THE FUTURE GENERATION: PREPARING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS FOR INCLUSION

by

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(Under the Direction of Cynthia O. Vail)

ABSTRACT

With the increase of students with special needs participating in regular education classes, general educators are responsible for meeting the needs of a diverse group of students. In turn, higher education institutions are preparing pre-service educators using various models of instruction. The models discussed within this study include the one-course, dual certification, embedded, combination, and the block. Faculty from institutions utilizing each of these models discussed the intricacies of their program approach. Themes identified within the models included providing a basic content knowledge, programmatic change, program intensity, linking of content, increased demands, enhanced collaboration, programmatic changes, and flexibility. Additionally, faculty members discussed program components needing improvement. These included behavior management, special education/differentiated instruction, and assessment. Finally, faculty members discussed the utilization of data when making programmatic improvements. These enhancements included program restructure and redesign, establishing annual program improvement goals, additional fieldwork hours, and additional course and training needs.

INDEX WORDS: Teacher preparation, Inclusion, General education, Special education, One-course model, Dual certification model, Embedded model, Combination model, Block model

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother. "Gran" never allowed an opportunity to pass without bragging that she had a granddaughter getting her PhD. I only wish she was here to see my dream come to fruition.

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I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge many of the individuals who helped make this degree possible. First, I want to recognize my parents for instilling in me the value of education and making it possible for me to pursue this dream. In addition, I appreciate the support provided by my siblings, who wiped away many tears and who encouraged me along the way. This entire process would not have been possible without the support of *ALL* of you. Thank you.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Pre-service teacher preparation is more important than ever. In a speech at Columbia

University, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan outlined the issue:

> We currently have about 3.2 million teachers who work in some 95,000 schools. But
>
> more than half of those teachers and principals are Baby Boomers. And during the next
>
> four years we could lose a third of our veteran teachers and school leaders to retirement
>
> and attrition. By 2014, just five short years from now, the U.S. Department of Education
>
> projects that up to one million new teaching positions will be filled by new teachers.
>
> (Duncan, 2009)

These future teachers will develop their philosophies and harbor their skills within the walls of

colleges of education across the country. Bynoe (1998) magnifies this importance stating,

"teacher education, whether pre-service or in-service, is the pivot for amending teacher thinking

to maximize learning for all students" (p. 38).

Research involving teacher preparation classifies into one of two conflicting

philosophies. Individuals who believe teaching is a craft argue schools of education and

traditional certification are obsolete and educators need more subject matter knowledge than

pedagogy (Goldhaber & Brewer, 1996, 1998; Hawkins, 1998; Monk & King, 1994; Monk, 1994;

Rothman, 1969; Rowan, Chang, & Miller, 1997; Eberts & Stone, 1984; Greenwald, Hedges, &

Laine, 1996; Goldhaber & Brewer, 1997; Murnane, 1983; Hanushek, 1989, 1992). On the

opposite end of the spectrum are individuals who believe teaching is a profession similar to

medicine and law. Therefore, this idea engulfs a strong belief in schools of education and a thorough preparation program (Darling-Hammond, 2002).

The debate around teacher preparation found increased consideration in the early twenty-first century. Walsh and the Abell Foundation released a report in 2001 claiming "the requirement that individuals must complete a prescribed body of coursework before teaching in a public school is deeply misguided. The process, known as teacher certification, is neither an efficient nor an effective means by which to ensure a competent teaching force" (p. iii). The foundation reviewed a half-century of studies and described the deficiencies of almost 200 articles. These discrepancies included claims of non-standardized measures, non-peer reviewed literature, and lack of routine statistical procedures (e.g. not controlling for key variables and too small of sample sizes) (Abell Foundation, 2001). The Bush administration and Education Secretary Rod Paige also succumbed to this philosophy, and in turn created regulations requiring highly qualified teachers in content areas.

The philosophies and beliefs behind Walsh's (2001) report led to more aggressive certification programs, which in turn increased the number of alternative teacher preparation (ATP) programs. Boe, Shin, and Cook (2007) define ATP programs as "typically target[ing] individuals with degrees who seek a fast-track route to full-time paid employment" (p. 158). These programs range from merely passing a certification examination to completing a shortened version of courses in pedagogy, philosophy, and methods (Boe, Shin, & Cook, 2007). While the research comparing traditional teacher preparation (TTP) programs and ATP programs is not the focus of this research study, Boe, Shin, and Cook (2007) claim "additional empirical research has demonstrated that extensive preparation produces more qualified teachers than does lesser amounts of preparation" (p. 159).

Following the release of the Abell Foundation's report, Darling-Hammond (2002) countered in defense to colleges of education across the country. The document cited five concerns including (1) evidence ignored, (2) unfounded claims, (3) misrepresentations of research, (4) methodological issues and double standards in using research, and (5) illogical policy considerations (p. 4-5). Darling-Hammond claimed the Abell Foundation disregarded research demonstrating the importance of teacher education programs. For example, she stated:

> Studies have documented that professional training can be effective in providing teachers with the strategies that enable them to teach these complex comprehensive skills, and teachers who receive such training significantly improve students' reading outcomes (e.g. Duffy, Roehler, Sivan, Rackliffe, Book, Meloth, & Bassiri, 1987; Duffy & Roehler, 1987; regarding explicit strategy instruction; Palincsar & Brown, 1988, regarding reciprocal teaching). (p. 5)

Furthermore, she faulted the Abell Foundation for a lack of specific criterion standards for the inclusion and exclusion of studies within the meta-analysis.

The current federal administration accepts the later belief. In fact, Secretary of Education Duncan's current focus revolves around improving higher education institutions and the quality of teachers produced. In order to meet these higher standards, researchers must first know what programs and learning opportunities colleges of education are implementing to meet the increased needs of their students. One of these areas involves the inclusion of students with special needs into general education classrooms.

While the twenty-first century binds general education teachers with increasing responsibilities and expectations, educational policies require teachers "be prepared to *educate all* of their students to achieve *the highest learning outcomes* in history" (Levine, 2006).

Including students with disabilities in the regular education classroom, implementing Response to Intervention (RTI), and ensuring each student passes end of the year standardized assessments are among the many requirements of these teachers. The implementation of President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB) holds educators accountable for the academic success of all students, regardless of disability or English fluency (NCLB, 2002). These intensified expectations reignited the debate over access to the general education classrooms and the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), although Congress implemented the LRE premise in 1975 with the authorization of PL 94-142. In addition to the focus on assessment and inclusion, the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), included language providing "districts to use as much as 15% of their special education monies to fund early intervention activities" (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006, p. 94). The most well known of these intervention programs is entitled Response to Intervention, which will be further discussed in this chapter.

Least Restrictive Environment

IDEIA provided the impetus for universal education to all students with disabilities. Furthermore, the LRE premise requires, "a child with a disability is to be removed from the general educational environment only when the nature or severity of the child's disability is such that education with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be demonstrated satisfactorily in a general education classroom" (IDEIA, 2004). These services include changes in environment, instructional strategies, social or behavioral supports, staff assistance, assessment or testing and school wide programming. Supplementary aids and services fall into three various categories: accommodations, adaptations and modifications. Accommodations provide access to programs or activities (i.e. wheelchair ramp, computer, word processor, and

preferential seating). Adaptations include devices, materials, or support processes that will enable the student to accomplish a task more efficiently however, using the same outcomes as typically developing students (i.e. study guides, tests read aloud, peer tutors, pre-teaching). Finally, modifications are changes to the instructional outcomes and/or changes to course content (i.e. adjusted expectations, functional tasks) (Yell, 1995).

If children are removed from the general education classroom because they cannot be included satisfactorily with the use of supplementary aids and services, their Individualized Educational Program (IEP) teams must identify the least restrictive placement within the continuum of available services. The legislation "requires local educational agencies to prepare a continuum of alternative placements, from least to most restrictive within which the child's program can theoretically be delivered" (IDEIA, 2007). This continuum of placements typically includes options such as the regular classes with or without supportive services, regular class attendance plus supplementary instructional services (i.e. co-teachers, sped paraprofessional), part-time special class, full-time special class, special school in public school system, homebound services, and instruction in hospital, residential, or total care system (Crockett & Kauffman, 1999).

While the LRE premise was enacted in 1975, its emphasis expanded with the passing of No Child Left Behind. The increased prominence placed on inclusion, forced general education teachers to adapt to a new level of responsibility. Previously, students had the right to be educated alongside their peers, but now Congress has established higher expectations.

No Child Left Behind Act

No Child Left Behind requires all children reach grade level standards in reading and mathematics by 2014. This landmark policy acknowledges the different subgroups of children

(i.e., English language learners, students with disabilities, gifted and talented) and their varying needs; however, the policy still holds all children accountable to the same academic standards. Furthermore, within NCLB Congress instructs 90% of children with disabilities be included in the general education classroom 80% of the day. Therefore, not only do general education teachers undergo the intense accountability of ensuring all students succeed academically, they must do so with increased duties. The policy also requires all but 1% of students to take part in annual high-stakes testing (NCLB, 2002). Policymakers hope the use of highly-qualified educators, access to the general education curriculum, and emphasis on scientifically based research strategies will improve the achievement of students typically in low-performing sub-groups and furthermore close the achievement gap (NCLB, 2002).

Consequently, No Child Left Behind requires states establish uniform statewide academic standards and a testing system that meets federal requirements. The policy holds schools accountable for student achievement by measuring annual yearly progress (AYP). This measure is determined by student achievement on end of term statewide assessments. AYP assessments do not measure the growth the child makes from year to year; instead, assessments quantify the student's content knowledge for their current academic grade. In defining AYP, each state sets a minimum level of yearly improvement required for schools and districts, based on student performance on state standardized tests. In theory, these achievement levels increase gradually until all students meet the 100% proficiency goal. For example, one year a state may set a goal for 57.5% proficiency in reading and math. Then, the next year the state could increase the goal to 59% proficiency in reading and math. The goal setting area is flexible as long as all children are on grade level by 2014. Annual yearly progress requires schools to meet standards in three areas: (1) 95% test participation for reading and mathematics, (2) annual measurable objectives

for both reading and mathematics, and (3) a second indicator determined by the state (NCLB, 2002). The same criterions are used for students with and without disabilities.

Proponents of the increased standards argue the use of related services, accommodations, and modifications of grade level content, provide students with disabilities all the necessities to participate in state assessments. Held to the same standards as their peers, individuals with disabilities undergo assessment either by taking the state created criterion-referenced exam with appropriate accommodations or through an alternate assessment. Members of the student's IEP team collaboratively determine what test and accommodations the student needs for optimal success based on the child's strengths and weaknesses. Through the use of these accommodations, students with special needs participate in high-stakes testing as their typically developing peers.

Response to Intervention

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-tiered intervention model providing quality instruction to all learners with intense interventions for students struggling in any academic or behavioral area (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005). The incorporation of RTI provides a new dilemma for general educators. Unlike previous intervention models, RTI incorporates a shared responsibility between both general and special educators (Richards, Pavri, Golez, Canges, & Murphy, 2007). The RTI model incorporates a team of individuals focused on the success of a student struggling academically or behaviorally. RTI is based on the premise that 80% of students demonstrate academic success with only tier one supports. An additional 15% of students display success with tier two levels of support, while the remaining 5% need tier three levels of support. This idea follows the bell-shaped curve of traditional statistics (Richards et al., 2007). The approach typically incorporates a pyramid with tiered levels of support, implemented

on a need basis. If the student is unsuccessful at tier one, educators implement supplemental interventions from tier two. If the issue still does not improve, educators proceed to tier three. If the student continually demonstrates academic or behavioral difficulties, the team recommends the student undergo a psychological assessment and potentially special education services. Richards et al. (2007) claims, "it is likely that these students will be referred for special education and may qualify for special education services based on the systematic documentation of interventions received through an RTI model or through further evaluation" (p. 58). During each level of the RTI model, educators collect data to provide empirical evidence of the success or further needs of the struggling student.

Although the RTI approach provides intensified interventions for struggling students, general education teachers provide and collect data on the vast majority of interventions. These furthered responsibilities are in addition to all other teacher requirements. Richards et al. (2007) highlights these increased responsibilities:

> [RTI] has implications for the general educator's workload and how he/she is
> prepared. For instance, general education teachers will now be required to look
> more closely at the individual learning needs of their students and develop
> strategies and skills that can be implemented to address these learning needs.
> They will also need to develop expertise in data-based decision making and the
> administration and use of ongoing progress monitoring measures. (p. 60)

Response to Intervention, along with No Child Left Behind and increased focus on inclusion, are three of the areas that are providing increased expectations for general education teachers.

Finally, President Obama and Secretary of Education Duncan allocated billions of dollars with the Race to the Top grants. All states are eligible for these competitive funds if they create

reform programs that focus on one or more of the following areas: (1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction; (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and (4) turning around our lowest-achieving schools. The State of Georgia's application focuses on merit pay for teachers. Current legislation assigns 50% of teacher salaries dependent solely on student performance. Although the logistics of this new payment formula has yet to be negotiated, legislators are placing political emphasis on standards shifting to the execution of high levels of student achievement. This increased accountability is yet another augmentation of the increased expectations and responsibilities of general education teachers. Brown, Welsh, Hill, and Cipko (2008) claim, "at a time when education is grappling with issues of reform and a heightened focus on accountability, inclusive education presents additional challenges for teacher education" (p. 2088). The relevance of this study could not be more apropos considering the increased emphasis of inclusion, accountability, and merit pay within education policy and considering the emphasis placed on creating superior teachers through colleges of education.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to describe how higher education institutions are preparing general education teachers for the increased expectations of including students with special needs in their classes. This study will describe the teacher preparation models currently in existence within higher education institutions. Albeit the focus of policymakers is moving towards higher education institutions, little research exists about the current state of affairs regarding teacher preparation. Furthermore, the outcomes of the research will provide policy makers and pre-

service educators with a deepened understanding of programmatic needs within higher education institutions.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are (a) what models are higher education institutions using to prepare general education pre-service teachers for inclusion, (b) what are the perceptions of higher education faculty members concerning programmatic needs for general education inclusion teachers, (c) how are higher education faculty members adapting their programs and philosophies to meet the needs of general education inclusion teachers, and (d) what barriers exist that hinder institutions from making program modifications.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Education policy is an ever-evolving field that is intertwined deeply into the everyday lives and disciplines of American citizens. Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, education policy has evolved from simply compulsory attendance legislation to the enactment of mandates requiring each student's academic success. Policy surrounding students with special needs occurred in a unique manner, in that children with special needs earned the right to an education; however, not until decades later did legislation provide access to the general curriculum. Today, the percentage of students with special needs included in the regular education environment continues to increase (United States Department of Education, 2005).

The increased diversity within the general education classroom expanded the expectations and additional responsibilities for general educators. Blanton, Griffni, Winn, and Pugach (1997) claim "job descriptions for special and general education teachers already look very different from those of 20 or even 10 years ago" (p. 5). Furthermore, teachers report a lack of preparedness when teaching the wide range of students now in the general education setting (Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2000). Therefore, it is essential to determine what higher education program models are used within teacher preparation, while also acknowledging the existing pool of research regarding increased responsibilities of general education teachers. Within this chapter, I outline the literature in regards to effective teachers and teacher education. Furthermore, I focus on facets within education which have increased the expectations for

general education teachers: (1) inclusion, (2) Response to Intervention, and (3) No Child Left Behind.

Effective Teachers

Much of the research surrounding teacher preparation focuses on the basics of preparing pre-service teachers to educate general education students. Campbell and Fyfe (1995) summarized the body of research surrounding teacher preparation. Within the literature, researchers found five key benefits of effective teacher preparation programs. These findings include (1) high quality teacher preparation helps candidates develop essential knowledge and teaching skills; (2) well prepared teachers are more likely to remain in teaching; (3) well prepared teachers produce higher student achievement; (4) leading industrialized nations invest heavily in pre-service teacher preparation; and (5) National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) makes a difference in teacher preparation. The report defends the need for not only content knowledge but also additional learning and application of pedagogical content. In fact, the researchers claim,

> Effective teachers understand and are able to apply strategies to help students increase achievement. They understand and apply knowledge of child and adolescent development to motivate and engage students. They are able to diagnose individual learning needs. They know how to develop a positive climate in the classroom in order to make it stimulating learning environment. (p. 4)

These qualities and characteristics are essential when preparing pre-service teachers for the everyday responsibilities within the education system.

Numerous national organizations weigh in on the topic of teacher preparation. The National Academy of Education (2005) found that teachers who take their content knowledge

base and apply it to the students they teach in turn produce students who are higher achievers. Furthermore, the organization emphasized professional development because of the importance it plays in the development of effective teachers (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

The Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (2001) further examined the issue of teacher preparation. The literature review found that content knowledge was essential to teaching, but pedagogical knowledge and practice are indispensable when increasing student achievement (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). Therefore, not only is pedagogy important for effective teachers, but content knowledge is essential too. This information is important when identifying components of quality teacher preparation programs.

Teacher Preparation

In addition to characteristics of effective teachers, the literature also addresses teacher preparation. Brownell, Ross, Colon, and McCallum (2003) identified seven factors within 15 effective general education preparation programs. These included (1) coherent program vision, (2) conscious blending of theory, disciplinary knowledge, and subject-specific pedagogical knowledge and practice, (3) carefully crafted field experiences, (4) standards for ensuring quality teaching, (5) active pedagogy that employs modeling and promotes reflection, (6) focus on meeting the needs of a diverse student population, and (7) collaboration as a vehicle for building professional community. These seven features were then researched within special education teacher preparation programs to determine how these characteristics coincided within both fields. Of importance to this study was the focus on inclusion and cultural diversity.

The researchers investigated the program components described the program components described within each of the institution's program descriptions. Next, researchers searched the literature base to determine the importance of each program feature. The researchers categorized

consistent key program components regarding preparation of pre-service inclusion teachers. These components included: (1) extensive field experience, (2) collaboration, (3) program evaluation, (4) focus on inclusion and cultural diversity, and (5) positivist or constructivist philosophy. Researchers maintained that each of these areas were consistent within programs previously identified as effective teacher preparation programs.

Policies, practices, and research involving individuals with disabilities are moving towards inclusive settings; however, preparation of general education teachers for inclusion remains in question. NCATE requires all pre-service teachers receive training focused on educating students with special needs; however, the organization does not specify the manner in which students should be trained. Research regarding the attitudes and perceptions of general education inclusion teachers focuses on the need for additional training and support in respect to practices and strategies for including students with disabilities (Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2000).

Kamens, Loprete, and Slostad (2000) conducted a study surveying the preparedness of general education teachers for including students with special needs. The participants claimed the instruction and preparation received within higher education institutions was inadequate and in turn, the teachers felt ill prepared for the additional challenges. Furthermore, teachers specified six areas which needed additional focus. These areas include (1) behavioral concerns, (2) conflict resolution and social skills, (3) identification of students with special needs, (4) adaptation of curriculum and materials, (5) adaptation of instructional strategies, (6) legal regulations and individual education programs (IEP), and (7) co-teaching, teaming and collaboration (Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2000).

In fact, the lack of preparation and lack of focus on individuals with special needs is denoted as a barrier to the success of inclusion (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Burke & Sutherland, 2004) and potentially the cause for negative perceptions and attitudes towards inclusion that are often expressed by general education teachers (Daane & Latham, 2000; Lohrmann & Bambara, 2006). Moreover, Destefana, Shriner, and Lloyd (2001) found exposure to training techniques and research focusing on including students with special needs improved the outlook of general education teachers.

In response to this research, general education programs are scrambling to determine an innovative, efficient, and successful means for preparing general education teachers for the increased responsibility of teaching students with special needs. In addition, the increased student expectations of passing end of term high stakes testing, outlined later in this chapter, require additional responsibilities from general educators. Furthermore education law requires teachers provide intense interventions and data collection for struggling students. The evolving demands of general educators forced educational programs to reassess their methods for meeting pre-service teacher needs. To meet these needs, three higher education teacher preparation program models have been described within the literature: (1) dual certification, (2) one-course method, and (3) embedded instruction.

Dual certification model.

Campbell and Fyfe (1995) describe the dual certification approach as a unification of the general and special education programs. These programs prepare educators for students with and without disabilities. Considering the current policy focus on inclusion, this model provides instruction and application for meeting the needs of all students within today's classroom.

One-course model.

A different model used by many higher education institutions is the one-course model. This method of instruction is defined as students taking "at least one course that introduces them to special education issues" (Brown, Welsh, Hill, and Cipko, 2008, p. 2088). Powers (1992) conducted a study investigating the impact of a one-course program specializing in the needs of individuals with disabilities. This study concluded that the one-course model significantly improved the instructional abilities and attitudes of pre-service inclusion teachers. However, the researchers believed the improvements continued to fall short of the needs of teachers including students with special needs. Powers (1992) recommended using the one-course model while also embedding special education instruction within other courses outlined in the program of study. This approach suggested by Powers (1992) is closely related to the embedded instructional model discussed below.

Embedded instruction model.

Another approach of teacher preparation adopted by higher education institutions includes the embedded instruction model. This method inserts special education content into each course of the program of study. For example, a general education assessment course would include information related to special needs assessment issues too. This approach maintains the focus on general education content while also including necessary information regarding individuals with disabilities (Campbell & Fyfe, 1995; Slee, 2001). Furthermore, this model is easily combined with both the one-course method and dual certification. Each of these models can exist alone or be combined for a more enriched program. For example, Winters (2006) petitions for an embedded program with a one-course model as the best approach to meet the needs of general education inclusion teachers. Each of the three teacher preparation models

detailed above attempts to prepare pre-service educators for the increased expectations which general educators undergo. The following sections depict the areas with the current education field that are increasing the workload of current teachers.

Students with Special Needs

As previously described in this chapter, students with disabilities are spending more time in the general education classroom (United States Department of Education, 2005). This increase follows a path consistent with the legislation focusing on individuals with disabilities. Consequently, with the enactment of the Education of All Handicap Children's Act of 1975 or PL 94-142, the government mandated key components within the legislation that are still present in today's special education policy. For example, assistance to states and districts for educational opportunities, zero reject, non-discriminatory assessment, procedural due process, parental participation, Individualized Educational Programs (IEP), and mandated services for children 6 to 21 years of age were all included. The two more prominent components of PL 94-142 included free appropriate public education (FAPE) for all students with special needs, and the least restrictive environment (LRE) mandate that provided access to the general education environment for students with special needs. Both FAPE and LRE are described below.

Free Appropriate Public Education

Although it is one of the most straightforward principles in PL 94-142, the premise behind free appropriate public education remains a litigious area within special education law. FAPE was first included in PL 94-142 to ensure all students with special needs have a right to free public education. Often referred to as the zero-reject policy, the legislation defines FAPE by stating,

The term "free appropriate public education" means special education and related

services that are (A) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and

direction, and without charge; (B) meet the standards of the State educational agency; (C)

include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school education in the State

involved; and (D) are provided in conformity with the individualized education program

under section 614(d). (Pub. L. No. 94-142 § 602(9))

When initially instituted in 1975, the policy required compulsary education for schoolage

children. This revolutionary policy provided educational oportunities for children who for

decades spent their lives in institutions and hospitals with little to no academic instruction

(Osborne & Dimattia, 1994). The FAPE premise continues to be an intergal part of special

education legislation.

Least Restrictive Environment

In addition to the FAPE principle, PL 94-142 included legislation requiring students with

special needs be educated in the least restrictive environment. This idea is deeply rooted in our

country's history as it was,

derived from the constitutional doctrine of the 'least restrictive alternative.' That doctrine

requires government to achieve its purpose through the least oppressive and restrictive

means. As such, school districts, in their efforts to comply with the Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA) may not restrict individual rights and liberties

beyond that which is minimally and reasonably necessary to provide each child with a

disability with a free appropriate public education (FAPE). (Thomas & Rapport, 1998,

p. 66)

Therefore, Congress encouraged the inclusion of students with disabilities alongside their typical

peers.

Within these legislative initiatives, Blanton, Griffin, Winn, and Pugach (1997) claim

"general education has begun to implement changes in curriculum and instruction that make

classrooms more accomodating for studens who historically have been unable to succeed" within

inclusive settings (p. 3). With the implementation of research based strategies, students with and

without disabilities are engaging in learning together in the same environment. Consequently,

Allington and Wamsley (1995) claim the use of these practices is not only beneficial for students

identified with special needs, but also for students at-risk for learning difficulties and typically

developing students. In turn, general educators are using diverse methods for reaching a wider

array of students. Additionally, Blanton, Griffin, Winn, and Pugach (1997) desribe this process

as:

> conceptualizing intensive instruction as a part of classroom communities, linking
>
> it to more general instruction, and implementing classroom-wide curriculum and
>
> instruction that is more accommodating to a wide range of students requires
>
> special and general education teachers to develop a common framework for which
>
> to views the curriculum and instruction in the first place-a framework that must be
>
> set in teacher education programs. (p. 4)

Research demonstrates this practice can be beneficial for all students involved; however,

teachers claim they are not prepared for the task. Furthermore, the policy and practice of

including students with disabilities in the general education classroom is one of the

increased expectations placed on general education teachers.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

PL 94-142 is available for reauthorization every five years. In 1990, PL 94-142 was amended and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Further additions and reauthorizations occuring in 2004 focused heavily on behavioral issues of students with disabilities. Furthermore, the policy's name was amended to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). Overall, this policy has undergone immense modifications including increased access to the general education classroom.

Due to the increased accessibility to the general education environment, general education teachers are responsible for successfully including and teaching students with special needs. The role of these teachers continues to increase as "75% of all students with disabilities spend 40% or more of their day in general education" (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Furthermore, a study regarding the personnel needs in special education found "96% of general educators currently teach students with disabilities or have done so in the past" (SPeNSE, 2002). With this increase in the number of students with disabilities participating in general education settings, it is essential to determine the needs of pre-service programs and the current practices being used to prepare these teachers. The inclusion of students with special needs into the general education classroom is one of the numerous expectations placed upon general educators. In addition to the increased focus on including students with special needs in the general education classroom, general educators are now expected to implement scientifically based interventions with struggling students within the general education classroom.

Response to Intervention

With the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, Congress included language providing "districts to use as much as 15% of

their special education monies to fund early intervention activities" (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006, p. 94). One of these interventions includes Response to Intervention (RTI).

RTI is a multi-tiered intervention model providing quality instruction to all learners with intense interventions for students struggling in any academic or behavioral area. This approach gained momentum as a method to reduce the overrepresentation of students in the learning disabilities (LD) category of the IDEIA. Fuchs and Fuchs (2006) claim, "the proportion of children with learning disabilities in the general US population skyrocketed from less than 2% in 1976-1977 to more than 6% in 1999-2000" (p. 96). In fact, Reschley, Hosp, and Schmied (2003) conducted a survey of the pervasiveness across the United States of students identified as having a LD. The lowest percentages provided by a state included Kentucky with 2.96% while the highest ranged to 9.46% in Rhode Island.

Researchers believe the previous model for identifying students as having a learning disability is partially to blame for the high percentages of students with LD. This approach, which is often referred to as "the discrepancy formula," underwent intense scrutiny at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This method considered the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) of a student against their achievement. Then, psychologists analyzed scores for a discrepancy between the two scores, which differed from state to state between one and two standard deviations from the mean. Furthermore, the districts and states used varying assessments and calculated scores differently (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Critics claim this method waited for students to fail in the classroom before acknowledging the potential learning problems. This identification process typically occurred around the third grade because essential exposure to basic skills was necessary to determine the potential of LD (Reschly et al., 2003). Furthermore,

Gerber (1998) and Gersten and Woodard (1994) cited teachers' lack of preparation for diverse

learners as a reason for referring students for special education testing.

No current legislation creates a specific definition for Response to Intervention. In turn,

national organizations and researchers created definitions depicting the essential components.

For example, the National Center on Research for Learning Disabilities (NCRLD) provided an

explanation of effective RTI. The elements are:

> (a) students receive high-quality, research-based instruction from qualified staff in
>
> their general education setting; (b) general education staff members assume an
>
> active role in students' assessment in the curriculum; (c) school staff conducts
>
> universal screening of academics and behavior; (d) school staff implements
>
> specific, research-based interventions to address the students difficulties; (e)
>
> school staff conducts continuous progress monitoring of student performance (i.e.,
>
> weekly or biweekly) for secondary and tertiary interventions and less frequently
>
> in general education; (f) school staff uses progress monitoring data and explicit
>
> decision rules to determine interventions' effectiveness and necessary
>
> modification; (g) systematic assessment is made regarding the fidelity or integrity
>
> with which instruction and interventions are implemented; and (h) the RTI model
>
> includes, as required, provisions for referral for comprehensive evaluation, free
>
> appropriate public education, and due process protections. ("Core concepts," n.d.)

The RTI model incorporates a team of individuals focused on the success of a student struggling

academically or behaviorally (Brown-Chidsey, & Steege, 2005). The approach typically

incorporates a pyramid with tiered levels of support, implemented on a need basis. If the student

is unsuccessful with tier one interventions, educators implement interventions from tier two. If

success still does not occur, educators proceed to tier three. If the student continually demonstrates academic or behavioral difficulties, the team recommends the student undergo a psychological assessment and potentially special education services (Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006). During each level of the RTI model, educators collect data to provide empirical evidence of the success or further needs of a student. RTI is based on the premise that 80% of students demonstrate academic success with only tier one supports. An additional 15% of students display success with tier two levels of support, while the remaining 5% need tier three levels of support. This idea follows the bell-shaped curve of traditional statistics (Richards et al., 2007). States have adopted various models of RTI with differing levels of tiers. For example, Georgia's RTI approach incorporates four tiers, while many others include only three.

Most of the requirements required by Response to Intervention are expected of general education teachers. Therefore, general educators are implementing strategies and collecting data in addition to their daily responsibilities. Many of these interventions and data collection methods are foreign to general education teachers. Richards, et al. (2007) claim this process requires a collaboration of the expertise of both general educators and special education teachers for RTI and the benefit of students. This is essential because problems occur when "general educators may not be familiar with analyzing and interpreting the assessment data, whereas, the special educators are likely to have experience, knowledge, and skill in interpreting assessment" (Richards et. al, 2007, p. 59). These additional requirements within RTI are among the many additional duties required for general education teachers in the twenty-first century.

No Child Left Behind Act

In addition to both inclusion and RTI, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) further increases the requirements and expectations for genral education teachers. President Bush signed

into law NCLB in 2002. The purpose of this legislation is to radically reform schools across the nation and assure all students are on grade level in reading and mathematics by 2014. This explicit policy acknowledges the different subgroups of children (i.e., English language learners, students with disabilities, gifted and talented) and their varying needs; however, the policy still holds all children accountable to the same academic standards. In NCLB, Congress instructs, 90% of children with disabilities be included in the general education classroom 80% of the day. This push for inclusion coinsides with the focus on access to the general edcuation curriculum. In addition, the policy requires all students to take part in annual high-stakes testing. Policymakers believe the use of highly-qualified educators, access to the general education curriculum, and emphasis on scientifically-based research strategies will improve the achievement of students typically in low-performing sub-groups and potentially close the achievement gap (NCLB, 2002).

Language within the No Child Left Behind Act requires all states establish uniform statewide academic standards and a testing system that meets federal requirements. Accountability is determined in all schools by annual yearly progress (AYP). This measurement indicates student achievement on statewide assessments. States do not measure the growth a student makes from year to year; instead, assessments measure student content knowledge for the current academic grade level. In defining AYP, each state sets a minimum level of improvement required for schools and districts, based on student performance on state standardized tests. In theory, these achievement levels increase gradually until all students meet the 100% proficiency goal. For example, one year a state may set a goal for 57.5% proficiency in reading and math. Then, the next year the state increases the goal to 59% proficiency in reading and math. The goal setting area is flexible as long as all children are on grade level by 2014. Annual yearly

progress requires schools meet standards in three areas: (1) 95% test participation for reading and mathematics, (2) annual measurable objectives for both reading and mathematics, and (3) a second indicator such as attendance.

Although students with disabilities receive related services, accommodations, and modifications of grade level content when participating in the general education environment, students with disabilities participate in state assessments either by taking the state created criterion-referenced exam with appropriate accommodations or through an alternate assessment. Members of the student's IEP team collaboratively make decisions of what test and accommodations the student needs for optimal success based on the child's strengths and weaknesses.

Although NCLB theoretically raised educational standards throughout the country, the law enacted requirements for assessing children previously left out of high-stakes testing. Because policy makers disaggregate data into sub-groups, schools and school districts meet AYP by achieving proficiency in all categories. Therefore, children with special needs are a group of students that can keep schools and districts from meeting the annual yearly progress required by NCLB. For example, in Georgia 53% of schools reported the annual yearly progress for the special needs sub-group (i.e. schools are not required to report the sub-group if the amount of students in the sub-group is below a specific number set by each state). Of those 53%, 10% of schools missed AYP in the special education sub-group. Of the 10% of schools that missed AYP in the special education sub-group, 38% missed AYP solely because of the special education subgroup (Commission on No Child Left Behind, 2002). Therefore, extreme focus is placed on all sub-groups but especially the special needs sub-group. With this additional focus, general

educators are feeling the increased expectations of not only including students with special needs but assuring these students pass end of term high-stakes tests.

Although research is vast in the area of teacher preparation, a relatively small portion of this teacher preparation literature focuses on how to prepare general education teachers to meet the needs of all children. This lack of research is even more important as general educators focus on the increased expectations required by including students with disabilities in the general education classroom, providing and collecting data on research-based strategies through the Response to Intervention process, and providing differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students who are participating in high-stakes testing. With the immense pressure these teachers face, higher education institutions must ensure they are meeting the needs of pre-service educators. Therefore, this study which seeks to determine what models of general education teacher preparation exist relative to special education content, is timely in regards to better serving pre-service general education teachers in the future.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

A mixed-method research design was used to answer the following questions: (a) What program models are higher education institutions using to prepare general education pre-service teachers for inclusion, (b) What are the perceptions of higher education faculty members concerning programmatic needs for general education inclusion teachers, and (c) How are higher education faculty members adapting their programs and philosophies to prepare general education inclusion teachers? This chapter focuses on the following topics: the design of the study, context of the study, sample selection, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and researcher bias and assumptions.

Design of Study

The research questions for this study corresponded best with a mixed-method research design. One of the research questions was answered using a quantitative approach, while the other two required more descriptive and qualitative methods. The mixed-method approach was beneficial because it broadened the perspectives within the research as opposed to data collected using one method alone. Multiple designs exist within mixed-method research. However, I used a mixed-method concurrent nested design. According to Creswell, Plano, Clark, Gutmann & Hanson (2003) this approach:

> has a predominant design that guides the project. Given less priority, a method
>
> (quantitative or qualitative) is embedded, or nested, within the predominant method

(qualitative or quantitative). This nesting may mean that the embedded method addresses a question different from that addressed by the dominant method or that embedded method seeks information from different levels." (p. 229-230)

Oftentimes, the use of a mixed-method design utilizes one approach (i.e. quantitative or qualitative) to inform the other (Miller & Crabtree, 1994). Because mixed-method research incorporates both quantitative and qualitative measures, the strengths of each of these approaches apply to mixed-method studies. For example, one drawback of qualitative research involves the lack of numeric data to strengthen claims. However, because mixed-method research utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data sources, these limitations do not pertain to mixed-method research. Nevertheless, limitations do exist for mixed-method research. Because mixed-method research is newer than qualitative and quantitative designs, limited resources exist for mixed-method researchers. The lack of resources may cause more frustration for researchers when handling discrepancies within the two data method sources (Creswell et. al, 2003).

For this research study, I utilized the mixed-method research design with the use of a survey, interviews, and document searches. To best answer the first research question, I surveyed deans and department chairs of higher education institutions responsible for preparing teachers in Georgia and the five bordering states. The survey provided useful quantitative data describing the program models in existence. The survey, which I describe in further detail later, provided descriptive statistics for the study. Furthermore, the information gathered assisted with the selection of interview participants for the second phase of the study.

Although I used quantitative measures to answer the first research question, the predominant portion of the research study, entailed a qualitative case study model. Case study

research is unique because "researchers examine each case expecting to uncover new and unusual interactions, events, explanations, [and] interpretations" (Hays, 2005, p. 219). Overall, this study investigated multiple cases involving higher education institutions using different program models to prepare general education pre-service teachers for inclusion. Each case provided a unique perspective, depicting how the faculty members arrived at their current philosophies and practices. Hays (2005) describes the main feature of case study research as the unit of analysis. She defined the unit of analysis as the location "where the researcher obtains the data for the case study" (p. 226). For this study, I selected eleven institutions as units of analysis. I identified these programs based on characteristics of the institutions and models of instruction depicted by deans and department chairs during the survey. Ten of the eleven schools agreed to participate. Then, I conducted further in-depth investigation into the process each institution used to develop their program model. I further describe these phases of research later in this chapter.

Finally, one of the major benefits of mixed-method research design is the use of multiple data collection sources (Yin, 1994). Multiple sources provide researchers the opportunity to strengthen claims using triangulation measures. O'Donoghue and Punch (2003) define triangulation as a "method of crosschecking data from multiple sources for regularities in the research data" (p. 78). This practice provides additional validity and trustworthiness within research studies utilizing multiple data sources.

Context of the Study

This research took place in the southeastern United States. The study focused on six states including: (1) Georgia, (2) Alabama, (3) Florida, (4) South Carolina, (5) North Carolina, and (6) Tennessee. The initial part of the study, which entailed an electronic survey, was

disseminated to every southeastern private and public higher education institution with a major in education. Main informants for this portion of the study included department chairs but in some cases deans responded to the survey. Following the survey and sorting of the data, I conducted phone interviews with the contact person, provided within the survey, from at least two higher education institutions practicing the various teacher preparation program models (i.e. embedded, one-class method, dual certification). Additional information regarding these methods is discussed in the remainder of the paper.

Participant Selection

Because the study involved multiple methods of data collection, I selected participants on two different occasions. For part one of this study, I utilized criterion-based selection strategies when choosing participants. The United States houses thousands of higher education institutions, which award education degrees; however, I selected only colleges and universities in southeastern states that border Georgia. The following states were included: (1) Georgia, (2) Alabama, (3) Florida, (4) South Carolina, (5) North Carolina, and (6) Tennessee. Overall, 165 schools met this criterion. Each of these higher education institutions received an initial survey regarding the current program models utilized within their institution for preparing general education pre-service teachers for inclusive education. Further information regarding the survey process is outlined later in the chapter.

After reviewing the survey results and identifying the various program models outlined by higher education institutions, I initiated part two of the study. During this segment, I conducted interviews of higher education faculty members at institutions with varying funding sources (i.e. public or private), different focuses (i.e. research or teaching), and unique program

models (i.e. embedded, dual certification). When selecting participants for the interview portion of the study, I utilized the following steps, which involve purposeful selection strategies. First, I eliminated all colleges and universities who chose the option of the survey that indicated unwillingness to participate in interviews. Next, I sorted all institutions into categories based on six characteristics. These specifications included: (1) funding of the institution (i.e. public institution or private institution), (2) focus of the institution (i.e. research or teaching), (3) program model used (i.e. embedded, dual certified, etc.), (4) overall size of institution, (5) number of education majors, and (6) location. Once these categories existed, I purposefully selected institutions with varying characteristics for the interview portion of the study. By purposefully selecting institutions, I was able to guarantee diversity amongst the colleges and universities. Overall, I selected eleven institutions for interviews and document searches, although only ten participated.

Data Collection

Within mixed-method research, multiple data collection approaches provide a more in-depth understanding of the research topic. Furthermore, the combination of methods provides an opportunity to establish relevance and trustworthiness within the research. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe this process as adding "rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to an inquiry" (p. 5). The methods used for data collection were the following three-fold data collection methods: (1) survey, (2) interview, and (3) document search.

Survey.

Survey research involves an established set of questions for participants to answer. Inquiries are typically closed-ended and provide limited space for participants to expound on

their answers. Multiple assumptions are at the root of survey research. Hutchinson (2004)

outlines two different assumptions typically encountered by the researcher. First, researchers

assume participants provide truthful and reliable accounts of information. Because these data are

self-reported, the liability of dishonesty exists. Therefore, I conveyed the importance of

truthfulness and accuracy within my initial e-mail to deans and department chairs. Finally, with

the use of any measure there is a risk of participants interpreting terms and questions in different

manners. Therefore, I defined questionable terms within the survey to alleviate any uncertainty

amongst participants. The steps I used to ensure accuracy assisted in authenticating responses

from survey participants.

In addition to assumptions that exist with survey research, Hutchinson (2004) describes

multiple pitfalls that oftentimes occur. For example, return rates of surveys tend to be rather

low. However, the author claims the length of the survey directly impacts this issue. Therefore,

Hutchinson (2004) warns against lengthy documents with long-winded questions. In addition to

the length of the survey, misunderstandings of the content and questions lead to a lack of

participation in the surveys. Following his suggestion I defined the questionable terms, a process

I describe later in this chapter.

The survey used for this research included twelve questions (Appendix A). Part one of

the research study involved questions regarding the program model (i.e. embedded, one-class, or

dual certification) within the institutions that are used to prepare general education pre-service

teachers for inclusion. One of the two questions included a 5-point Likert scale where

participants rated the use of various practices (e.g. lectures, case studies, collaborative group

projects, and field work) on a scale of one (e.g. never used) to five (e.g. always used). Part two of

the survey included seven questions describing the institution and faculty employed. The final portion of the study involved three questions regarding the institution's willingness to participate in other aspects (i.e. document search and interview) of the research.

The survey was disseminated via electronic mail using Survey Monkey to one of two individuals at higher education institutions. The primary participant at each higher education institutions was the department chair. Albeit, depending on the make-up of the college or university, some deans received the survey. However, only in cases where the department chair was unknown or did not exist did the dean receive the survey. Hutchinson (2004) claims a lack of research exists regarding the impact of e-mail as the delivery method of survey. However, he speculates three potential issues with its use. First, the participant's lack of technological capabilities could interfere with the return of the survey. Secondly, a technological issue or lack of compatibility with the program could alter the results. Finally, incorrect email addresses could impact the rate of return. Unlike the previously described potential pitfalls, these were more difficult to overcome. However, I conducted a field test of the survey to assure its compatibility and the understanding of questionable terms. I used the graduate list-serv within the Communication Sciences and Special Education department at the University of Georgia as testers of the survey. I asked the graduate students to read through each question and provide feedback on terms needing definition and any confusing aspects of the survey. Furthermore, I asked the graduate students to denote the amount of time needed to complete the study and suggestions of ways to make it more efficient. I received twelve e-mails from graduate students participating in the field test. Respondents suggested minor word changes and claimed the survey only required three to five minutes to complete. Although I instituted measures to

overcome many of the pitfalls associated with survey research, I expected a low return rate. Following the collection and sorting of survey data, I conducted phone interviews of faculty members at higher education institutions.

Interview.

deMarrais (2004) claims interviews are "a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study" (p. 54). If a shared rapport is developed, interviews provide the researcher with the most authentic and richly descriptive information. Furthermore, the interviews allow the researcher an opportunity to identify what is important to the participants and gather an understanding of their experiences. deMarrais declares the practice of interviewing allows the researcher to "gain in-depth knowledge from participants about particular phenomena, experiences, or sets of experiences" (p. 52). The interviewer encourages the interviewee to direct the conversation and gains a perspective from the interviewee. In fact, Mishler (1986) describes the interview process as a discourse, rather than a back and forth question and answer session between the interviewer and interviewee. Through this collaboration, both members develop an understanding of information and shared meanings.

For this study, I conducted interviews consisting of open-ended questions and follow up probes for additional understanding. Interviews lasted 15 to 45 minutes. Although I used a protocol of questions (Appendix B), they provided only a direction for our conversation. Rather, the interview process was unique to each of the participants, as their answers guided the conversations as the topics and themes emerged that were relevant to the participants. Each of the phone interviews was audiotaped and later transcribed. This allowed me to follow the flow of conversation, rather than focus on taking notes and transcribing conversation.

Document Search.

In addition to the survey and interviews, I conducted a document search at each institution participating in the interview portion of the study. Hays (2005) cites the use of document searches as "valuable in suggesting directions for interviews" (p. 229). The documents I collected provided additional evidence of themes and information presented in the interviews and survey. Additionally, the documents provided credibility or the lack thereof to claims made by faculty members from higher education institutions preparing general education teachers for inclusion.

For this study, I collected mission statements, philosophies, syllabi, and any other documents disclosed by the participants. Some of the documents (i.e. mission statements, college philosophies, and syllabi) were available on-line. However, other forms of data (i.e. first year teacher data, syllabi) came from the faculty and institutions. Therefore, some documents were easy to attain, while others were at the will of the faculty and institution. I used these documents as a form of data, coding them, as I did the interviews. Hays (2005) describes the use of documents as data by claiming they "can be used to corroborate or elaborate data from other sources. They are also valuable in suggesting directions for interviews and observations" (p. 229).

Overall the methods used within this research study included a survey, interviews, and a document search. Using three methods allowed me the opportunity to improve the trustworthiness of the research and themes as they developed in more than one data source. Furthermore, multiple methods provided more descriptive and in-depth information.

Data Analysis

I utilized various methods of data analysis throughout this study. Using the data from the survey, I reported descriptive statistical information regarding the program models and practices used to prepare general education pre-service teachers for inclusion within southeastern higher education institutions. When working with the interview and document search data, I utilized qualitative data analysis methods.

Qualitative data analysis allows researchers to immerse themselves in the data and analyze throughout the collection of the data (deMarris & Lapin, 2004). Being grounded in the data helps guide the researchers and their collection of further data. By exploring and discovering themes grounded within each data source, researchers using inductive analysis procedures to stay within the data inductively analyzing the language, actions, and environments related to the participants (Patton, 1990). Researchers gather understanding of the processes involved within the actual research that are new and undiscovered. Investigators focus on the data and allow the development of themes. In addition, researchers analyze the data by either "bracketing" biases or acknowledging them and using them as a framework understanding the data. Research based in inductive analysis focuses on open-ended interviews, allowing "the respondent to describe what is meaningful and salient" (Patton, 1990, p. 56). Then, researchers "establish themes and correspondences between participants and comments" looking for relationships (Austin, Gregory, & Martin, 2006, p. 162).

The coding strategy used during the analysis process depends on the purpose or question of the research. For example, some researchers use word-by-word or line-by-line coding. This timely coding procedure involves applying codes to each word or line. Charmaz (2000) believes this coding method prevents researchers from applying their own beliefs, thoughts, and values into the data. Additionally, *in-vivo* coding uses the "interviewee's expressions" for labeling

purposes (Flick, 2006, p. 299). Because the coding methods potentially provide multiple codes, researchers look for consistencies within these categories.

Regardless of the coding method used, the most important aspect of data analysis involves engulfing and grounding oneself within the data. By immersing oneself within the data, researchers identify ongoing and reoccurring themes within the data, while also developing a road map for further inquiry.

For the research analysis of this study, I used multiple strategies to reach a full understanding of the data. Although the survey provided useful descriptive statistics, the main purpose of the survey was to assist with the identification of interview participants. After collecting and sorting the survey data, identifying institutions for interviews, conducting phone interviews, transcribing each interview verbatim, I imported each interview into the Atlas: Ti software. This computer software helped organize the data for in-depth coding.

Once the transcripts were uploaded, I coded the data. Using Strauss's (1987) model for open coding, I followed his five steps depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Steps for Open Coding

Step	Process
Step 1	Look for *in vivo* (within the data) codes and attach existing concepts (from your own discipline) to these.
Step 2	Name each code.
Step 3	The application of the following questions will gain broader dimensions. (a) What is going on here? (b) Why is this being done? (c) What if – this or that changed? (d) What would be the outcomes of any change?

(e) What category does this incident indicate?

Step 4   Locate comparative cases.

Step 5   Account for all data in the coding process.

Note. Adapted from Grbich (2007).

Grbich (2007) claims this thorough process allows the researcher:

> to break open the text and lead you to seek specific examples of this or that aspect
>
> (theoretical sampling) in a process of induction (inferences from observations), deduction
>
> (reasoning from general to particular instances) and verification (double checking or
>
> cross-checking against other data). (p. 75)

These strategies provided both an inductive and deductive approach to the data analysis. After

coding the interviews, I organized the data, identifying the themes within the interviews. Finally,

I implemented similar strategies when I coded the documents collected throughout the study. I

used the codes from the interviews to identify the salient themes. After all interviews and

documents were coded, I reviewed the codes and data for any gaps within the findings. Then, I

contacted faculty members who participated in interviews and document searchers to resolve any

misunderstandings. Furthermore, this encouraged reliability and trustworthiness within the

research.

As I coded the interviews and documents, I used theoretical memos to organize and

inspire my thought processes. Grbich (2007) claims these memos allow researchers to "(a)

follow the pathway from indicator to concept, (b) develop the properties of each category, (c)

identify hypotheses relating to categories, and (d) link categories and generate theory" (p. 77).

Additionally, researchers use this process to help organize their thoughts throughout the time-

consuming coding process. These memos serve as an additional layer of support for researchers

as they integrate the information from the memos with the coded interviews and documents (Grbich, 2007). In addition, this layer of analysis provided additional trustworthiness within the data analysis process.

Trustworthiness

Undoubtedly, all research has limitations; however, practices exist creating trustworthiness within research. One of the most common exercises used within qualitative research is the practice of triangulation. This practice involves the use of multiple methods or researchers in order to provide "in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin & Lapan, 2005, p. 5). Not only does this practice provide an increased understanding within the research, but additionally Flick (2002) describes the benefit as providing "rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to an inquiry" (p. 229).

Within this research study, I employed three methods of data collection. The survey portion of the study provided descriptive statistics describing the program models utilized currently within southeastern higher education institutions. Additionally, I used this data collection measure when narrowing the participant pool for the interview and document search portions of the study. The interviews and document searches provided descriptive and rich information regarding the specifics of the models used by each institution. Using the multiple data collection measures, I linked the themes that arose from each data source during the analysis process. In addition to a better understanding of the data, triangulation helps "reduce the risk

that your conclusions will reflect only the systematic biases or limitations of a specific source or method" as well as limits the possibility of researcher bias (Maxwell, 2005, p. 94).

Research Bias and Assumptions

By following policies, practices, and research, I assume inclusive education is a policy and practice focus within the education field. In addition, I believe general education teachers often have negative perceptions of inclusion, oftentimes linked to a lack of proper preparation. Much of the research emphasized these negative views, as well as a plea for additional training (Kamens, Loprete, Slostad, 2000). As a former elementary inclusion teacher, I witnessed teachers with negativity towards the process and practices of inclusion.

Because of my beliefs and experience, I have a potential bias because of my strong beliefs that inclusion is a fair and appropriate educational placement for students with disabilities. Although I understand inclusion cannot work for every child, I believe strongly in blending students with and without disabilities as much as possible. Unfortunately, I did not always believe this occurred. Although I have this potential bias, I acknowledged that many educators do not believe the general education setting is the appropriate placement for students with disabilities. Spending time in the schools as a teacher and student teacher supervisor, I witnessed examples of the negativity towards inclusion. Furthermore, I taught courses at a major university where students expressed this opinion. Witnessing these views and beliefs increased my desire to provide meaningful educational opportunities for pre-service general education teachers regarding inclusion, as well as understand where and when these attitudes developed.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This research study included a mixed-method design to answer the following questions: (a) what models are higher education institutions using to prepare general education pre-service teachers for inclusion, (b) what are the perceptions of higher education faculty members concerning programmatic needs for general education inclusion teachers, (c) how are higher education faculty members adapting their programs and philosophies to meet the needs of general education inclusion teachers, and (d) what barriers exist that hinder institutions from making program modifications. In this chapter, I discuss the results found from the data collection stages previously described in chapter 3.

The data collection occurred in three phases. Phase one involved the dissemination of a survey and the collection of descriptive statistics. This stage answered the initial research questions regarding the models higher education institutions are using to prepare general education pre-service teachers for inclusion. Phase two of the research included the interviews of ten institutions. Using Atlas: ti software, I coded the interview transcripts of each institution. Phase three involved the collection of multiple documents such as mission statements and course syllabi. These data sources were analyzed using a framework created by Holland, Detgen, and Gutekunst (2008) in a similar study. Results from phases one, two, and three are described below.

Phase One

　　Phase one of this study investigated the models that higher education institutions utilize to prepare general educators for inclusion. In order to determine the models currently used, I surveyed all colleges and universities in the southeast that met a certain criteria. The criterion was two-part. The first condition involved the location of the institution. All institutions situated in Georgia and her five bordering states Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Tennessee were included. In addition, the institutions were required to issue degrees in elementary education. 166 schools met the above stated criteria. I disseminated a 12-question survey via electronic mail to all 166 department chairs and deans. Thirty-two percent (i.e. 54 institutions) of the institutions responded to the survey. Respondents chose from three models: embedded instruction method, dual certification method, or one-course method. If respondents used an alternative method, they selected the "other" option and were asked to provide specific information regarding their program model. Table 2 includes statistics regarding the models selected by the responding 53 institutions.

Table 2

Model Used To Prepare General Education Teachers for Inclusion

Model	Percent responded	Number of schools
Embedded Instruction Model	20.8	11
Dual Certification Model	9.4	5
One-Course Model	41.5	22
Other	28.3	15

Most of the respondents chose the one-course model of instruction; however, close to 30 percent of deans/department chairs chose "other." Thirteen of the fifteen institutions that chose the "other" category, claimed to use a combination model. The remaining two institutions described a block and co-taught model. The combination and block models are described in further detail below; however, the institution using the co-taught approach never responded to queries for an interview.

Five of the twelve questions on the survey included demographic information regarding the institutions. Tables 3 through 7 display the demographic information of the institutions that responded to the survey.

Table 3

Size of Higher Education Institution

Size	Percent responded	Number of schools
Less than 4,999	67.9	36
5,000-9,999	17.0	9
10,000-14,999	3.8	2
15,000-19,999	0	0
20,000-24,999	5.7	3
25,000-29,999	1.9	1
30,000 or greater	3.8	2

Table 4

Size of Education Program

Size	Percent responded	Number of schools
0-49	11.3	6
50-99	11.3	6
100-149	17.0	9
150-199	22.6	12
More than 200	37.7	20

Table 5

Highest Degree Awarded in Education Program

Degree Level	Percent responded	Number of schools
Baccalaureate	37.7	20
Masters	35.8	19
Specialist	5.7	3
Doctorate	20.8	11

Table 6

Description of Institution

Institution Funding Source	Percent responded	Number of schools
4 year public institution	37.7	20
4 year private institution	60.3	32
Other	1.8	1

Table 7

Institution Focus

Focus	Percent responded	Number of schools
Teaching	86.8	46
Research	9.4	5
Other	3.8	2

Although deans/department chairs from a wide array of institutions replied to the survey, no faculty members from institutions with 15,000 to 19,999 students answered. The majority of survey respondents were affiliated with smaller institutions of less than 4,999 students. Ironically, the overall size of the institution did not impact the number of students within the school's educational program. The majority of respondents housed more than 150 students in the institution's teacher education program. In regards to the highest degree awarded in each institution's education program, over 60 percent of schools claimed a baccalaureate or masters degree. In addition, more than half of the institutions that replied to the survey were from private institutions, while one institution responded with "other" providing both two and four year tracks. The final question in the demographic portion of the survey questioned the institution's main focus. Well over 86 percent of respondents identified as teaching institutions. However, two schools chose the "other" category and specified a liberal arts focus.

Although institutions recorded a range of responses to the survey, most institutions fell into the following categories: (1) one-course model of pre-service teacher preparation, (2) institution size of less than 4,999 students, (3) education program with more than 200 students, (4) baccalaureate as the highest degree awarded to education majors, (5) private institutions, (6) with a teaching focus.

Phase Two

Phase two of the research study included interviews of ten institutions. Of the 53 respondents, 27 agreed to participate in phone interviews during the second portion of the research study. Table 8 depicts the models of instruction used by the interview institutions while table 9 represents the location of size of the schools.

Table 8

Models Instituted by Potential Interviewees

Model	Percent responded	Number of schools
Embedded Instruction Model	14.8	4
Dual Certification Model	22.2	6
One-Course Model	30.0	9
Combination Model	22.2	6
Other	7.4	2

Table 9

Location and Size of Interview Institution

Name of institution	Model	Location	Overall size	Ed size
Small/Block	Block	AL	< 4,999	100-149
Large/Dual#1	Dual	AL	25,000-29,999	150-199
Large/Dual#2	Dual	NC	20,000-24,999	>200
Large/Dual#3	Dual	GA	5000-9,999	>200
Large/Embedded#1	Embedded	FL	20,000-24,999	100-149
Small/Embedded#2	Embedded	TN	< 4,999	50-99
Large/One-Course#1	One-Course	AL	20,000-24,999	>200
Small/One-Course#2	One-Course	SC	< 4,999	> 200
Small/Combo#1	Combination	GA	5,000-9,999	>200
Small/Combo#2	Combination	TN	5,000-9,999	150-199

In chapter 3, I described the ideal number of interviews to be between 10 and 15. Although I initially selected 11 interview institutions, one never responded to requests for participation. Therefore, I ended with 10 institutions from the 27. In order to determine the institutions for interview, I sorted the data based on the previously discussed demographic data.

When choosing the interview institutions, I immediately chose the two schools that selected the "other" category. The two models described were the "block" and "co-taught" models. These approaches are virtually absent from previously published literature, so their contribution was obvious. Unfortunately, the institution with faculty utilizing the co-taught model was the ones that did not answer my requests for participation. Next, I chose two institutions from the one-course model. Although the majority of potential interviewees used the

one-course method, most information within the literature depicts the use of this method. Additionally, the one-course model is most straightforward, in that institutions require education candidates to take one course focused on students with special needs. Next, I selected two institutions who used the embedded model and three that used the dual certification model for interviews. Finally, I chose two institutions that used a combination model. One of the institutions used a combination of the one-course and embedded models, while the second institution used a two-course and embedded approach. Tables 8 and 9 describe the demographic information of the institutions selected for interviews.

Pseudonyms are used for all institutions participating in phases two and three of this study. In order to assist the reader, I organized each institution's name based on the overall enrollment and program model. Institutions classified as small have an enrollment size less than 10,000, medium sized institutions ranged from 10,000-19,999, while large intuitions have 20,000 students or more. In addition, if multiple schools used the same model I numbered the schools to help the reader decipher which institution was represented.

Models

Participants of the research study described six different instructional models used within their institutions. The models identified include (1) one-course model, (2) dual certification model, (3) embedded model, (4) combination model, (5) block model, and (6) co-taught model. In this section, I define each of the models based on the published literature base and information provided by participants. In addition, I discuss the themes I identified within the interview transcripts. Unfortunately, information regarding the co-taught model is not included in this section because faculty members using this method did not respond to my requests for interviews.

One-Course Model.

Brown et al. (2000) claim the one-course model includes one special education introductory course that provides the basic information necessary or required for pre-service teachers. Participants interviewed in this study claimed the one course was an overview for students to understand basic information regarding special education content, legislation, historical perspectives, and disability characteristics. Many of the participants claimed the one special education course was mandated by the state government or higher education authority and required for students seeking teacher licensure. For example, Small/Combo#1 claimed the choice of the one-course model was "a compromise given program constraints from the Board of Regents and accrediting agencies."

Two of the ten institutions interviewed utilized the one-course method to prepare general education students for inclusion. When analyzing the interview transcripts from both institutions, I identified two recurrent themes. These themes included an advantage of basic knowledge needed for beginning teachers and an additional need for programmatic changes. These two ideas are discussed below.

Basic Knowledge.

Both participants interviewed that used the one-course model claimed the exceptionalities course was part of the initial stages of the program of study because of the introductory nature of the class. The timing and placement of the course was considered beneficial because it provided basic knowledge about special education to pre-service teachers just beginning the teacher preparation program. Furthermore, one faculty member at Large/One-Course#1 claimed,

> I think…a good thing about this is that…you know, it's at the beginning of their program
>
> and so a lot of students still come in with the idea that they're not going to have special

ed [students] and so at least they have that understanding as they start to take their content area courses.

Overall, the faculty members believed the placement of the course at the beginning of the program of study provided students' information and resources necessary for learning in higher leveled education courses further along within the program.

Although the institutions provided only an introductory course, the faculty members of both institutions using the one-course model believed the class helped create better prepared and well-rounded students. A faculty member from Small/One-Course#2 stated,

Well…I think we're starting to see on post-graduate surveys that students feel more prepared once they get out in the field. Of course, we just started the course as of '07 and so we're just now starting to have our first graduates out in the field. But when we do our exit interviews with our graduates and when we do our post-graduate surveys, the trend seems to be that they are feeling more prepared to handle special needs in their classrooms.

Although only having one course regarding individuals with special needs, graduates were able to apply the introductory information within their job placements.

In addition, one faculty member from Large/One-Course#1 claimed the one-course model was the "best" approach the institution could offer considering the time and resource constraints within the school of education. For example, Large/One-Course#1's articulation agreement with junior colleges guaranteed students entering the institution with an associate's degree could finish their baccalaureate degree within four years. Therefore, faculty members were limited in the options they could provide students.

Overall, the faculty from both institutions providing the one-course model believed the approach was best within the constraints of the university. Additionally, faculty members felt the course provided an opportunity to broaden the perspectives of pre-service teachers who believed they would not encounter students with special needs in their future general education classroom. Finally, the two faculty members claimed the implementation of the one-course provided teachers with knowledge they could apply to their own classrooms once they graduated.

Need for programmatic changes.

Although faculty members who were interviewed described their approach as beneficial for providing students with information and resources regarding individuals with disabilities, the two interviewees also identified a need for changes within the program model. The faculty at Large/One-Course#1 claimed the course placement at the beginning of the program was beneficial for pre-service teachers developing an understanding of students with special needs. However, the content and timing of the course did not allow pre-service teachers to link the information to prior knowledge and learning. The faculty member at Large/One-Course#1 claimed,

> It [the special education course] comes early on, they get that mindset but then…a lot of them at that time don't have anything to tie it to because they haven't even [gotten] into their teaching area and so that makes it hard. It is seen as separate and then when they actually get into the field and real issues arise, there is not that opportunity as much to kind of address some of the issues that they are dealing with.

Even though both faculty members believed the best placement of the course was at the beginning of the teacher education courses, they observed drawbacks to this placement as well.

The faculty member interviewed from Small/One-Course#2 described her desire to see programmatic changes in regards to a field placement component in the special education course. In order to provide the students some understanding of the inclusion of students with special needs in the general education class, the faculty members at Small/One-Course#2 incorporated three four-hour field trips to schools that implement different models of inclusion. This strategy allowed students to connect the course content knowledge with field experiences and observations. In turn, faculty members were able to show pre-service teachers the integration of general and special education as a whole program.

Although faculty from both of the institutions interviewed believed the one-course model provided much needed information regarding students with special needs, both faculty members agreed that their programs could be improved with changes made to the program of study. The institutions using the one-course model observed advantages to the approach such as providing integral content within time and financial constraints. However, faculty members claimed the timing of the course and the lack of field experience accompanying the course prevented students from seeing the connection of general and special education. In turn, one faculty member believed the one-course model fell short of meeting the demands of novice teachers.

Dual Certification Model.

The dual certification model was the approach least commonly implemented within institutions participating in the survey. Campbell and Fyfe (1995) describe the dual certification approach as a unification of the general and special education programs. Faculty I interviewed from the three institutions that use the dual certification model claimed their programs provided courses with content knowledge and field-experience in both general and special education. The increased focus on both areas did not dilute the content standards to fit into a set time frame,

rather the faculty created a specific program of study that embedded content from both disciplines. When analyzing the transcripts from all three institutions, I identified one theme, seen both as an advantage and disadvantage, to using the dual certification model. This theme involved the intensity of the program, in regards to how well the course program prepared general education teachers, as well as the high demands on faculty, staff, and students. This topic is discussed at length below.

Program intensity.

The three institutions using the dual certification approach were at differing implementation stages within their program. Small/Dual#3 began their dual certification program over ten years prior to the interview. Similarly, Large/Dual#1 had over five years experience with the current model. However, Large/Dual#2's program was in its infancy with the 2010 academic year as the initial term for implementation. Although the institutions were at different points of implementation, all three identified the intensity of the program as significant and meaningful to the approach.

Faculty members from all three institutions believed the intensity and structure of the program created educators who entered the work-force better prepared, well-trained, and self-confident. One faculty member at Large/Dual#1 claimed,

> The advantages…well, first I mean, it's obvious that they leave, and they feel very much experienced from the delivery we require. They have a sense of how to set up a classroom, they've got confidence in what they do…so, it works. I think the biggest thing is the experiences that they have and then couple that with the nature of the delivery and then they cannot run and hide. I mean, you can't take your literacy one course and wipe your brow and say, 'Okay, I'm moving on'…it just constantly comes back to get you

because it's important. It builds skills to a degree that I really just have never seen

happen.

The increased focus and attention students receive in dual certified programs create self-confident and well-trained novice teachers. In addition, one of the faculty members at the Large/Dual#2 depicted this benefit as essential during the implementation of Response to Intervention and the issues regarding the overrepresentation of students with learning disabilities. The Large/Dual#2' faculty member believed that the dual certification approach guaranteed a struggling student would not sit for three months in a classroom before receiving research based interventions. In addition, she believed students displayed a dual-ownership of the classroom and students. Rather than having the special education teacher responsible for only students with special needs and vice versa, the teachers shared a responsibility of ensuring all students were successful in the classroom.

Finally, two of the three faculty members claimed the focus and strength behind the program created graduates who were problem solvers and ready for the struggles that can develop within the classroom. One of the faculty members at Small/Dual#3 described these benefits:

The benefits are viewing not only 'am I an early childhood teacher or I'm a teacher of students with disabilities' but I am a teacher and to be effective I need to be able to be extremely analytical about the needs of individual kids and groups of kids and make decisions based on that rather than making any assumption about curricular approaches or instructional approaches or management approaches based on a title or a category because that doesn't work very well…I think it reads the teacher as a problem solver, analyst in a very active leadership role rather than a passive [role].

Rather than teach students the introductory categorical information oftentimes included in a one-course model, dual certification programs teach problem solving skills to students who are encouraged to make data driven decisions within the classroom.

Overall, all three of the faculty members at the interview institutions implementing the dual certification approach claimed the intensity of the dual certification approach forced their students to make individualized decisions while providing research based interventions. Furthermore, two of the three faculty members believed the pre-service teachers developed problem-solving skills necessary to meet the needs of all students within the inclusive classrooms. In general, all three faculty members at institutions providing dual certification in general and special education argued their students were most prepared to meet the diverse needs within the twenty-first century classroom.

Although the intensity of the program was described as a benefit of the dual certification program, two of the three faculty members professed the demands of the approach as a weakness. The overall passion, coupled with the amount of work and collaboration required was described in detail. For example, one of the faculty members at Large/Dual#1 described the dual certification program as a concentrated and rigorous program that starts at the beginning of the pre-service teachers' junior year and continues through summer term and the entire senior year. He claimed the approach requires intensity not always present in teacher preparation programs. In fact, this faculty member described the intensity as a drawback to the program model by stating, "It's intensity [the drawback]. It really does intrude on the collegiate experience but…if you're going to error in teacher preparation, I'd rather error on taking that away." The program described by the faculty members at Large/Dual#1 is an extreme approach that includes five recursive courses that build on each other every semester. The content and practicum load of the

program prohibits pre-service teachers from enjoying all the benefits of collegiate life and forces them to focus their time on academics and within field placements.

In addition to the increased student requirements described by a faculty member at Large/Dual#1, time and faculty demands for a dual certification program were also deemed disadvantages by faculty at Small/Dual#3. One faculty member interviewed depicted the weaknesses of the program by asserting,

> The drawbacks? Time and faculty because given the clinical demands and presence in the schools, our teaching loads are very heavy in terms of time. There is such a strong faculty commitment and that plays into other things. If you're going to discuss curriculum and understand common objectives and assessments for a course, there is certainly a lot of ways to get there and that takes time. And so the disadvantage is time. The other obstacle for all those reasons and because we know our students well because they spend a lot of time with faculty…getting feedback, getting assistance, personal and professional, so…though we are getting to be more like a middle sized university in terms of numbers, the commitment to support students is still very personal and that's time consuming as well.

Faculty members at Small/Dual#3 collaborate and co-plan to ensure multiple sections of the same course follow the same objectives and end of term assessments. Additionally, the personnel embrace the collaboration required to provide a cohesive program for pre-service teachers.

The three faculty members working in institutions with dual certification programs identified the intensity of the program as both an advantage and disadvantage of the approach.

The increased requirements of students created better prepared and well-equipped teachers; however, the load and demands of faculty members were also heightened.

Embedded Model.

Slightly over twenty percent of deans and department chairs that answered the on-line survey claimed their institution used an embedded model to prepare general education teachers for inclusive environments. Campbell and Fyfe (1995) and Slee (2001) describe this model as mainly focused on general education content with special education content entrenched within multiple courses. One of the faculty members at Large/Embedded#1 claimed his institution implemented the embedded model because all twenty-first century teachers encounter students on multiple ability levels. He stated, "Even if I'm a regular education teacher, I'm going to have exceptional students so we always have some area of exceptionalities embedded into our regular education classes." With more students included in general education classes, the use of Response to Intervention, No Child Left Behind, and overall increasing diversity within school settings, all teachers will likely work with students with disabilities.

Two institutions, Small/Embedded#1 and Large/Embedded#1, were interviewed regarding their implementation of the embedded approach. Both faculty members described their embedded programs where a portion of the field experience requirement of all pre-service teachers involved working with students with disabilities. The faculty at Small/Embedded#1 claimed the university students spend a minimum of 10 hours in small group, resource, or inclusion classrooms during their introductory special education course. However, throughout the other courses, students work in inclusive classrooms. Because the pre-service teachers work with a diverse group of students, the faculty at Small/Embedded#1 developed a lesson plan format that incorporates differing ability levels. The faculty member interviewed claimed the

framework encourages pre-service educators to problem solve strategies that can be used for teaching students of all ability levels.

Compared to the one-course model, the embedded approach provides students more than an introductory course regarding the characteristics of individuals with special needs. Education programs may or may not include an introductory special education course; however, the faculty embed special education content into other general education content classes. For example, one faculty member at Large/Embedded#1 described the embedded approach by saying, "We always have some area of exceptionalities embedded into our regular education classes. Like one of our elementary classes might be teaching strategies for elementary students. Well, we also include teaching exceptionalities or how to teach elementary math. Well, we include how to teach exceptional kids." Although this approach is typically focused on university students who are planning to be general education teachers, the faculty members provide useful content regarding how to meet the needs of students with disabilities within these regular education settings too.

When analyzing the data from the two transcripts of faculty members instituting the embedded model, I identified two themes common across both faculty interviews. The connections described by both faculty members were central to the interviews. These connections involved links to content, the world and the whole picture behind education. Additionally, both interviewees described the overall demands of the faculty as significant within their programs. These two themes are described below.

Linking of content areas.

Students prepared in institutions using the embedded model of instruction receive content knowledge focusing mainly on general education, while also encompassing strategies necessary for teaching students with special needs. Both of the faculty members described the process of

linking the content of general education and special education to create a cohesive program

model that prepares teachers for the diversity within today's classrooms. One of the faculty

members at Large/Embedded#1 claimed,

> Sometimes with the stand-alone course, you don't see how it is integrated with other
>
> classes. I used to teach diversity…and we'd talk about special ed…okay? Well, that's
>
> fine but the students may not…see how to embed or instruct if it was a separate course,
>
> like how to teach elementary math, okay? Again, as I said earlier, we have some
>
> exceptionality strategies in there. If we didn't have it, how would these kids know how
>
> to do that?

By embedding content regarding how to teach and include students with special needs in general

education classes, pre-service educators gain necessary strategies to encourage the success of all

students within the general education setting. In fact, the faculty at Small/Embedded#1

described the embedded model as more realistic of how classrooms work today, as well as

providing a holistic picture and model to meeting the needs of all students. The two interviewed

faculty members at Large/Embedded#1 and Small/Embedded#1 claimed that more than a stand

alone program, the embedded model shows pre-service educators how general and special

education can work together cohesively with the best interest of the child in mind.

Increased demands.

Although faculty at both institutions using the embedded model believed the approach

provided an example of the organization of general and special education, both faculty members

described the demands of the faculty as a drawback to the approach. Similar to the dual

certification approach, the embedded model requires additional collaboration between faculty

members within a department. To guarantee students receive the content knowledge needed to

be successful as novice teachers, faculty members must share ideas, co-plan, and incorporate subject matter within courses as necessary.

In addition, one faculty member discussed the need to stay atop two fields of literature as one of the increased demands. The faculty member interviewed at Large/Embedded#1 stated,

> If I was teaching…because my degree is not in exceptional students, and I'm teaching how to teach math to elementary school students, I may not be as up to date as somebody who is in the exceptional students department. Now we have a professor focusing on exceptional students. If you're majoring in special education, you take the majority of your classes through her but for the non-exceptional students they don't have that benefit.

Because this model involves faculty members potentially teaching out of their field, there is a need for increased collaboration and to stay abreast of two fields of research.

Overall, the two faculty members interviewed who utilized the embedded model described the approach as providing more information and content than just a one-course model. By embedding instruction regarding how to teach students with special needs, pre-service teachers receive instruction on how to teach students with and without disabilities in the same educational placement. In addition, both faculty members believed the dynamics of the approach emphasized the connection of general and special education and its realistic nature in comparison to the world around.

Combination Model.

Oftentimes two of the above approaches are combined to create a combination model for preparing pre-service teachers for inclusion. Seven institutions that responded to the initial on-line survey claimed they used a combination of two outlined approaches (i.e. one-course, dual certification, and embedded). Six of the seven provided one introductory course regarding

students with special needs and embedded additional information in courses required throughout their program of study. The final institution provided two courses, one introductory and one methods course, while additional information was embedded within courses and field-experiences.

When analyzing the two interview transcripts of individuals working at institutions using the combination model, I identified two themes as prominent within the data. One of the ideas revolved around the need for collaboration amongst faculty, practicum placement schools, and students. The second premise involved the need for additional flexibility and programmatic changes. Both of these themes are described below.

Enhanced collaboration.

Throughout both of the interviews of faculty members working in institutions utilizing the combination approach, the faculty members depicted the importance of collaboration. One of the faculty members at Small/Combo#1 claimed the shift made by the department into the combination model created an increased sense for and importance around collaboration. She stated, "It [the combination model] has created a somewhat larger amount of cooperation between various faculty members involved across departments." She emphasized the importance of communicating across these barriers in order to best meet the needs of the students and prepare them for the diversity and needs of the classroom.

Similarly, one of the faculty members at the Small/Combo#2 described the collaborations as essential in regards to student practicum placements. She believed the rapport developed, similar to that described of colleagues at Small/Combo#1, was essential to guaranteeing pre-service educators had the best preparation program available to beginning teachers. The faculty member interviewed at the Small/Combo#2 described this collaboration by stating,

A ton of it [success of recent graduates] has to do with the fact that in a rural community

like this, I get to know a lot of the special education directors…and they hire our better

students, so I think a lot of it has to do with the communication between the school

system and the university.

This increased collaboration benefits both the faculty, who guarantee optimal placements for

their students, and the students, who are in turn hired because of their abilities gained while

within the education program. This win/win situation is developed through a building of rapport

and collaboration among the faculty and schools hosting the university's pre-service educators.

Use of programmatic change.

Although the two faculty members working within institutions using the combination

model described the collaboration and increased communication as salient to their programs,

they both described programmatic changes as essential to the success of their programs. One of

the faculty members from Small/Combo#1 discussed the level of training and preparation as

unsatisfactory for where the faculty desires the level of the program. However, she described the

barriers which interfere with changing the program. The actions the faculty members of

Small/Combo#1 have taken to improve the program is pertinent to understanding the current

climate within the institution. After reviewing first year teacher data, a committee of special

education faculty members met to create a plan of action regarding the necessary programmatic

changes for improving the level of preparation of graduates. She described this process by

stating,

Special education faculty recommended an additional course to improve the preparation

of general educators to implement inclusion. Faculty recommended (1) an introductory

course in special education and (2) an advanced course to target special education

inclusion protocols. At this time there is no plan to move forward with this

recommendation.

The member of the Small/Combo#1 faculty acknowledged the faculty's understanding that

programmatic changes are necessary to better prepare teacher education graduates; however,

with the barriers present the faculty felt their efforts were acknowledged but not acted upon.

These barriers, which interfered with the faculty's ability to make programmatic changes, are

described in further detail later in the chapter.

Similarly to the faculty at Small/Combo#1, the professors at the Small/Combo#2 utilized

first year teacher survey results to make data-based programmatic changes. The faculty member

interviewed at the Small/Combo#2 claimed,

> We take that information that we get back from the students and we have a committee
>
> that represents different areas, and we talk about what we need to do to make some
>
> changes and how we can beef this up. We've decided as a result of that last year that we
>
> needed more field experience and embedded more field experience in several classes and
>
> then more classroom management within all of our classes and so they're not just getting
>
> the one course, they're getting more of it embedded in several classes.

Using the data provided by recent graduates, the faculty members at the Small/Combo#2 adapted

their program to better prepare future graduates. The faculty identifies subjects which first year

teachers felt were inadequately covered, and they make changes in hopes of improving these

weaker areas.

Overall, both faculty members utilizing the combination approach described a need for

using recent graduate data to make programmatic changes; however, the interviewees

experienced different outcomes. Regardless of the situations, the faculty members identify the data as useful for informing decisions regarding programmatic adaptations.

Block Model.

Faculty members at Small/Block implemented a model not previously described within the research. The program is a multiple certification program, as students graduate with licensure in early childhood, elementary, early childhood special education, and special education consultation. In order to meet the extreme demands of such a program, faculty members developed an instruction model to ensure students meet the objectives from all four academic areas.

Small/Block's block model encompasses two cohorts of students. Pre-service teachers are assigned to a cohort based on their year of entrance into the teacher education program. Each cohort of students attends classes during the blocked off time period of instruction. All academic classes occur between eight and twelve daily. One of the faculty members stated,

> And, what that [the block schedule] allows us to do is commingle the content, so that if I were talking about children with special needs then I would also talk about making modifications for teaching literacy or math or science. The bigger part of the block allows us to get more in-depth study of a topic. Or it works out very well and probably best for our clinicals. And that is, I think, the clinicals are a strength of our model and that is because of the block that we can do that. So that if I want a student to see the opening of a school day or I want them to have a full knowledge from a practical standpoint what a full morning looks like, or if I want to take them a specific site, for example a school for the deaf, a school for the blind, or a school that serves children with

severe autism, then that allows us travel time to leave campus, go to that site, visit, and come back within our class time.

Overall, the block model provides the faculty members an opportunity to move further in-depth into various topics. Additionally, professors can plan off-campus field trips where students have ample time to participate without impeding on their other academic courses.

The program requires tedious planning where faculty members coordinate who is responsible for teaching at different times throughout the semester and when certain topics will be covered. The faculty members at Small/Block claim they moved to the model from using a backward design approach. Specifically, the professor stated,

> We just knew that…the best way for students to learn is through active participation, and that is through our clinicals and internships. So, we wanted to make sure that they had enough of the structured experience, so they could have that. It is probably one of the longest [clinical contact hours] in the country from what I understand…so, the thing that makes the difference is that we make sure our students are in the classrooms with students with special needs. It is not random…we have relationships with the schools and the principals, and the clinicals are very structured. So, it isn't just following through and logging in your activities. You have specific activities that must be done and must be witnessed and ranked by your university supervisor and the classroom cooperative teacher.

Small/Block moved to the model in order to provide students the opportunity to complete the large number of clinical hours required for pre-service teacher graduation. After nine years of implementation, the faculty believe they have successfully worked out the kinks and have a

program that runs smoothly and prepares novice teachers for the demands faced by beginning teachers.

Faculty members describe the preparedness of first-year teachers as one of the major benefits of the program. Small/Block prides themselves on the employability of their graduates. In fact, until this year, 100 percent of students were employed after graduation. Administrators from local schools and districts describe the graduates as being confident and well prepared. Consequently, one of the faculty members stated,

> Now we have students who walk out of here who…do fairly well running a self-contained class for kids with significant disabilities, who can work in a class with kids who have nothing but autism, who can walk into a class and rewrite nineteen IEPs because they were written incorrectly and there is about to be a site visit. That is a first year teacher doing those kinds of things, and we're just amazed that they have those skills in the short two-year program.

Students graduating from Small/Block receive in-depth training that prepares them for the numerous responsibilities of teachers. In turn, students successfully deal with issues as they arise throughout their rookie teaching years.

Flexibility.

The faculty member interviewed from Small/Block identified the flexibility as the most beneficial component of the block model approach. As previously described, the approach allows for a considerable amount of practicum hours and the opportunity for students to delve more in-depth into the content topics required for graduation. In addition, faculty members can schedule field trips and observations within the allotted four-hour time block. This provides students time to travel to the site, observe, and return travel while remaining within the

scheduled block. In addition to student flexibility, faculty members schedule their teaching and supervision around the academic responsibilities of conducting research or presenting at conferences. The flexibility of the block model allows both students and faculty members the benefit of accomplishing all of their responsibilities.

Increased demands.

Not surprisingly, the faculty at Small/Block claims the major disadvantage of the block model is the time intensity and demands for both the students and professors. One of the faculty members described this drawback by saying,

> They [the students] probably spend more time in this kind of a program than in any other one where you know that you have one class Tuesday and Thursday. So you end up with if it's an 18 hour semester, you may actually be in class 20 or 21…For the faculty, the faculty time…We have 48 students in our pre-professional block [entering the teacher education program] who are going to be in very structured practicum placements, one month in early childhood, one month in an elementary setting, and then one month in an upper elementary setting. That all has to be supervised. That is Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Then, Thursday and Friday they are in class for eight hours…the block schedule is more than just the lecturing portion. We spend inordinate amounts of time with our students on assignments before and after class, and then the grading of the assignments and project is just getting to the breaking point.

Not only are the faculty members consumed by the requirements of the program, but the student demands are intense. With over 1,000 hours spent within educational settings and the content required throughout courses, students learn to manage their time wisely to succeed within the teacher preparation program.

In addition to working with students, faculty members participate in significant collaboration. Because of the nature of the program and the non-traditional approach of the model, faculty members are required to attend meetings to ensure all standards are covered and each faculty member shares an understanding of each student's progress. One of the Small/Block faculty members stated,

> This takes a lot of collaboration. We have block meetings throughout the semester where we review…and go through the students and their assignments and the clinicals or whatever is going on and try to update each other on where we are with our particular content area.

These meetings guarantee students receive attention for individualized support from all faculty members. This communication creates a sense of communal ownership, as faculty members understand what information needs further remediation.

Program Model Summary.

Institutions participating in phase one and two of the study claimed to use one of five models to prepare general education teachers for inclusion. These approaches included the one-course, dual certification, embedded, combination, and block models. Each of the interviewed faculty members described components of the program which were salient to their faculty members. From these discussions, I identified the most prominent themes across models. Many of the ideas coincided with the advantages and disadvantages of the approaches. Furthermore, faculty from multiple approaches described similar issues within their program model. In addition to analyzing the data within program model, I identified relevant themes depicted across multiple models. These ideas all focused on programmatic needs and changes made

through the utilization of data collected within institutions. These themes are described in detail

below.

Programmatic Improvement

Faculty members at all ten interview institutions described the use of data to make

programmatic decisions. The faculty at Small/One-Course#2 described the data used for

program improvement by saying,

> Well, first of all, about every other year we do a curriculum-mapping project where we
>
> look at every course we teach and what the objectives are, and we just finished that in
>
> May. And so we do that about every other year but we also, any time we get data, we
>
> present it to the teacher education faculty and they make some suggestions,
>
> recommendations, whatever that they would like to implement as a result of what the data
>
> tells us and then that goes to the teacher education committee for approval. So, we have
>
> a thinking, working body of teachers and faculty and then a smaller group compromised
>
> of faculty, public school partners and other folks on campus who are the decision making
>
> body.

The data that institutions use to make programmatic changes comes from multiple sources.

Faculty members analyze the various data sources, determining the programmatic needs within

each institution.

During six of the ten interviews, faculty members discussed the results of survey data

collected from first year teacher data. Each of these six institutions identified the areas within

their programs that needed most improvement and future focus. A faculty member from

Large/One-Course#1 summed up the areas of most concern. She maintained, "Well, we just get

general information and a lot of it's special ed, it's behavior management and they don't use this

term 'differentiated instruction' but it's how to meet the needs of learners who are struggling."

These three areas needing additional focus were evident in the majority of the six interviews

where results of survey data were discussed. Below I discuss the following areas in greater

detail (1) behavior management, (2) special education and differentiated instruction, and (3)

assessment.

Behavior management.

Behavior management was a consistent concern expressed by recent teacher education

graduates. All six of the institutions that discussed areas needing future focus agreed that recent

graduates consistently claimed behavior management was most necessary. Although many

novice teachers expressed a need for additional training in the area of behavior management,

three of the six faculty members described a lack of concern. When asking the faculty at the

Small/Combo#2 about the programmatic needs expressed by first year teachers, she stated

> Classroom management that is always the top of the list is classroom management. My
>
> feeling on that is that it takes probably three years to get to where you can manage
>
> everything in a classroom. So, I think that they think they are going to be able to just go
>
> in there and it's going to work and it takes a while to figure it out…So, I'm not really
>
> alarmed by it.

All six of the institutions who discussed first year teacher data claimed initial teacher graduates

continually recommend additional content in the area of behavior management. However, none

of the institutions made changes to programs based on this result. Additionally, six of the three

schools claimed this was a skill developed "on the job."

Similar to the Small/Combo#2, Small/One-Course#2 faculty stated, "Well, they always

say classroom management, they say that regardless of what we do because that's a kind of thing

that you learn on the job." Although beginning teachers continually claim a desire for additional training, half of the faculty members dismissed the claim as a skill learned in the classroom and with multiple years of experience teaching.

Special education and differentiated instruction.

In addition to increased training in the area of behavior management, first year teachers from three of the six institutions also requested further instruction for teaching students with special needs. One of the faculty members at Small/Embedded#1 expressed this need saying, "And I know from the research that we've gotten back from the surveys and so forth, they don't feel like they're really prepared for exceptional children. I don't know if anybody ever gets prepared because they are different." Comparable to the appeal for additional guidance in behavior management, first year teachers request additional training in regards to working with students with special needs. Akin to the situation with behavior management, many faculty members claim skills related to teaching students with special needs also develop with experience in the classroom. However, as described later in this chapter, institutions did recommend and create programmatic changes to meet some of the increasing demands and recommendations of recent graduates.

Assessment.

In addition to supplemental training in behavior management and teaching children with exceptionalities, faculty members at two of the six institutions claimed students wanted further instruction regarding the use of assessments. One of the professors at Small/One-Course#2 stated,

> I think what they really are asking for now is more information on assessment, and it's
>
> weird. We show them so many types of formative assessments, and I think in the process

of concentrating on that we forgot to tell them that high schools have end of course tests and how to construct a good test so that is what we seem to be hearing now is that we need to deal with what the best practice in assessment, specifically in summative assessment.

One of the increased expectations described in chapters one and two included the annual assessments required through the No Child Left Behind Act. With this intense focus on assessment, especially summative assessments, it is no surprise that recent graduates desire more information regarding effective evaluation measures. In fact, one direct comment from Small/Combo#1's first year teacher data stated, "I would suggest students take more assessment classes and possibly RTI training since this is becoming so prevalent in the school systems." With the increased emphasis on assessment through NCLB and RTI, students desire better preparation in these areas.

Adaptations

Faculty members at all ten interview institutions analyzed end of year data to create improvements to the teacher education programs. Using the data from recent graduates, the collegiate faculty members used the data for many purposes. Interdisciplinary teams (1) restructured and redesigned programs, (2) establish annual improvement goals, (3) added additional fieldwork hours, and (4) including additional coursework. I describe each of these adaptations in the sections below.

Program restructure and redesign.

Using different pieces of student data, faculty members reordered the class sequence required at Large/Dual#1. In order to better meet the needs of the students graduating from the teacher education programs, the department moved to a cohort model. This ensured all pre-

service teachers received the training necessary to be successful teachers in a structured and well-organized manner. In turn, the content from each course built onto each other throughout the time the students spent in the teacher licensure program. One of the faculty members described the program change as,

> This is my fifth year, and we basically restructured the sequence of our program. There was an understood sequence five years ago that sometimes would show up but we kind of got into a thing where the program started shrinking and we had one student that needed this course and they would jump out of sequence and people were accommodating that. Very quickly, we had no structure. And so, we instituted it and it's a cohort model is very definite, doesn't matter what program you're in within our undergraduate program. There is a cohort model, and all the students follow the same sequence. So, we've been able to monitor and pace and use Live Text as an e-portfolio base and so we collect our facts from that. They are rated in their courses based on the artifacts that they have assembled for us and so we have ways to probe into the program throughout.

In order to ensure all students received the essential content before graduation, Large/Dual#1 not only made changes to their program by reorganizing the sequence and moving to a cohort model, but they also instituted a way to monitor the outcome and student progress of the Live Text e-portfolio system. The system requires students upload their core assessments within each class and the projects are accessible to faculty members. With this system, the faculty at Large/Dual#1 can monitor the progress and understanding of current students within the program.

Similar to Large/Dual#1, Large/One-Course#1 described their use of the data to restructure the program. One of the faculty member stated, "We've been working on redesigning

our program and so we're looking at how we can provide more information and experiences related to those need areas identified." These changes helped improve the programs of study to meet the identified needs of students within the program and recent graduates.

Establish annual improvement goals.

In addition to making programmatic changes, faculty at Small/Dual#3 comes together for a two to three day annual retreat to establish program improvement goals for the year. One of the faculty members described the data and process by saying,

> We will use this [Board of Regents data from first year teachers]. We will use performance data from all of our classes so we aggregate data, for instance, if we want to look at their ability to assess kids' reading in informal reading inventories and developing related instructional plans for that. We use this data, we use all the assessment pieces from the course, we use an analysis of GACE II data and I compile that during the summer. I start sending it out. There is so much of it so people can start digesting it. But we have a retreat every fall which we spend about three days as a unit but also as an individual program looking at data to make program improvement goals for the year, of course, faculty make them…we ask faculty if they are making any changes in courses based on their own analysis of their Live Text data every term. That has become a tremendous amount of data because we also evaluate them and they evaluate us at the end of their program. We have an informal open-ended questionnaire and have an outside educational bench-marking agency do a very long and detailed analysis that gives us longitudinal data on what we are improving on from year to year…We look not only at that but we get data from their final teaching evaluations, from their cooperating teachers and assistant principals or principals…We start asking them if they will give us feedback

on their strengths and weaknesses individually and as a group. We get feedback from our

part time supervisors hat are out in the schools to see if they see trends in terms of

relative strengths and weaknesses. So, we choke on the data.

Collaboratively creating program improvement goals ensures each faculty member knows the

areas of need within the department. Furthermore, the faculty can work together to engage

students in the identified areas by embedding additional content knowledge and instituting well-

designed activities within more required courses.

Additional fieldwork.

Many institutions claimed first year teacher data emphasized a need for additional

training in areas such as behavior management and strategies for working with students with

special needs. As outlined in the section entitled programmatic needs, faculty members believed

these skills developed with time in the classroom. In turn, several interview institutions

increased the required hours of fieldwork needed to graduate. Small/Embedded#1 used the data

to for this reason. One of the faculty members stated,

> The thing we did lately was we took the data and one of the things that we got
>
> consistently back was the need more hands-on real classroom experience. And so we've
>
> expanded our field experience area hours. Now, one of the things here in this local area
>
> is that we have a lot of classrooms that are included and so that's one of the things that
>
> we require them to do in the field experience.

These additional hours provided opportunities for pre-service educators to apply the skills they

learned during collegiate lectures and observe quality inclusive environments.

The experience of Small/Embedded#1 was common with other institutions. The teacher

education department at the Small/Combo#2 also generated additional fieldwork as a result of

data regarding the program. As a committee of interdisciplinary members, faculty members opted to make several changes. A faculty member discussed these changes by stating,

> We talk about do we need to make some changes and how can we beef this up and we've decided as a result of that last year that we needed more field experience and embedded more field experience in several courses…so they're not just getting the one course, they're getting more of it embedded in several classes.

By analyzing the various data sources, some institutions added additional practicum hours to provide opportunities for students to master the skills necessary to be an effective teacher.

Additional course and training needs.

Although faculty from many institutions discussed great success with making changes based on the data of recent graduates and current students, one institution portrayed a different perspective. Small/Combo#1 used the data of first-year teachers to determine areas needing improvement within their program. One of the faculty members described the process and outcome by saying, "Special education faculty recommended an additional course to improve the preparation of general educators to implement inclusion. Faculty recommended an introductory course in special education and an advanced course to target special education inclusion protocols." Although the department created these recommendations, the faculty has seen little change within the program. In fact, the same faculty member claimed, "At this time there is no plan to move forward with this recommendation. There is, however, recognition that educators are not adequately prepared to implement special education inclusion protocols and additional instruction/modeling is warranted in educator preparation programs." Although nine of the ten institutions described changes made to the programs due to the analysis of data, Small/Combo#1

described the difficulties experienced when trying to institute the recommendations of department faculty.

When analyzing the transcripts from the ten interviews, I discovered an assumption I made when developing this study. The third research question of this study examined how higher education faculty members adapt their programs and philosophies to meet the needs of general education inclusion teachers. As described in the previous section, institutions used multiple data sources to alter their programs to better meet the needs of their pre-service teachers. However, faculty from more than half of the ten institutions believed the philosophies of the faculty did not necessarily match the approach used within the institution. In fact, one faculty member discussed how their faculty would never be able to agree on one single philosophy. As I reread the transcripts following the interviews, I realized this was an assumption I made subconsciously before creating the research questions. Therefore, the portion of the research question regarding the philosophies of the departmental faculty was not answered.

Phase Three

Phase three of this research study involved a document search. Initially, I located the mission statements of all ten interview institutions. Then, through internet research of university and college web-sites, as well as e-mails with some of the interviewed faculty, I collected the data necessary to determine each institution's focus on inclusion and individuals with disabilities.

Following a modified framework identified and modeled by Holland et al. (2008), I analyzed the documents to create table 10.

Table 10

Highest Degree, Funding, and Focus of Interview Institutions

Name of institution	Highest degree	Funding	Focus
Small/Block	Doctorate	Private	Teaching
Large/Dual#1	Doctorate	Public	Research
Large/Dual#2	Doctorate	Public	Research
Small/Dual#3	Specialist	Public	Teaching
Large/Embedded#1	Baccalaureate	Public	Teaching
Small/Embedded#2	Baccalaureate	Private	Teaching
Large/One-Course#1	Doctorate	Public	Research
Small/One-Course#2	Baccalaureate	Private	Teaching
Small/Combo#1	Specialist	Public	Teaching
Small/Combo#2	Masters	Public	Teaching

In order to fit the models identified within this study, I adapted the framework to include the

models discovered through the on-line survey. Furthermore, I added additional options to the

fieldwork and mission/coursework sections. Table 11 provides the percentage of elementary

education teacher preparation programs in the interview sample using strategies integrating

disability content (i.e. mission statements, disability courses, embedded content, and fieldwork).

Table 11

Percentage of Elementary Education Teacher Preparation Programs in the Interview Sample Using Each Strategy for Integrating Disability Content

Strategy	Detail	Percent
Disability-Focused Mission	Incorporates disability priorities in mission	20%
	Associate disability with diversity in mission	10%
Disability-focused course	Require at least one course	100%
	Require more than one course	50%
Embed disability content	Embedded in only one course	20%
	Embedded in more than one course	80%
Disability content in field-work	Fieldwork based in special ed classrooms	50%
	Fieldwork based in inclusive classroom	70%
Mission and program model	Disability in mission and one-course model	50%
	Disability in mission and embedded model	0%
	Disability in mission and dual certification	33%
	Disability in mission and combination model	0%
	Disability in mission and block model	100%
	Disability in mission and require fieldwork	66%

Only three of the ten mission statements discussed disability, and one used diversity to cover special education. Overall, the mission statements that discussed diversity and disability issues belong to one institution incorporating the one-course model, one institution using the dual certification model, and the institution using the block model. No other institution mentioned disability or diversity within their program missions.

Interestingly, every institution required at least one course focused on special education. However, this could be because of state requirements placed on higher education institutions. In fact, the state of Georgia requires a course focused on the characteristics of individuals with special needs. However, pre-service teachers who go to school out of state but want to teach in Georgia are required to complete a course before licensure. This requirement is not difficult considering most institutions now insist on the course as part of their teacher preparation program of study.

In addition to one course required at every institution, all but one institution embedded some sort of special education content within their program of study coursework or field experience. This might be due to the fact that programs such as Response to Intervention, that incorporate many special education strategies and generated from exceptionalities research, have become more prevalent. Although 80% of the colleges and universities claimed to embed special education content into two or more courses, only two of the institutions selected the embedded model when completing the initial on-line survey. This is likely because much of the embedded information focuses on strategies that originated and are often associated with special education, such as co-teaching.

In addition, 70% of interview institutions place students within a setting where students with special needs are educated. Five of the ten schools provide field-work placements in a special education resource classroom, while seven out of ten institutions place students within inclusive environments.

This chapter presented the findings of my study which were three-fold. Initially, I identified the program models currently used to prepare pre-service general education teachers for inclusion. Three models, which were already discussed within research, were most

prominently used within the 166 institutions initially surveyed. Multiple institutions also used the combination model, while the co-taught and block models were described only one institution respectively. After identifying the models of instruction adopted by institutions in the southeast, I investigated the programmatic needs perceived by faculty members in universities and colleges with teacher education programs. Consistently, faculty members identified behavior management, special education/differentiated instruction, and assessment. From these programmatic needs, I explored how institutions used the data of first year teachers to create programs better equipped to prepare pre-service teachers. Higher education institutions used the data in numerous ways. Many institutions instituted programmatic changes and reorganized class sequences. One institution used the data to create annual program improvement goals that were specific to the needs of first-year teacher graduates. Finally, multiple colleges and universities determined additional courses and field-work were needed to provide students with the knowledge and experiences necessary to be a successful teacher. The following chapter discusses my conclusion, limitations, implications for practice, and future research recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined the models of instruction that are currently used by higher education institutions in the southeast to prepare general education pre-service teachers for inclusion. I identified six approaches currently in practice including the (1) one-course model, (2) dual certification, (3) embedded model, (4) combination model, (5) block model, and (6) co-taught model. In addition to identifying the models used, I examined the programmatic needs perceived by faculty members within institutions using five of these six models. Faculty identified the following areas as needing additional focus: (1) behavior management, (2) special education/differentiated instruction, and (3) assessment. Finally, I researched how higher education faculty institute changes to meet the needs of pre-service educators. Faculty members disclosed four major changes made within programs after analyzing data sources. The different amendments included (1) program restructure and redesign, (2) establishing annual improvement goals, (3) adding additional fieldwork hours, and (4) including additional coursework.

This final chapter includes four main sections. Initially, I address the ways the findings from this research study enhance the literature base surrounding the preparation of general education pre-service teachers. Next, I explore the limitations of the study, implications for practice and provide recommendations for future research.

Conclusion

An abundant amount of research exists surrounding the topic of teacher preparation. However, the majority of the research involves preparing general education teachers to educate

typically developing students. When analyzing the research focused on preparing general

education teachers for working with students with special needs, the research base is sparse.

However, with the accountability created within No Child Left Behind, all sub-groups including

students with special needs, must meet the same high level of achievement as their typically

developing counterparts. Furthermore, the increased time students with special needs spend in

the general education prompts the question of how institutions are preparing these educators for

the task of teaching students with disabilities.

This research study investigated the teacher preparation models higher education

institutions use to prepare general education teachers for inclusion. When initially investigating

the research base surrounding general education teacher preparation for inclusion, I identified

four models previously described within the literature. Campbell and Fyfe (1995) described the

dual certification model as a combination of both general and special education content. Brown

et al (2008) classified the one-course model by simply claiming the approach included "at least

one course that introduces them [pre-service teachers] to special education issues" (p. 2088).

Finally, Slee (2001) and Campbell and Fyfe (1995) described the embedded approach as one that

emphasized the content of general education but included various components of special

education content throughout various courses. Winters (2006) although never terming the

approach as the combination model, described the embedded approach as the most common

model used in addition to another approach. Throughout this research study, survey participants

classified their teacher preparation model into one of the four above described categories or the

under the option of "other." If the respondent chose the "other" category, the participant was

asked to describe the approach. With the use of this question, I confirmed the use of the four

models previously described within the literature, as well as two other program models. These

two models included the block model and co-taught model. Unfortunately because of inability to make contact with one institution, I was unable to gather further information about the co-taught approach. Furthermore, within the research base regarding teacher preparation, I created a specific definition of each of the five models. Using both the data from this research study and the information from the literature base, I created concise definitions of each approach.

In addition to identifying the various program models utilized by higher education institutions preparing general education teachers for inclusion, I observed themes that were consistent within the models. Analyzing the data from both the dual certification and block models, I identified intensity as a theme. In fact, faculty from the Small/Block institution discussed the focus on planning and preparation as one of the most concentrated aspects of the job. He stated,

> When we started this we took it very seriously and we paid faculty to participate in retreats, we had daylong meetings, many of them were where we sat down with standards on sticky notes and we wrote down what we have to teach and we kind of broke down how these things do overlap. We did a lot of planning and people were paid to do that like you are in any other business. If you're going to do something, you're paid for it. While it might not have been much, it was just…the acknowledgement of your participation, how valuable that was but it really helped.

This increased responsibility was rewarded through funds from grants and private donors. Similarly, one faculty member Large/Dual#2 discussed the development of their program occurred through grant funding. Knowing she wanted to create a stronger program more focused on aspects important to special education, she searched for two years looking for a grant that

would fit the specifications of program development. Then, with the help of a senior faculty member, she created a grant proposal that was accepted.

These grant funds and private donations made to institutions encouraged collaboration and group planning for institutions to creatively develop programs to meet the needs of the institution's students. Furthermore, faculty members were shown the importance of their collaborative efforts through the stipends they received. These funding opportunities must be available for institutional planning to creatively explore options for preparing pre-service teachers.

In addition to the contributions to the teacher preparation literature base and the importance of grant and private funding sources for teacher preparation program development, the aspect of behavior management was prevalent within the findings. All six of the institutions that reported first year teacher feedback data determined behavior management was an area of concern for novice teachers. Of the six institutions that reported behavior management as an area of weakness, three of the six respondents claimed to be unconcerned. Claiming the skill was developed "on the job," faculty members dismissed the concern.

The dismissal of behavior management as an area needing improvement is of great importance when analyzing the research regarding what leads to teacher burnout. For example, Abel and Sewell (1999) identified numerous characteristics that lead to teacher burnout. Two of these traits included fear of violence and student behavior problems. In addition, Boyle, Borg, Falzon, and Baglioni (1995) identified one of the four main factors associated with teachers leaving the field as student behavior issues. Additionally, research statistics show that approximately 25 percent of teachers leave the profession within the first three years, while 40 percent change careers after only five years (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004;

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). Additionally, when teachers

remain in the classroom despite burnout and exhaustion, their effectiveness is oftentimes

dramatically decreased (Oliver & Venter, 2003). These high levels of teacher turnover and the

effects it has on student achievement should create more concern for higher education faculty

members who dismiss behavior management as a skill that is developed "on the job."

Overall, this study contributed to the literature base on numerous levels. The results of

the study expanded the research base with the discovery of a new model utilized to prepare pre-

service teachers for inclusion, establishing more in-depth definitions of the various approaches

used by higher education institution, and identifying areas in need within each of the models. In

addition, faculty from higher education institutions expressed the need for program development

grants or private funding contributions as a means to creatively meet the needs of future teachers.

Finally, the study confirmed behavior management as an area of weakness amongst many

teacher education programs; however, further discussions revealed the lack of concern displayed

within three of six institutions. These concerns are of utmost importance because of the

connection between behavior management issues and teacher burnout and attrition.

Limitations

This research study, like all others, exhibited limitations. Due to issues such as lack of

funding, time, or available resources, I encountered several areas that limit the outcomes of this

research study. Some of the drawbacks included sample limitations, interview restraints, and

connectivity of data sources. Below I discuss each of these issues further.

Sample Limitations.

I initially disseminated phase one of the study (i.e. the survey) to deans and department

chairs at 166 elementary education higher education programs. Although I received a 31 percent

response rate, this only included 54 schools. The majority of the schools were small (e.g. less than 4,999) and teaching institutions. A broader response would likely have provided richer detail and greater understanding of the range of teaching models currently in existence within higher education institutions. Therefore, one of the limitations of the survey involved the lack of diversity in responses. Although I was content with the response rate, I would have liked to see a broader range of characteristics within institutions participating in the survey.

From the responses, I chose eleven institutions to participate in phone interviews. Of the eleven institutions selected, ten agreed to participate. The one remaining institution used a "co-taught" model that is not thoroughly described in the published literature. Therefore, the inclusion of this institution would likely have added additional depth to my study and broadened the research base regarding how to overcome barriers that exist when co-teaching in the collegiate setting. In addition, having only ten informant interviews narrowed the information and data gained from these meetings.

Interviews.

All interviews for this study were audio-taped over the phone. Without funding and a lack of resources, interviews could not occur in person. Although I attempted to ease any nervousness or apprehension during the interviewees, there were times I felt that some of the participants limited their responses. For example, when I asked one institution faculty member about the drawbacks of a specific model, she hesitated and giggled seeming uncomfortable with her response. Although I took this opportunity to reassure her anonymity, I still felt that I might have received a different response if I was interviewing in person and had developed greater rapport.

One option for overcoming this limitation involved using technology to conduct computer-to-computer interviews. With technological advances and programs such as Skype or iChat, this possibility could have helped overcome the rapport issue. However, I chose not to use computer-to-computer technology because I was weary of potential technological issues. Furthermore, I believe the use of computer-to-computer technology might have decreased the amount of interviewee respondents because this would take time to ensure computer technology was prepared and ready for the interview. Considering most individuals need no technological training or assistance with a telephone, I decided this would be the easiest method to use for the interviews. Finally, although the face-to-face interviews may assist with rapport, the personal interview nature was not essential considering I was not using coding measures that would include facial expressions or any other body language.

Connectivity.

Qualitative researchers use triangulation measures to garner trustworthiness within their research. Although I collected three data sources and used these approaches, the lack of direct observation means I did not have the opportunity to truly observe the practices described by the interviewees. I analyzed mission statements to determine the emphasis on diversity and individuals with special needs, and I used different syllabi to link the claims of participants with the actual practices occurring within the teacher preparation classrooms. Consequently, the syllabi and mission statements may not accurately demonstrate the activities and purpose behind each institution. Without direct observation I was not able to visually observe the actual practices described by each interviewee. Therefore, one of the limitations of the study involved the reliance on documents as opposed to observation.

Implications for Practice

This study is timely in nature given the current federal administration's focus on how higher education institutions are preparing teachers to meet the needs of students. The policies governing public education, the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, continue to shift the placement pendulum towards inclusive education. Therefore, this study involves multiple implications for both higher education institutions as well as public kindergarten through twelfth grade education. These implications are discussed in detail below.

Implications for Higher Education

One of the implications for practice by higher education faculty developed from a practice already utilized by one of the interview institutions. This practice includes one institution mentoring another school that is interested in developing a similar program or approach. For example, Small/Dual#3 was the first institution in Georgia to implement a dual certification model for elementary and special education. The university has over ten years of experience running the approach, while also having negotiated the process of moving from one model to another. In turn, the faculty from the college mentors faculty from other institutions to help them develop similar approaches. Believing strongly in the model used by Small/Dual#3, faculty assisted a small public institution in southern Georgia, with the conversion to a dual certification model. Multiple faculty members facilitated meetings, the institution shared documents, and the overall department answered questions related to the program. Having already experienced the conversion, Small/Dual#3 faculty served as experts while the other college shifted from one approach to another.

This mentoring approach is one method that other institutions could institute to assist department members within their state to modify their current instructional approach. Because the faculty members of one institution have already experienced the alteration, they can provide expertise and assistance for other colleges and universities wanting to follow suit. This inter-collegiate mentorship could provide the assistance necessary for another institution to apply programmatic changes to meet the needs of pre-service teachers.

In addition to developing a mentoring partnership between schools wanting to alter program models, institutions need to make better use of the programmatic data collected statewide and within the institution. Numerous data sources are available to higher education institutions; however, many faculty members interviewed for the study knew little about the needs prescribed by recently graduated teachers. Furthermore, faculty members did not know how to access the data to analyze and develop recommendations for changes. Although some institutions used the data to develop annual improvement goals or to add additional fieldwork, many institution faculty members were unable to discuss how they used the data to make programmatic changes.

NCATE, the national accreditation organization charged with ensuring teacher education programs are meeting the standards necessary to prepare pre-service teachers for the twenty-first century classroom, encourages the use of data as a means for creating changes within higher education teacher preparation programs. Although NCATE procedures were instituted to help faculty members become more aware of the data collected and how to use it to develop quality teacher preparation programs, many interview participants could not easily discuss the areas in need of improvement within their institution. Just as faculty members encourage pre-service

educators to utilize student data to make educational improvements within the public school classroom, faculty have the opportunity to lead by example.

Using data to make program improvements is not a new recommendation. However, I hope to reinforce the importance of the practice and the effects it can have on the education of future teachers. In addition to the use of data as an integral resource, mentor relationships between faculty at separate institutions have the potential to improve programs in need of assistance.

Implications for K-12

In addition to a mentoring program within the higher education community, administrators within public education schools should work to develop similar mentor programs. Unlike many of the current mentorship programs available to novice teachers, the mentor relationships could occur across disciplines. By having a special educator mentor a general education teacher, general education teachers learn to collect data to make academic decisions, differentiate instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners, and how to provide instruction for students with differing learning abilities. However, when a special educator is mentored by a general education teacher, the special education teacher learns how to align assessments and standards, manage classrooms with large amounts of students, and incorporate activities that engulf many learning standards and topics. These relationships help the teachers from different disciplines understand the intricacies of each educators' expertise and create collaborative relationships that could carry over into the classroom and assist with student achievement.

Besides developing an interdisciplinary mentorship, pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade educators can develop and pilot inclusive and co-teaching programs within their schools. One of the faculty members at Small/Combo#2 described one of the advantages of the embedded

model as seeing some of the institution's recent graduates conduct an exemplary inclusive and co-taught environment. In this exceptional classroom, identified by the administrators of the school, other teachers observed and witnessed the success of the environment. Indirectly, this teaching environment provided educators access to best practices and an opportunity to observe a unique and successful classroom. In turn, teachers learned alternative ways to deliver instruction and meet the needs of all students with and without diverse learning needs.

Recommendations for Future Research

One of the main purposes behind this research study was to identify the models higher education institutions currently use to prepare general education teachers for inclusion. Three models were previously identified in the published research. These approaches included the (a) one-course model, (b) dual certification model, and (c) embedded model. One approach less often highlighted within the research included the combination model. Additionally, within this study, I discovered the block model as another approach adopted and instituted by Small/Block#1.

Now that several studies have identified these models, researchers need to explore the effectiveness of the different approaches. Multiple data sources exist which could be used to provide researchers essential information as they investigate the outcomes of the various models. For example, all of the institutions I contacted collected data from both first year teachers and their employers. This information provided qualitative and quantitative data that could be valuable for researchers. In addition to first year teacher data, researchers could utilize test data required for state certification. Disaggregating the data into areas of strengths and weaknesses for the students would allow researchers and higher education institutions a better idea of where pre-

service teachers need additional training, as well as opportunities to determine institutions with exceptional pass rates.

Many institutions discussed barriers to providing more intensive instruction for pre-service teachers. For example, Large/OneCourse#1 claimed funding and a lack of faculty resources prevented the institutions from providing a different model to students. Large/OneCourse#1 faculty stated, "and resource constraints, too. I mean, we don't have the faculty. I guess if it would come from our department, we would need at least another faculty member." In the current economy, funding barriers inevitably exist within higher education institutions. However, both researchers and higher education teaching faculty must problem solve methods of preparing teachers for the diverse needs which exist within the classroom. This involves brainstorming for different and alternative measures to incorporate more content into course programs. One solution would be for researchers to follow institutions piloting different approaches. In turn, publishing the various case studies allows other institutions to build upon and develop similar strategies.

America has become a melting pot of cultures and customs. In turn, this diversity carries over into public education classrooms, forcing educators to meet the needs of students from differing backgrounds and multiple learning styles. Higher education faculty must provide graduates with a different skill set than educators needed twenty years ago. Using the findings, implications, and recommendations within this study and the institutional data available, higher education faculty and educational departments have the informational resources necessary to meet these needs.

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APPENDIX A

DISSERTATION SURVEY

1. Which of the following best describes how your institution is preparing general education pre-service teachers for inclusion?
   - Embedded method (definition)
   - One class method (definition)
   - Dual certification (definition)
   - Other (please explain)

2. Using the 5-point Likert scale, rate the following activities based on how often professors and lecturers at your institutions use them to prepare general education pre-service teachers for inclusion.

        1   2   3   4   5
     Never used   Occasionally used   Always used

   Lecture
   Case studies
   Collaborative group projects
   Field work
   Other (please explain)

3. Which of the following best describes your institution's approximate size of student population?
   - 2,000 or less
   - 2,000-5,000
   - 5,000-10,000
   - 10,000-15,000
   - 15,000-20,000
   - 20,000-30,000
   - 30,000 or more

4. Which of the following best describes the highest degree awarded in your department?
   - Baccalaureate
   - Maters
   - Educational Specialist
   - Doctorate

5. Which of the following best describes your institution?
   - 4 year public university

- 4 year public college
- 4 year private university
- 4 year private college

6. Which of the following best describes your institution's focus?
   - Teaching college
   - Research institution

7. Which of the following best describes the amount of students in your general education pre-service training program?
   - <200
   - 150-200
   - 100-149
   - 50-99
   - 0-49

8. Which of the following best describes the amount of full-time professors/lecturers in the general education department?
   - <10
   - 7-9
   - 4-6
   - 1-3

9. Do you have a faculty member specializing in inclusive education on staff in your department?
   - Yes
   - No

10. Would you be willing to participate in a 15-20 minute follow-up interview about your beliefs and opinions regarding teacher preparation methods and practices your college of education uses to prepare pre-service general education teachers?
    - Yes (please enter name, phone number, and email address)
    - No

11. Would you be willing to share any course syllabi with the researcher?
    - Yes (please enter a contact name and number)
    - No

12. Do you have any first year follow-up teacher data you are willing to share with the researcher?
    - Yes (please enter a contact name and number)
    - No, we don't collect follow-up data
    - No, we prefer not to provide that data

APPENDIX B

DISSERTATION INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. You chose the "_____" model as the method for preparing general education teachers for inclusion at your institution. How would you describe this model?

2. Why did your program choose this model?

3. Describe how your department came to this approach?

4. How are the beliefs/philosophies of your department portrayed in this model?

5. How are the faculty members within your department meshing their instructional methods to meet the beliefs and philosophies of the department?

6. What have you witnessed as the benefits/advantages of this approach?

7. What have you witnessed as the drawbacks/disadvantages of this approach?

8. Do you feel the "_____" model is meeting the needs of the students within your program?

9. What do you believe are the programmatic needs of general education inclusion teachers?

10. Does your institution collect first-year teacher data as a means of improving your department?

11. If yes, what are the novice teachers expressing as needed areas for additional pre-service training?

12. If yes, what are the novice teachers expressing as the most beneficial areas within their pre-service training?

13. If yes, how is your institution adapting the model of preparation to meet these needs?