemented in the classroom?
            - How are AT devices infused in a student's daily routine?
        - How often are they implemented?
        - What is their purpose?
    - What types of additional AT tools are used in the classroom?
        - Low-tech?
        - Mid-tech?
        - High-tech?
    - Computers
        - How do you evaluate computer use for students in the classroom?
        - How do you evaluate specific software use for students in the classroom?
    - BYOD
        - Do you use and/or implement BYOD for students in the classroom?
        - If so, how do you evaluate use for students?
    - What barriers are faced when implementing AT in inclusion? Including funding, training, knowledge, support, student population, demographics, administrative/district support, etc.
        - How do you overcome these barriers?

Leadership Based Questions

- How would you define leadership?
    - How would you define yourself as a special education leader?
    - How would you define yourself as an inclusion leader?
    - What is your role as a technology leader?

- SENCOs are special educational needs coordinators working within the context of educational leadership. The pressure is on schools to incorporate the use of SENCOs to lead change in the schools alongside formative educational leaders. How does your school incorporate SENCOs or those of the like within leadership roles specific to exceptional student education?
- What is your role as a technology leader?
    - How do you integrate technology in the classroom?
    - How do you determine the purchase and/or integration of AT in the classroom?
        - How do you evaluate what teachers know, what they need to know, what will they actually use, and what investments will need to be made on behalf of the school as a whole?
- How does your school try to increase inclusion for students with disabilities?
    - In what ways do you, as a leader, support inclusion for:
        - Students
        - Teachers
        - Families
- How do leaders and teachers address ethics in the successful use of Assistive Technology in inclusion?
    - How does ethics play a role in your leadership decisions in regards to students with disabilities and inclusion?
    - How are the laws and ethics in education related?
    - Could you recall a scenario where your ethics have been challenged because of a legally binding law, as it relates to exceptional student education? Could you summarize what the ethical dilemma was and what was the outcome in the end?
    - How do you uphold the Code of Ethics? Whether it be based on the:
        - Council for Exceptional Children: Special Education Professional Code of Ethical Principles?
        - National Association of Special Education Teachers Code of Ethics
        - National Education Association Code of Ethics
    - *Principal/District Level Specific: How do you uphold the Educational Leadership Standards?
- What would you say, overall, is your role in 21st Century Leadership as it relates to ethics in practice?

Is there anything else that you would like to share about Assistive Technology, inclusion, or decision-making in your school?

Appendix G

Responses to Terminology Definitions

Code words and phrases have been identified and are in bold.

Table G.1 Leadership Defined.

Principal 1	Leadership is getting **people**, inspiring people to do things they normally wouldn't want to do and getting them on the **same page** on that same **goal** as the leader.
AP 1	Leadership is just forming **relationships** and getting those that work for you I desire and want to follow you. It's not just coming in and saying I'm the boss you need to follow me. It's the fact that you need to have that relationship and you need to have that buy in so that you are not telling the staff to do something, you're **going with** the staff in that direction. They're moving with you. So you have to get that buy in towards not common vision and common goal. It's not just demanding or telling, it's leading by example, building relationships, and it's getting those to buy into your cause.
Principal 2	Leadership is willing to do what is needed at any point in time. The other part of leadership is **communicating** your **vision**, action and framing, so that people can see what is not always clearly seen. You're not leading if no one's **following**.
LEA 2	Building capacity…Building confidence…A leader who **builds leaders**.
Principal 3	Leadership is setting the **vision** for everyone. Your job as a leader is to listen. Be willing to get in there and do the work with whoever you **are working with**.
AP 3	I **don't think leadership means you're the expert**. You can listen and make the most appropriate decision.
Principal 4	The best I can give you is it needs to be ever-changing. It is **collaborative**. It is awareness of culture, awareness of learning, awareness of your community, awareness of the learning. It is being actionable, the willingness to be actionable in regarding those things. Then timing, gauging the appropriate time for something. I think that that comes with prioritizing.
AP 4	Leadership is putting together a **team of people** who have not only specific roles, but also specific expertise, and **building their capacity** in order to share their knowledge with others.

TableG.2 Define Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

Principal 1	It should be a process or classroom environment where learning is taking place and various techniques ultimate **support** for students not just for students that have been identified as having some special needs. It should be a collaboration between the general education and the ESE teacher.
AP 1	An **educational experience** for those students who have disabilities, whether it be intellectual or physical. Education that allows them to **succeed** and a public school system.
Principal 2	A service model. It's not a place for a designation or a label. It's actually an **instructional mode**l needed to make each particular student successful based on their physical and cognitive abilities, as well as probably their social abilities, as well. It's an instructional model. It's not a place or a label.
LEA 2	It's just that students **learn differently**, all of our students. I tell our parents all the time, these students aren't disabled. They're just differently-abled. They do things differently, and we, as a society, have to learn how to teach them in the way that they learn. We're not trying to get them to adapt to the way we learn. We have to adapt and teach them the way they learn. That's with any of our students. They learn in different ways so we have to adapt whatever it is, our teaching style, our curriculum. We adapt it to all students and their specific needs. Whether it's their learning, whether it's their culture, whether it's their language, we adapt to what they need.
Principal 3	Providing the **necessary support** to students in a variety of ways. Starting with the least restrictive environment first.
AP 3	Giving **necessary support** for students to be academically successful in the least restrictive environment.
Principal 4	These students are your Tier Two students. Some of them may be Tier Three, so you have to already go in with these types of, to have a perspective as a teacher, Okay, these are automatically my Tier Two students because they don't learn or they need **different types of access to it**. Tier Two already comes in with an Individualized Education Plan, you just have to make sure you're guiding them over that and that you understand that.
AP 4	Students need **extra support** in order to be successful.

Table G.3 Define Inclusion.

Principal 1	A blended classroom. A **blend of different learning styles** in one classroom with different teachers trying to meet those different learning styles. It shouldn't be just one traditional teacher that teaches a certain way you should be able to blend different learning and different teaching styles in order to make sure every kid is being **successful.**
AP 1	An **educational setting** that provides an **equal opportunity for all students**, again no matter their intellectual level or physical disabilities, it's a setting that allows for success for all.
Principal 2	Allows the student with the disability that's being **included in the regular education environment** to experience **success** in whatever environment they're being included in. A successful inclusion environment is where that student who has a disability is included in with the regular education kids like they would normally be, whether it's academic or for social reasons, whatever the reason is and they, along with their peers that they're being included with, all experience success.
LEA 2	It's just **accepting**.
Principal 3	Ensure that you are placing them in a **general education class** and not putting them in mainly an ESE classroom. You wouldn't want over 50% of the classroom to be ESE students.
AP 3	Where the students are in the general education class and they **receive support** in the classroom.
Principal 4	Has to be **based on the child's** readiness.
AP 4	Providing an ESE student with the opportunity to be in the **general education classroom** and still **providing them with the support** they would need to be **successful.**

Table G.4 Define Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Principal 1	If you give it in the **least restrictive environment** and give them an opportunity to learn in a regular General Education classroom, we are meeting FAPE because we are providing them everything that they need and we are not putting them in an isolated classroom.
AP 1	An education for all that is **appropriate** for all. Meaning, that it suits the needs of all students. So an education that is accessible to all and meets the needs of every student and does not leave out any student.
Principal 2	Whether or not it's **appropriate** for that child, whether that kid's, that child's in the right teacher's classroom with the right number of students, all of that has to be re-evaluated.
LEA 2	Making sure that all of our children have the **access to the education** that they deserve and they are taught where they are, and they're able to achieve to their abilities.
Principal 3	Ensure that you are placing them in a **general education class** and not putting them in mainly an ESE classroom. You wouldn't want over 50% of the classroom to be ESE students
AP 3	They have the right to a **free education** regardless of the student's disabilities.
Principal 4	Has to be **based on the child's** readiness.
AP 4	It goes **hand in hand with anything we would need to provide to them according to their plan**. Our goal is to in fact give every student the tools they need to be successful.

Table G.5 Define Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Principal 1	A **blended classroom**. I mean just that's the biggest thing I can think of. My model of inclusion here, what I like to see just a blend of different learning styles in one classroom with different teachers trying to meet those different learning styles. It shouldn't be just one traditional teacher that teaches a certain way you should be able to blend different learning and different teaching styles in order to make sure every kid is being successful.
AP 1	The Least Restrictive Environment goes along the lines of, again an environment that **promotes success for all** and **does not put limitations or any restrictions** on the ability for them to succeed.
Principal 2	Just because we put kids in the inclusion environment, if the child is not **learning and growing** and having **a positive experience**, then that's not a good environment for the kid and that whole situation needs to be re-evaluated.
LEA 2	When we **start** at the Least Restrictive Environment, we're going to **give them inclusion limits**. We start with the mainstream teacher. Then we revisit in a couple months if it's not working. If it's not working, then do we need to revisit it? Do we need to increase the number of minutes? If we need to change the model, and then we pull out. Not in lieu of but in addition to.
Principal 3	Always going to **start with a General Education inclusion** setting and then see if the supports given are going to work, at least six to nine weeks to see. If not making progress then add more supports. Look at students education and if they are improving.
AP 3	General Education population, but it also depends on the kid. **What is least restrictive for one is not always least restrictive for another**. To me it's the environment the kid needs to be in to be successful.
Principal 4	We sit back and we include everybody into the conversation. I love the **flexibility** my General Education teachers have. We had a student that he wasn't being successful and he needed...He had inclusion but was not successful in that model, however we put him...Where he wasn't successful in resource, he needed that intensity and to be with that teacher.
AP 4	They're allowed to, they are **given the opportunity** to be with their peers and to **experience the same experiences as their peers**, but they're given the **support**.

Table G.6 Define Supplementary Aids & Services (Accommodation code words in **bold** & Modification code words in *italics*)

Principal 1	Accommodation is basically looking at their assignment and trying to **accommodate** them to put them in the best way to be successful. A modification we are *modifying the assignment*.
AP 1	A modification would be, it's a regular lesson, but you notice that maybe real quick that flexibility where you can quickly *modify* it to meet their needs. Whereas an accommodation is something that you've already planned for or that you're providing like with a test. So you're giving them that **extra time** or you're giving them a nots with some of them already filled in so there maybe not doing the whole thing. Where the modification to me would be on the fly, you're quickly making those adjustments when you see fit.
Principal 2	An accommodation provides the child **access to what all the students** or all regular education students **have to be able to do**. A modification is actually *changing that criteria,* so that their having success does not necessarily mean the same level of expectation or the same level of standards.
LEA 2	The modifications take place when they're in the *separate classroom*. My self-contained teachers are…The modifications are really working around access points.
Principal 3	Accommodations is where they get **extra time or smaller setting or questions read to them**. Modifications, isn't that just *altering what they are learning*?
AP 3	Accommodations is like writing, we have one student that **has it transcribed**. Modifications, isn't that just *altering* what they are learning?
Principal 4	We are **keepers of these accommodations**. These children have these accommodations and if this classroom implements those accommodations, so they can meet the curriculum.
AP 4	An accommodation is that students are all **learning the same material**. A modification would be that the *expectation might be different in terms of matching the standard* or being on Access Points to do something where they are on a modified curriculum

Table G.7 Define Assistive Technology (AT).

Principal 1	Assistive should be, if you have a kid that what state has an issue with writing, you are able to provide some type of word processor for them so we could **close the gap** so they don't have to struggle with handwriting.
AP 1	Assistive Technology would be like the smart, like little typewriters to help those students that maybe have difficulty with writing. So it would be those **technologies that help them succeed in the classroom** and **assist them** in those abilities when they're struggling with writing or maybe, I want to say we've even had some students that have like specific hearing aids assist them with being able to hear. So I would just say any technology that is going to help the **student success** and be able to perform at the **same level as the other students**.
Principal 2	Assistive Technology is technology or any device that provides **support to that student**. It can be as simple as the pencil or pen with a cushion on it, it can be a little bouncy rubber-band-type item on the student's chair legs, the desk legs, so that they can bounce up and down without making a noise and distracting others. It can be they have AlphaSmart to where they type in their responses instead of having to write them, or it could be something that is a touchscreen, seeing that the child does not have the dexterity to be able to click a mouse or use their fingers that well. All of those are forms of technology that assist the child in **accessing the curriculum and having success.**
LEA 2	Anything that helps **bridge that gap** so that the student can **access the learning** to get to where they need so whether it's a tablet…not necessarily. We have iPads, but no an iPad, so whether it's a tablet, have access to an audio book. We have some students that need the PECS system, whatever it is that bridges that gap so that they can access the curriculum.
Principal 3	Where they need **supports** that are provided **through technology**.
AP 3	**Support**s to like help them write.
Principal 4	Some of it is the iPad cart, some of it is dictation, some of it is engaging through technology, using technology to give kids **access at their level** or exposure to different aspects of the curriculum.
AP 4	Assistive devices help **bridge the gaps** between the student's abilities. It's an extra thing to help them be **successful** and put them on the same playing field as other students.

Table G.8 Definitions of Terminology from ESE District Coach

Exceptional Student Education	A service provided to students who have met the requirements for this program. An individualized plan is developed to ensure that the student is successful with the curriculum presented in the school, as well as to close the achievement gap.
Inclusion	Promoting the least restrictive environment through the collaboration of the ESE and Gen Ed Teacher to promote student success.
Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	The fact that students with disabilities are entitled to the same services as other students, and are also entitled to the services described in their IEP.
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	The promotion of students with disabilities receiving an education with non-disabled peers as much as possible.
Supplementary Aids & Services (Accommodations & Modification)	*No response when asked what Supplementary Aids & Services. Accommodations are services provided in the classroom that will assist the student in understanding the same information and material presented to the remainder of the class. A modification would be a change to the material presented in order to meet the cognitive level of the student.

Table G.9 Define Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

GE 1	Giving them all the tools they need to be **successful** in the **learning** process in the **least restrictive environment**.
ESE 1	Giving them all the tools they need to be successful min the learning process in the least restrictive environment. Whatever they need to be **successful**.
GE 2	What I know its students who are not within the realm of what is defined as being on grade level based on a child's academic age, chronological age. That can be either **delayed, or it can be advanced**. You're **gifted students are also considered.**
ESE 2	It's just students that need extra help, that they're struggling in certain areas that they typical child is not struggling in. They need some extra attention and **extra support to learn what they need to learn**.
GE 3	Any different type of **learning**, whether it's needing sign language, whether it's needing Braille, whether it's needing things broken down to the very basic, whether it's extra time, flexible seating, multiple breaks, less amount on the assignment. Anything that…In my opinion most kids are ESE. They're all exceptional students, and they all can use **differentiation**.
ESE 3	Basically giving a **quality education** to all students including kids with special needs and determining what does the child need, the special need in order to level the playing field so they can have the same opportunity as the regular education student, so they could have a quality education.
ESE 4	**Education for children with disabilities which is designed to provide specific instructions and services to enhance the academic success of special needs children**.

Table G.10 Define Inclusion.

GE 1	This year, their minutes line up with the **student IEPs** having our own grade level inclusion.
ESE 1	**Meeting the needs of students in the general education setting.**
GE 2	One that students, I believer, **make gains on their level**. Wherever they came in, they should leave better than when they came in. Are they part of the class or are they just isolated work when they're teacher one-on-one? Do **they belong**? That's my goal for all my kids.
ESE 2	You're **including** the students into the **regular educational classroom** as much as possible and making them feel more like a typical student rather than specifically pointing them out and saying, "OK. Let's go. You have to go to a special room now."
GE 3	That the **regular education teacher** is responsible for the ESE student's education through…I don't know. The ESE students are **in with regular education students**, and they get pull-out services for however much time is on their IEP.
ESE 3	Inclusion is when an **extra teacher goes in the classroom** and attempts to work with students in the classroom who have special needs and therefore have services that are provided for them by the special education teacher.
ESE 4	Special needs children with disabilities that are **receiving assistance** and service hours **from an ESE teacher in a regular education environment**.

Table G.11 Define Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

GE 1	**Including students** provides a shift in their education in a positive way. If they knew the power they had to speak for what would make them successful.
ESE 1	The inclusion program of course, giving **access to all things** that the general education students have access to. All the programs, clubs, field trips, I mean they're not missing out on anything that general education is doing. They're **not being singled out**.
GE 2	To me, it would be if this child needs these accommodations, modifications, whatever that's going to take for them to meet their goals once their goals are appropriately set for them.
ESE 2	The definition of **free**. The students and the parents shouldn't have to pay the extra services that their child is getting because they get a free education, regular education, and just because they need extra help. That should be included with it.
GE 3	The **least restrictive environment**, wherever they're going to learn the best, whether it's in full-time with all regular education students and get support from within the classroom or be pulled out, or maybe they would be in a self-contained room because that would provide them with what they need.
ESE 3	That means that a child should have **whatever that child needs** to be **successful** based on what is determined from an IEP team. It obviously needs to be **free** first.
ESE 4	All children with disabilities are entitled to a **free** appropriate education at a public school.

Table G.12 Define Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

GE 1	**Most restrictive is a specific paraprofessional**, but we could only imagine how well as these students would do if they all had one. Remembering to give them a five minute break here and there.
ESE 1	Where are they **most successful giving them what they need no matter what**. To be the most successful is pushing them to their capabilities with their accommodations. There will always be a gap in our ESE and our general education because people are not pushing ESE students.
GE 2	76% that **goes along with FAPE**.
ESE 2	We have the whole all the way up. We have **starting with inclusion to resource to self-contained, and we've got self-contained**, self-contained physical limitations, mental limitations, everything.
GE 3	Self-contained classrooms which would be full-time with the ESE teacher, and then regular education with **support services** through a couple of different ESE specialists. I don't know what else to call them.
ESE 3	Whether that actually happens or not, there's a lot of different scenarios that play or they may not get a **free and appropriate education**. They get free, but appropriate is not always the case.
ESE 4	That children with disabilities be **educated with students without disabilities to the highest extent**.

Table G.13 Define Supplementary Aids & Services (Accommodation code words in **bold** & Modification code words in *italics*)

GE 1	An accommodation is **what has to be met** and a modification is *what is to be changed*.
ESE 1	*Modify an assignment* but their accommodations they're going to **get all the time**.
GE 2	To me, an accommodation is what you do to make that child **successful** wherever they are, whatever level they are, whatever you need for them to be successful. The modification might be the actual *task that you change* to get to that accommodation.
ESE 2	Accommodation is where you **do what you can to help the child** do the **regular work** whether this is reading aloud to them or to help them on a computer or sitting in a quiet area, things like that. A modification is where you're *changing that work*. You're giving them *less work*, maybe even a different type of work that's doing the same thing or maybe even the grade level below where they are, that type of work.
GE 3	An accommodation. Let's see. A modification is a *change* in a site. An accommodation is when I'm **providing something else**?
ESE 3	The difference between accommodations and modifications. Accommodations are what you **give a student** so that they can meet their IEP goals at the grade level. A modification would be *changing the curriculum*.
ESE 4	Modification *changes* what a student is *taught or expected to learn*. Modifications simplify things into steps and clusters.

	Accommodations can **help kids learn** the same material and meet the same expectations as their classmates. Accommodations are when students are **assisted** with tasks so they could be successful academically.

Table G.14 Define Assistive Technology (AT).

GE 1	Anything from a **pencil grip** to the **reader things**.
ESE 1	Things like the AlphaSmart and even a **highlighter**.
GE 2	We've always have the kids IEPs and gizmos like a fidget or something. You go that's when they get. But other kids can put little bands on their chairs when they **fidget**. Not knowing that saying those are a big deal.
ESE 2	One of my students is physically handicapped. He can talk, he can learn. He just can't control how his body reacts. He's wheelchair-bound and we have his iPad **set up in a special way**. He can do everything the class can do on his iPad. He has a para. He does a worksheet, the para can take a picture of the worksheet and put it in a program, and it will show up on his iPad as the worksheet.
GE 3	Anything that gives them **additional support**.
ESE 3	**Assists** the child in able to be **successful** in whatever it is that they have a deficit in, for example, the keyboard. If a child has a difficult time writing it's suggested to use a keyboard.
ESE 4	**Technology that helps students to learn** and remain attentive during learning.

Appendix H

Reponses to Legislation Definitions

Table H.1 Knowledge of ESE Legislation

Principal 1	It came from being very restrictive, very isolated, to now more include. When I started with ESE, we were always separate from the regular kids and we were on the back wing, but now when you see more of your ESE classrooms and ESE kids they're included in the general education process and that's how it's supposed to be. As we move forward, it's going to be more blended where you're going to lose more titles and it's just going to be kids learning and not have multiple teachers in there, but they teach multiple different ways to be more effective for all students in the classroom.
AP 1	I'll be honest with you, I don't know enough about it. I would just truthfully say over the years we've probably gained a lot more knowledge as to what particularly constitutes disabilities, probably classified more disabilities. So I would honestly just go along those lines. I don't know the exact verbiage to rattle off.
Principal 2	It goes way back to IDEA and a little bit before. It just really means, the gist of all legislation is that these are humans, these are students and they have the same rights as anybody that does not have a disability. The legislation all just deals around or deals with making sure that educational and life experiences are as equal and as equitable as we can make it for individuals that may have a disability.
LEA 2	I think it's evolving. It's not where it needs to be. You change the words, you change this, you can't…It's not where it needs to be. Like I said, we're evolving. The acceptance and our understanding is going to forever be evolving.
Principal 3	I would tell you that I know that the laws protect students with disabilities. Schools are not allowed to turn any student with a disability away. They will require the school to accommodate each student's disability. When it comes to discipline, ESE students can only be suspended from school up to ten days. After the ten day threshold you must have a hearing to ensure the behavior the student is being suspended for is not part of a manifestation of his disability. Even if you do get alternative education, those students can only be in that setting for up to forty-five days before they must return to the home school.
AP 3	I cannot tell you, well I think it started as just allowing students with disabilities access to free education but then has turned into protections for ESE students that don't take the best interests of the school or other students into account.
Principal 4	Legislation, I think in some way or another I understand is to have a different thin. I understand legislation's goal is to move everybody to inclusion, move these certain children out of self-contained and put them into mainstream. I understand the ideas behind that. I think legislation deals with one size fits all and you and I both know no rule, no building, no school is one size fits all. I think they have taken it into their hands to do that not out of malice or not. Just acknowledging that they know that we have that capacity, that some way or another trust has been lost. That's how I feel about legislation in ESE.

AP 4	I was going to say where if we put into place, we are held to the fact that we need to actually be providing those services for the children. In terms of the advocating side of ESE, I don't know. I don't know much about it.

Table H.2 Knowledge of ESE Legislation

GE 1	No general definition provided. Requested specific starters (i.e. Legislation).
ESE 1	No general definition provided. Requested specific starters (i.e. Legislation).
GE 2	All I can say is I don't know a lot of it. I don't know possibly any of it. What I have heard is there is a bigger movement for…What is it called? I just had it. People with Disability Act? Is that it? Individuals with Disability Act? The little that I know is that there is a push more to have students be included in regular education rather than pulling them out.
ESE 2	That I don't know.
GE 3	Let's see. Since my kids got out of high school, I haven't had to deal with it much. IDEA came along, and then we've got the ADA. All that started maybe back in the '70s. As far as where we're at today, not a whole lot. Even though I graduated not very long ago, those classes aren't very detailed. They're not very in depth. You don't come out with a lot of knowledge.
ESE 3	Personally, looking back at the history of ESE and where it's at now, I don't think that we've come very far. I still think we have a lot of issues with whether the kids get proper placement, proper services. A lot of times, in most schools I've been in, they're still focused on what they have available and how many students should be using services and how much services. I think that No Child Left Behind has created problems in the sense that they won't let ESE students fail because they are ESE students. From what I saw and learned from school from the 1980s and 90s and so on, I don't think we've come very far.
ESE 4	No general definition provided.