The principal's role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs

Evie Ruth Tindall
College of William & Mary - School of Education

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THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN FOSTERING TEACHER COLLABORATION
FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Evie Ruth Tindall
December 1996
THE PRINCIPAL’S ROLE IN FOSTERING TEACHER COLLABORATION

FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

By

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Christine S Walther-Thomas, Ph.D
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Ronny, and two sons, Jeremy and Matthew who have faithfully supported and encouraged me throughout the experience.
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Acknowledgements

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THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN FOSTERING TEACHER COLLABORATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

ABSTRACT

This study examined the principal's role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs by investigating two overarching questions: (a) How do principals foster teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs and (b) how do these behaviors relate to leadership behaviors that have been identified as facilitative of teacher collaboration? First, a multiple-site descriptive case study was conducted and, using nomination criteria, five sites in four school districts were selected. The data collection involved the verification of the nomination criteria through observations and the collection of data through interviews with principals and general and special education teachers as well as document reviews. An analysis of the cross-site case study data revealed five emerging themes related to the principal's role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs. Second, role descriptors of the principal identified in the cross-site analysis of the case studies were compared with role descriptors cited in empirical studies relating to the principal's role in fostering teacher collaboration. The findings from the cross-site comparison were classified into three levels of role descriptors.

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THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY IN VIRGINIA
The Principal’s Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs
CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

American education has a moral purpose to make a positive difference in the lives of all students so that they can live and work productively in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing society (Fullan, 1993). To accomplish this purpose educators face tremendous challenges, two of which include the accelerating needs of a diverse student population and the limited economic resources to meet those needs (Cosden, 1990).

As the composition of the school-age population shifts to include more students from diverse backgrounds and with diverse needs, the demand for services for America's youth will dramatically increase. By the year 2000, students from dissimilar cultural backgrounds will compose as much as 40% of the total school populations (Ramirez, 1988). Other expanding populations include students from low income families, students from fragmented families, students with substance abuse problems, students who are potential dropouts, and students who are technology dependent and medically fragile (Johnson, 1988; Sirvus, 1988; Wood, 1988). As a result of the continuing growth of these unique groups with differing needs, diversity among students may become more the norm rather than the exception (Johnson, Pugach, & Devlin, 1990).

The challenge of serving an increasingly diverse population is heightened by the knowledge that our nation's schools will be operating in a milieu of increased fiscal

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constraints (Cosden, 1990). Without substantive growth in funds, educators will need to problem solve and plan together in order to use existing resources efficiently and creatively. Successfully educating the burgeoning numbers of culturally diverse students, at-risk students, and students with disabilities with limited fiscal resources requires change within the existing system.

One such change is collaboration among teachers. Teacher collaboration, according to a number of educators and researchers, will continue to be an essential component of education throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century (Friend & Cook, 1992; Fullan, 1992; Pugach & Johnson, 1995). Pugach and Johnson indicated that the effectiveness of current educational conditions such as site-based management, inclusion, and changes in the student population to include increasing numbers of students with special needs depend on successful collaboration among teachers. Furthermore, Friend and Cook stated that if schools are to adapt to significant changes such as inclusion, greater use of technology, and the increasing numbers of students with special needs, collaborative relationships are necessary. On a similar note, Fullan (1992) asserted that the ability to collaborate on both a small and large scale is becoming essential for educators.

Teacher collaboration has been described in general and specific terms. For example, Rosenholtz (1989) broadly defined teacher collaboration as the extent to which teachers are involved in help-related interactions. Friend and Cook (1992) defined teacher collaboration more specifically as a “style of direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a
common goal" (p. 5). Friend and Cook (1992) further related that teachers engaged in
collaboration are willing to share responsibilities, resources, and accountability.
Additionally, they suggested the emergent characteristics of the collaborative style
include (a) valuing collaboration as an interpersonal style, (b) trusting one another, and
(c) establishing a sense of community.

The advantages of developing collaboration among teachers are noteworthy for a
number of reasons. First, collaboration among teachers can result in improved instruction
and can enhance teacher confidence, quality of performance, and commitment
(Rosenholtz, 1989). Secondly, effective collaborative endeavors among teachers can
have positive effects on the success of innovations (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). Thirdly,
teacher collaboration can enhance teacher development (Little, 1982). Finally,
collaboration among teachers can reduce referrals to special education and improve the
performance of students with or without disabilities in the general classroom (Chalfant &

Although the need for teacher collaboration is established and the advantages of
teacher collaboration are noteworthy, barriers to successful collaboration are reported to
exist. Nevin, Thousand, Paolucci-Whitcomb, and Villa (1990) identified eight barriers to
teacher collaboration cited in the literature: (a) lack of planning, (b) lack of training,
(c) lack of time, (d) lack of a common knowledge base, (e) lack of funding, (f) lack of
ownership for all students, (g) teacher overload, and (h) hierarchical relationships.
Moreover, West and Idol (1987) pinpointed lack of time to collaborate and lack of
administrative support as the two major barriers.
The lack of administrative support is cited in the literature as a barrier (West & Idol, 1987). However, the presence of administrative support is reported to be a facilitating agent for teacher collaboration. Smith and Scott (1990) stated that principals who support teacher collaboration are in a position to counteract all other barriers and to influence norms of collaboration within the school. On a similar note, Rosenholtz (1989) reported that norms of teacher collaboration are not a result of spontaneous happenings among teachers, but rather the product of “social engineering” by principals (p.421).

Considering their position of influence within a school, how do principals counteract barriers to teacher collaboration and encourage collaborative relationships? Additionally, how do principals initiate, develop, and continue collaborative structures among teachers for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs? These questions converge to form the problem to be investigated in this study: the role of principals in fostering teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving the teaching and learning of students with special needs.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was developed by analyzing 11 empirical studies to determine specific role descriptors of the principal in fostering teacher collaboration. This analysis (not a meta analysis) included studies on teacher collaboration for general purposes such as staff development, organizational change, organizational effectiveness, and organizational innovations and studies on teacher collaboration for students with special needs. Some studies reported findings associated with the principal’s role as by-products of the research while others specifically examined...
the principal's role. Data from the literature analysis were divided into two categories: role descriptors that were most frequently cited in the literature (see Table 1) and role descriptors not as frequently cited in the literature (see Table 2). These tables are located at the end of this chapter. The role descriptors of the principal most frequently cited in the literature (identified in at least four studies with two of the studies relating to teacher collaboration for students with special needs) are as follows:


5. Provide time to collaborate (Chalfant & Pysh, 1989; Dawson, 1984; Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes, 1995; Kruger, Struzziero, Watts, & Vacca, 1995; Leithwood &


7. Help with schedules (Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes, 1995; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Meyerowitz, 1990; Pugach & Johnson, 1990; Walther-Thomas, in press). Role descriptors of the principal not as frequently cited in the literature are not listed here because there are so many of them (see Table 2). Further support for the conceptual framework as well as a discussion of the studies cited in this section are presented in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

Statement of the Problem

This study investigated the principal's leadership role in initiating, developing, and continuing collaboration among teachers for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs.

Overarching Questions

1. How do principals foster teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs?

2. How do these behaviors relate to leadership behaviors that have been identified as facilitative of teacher collaboration?
General Design of the Study

To examine the first question in the study, a multiple-site, descriptive case study was conducted. This design was selected for several reasons. First, the researcher wanted to describe as completely as possible within the school context, specific behaviors of the principal in initiating, developing, and continuing collaborative endeavors among teachers for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs. Additionally, the researcher desired to obtain the personal perspective of principals and teachers on the principal’s collaboration-fostering behaviors. To address the study’s second question, specific role descriptors of the principal identified in the case studies were compared with role descriptors of the principal as cited in 11 empirical studies relating to the principal’s role in fostering teacher collaboration.

Operational Definitions

Collaborative Schools

Collaborative schools are schools that meet all of the following criteria:

(a) schools in which two collaborative structures such as collaborative teams, collaborative pairs, and collaborative teaching have been functioning for at least three years, including the present school year; (b) schools in which the teachers in the collaborative structures meet frequently, which would include a 30-minute session each week for collaborative pairs and at least one 30-minute session each month for collaborative teams; and (c) schools in which the same individual has been the principal for the year preceding and the three years following the implementation of the collaborative structures.
Development Stage of Collaboration

The development stage of collaboration refers to the preparation period and the first year of implementation.

Fostering

Fostering refers to actions of the principal in initiating, developing, and continuing collaborative endeavors among teachers.

Initiation Stage of Collaboration

The initiation stage refers to the time when teacher collaboration for student with special needs was first considered, discussed, and perhaps attempted in an informal way.

Leadership Role of the Principal

Leadership role refers to those characteristics and behaviors exhibited by the principal to foster collaboration among teachers.

Continuance Stage of Collaboration

The continuance stage refers to the second year of implementation to the present time.

Principal

A principal is an individual who is the executive head of a public school serving grades ranging from kindergarten to twelfth and who is listed in Virginia Educational Directory -- 1996.

Students with Special Needs

Students with special needs are students that evidence learning and behavior problems in the classroom. This classification includes students considered “at-risk”, as
well as those identified with learning disabilities, those for whom English is a second language, those receiving remedial support, and those who are considered high ability or gifted.

**Teachers**

Teachers refer to general educators and specialists who are involved with the instruction of students.

**Teacher Collaboration**

Although teacher collaboration can refer to interactions among teachers for various purposes, in this study the term will refer to a style of direct, egalitarian, and usually voluntary, student-based interactions among teachers for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs. This form of collaboration is practiced in structures such as (a) collaborative teams (teachers meeting together as a problem-solving unit to generate intervention strategies), (b) collaborative teaching (general educators and specialists jointly planning and delivering instruction in the context of the general classroom), and (c) collaborative pairs (a general classroom teacher and a specialist or two general educators meeting to problem solve and plan around the needs of students with special needs).

**Thick Description**

Thick description refers to the depth, detail, and richness that the researcher seeks in the data-gathering processes.
Significance of the Study

Owens and Steinhoff (1976) related that “it is through the analysis of leader behavior that we can hope to identify the elements of leadership that can be studied, learned and practiced” (p. 126). Moreover, Greenfield (1987) urged researchers to use a more analytical approach as they seek to understand leadership in the schools by tempering generalizations about the nature of leadership with more specific insights found in the day-to-day reality of the school settings. Similarly, Hallinger and Murphy (1987) reported that research in instructional leadership has rarely defined specific policies, practices, or behaviors to be initiated by the principal. Whereas the existing literature on the role of the principal in promoting collaboration among teachers indicates that the principal plays a key role and pinpoints general leadership behaviors, guidelines, and strategies (e.g., Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990; Smith & Scott, 1990; West, 1990), no study to date was found that focused specifically on the principal’s part in fostering teacher collaboration from the initiation stage through the continuance stage. Additionally, no study was found that focused solely on the principal’s role in fostering teacher collaborative relationships for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs. This study sought to describe specific behaviors of certain principals in the day-to-day reality of promoting collaboration among teachers for the purpose of improving teaching and learning in a number of local school settings. This study also described the behaviors of the principal over a period of time from the initiation stage to the continuance stage. Therefore, the study added depth and specificity
to the present understandings of the principal’s role in fostering student-based collaboration among teachers.

Delimitations of the Study

The researcher delimited the study in the following ways:

1. Because of the convenience of accessibility, the researcher selected only Virginia school districts in which teachers had presented and/or attended a state-wide symposium on teacher collaboration; thus, the representation of schools was limited.

2. The researcher sought school nominations from directors of special education and/or their designees and used nomination criteria for the selection of schools; thus, only schools meeting the criteria were considered.

3. At each nominated site, the researcher requested that the principal, using specific criteria, select the teachers to be interviewed; thus all teachers were not represented.

4. The researcher observed only two structures of teacher collaboration; thus, all structures of teacher collaboration in the schools were not represented.

5. The researcher interviewed only principals, general educators, and specialists; thus, the study did not offer a representation of the whole school.
Table 1
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration

Literature Analysis

|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|──────────|-------------------------------|-----------------|───|───|
| 1. Be supportive                                       | ●                    | ●                                    | ●                                     | ●               | ●                     | ●                   | ●                    | ●                             | ●               | ● |
| 2. Demonstrate commitment                               | ●                    | ●                                    | ●                                     | ●               | ●                     | ●                   | ●                    | ●                             | ●               | ● |
| 3. Provide training and participate in training         | ●                    | ●                                    | ●                                     | ●               | ●                     | ●                   | ●                    | ●                             | ●               | ● |
| 4. Provide resources (human and material)               | ●                    | ●                                    | ●                                     | ●               | ●                     | ●                   | ●                    | ●                             | ●               | ● |
| 5. Provide time                                         | ●                    | ●                                    | ●                                     | ●               | ●                     | ●                   | ●                    | ●                             | ●               | ● |
| 6. Provide recognition of accomplishment                | ●                    | ●                                    | ●                                     | ●               | ●                     | ●                   | ●                    | ●                             | ●               | ● |
| 7. Help with schedules                                  | ●                    | ●                                    | ●                                     | ●               | ●                     | ●                   | ●                    | ●                             | ●               | ● |

* Decision rule: Cited in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs.

- Studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs.
- Studies addressing teacher collaboration for general purposes such as organizational change and professional development.
Table 2

The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration

Literature Analysis

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<td>2. Show confidence in teachers and give freedom</td>
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<td>4. Model a collaborative style</td>
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<td>5. Encourage teachers</td>
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<td>8. Communicate a compelling purpose</td>
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<td>11. Set clear goals (involve staff)</td>
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<td>12. Relate to teacher concerns, priorities, and mission</td>
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<td>13. Help develop structures</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptors Not As Frequently Cited in the Literature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate faculty participation in defining and developing structures</td>
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<td>Provide assistance when needed</td>
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<td>Provide opportunity</td>
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<td>Provide positive feedback</td>
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<td>Provide a systematic plan</td>
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<td>Recruit teachers</td>
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<td>Acquire knowledge and skills to enhance collaboration</td>
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<td>Engage in frequent and direct communication</td>
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<td>Project a positive attitude</td>
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<td>Start with volunteers</td>
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<td>Start small and build</td>
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* Decision rule: Cited in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs.

- Studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs.
- Studies addressing teacher collaboration for general purposes such as organizational change and professional development.

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CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Latin roots, *cum* (together) and *laborare* (to labor) form the term "collaboration" (Webster, 1963). Currently, the idea of collaboration or educators laboring together toward a common goal has become prominent in educational parlance. Collaboration within the school setting takes a number of forms: principal and teacher collaboration (Smith & Scott, 1960), teacher collaboration (Friend & Cook, 1992), teacher and student collaboration (Stevens & Slavin, 1995), student collaboration (Stevens & Slavin, 1995), or school collaboration where some or all of the aforementioned forms are present (Stevens & Slavin, 1995). This research addresses the principal's role in one area of educational collaboration: teacher collaboration for students with special needs.

In this chapter related literature and research are reviewed to support the conceptual framework and to provide further insight into the principal's role in fostering teacher collaboration. The review is organized into three sections: teacher collaboration, teacher collaboration for students with special needs, and the principal's role in fostering teacher collaboration. The first section presents a general perspective of teacher collaboration by addressing the need for teacher collaboration, teacher isolation, a conceptualization of teacher collaboration, and the benefits and barriers of collaboration. The second section focuses on teacher collaboration for students with special needs and...
includes the evolution of student-based collaborative structures and their benefits. The final section examines the principal's role in fostering teacher collaboration for general educational purposes and for students with special needs.

Teacher Collaboration

The Need for Teacher Collaboration

Many educators and researchers now suggest that, in the 1990s and into the 21st century, collaboration is and will be a critical component in education (Friend & Cook, 1992; Fullan, 1993; Pugach & Johnson, 1995). To elaborate, Pugach and Johnson stated that the effectiveness of five current practices in education depends on successful collaboration among adults in the schools. These practices include (a) changes in the authority structure of the schools, such as site-based management; (b) changes in teacher responsibility, such as peer evaluation and coaching, or curriculum integration and development; (c) changes in the student population, such as a greater number of students from diverse cultural backgrounds and increased numbers of students with various social, physical, and emotional needs; (d) changes in the general classroom setting to accommodate greater integration of students with disabilities as well as changes made to meet the needs of all students in the context of the general classroom, such as the practice of inclusion; and (e) changes in instruction, such as interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum, cooperative learning, and the use of technology in the classroom.

Additionally, Villa and Thousand (1992) cited three societal forces that call for collaborative practices in our schools: (a) the changing characteristics of students, (b) the pressure of competition in the international marketplace, and (c) the demand for
problem-solving skills in a technological society. Considering all the aforementioned current practices and societal forces, the need for successful teacher collaboration in educational system appears firmly established.

**Teacher Isolation**

Although teacher collaboration is needed and desired, it has not been a common practice in our schools (Barth, 1986). Traditionally, teacher isolation (teachers working in close proximity yet independently), has been the norm. Rosenholtz (1985) identified two contributing factors to teacher isolation: (a) teacher uncertainty in the absence of a technical culture and (b) a sense of threatened self-esteem. Friend and Cook (1992) also offered an explanation for teacher isolation. They reported that the norm or pattern of typical behavior of isolation exists in our schools for two reasons: It is present in response to the physical structure of schools that forces teachers to work in separate classrooms with little opportunity to interact and secondly, in response to the professional socialization that fosters the idea that teachers should solve their own problems individually.

A number of other researchers have commented on teacher isolation. Bird and Little (1986) stated:

Teachers inherit the same images of teaching that we all do, struggle toward proficiency virtually alone, and accumulate as much skill and wisdom as they can by themselves. Superb teachers leave their marks on all of us. They leave no marks on teaching. If teachers' performances or responses to changing demands and opportunities are disappointing, there should be no surprise. Teaching is not yet organized to hold teachers accountable for their work, or more important, to support them in mastering it. (p. 495)
To examine teacher socialization, Zahorik (1987) interviewed 52 teachers in six schools to investigate the amount and kind of information they exchanged throughout the school day. Results indicated that, although teachers do talk to one another, they do not communicate with many teachers on a variety of subjects and they do not observe one another. Mostly, they briefly communicate with grade-level colleagues to share materials or discuss discipline or schoolwork activities. Flinders (1988) found that teachers felt they had no time for collegial interactions and viewed isolation as more professional because all of their time could be spent on the instruction of students. Flinders noted that this self-imposed isolation hindered the instructional quality that it was intended to protect.

Teacher isolation has serious consequences because it limits teachers' professional growth. For example, outstanding teachers are not recognized, nor do they have the chance to share their expertise with others. Additionally, novices and less-than-proficient teachers have little opportunity for needed discussion about the improvement of their practice. Zahorik (1987) contended that teacher isolation is a waste of human resources and contributes to disenchantment with teaching as a career. On a similar note, Rosenholtz (1985) stated that isolation hinders learning to teach and teaching improvement and refinement.

Teacher Collaboration Conceptualized

Barth (1986) defined teacher collaboration along with four other types of relationships found among teachers in school settings. The first teacher relationship, parallel play, depicts a relationship in which teachers are in close proximity and have
much to offer one another, yet work in isolation. The second, an adversarial relationship, portrays teachers in direct opposition to one another. The third, a competitive relationship, describes teachers as deliberately withholding from one another because they are competing for resources or recognition. The fourth, a congenial relationship, pictures teachers as cordial and personally supportive. The fifth, the collaborative relationship, represents teachers who are interdependent and who are focused on and interact with one another about teaching and learning (Barth, 1986).

A number of researchers have defined teacher collaboration in general terms. After examining collaborative relationships in various professions, Schrage (1990) defined collaboration as “the process of shared creation: two or more individuals with complimentary skills interacting to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed or could have come to on their own” (p. 40). Rosenholtz (1989) described teacher collaboration as the extent to which teachers engage in help-related exchange. While Pugach and Johnson (1995) defined teacher collaboration this way: “collaboration occurs when all members of a school’s staff are working together and supporting each other to provide the highest quality of curriculum and instruction for the diverse students they serve” (p. 29).

Friend and Cook (1992) offered a more precise definition for collaboration: “Interpersonal collaboration is a style of direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal” (p. 5). Friend and Cook further explained collaboration by identifying a number of
defining characteristics: Collaboration (a) is voluntary, (b) requires parity, (c) is based on mutual goals, (d) requires shared resources and responsibility in decision making, and (e) requires shared accountability in outcomes. Additionally, Friend and Cook also identified emergent characteristics of collaboration. These characteristics have several functions in that they are prerequisites as well as outcomes of collaboration. They tend to emerge and grow from successful collaboration experiences. The emergent characteristics are (a) valuing collaboration as an interpersonal style, (b) mutual trust, and (c) a sense of community. Throughout this study the term, “teacher collaboration” will reflect Friend and Cook’s (1992) definition as stated in the above discussion.

Little (1990) offered four conceptions of teacher collaboration, ranging from teacher isolation or mutual independence to teacher collaboration or mutual interdependence. Movement along the continuum depends on the frequency and intensity of teacher interactions, the possibility of conflict, and the probability of mutual influence. The four conceptions of collegiality on Little’s continuum range from story telling or scanning to aid or assistance on to sharing and finally to joint work.

Teacher collaboration as a style of interaction can occur in several groupings, within various structures, and for diverse purposes. Concerning grouping, teachers can collaborate in dyads or small groups. These groupings can involve general educators with general educators, special educators with special educators, or general educators with special educators (Laycock, Gable, and Korinek, 1991).

Laycock, Gable, and Korinek (1991) described a number of collaborative structures presently operative in the schools. Among the existing structures are
(a) teacher assistance teams (Chalfant, Pysh & Moultrie, 1979; Chalfant & Pysh, 1989);
(b) child study teams (Hayek, 1987); (c) intervention teams (Graden, Casey &
Christensen, 1985, Graden, 1989); (d) behavioral consultation (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1990;
Gable, Friend, Laycock & Hendrickson, 1990); (e) collaborative consultation (Friend &
Cook, 1990; Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb & Nevin, 1986; West, 1990); (f) peer collaboration
(Pugach & Johnson, 1989); and (g) cooperative teaching (Bauwens, Hourcade & Friend,
1989). Other collaborative structures identified in the literature include (a) peer coaching
(Showers, 1987); (b) collegial observation (Glatthom, 1984); and (c) collaborative action
research teams (Oja & Pine, 1989).

Teachers collaborate for various purposes. Some of the most common purposes
include (a) problem solving, planning, and teaching (Bauwens, Hourcade & Friend,
1989); (b) coaching, observing, and evaluating (Glatthorn, 1986); (c) mentoring
(Showers, 1987); and (d) researching (Oja & Pine, 1989). These functions address
concerns ranging from those of an individual student to those of the school as a whole.

Benefits of Teacher Collaboration

Literature reviews and research studies have highlighted the specific benefits of
collaboration practiced for general educational purposes such as staff development and
school effectiveness. In their review of school effectiveness literature, Purkey and Smith
(1983) listed collaborative planning and collegial relationships as sustaining
characteristics of productive school culture. The reviewers reported that collegiality
breaks down barriers among school personnel and encourages intellectual sharing that
leads to consensus and also promotes a sense of unity and community. In a 1987 research
report from the United States Department of Education (USDE), collegiality was seen to benefit students academically. This report stated that good instruction flourishes in a school where teachers share ideas, assist in each others’ academic growth, and collaborate in developing goals that emphasize student achievement.

In a year-long, focused ethnographic study of the school as a workplace, Little (1982) sought to identify organizational characteristics conducive to continued teacher learning. Semistructured interviews and observation of 14 administrators and 105 teachers were conducted in four relatively successful and two relatively unsuccessful schools. Little characterized the schools and the groups within the schools by their participation in norms of collegiality and norms for continuous improvement. She reported that these norms clearly distinguish the more successful from the less successful schools. The norms of collegiality are as follows: (a) Teachers engage in frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete discussion about teaching practice; (b) teachers frequently observe each other teaching and provide one another with useful evaluations of their performance; (c) teachers plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials together; and (d) teachers teach one another the practice of teaching. The norms of continuous improvement are characterized by the belief that learning on the job is continuous and that continual analysis, evaluation, and experimentation are tools of the teaching profession. Little suggested that routine work arrangements and daily interactions with other adults in the schools, strongly shape teachers and their expectations for their practice of teaching. Little concluded that staff development was

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most effective and student achievement was greater in schools where norms of collegiality are present among the teaching staff.

To further validate the idea that adult interactions in the school enhance professional development, Little (1984) conducted a case study of the implementation of two professional development programs. She contrasted the traditional pull-out, in-service method with a site-based, in-service program of identical content. Over a three-year period, the traditional program remained unimplemented. On the other hand, the site-based program in which administrators and teachers were involved in collective decision making and evaluation and in which teachers frequently exchanged ideas based on clearly stated in-service goals was successfully implemented.

Another study that offered additional insight into teacher collaboration and its benefits to teachers and to student learning is Rosenholtz's (1989) research in 78 Tennessee schools. Using teacher questionnaires, she separated the schools into three categories: collaborative schools (n=13); isolated schools (n=15); and schools placed somewhere between isolation and collaboration (n=50). Rosenholtz randomly selected and interviewed teachers from each of the categories. Rosenholtz then conducted a statistical analysis of the relationship between teacher collaboration and student achievements. The researcher found that collaborative schools are clearly distinguished from isolated schools by norms of collaboration: (a) teachers plan instruction together and share ideas, (b) teachers identify teacher leaders as those who promote improved instructional practices, and (c) teachers willingly seek help from other teachers, the principal, and parents to solve student problems. Rosenholtz also discovered that
successful teacher collaboration is a strong predictor of student achievement gains in reading and math. Additionally, Rosenholtz reported that continuous interaction with colleagues when centered around clear goals, increased teachers' confidence about teaching practices and about the technical knowledge available within their schools. Finally, Rosenholtz related that teacher collaboration reduced teachers' collective complaints about problem students and parents, reduced the number of classroom disciplinary problems, and enhanced teacher quality of performance and commitment.

Although professional collaborative interactions can be highly beneficial, Fullan (1993) cautioned against carrying collaborative practices to an extreme. He reasoned that when collaborative practices are pushed too far, they become groupthink and opportunities for new learning are stymied. Groupthink occurs when individuals engage in uncritical acceptance and/or suppression of dissonance. Fullan also warned against balkanization which is the development of strong loyalty within a group that results in indifference and even hostility to other groups. One of Fullan's (1993) eight basic lessons of the new paradigm of change is that individualism and collectivism must have equal power. He urged honoring the positive qualities of individualism as a way of enriching collaborative interaction and encouraging positive change forces to flow.

Barriers to Teacher Collaboration

Although teacher collaboration appears essential and beneficial to the current and future educational system, barriers do exist. Major barriers include traditional norms of teacher privacy and isolation, lack of administrative support, and lack of time to collaborate (Little, 1990; West & Idol, 1987). From a summary of the studies on barriers
to collaboration, Nevin, Thousand, Paolucci-Whitcomb, & Villa (1990) expanded the list of barriers to include lack of planning, training, funding, a common knowledge base, as well as existing hierarchical relationships and teacher overload.

Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

Although teacher collaboration can be used for many purposes, it is particularly suited to teacher interactions for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for the students with special needs. This form of teacher collaboration is commonly cited in the literature in the context of the following three structures: (a) collaborative teams (Chalfant & Pysh, 1989), (b) collaborative pairs (Pugach & Johnson, 1990; Idol, Paolucci-Witcomb & Nevin, 1986), and (c) collaborative teaching (Bauwens, Hourcade & Friend, 1989). The trend to educate increasing numbers of students with disabilities in the general classroom greatly influenced the development of each of these structures. A discussion of the evolution of collaborative structures for students with special needs follows.

One of the earliest collaborative approaches, the teacher assistance team (TAT), was developed in the 1970's by Chalfant, Pysh, and Moultrie (1979) in response to the anticipated difficulties educators would encounter when students with disabilities were returned to the general classroom in response to the “Least Restrictive Environment” assurance of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (P. L. 94-142) (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995). Teacher assistance teams have three main purposes: (a) to provide ongoing support to general educators so that they can effectively teach students with or without disabilities who are experiencing problems in the general classroom, (b) to
decrease the number of referrals to special education and related services, and (c) to emphasize the importance of classroom teachers’ problem-solving abilities at the classroom level (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995; Pugach & Johnson, 1995).

According to Pugach and Johnson (1995), teacher assistance teams are composed of general educators who are selected to become permanent members of a problem-solving team. Principals, specialists, and other individuals join the team when their expertise is needed. When a classroom teacher seeks assistance, the individual designated as team coordinator helps the teacher clarify the problem, assembles relevant information, and observes in the classroom, if appropriate. Next, the team meets with the referring teacher for about 30 minutes to brainstorm interventions. The referring teacher chooses the intervention he/she deems most appropriate. The session concludes with a monitoring and follow-up plan.

Friend (1988) traced the emergence of educational consultation from the behavioral model of consultation used by school psychologists. Beginning in the 1960s, when school psychologists’ caseloads became more than they could handle, they began to use a consultant model. Psychologists consulted with teachers who in turn delivered mental health services to students. In a similar manner, educators began adopting the consultation model in the 1970’s when they were faced with providing services to increasing numbers of students with disabilities and with educating more of these students in the general classroom. By the 1980s educational consultation was used not only for students with mild handicaps, but also for students with sensory and physical impairments, for students needing remediation, and for students at risk of school failure.
Friend, 1988). Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb and Nevin (1986) after studying consultation in the business literature, added the word “collaborative” to “consultation” and defined “collaborative consultation” as “an interactive process that enables people with diverse expertise to generate creative solutions to mutually designed problems” (p.1).

Consultation, then, became more collaborative because specialists and general classroom teachers were sharing the responsibility of educating students with disabilities within the general classroom. Today, these teachers meet together to plan and problem solve around the needs of students. Once an intervention is chosen, the general classroom teacher implements the plan and reports back to the specialist concerning the intervention's outcome (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995).

Peer collaboration emerged from the collaborative consultation approach and is based on the assumption that classroom teachers possess the expertise to generate effective solutions to classroom problems (Pugach & Johnson, 1995). In peer collaboration, two general educators interact using a four-step process (problem description, problem summarization, solution generation, and evaluation planning) to generate solutions to problems of students with special needs. Teachers take on the roles of an initiator or a facilitator. The facilitator guides the initiating teacher through a reflective process of problem clarification to a decision on an appropriate solution (Pugach & Johnson, 1995).

Team teaching existed as early as the 1960s, yet never became a national practice in education (Cohen, 1981). As noted by Pugach and Johnson (1995), team teaching or cooperative teaching was revived as an educational practice through teaching teams at the
middle school level and teaching teams composed of general educators and specialists.

Cooperative teaching between general educators and specialists emerged in reaction to pull-out programs. Bauwens, Hourcade and Friend (1989) defined cooperative teaching as

an educational approach in which general and special educators work in a co-active and coordinated fashion to jointly teach heterogeneous groups of students in educationally integrated settings (i.e., general classrooms). In cooperative teaching both general and special educators are simultaneously present in the general classroom, maintaining joint responsibilities for specified education instruction that is to occur within the setting. (p. 18)

Cooperative teaching differs from the other student-based structures previously discussed in that both educators not only plan and problem solve, but also jointly deliver direct services to students in the general classroom (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995).

Although the previously discussed structures predate the present inclusion movement, they are particularly suited for the inclusive service delivery and are presently functioning in inclusive schools all over the nation. Collaboration in these structures employs differing processes and is composed of various configurations of general educators and specialists. However, all of the structures have one common goal--to improve teaching and learning for students with special needs.

Benefits of Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

The following studies will address the benefits of specific collaborative structures for students with special needs such as teacher assistance teams, peer collaboration, mainstream assistance teams, child study seminar, and the cooperative school. The teacher assistance team is a problem-solving structure used to assist teachers in meeting the needs of difficult-to-teach students within the general classroom. Chalfant and Pysh
(1989) summarized the data from five program development studies conducted on 96 first-year teacher assistance teams in seven states. Descriptive data was gathered in three stages using a teacher questionnaire. Findings indicate that teacher assistance teams (a) improve student performance (about 90% of problems involving both students with and without disabilities were successfully solved); (b) reduce referrals to special education; and (c) provide teacher satisfaction, particularly with the group problem-solving support found from their colleagues.

Peer collaboration is a reflective approach designed to address problem clarification and intervention strategies. Pugach and Johnson (1990) researched peer collaboration over a three-year period in five states. The impact of peer collaboration was examined through the collection of data on (a) the number of referrals made to special education, (b) descriptions of classroom problems prior to and after peer collaboration, (c) interventions and their outcomes, (d) teachers tolerance for diversity of students, (e) affective outlook toward their classrooms, and (f) teacher efficacy and confidence in developing classroom interventions. Major findings indicated that classroom teachers who received peer collaborative training (a) shifted the focus of problems away from the child toward changes the teacher could make, (b) generated interventions for all problems targeted through peer collaboration, (c) resolved over 85% of the problems targeted, (d) reduced referrals to special education, (e) gained significantly in their confidence in handling classroom problems, (f) experienced an increased positive attitude toward their class, and (g) expanded significantly their tolerance for students with cognitive deficits.
Mainstream assistance teams (MATs) involve a consultant, teacher, and student and focus on preventing referral of students for special education services. Fuchs, Fuchs, and Bahr (1990) examined whether prereferral interventions could be shortened without compromising effectiveness. Their experimental study was conducted in 17 schools and involved guidance counselors, special education students, classroom teachers, and difficult-to-teach students. Findings indicated that teachers in the experimental group were less likely to refer students to special education and indicated that their perceptions of their students improved. Results also suggested that the short and long versions of prereferral intervention were equally effective.

In a three-year qualitative study of co-teaching teams involving eight school districts and 23 teaching teams, Walther-Thomas (in press) identified a number of major benefits of co-teaching for students with disabilities, general education students, and general and special education teachers. The major benefits for students with disabilities included (a) students feeling positive about themselves as learners and (b) students improving in academic performance, social skills, and peer relationships. The major benefits for general education students included (a) improved academic performance for low-performing students, (b) increased teacher time and attention for all students, (c) increase in social skills for all students, (d) reported student benefit from strategy and study skill instruction, and (e) improved classroom communities. Lastly, the major benefits for general and special education teachers included (a) greater professional satisfaction (b) greater professional growth, (c) greater personal support, and (d) increased collaboration among faculty members.
Sudzina and Gay (1993) indicated that experienced elementary teachers increased in professionalism and personal satisfaction after participating in a one-year, child-study seminar where teachers along with counselors and other school professionals focused attention on individual students, their needs, and their perceptions of the school environment. One student from each teacher's classroom was studied. Case records of the experience revealed positive effects on the teachers involved as well as on the children studied.

Stevens and Slavin (1995) conducted a two-year experimental study of the cooperative elementary school model, which used working together as an overarching philosophy to change school and classroom organization and instructional processes. The model incorporated cooperative learning in the following ways: (a) across a variety of content areas, (b) in the full-scaled mainstreaming of students with academic handicaps, (c) with teachers using peer coaching and planning cooperatively, and (d) in parent involvement. Data were collected by using pre and post achievement tests, attitude measures, and social relations measures. After the first year of implementation, findings indicated that students in the cooperative schools had significantly higher achievement in reading vocabulary. At the end of the second year, students in the cooperative schools had significantly higher achievement in reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, language expression, and math computation. After two years, students with academic disabilities in the cooperative schools had significantly higher achievement in reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, language expression, math computation, and math application. Also social relationships were better for students with handicaps as
compared with those in traditional pull-out programs. Results also suggested that gifted students in heterogeneous cooperative classes had significantly higher achievement than those in enrichment classes. Stevens and Slavin (1995) state that this research is the first and only study of a cooperative school. The researchers concluded that cooperation among teachers and cooperation among students can greatly benefit all students in the general classroom.

The Principal's Role in Teacher Collaboration

The Principal's Role in Teacher Collaboration for General Educational Purposes

The principal plays a central and critical role in initiating, developing, and maintaining teacher collaboration. In the following section, research studies and literature relating to the principal's role in initiating, developing, and maintaining teacher collaboration for general purposes such as school effectiveness, staff development, and organizational change are reviewed. Since one study in this section (Rosenholtz's 1989 study) was reviewed in the previous section, only the findings related to the principal's role in teacher collaboration are presented here.

Fullan (1992) contended that "principals would do more lasting good for schools if they concentrated on building collaborative cultures rather than charging in forcefully with heavy agendas for change" (p. 19). He summarized the role of the principal as a cultural change agent. The principal must (a) understand the culture of a school before trying to change it; (b) value teachers and promote their professional growth; (c) extend and express their own values; (d) promote collaboration; (e) give choices, not commands;
(f) use bureaucratic means to facilitate, not constrain; and (g) connect to the wider environment (Fullan, 1992).

Grimmet and Crehan (1992) reported on initiating collaborative cultures. Results from their case studies of clinical supervision indicated that in the beginning all attempts at initiating collaboration are contrived to some extent because all innovations are organizationally induced in some way. According to Grimmet and Crehan, organizationally induced collaboration can pivot toward administratively imposed collaboration or interdependent collaboration. Administratively imposed collaboration is characterized by low principal and teacher experience and relationship as well as by dissonant beliefs and values. Collaboration under these conditions may lead to the disenchchantment of teachers and to unproductive collaborative activities. However, organizationally induced collaboration can also pivot toward interdependent collaboration, which is characterized by high teacher and principal experience and relationship as well as by shared values and beliefs. Collaboration under these conditions is likely to be stable and productive.

On a similar note, Little (1987) suggested that collaboration cannot be coerced, but it can be supported. Little viewed interdependent collaboration as a labor of love and skill. The principal’s support can be given by (a) demonstrating and communicating the value of collaboration, (b) providing opportunity for collaborative activities, (c) providing a compelling purpose for collaboration, (d) providing material and human resources, and (e) recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of collaborative endeavors.
Smith (1991) offered a cautionary note regarding the principal's purpose for initiating teacher collaboration. He warned that in the guise of professional development teacher collaboration could be used to coerce teachers into doing the work of economic reconstruction. When this is the case, Smith (1991) asserted that teachers will reject or neutralize collaborative endeavors.

Little (1981) conducted a qualitative case study to determine the contribution made by staff development to school success in the areas of academic achievement, attendance, program completion, and community support. The six schools in the study represented various degrees of success in the aforementioned areas and various degrees of staff development activity. Data was collected through observations of classrooms, staff development meetings, and the general school area and interviews of administrators and teachers. Qualitative analysis revealed that successful staff development was accompanied by a sense of community, evaluation, and collaboration between teachers and between administrators. Little (1981) indicated that principals can promote teacher collaboration by (a) announcing and describing norms and practices of collaboration at staff meetings; (b) modeling or enacting collaboration in interactions with teachers; (c) sanctioning the announced and modeled behavior with resources, incentives, and recognition; and (d) defining norms and practices that may require courage and the skill of reconciliation.

Rosenholtz (1989) concluded as follows from her extensive study of organizational conditions of student learning:

Norms of collaboration do not just happen. They are not the result of serendipitous combinations of people. Rather, they appear to be the product of social engineering by principals who are guided by school goals and the belief
that teachers can improve, both encourage collegial leadership in their schools and provide opportunities for collective teacher involvement in instructional decision making. The contribution of collective decision making to teachers' learning opportunities lies in the deliberative evaluation, discussion, suggestion, and modification of instruction required to enhance classroom learning. (p.421)

Rosenholtz identified a number of principal's actions that foster collegiality, such as (a) offering advice on instruction, (b) encouraging teachers, (c) providing assistance when needed, and (d) engaging in a collaborative relationship with teachers. Principals can also recruit and socialize new teachers and set goals. Furthermore, in collaborative settings, activities at the managerial level were closely aligned and facilitative of activities at the technical level. Finally, Rosenholtz (1989) stated that teachers who demonstrate competence may encourage principal behaviors that are more supportive and facilitative.

Dawson (1984) synthesized data from two studies of educational change to describe the principal's role in mediating the influence of school context to facilitate teacher collaboration. One study spanned a three-year period and involved 14 schools representing a mixture of school levels. The second study involved 12 schools and also represented a mixture of levels. Data were gathered by using unstructured interviews, observations, staff debriefings, and document reviews. Results suggested that the principal can foster collaboration among teachers by (a) providing time and other resources, (b) relating collaborative activities to local concerns and priorities, and (c) demonstrating a commitment to teacher collaboration.

Weiss, Cambone, and Wyeth (1992) reported on principal commitment to teacher collaboration. They stated that, because teachers have seen so many reforms come and
go, it is essential for the principal to clearly communicate his or her commitment to
teacher collaboration. Additionally, the principal's demonstrated commitment can take
many forms and should extend from the initiation stage through institutionalization.

Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) examined 12 schools in Canada that had developed
highly collaborative relationships over a three-year period while engaged in school
improvement initiatives. The study specifically investigated the extent to which these
schools had achieved collaborative cultures, the importance of improvement processes,
and the strategies used by administrators to develop more collaborative cultures. Data
were collected by two interviewers on a two-day visit to each school. A causal network
was developed for each site and analyzed to form various matrices. Results indicated that
the school cultures demonstrated extensive collaboration. The relationship between
strategies used by principals were neither simple nor direct. Six general strategies
employed by principals to foster collaborative cultures included (a) strengthening the
school culture; (b) employing various bureaucratic mechanisms to stimulate and reinforce
cultural change; (c) promoting staff development; (d) communicating directly about
cultural norms, values, and beliefs; (e) sharing power and responsibility with others; and
(f) using symbols and rituals to express cultural values.

Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) suggested that principals have access to strategies
that are able to transform cultures. They explained that in traditional or isolated cultures,
teachers' schemata were adapted, linked together, and extended in new ways in response
to students; whereas, in a collaborative culture teachers were confronted with a different
order of dissonance about purposes and practices of their classroom schemata.
Interacting with peers instead of students challenged teachers to reconsider basic assumptions and values. Furthermore, this study supplied evidence that, given a two to three year span, school cultures can become much more collaborative. To this extent, restructuring schools seemed possible without the expenditure of extraordinary human or financial resources. The researchers also concluded that the actions of school principals play a significant part in fostering collaborative school cultures. Finally, this study provided a detailed account of the strategies associated with the principal’s leadership in fostering collaborative cultures (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990).

Hoy, Tater, and Witkosie (1992) explored the role of the principal in influencing school effectiveness by testing the relationship of supportive leadership in influencing both a culture of trust and perceived effectiveness. A supportive leader was defined as a principal who was not only concerned with the task but also with healthy interpersonal relationships among teachers. Relationships of trust in the principal, trust in the school organization, and trust in colleagues were tested using a sample of 44 elementary schools. Data were collected from teachers using instruments that measured trust, collegiality, supportive leadership, and school effectiveness. Results indicated that the principal’s leadership produced teacher collegiality and teacher trust in the principal. An atmosphere of openness and professionalism led to school effectiveness. On a similar note, Ruck (1986) expressed that a principal’s open communication, sharing, and willingness to learn greatly encourages collaborative interactions among teachers. These traits of a principal facilitate mutual respect and trust, which are at the base of all productive relationships.
Kirby and Blase (1991) examined the relationship between teachers and "closed" principals by interviewing 366 teachers who described their principals as closed. Data indicated that teachers purposely limited their interactions with principals that they perceived to be closed. If a principal appears inaccessible, insecure, and unsupportive, teachers will avoid the principal's efforts to involve them in any collaborative efforts.

Harchar (1993) investigated the key elements for instructional leaders in elementary schools, focusing on conflict between the use of power and collaboration. Eight principals who were nominated as exemplary instructional leaders as well as 16 teachers were interviewed. Observations and documents analysis were also conducted. Findings suggested that the critical elements for successful instructional leadership include (a) forming a vision, (b) supervising and evaluating, (c) forming close personal relationships, (d) communicating, (e) conducting meetings, (f) initiating programs, and (g) soliciting parent involvement. Principals identified barriers to instructional leadership to be state education department mandates, time constraints, and parent opposition. From an examination of these barriers, Harchar maintained that problems rest in power inequities between principal and teachers, between teachers, and between school and community. The researcher presented a framework for instructional leadership based on collaborative power theory in which power inequities are managed through action/interaction strategies. These strategies include trust, collegiality, diplomacy, and a shared vision. This study suggested that principals can use collaborative power to develop a quality schools where the emphasis is on teacher collaboration and student development.
From their field experiences and interactions with principals and teachers, a number of writers offer additional information concerning the principal’s part in teacher collaboration. Smith and Scott (1990) strongly suggested that the principal is the key player in fostering collaboration. They presented a description of a collaborative school characterized by the following components:

1. The belief is held that based on effective schools research, the quality of education is largely determined by what happens at the school site.

2. Personnel share the conviction, also supported by research findings, that instruction is most effective in a school environment characterized by norms of collegiality and continuous improvement.

3. Teachers are considered to be professionals who should be given the responsibility for the instructional process and held accountable for its outcomes.

4. A wide range of practices and structures are used to enable administrators and teachers to work together on school improvement.

5. Teachers are involved in decisions about school goals and the means for achieving them. (p. 2)

Smith and Scott (1990) also offered descriptions of collaborative practices and programs, ranging from school improvement teams to teaching clinics, concluding that, although district-level support makes collaboration easier to implement, in its absence the principal is still able to foster collaboration in his or her school. A principal who desires to foster collaboration among teachers can use a number of strategies, such as (a) advising
teachers on their practice, (b) running interference for teachers who desire to interact with one another, (c) building collaborative processes into existing school structures, and (d) modeling collaboration in interactions with teachers, such as classroom observation and evaluations. Finally, Smith and Scott contended that building a collaborative culture is inherently a group activity. In essence, the principal shares the instructional leadership of the teachers by (a) presenting a vision for and a commitment to collaboration, (b) modifying and building structures for collaboration, (c) modeling the way, (d) offering incentives and encouragement, (e) being visible, and (f) providing necessary resources such as time and training (Smith & Scott, 1990).

Kent (1987) directed a five-year project to initiate teacher collaboration in two schools in a number of school districts and reported the changes she would institute, should she again attempt a similar project. First, she would again spend more time in the advocacy stage. Second, she would clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of the key players. Finally, she would determine the school district's readiness for teacher collaboration. From her experience, Kent provided a checklist of the roles and responsibilities for key players and a list of questions for determining a district's readiness for teacher collaboration. Kent viewed the principal as the key actor, who engages in the following functions: (a) articulating a vision for teacher collaboration, (b) leading and participating in teacher decision making around issues that affect curriculum and instruction, (c) facilitating resolution of conflicting ideas, (d) monitoring and assisting with coordination, (e) communicating the process and results to district
administrators, and (f) advocating the needs of the teachers as well as providing resources (Kent, 1987).

Gerber (1991) pinpointed three administrative behaviors that lead to teacher collaboration: (a) program advocacy, (b) visible participation, and (c) support for maintenance. Furthermore, Gerber stated these two behaviors created the building blocks of a collaborative ethic: credibility and durability. The advocacy and visible participation of the principal lead to credibility, and support for maintenance leads to durability. Gerber asserted that the principal's activism and modeling validate teacher collaboration.

According to West (1990), the principal is an establisher of norms that support collaboration. These norms are instituted when the principal (a) understands and discusses the benefits of moving from an isolated climate to one characterized by collaborative planning, decision making, and problem solving; (b) leads the faculty to consensus on an operational definition and describes the parameters of collaboration as it will be developed in their school; (c) facilitates the redefining and clarification of roles; (d) assists in the development and modification of organizational structures and procedures; and (e) develops and activates a monitoring and evaluation plan that gives particular attention to cost effectiveness and to improved teaching and learning for students.

Phillips and McCullough (1990) viewed the principal in the dichotomous role of manager and instructional leader in the advancement of collaboration among teachers. Additionally, the writers advocated a participatory style of interaction. Concerning a
collaborative leadership style, West (1991) maintained that the use of a collaborative style does not mean that the principal releases authority. He or she is still legally accountable for the oversight of the school. Furthermore, in a collaborative school, the professional autonomy of the teacher and the managerial authority of the principal are harmonized. Smith (1987) stated that strong leaders are necessary in collaborative schools to change a culture of isolation to a more collaborative one. Additionally, Smith (1987) related that although the principal shares power, power is gained through respect given to the principal by teachers.

Cook and Friend (1993) maintained that principals need to model collaborative traits, fostering and encouraging these behaviors in others. According to Cook and Friend the principal can foster and encourage collaboration by (a) providing incentives to participating teachers, (b) helping teachers set priorities, (c) setting a standard but allowing teachers to grow toward it, (d) providing professional development opportunities, (e) being present, and (f) seeking and valuing a wide range of feedback. Because programs and services featuring teacher collaboration attend to the behaviors and attitudes of adults, Cook and Friend recommended a systematic approach to program planning so that all involved will develop a sense of ownership and will be provided with adequate time to adjust to the demands of collaborative activities (1993).

The Principal’s Role in Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

Although studies investigating teacher collaboration for students with special needs have not addressed the principal’s role directly, findings from many of these research studies pertain to the principal’s role. Since the first three studies (Chalfant &
Pysh, 1989; Pugach & Johnson, 1990; Walther-Thomas, in press) have already been reviewed in a previous section, only their findings associated with the principal’s role are presented here.

In their study of teacher assistance teams, Chalfant and Pysh (1989) reported that the need for strong administrative support was consistently mentioned. They described principal support in the following ways. First, the teams looked to the principal for overt support in the provision of time for teachers to meet on a regular basis. Second, the teams needed a principal with a positive attitude toward and incentives for team members, and the acknowledgment of team efforts and successes. A final action of the principal needed by the teams was long-term, overall planning that considered such factors as readiness, needs of the school, proper preparation, resources, and suitable collaboration structures for the school (Chalfant & Pysh, 1989).

When examining peer collaboration, Pugach and Johnson (1990) found that in the implementation stage the commitment of the school principal is essential. Without overt principal support, peer collaboration can quickly be construed as only a function of special education services. It is important for the principal to communicate to all the faculty that collaboration is a valuable part of the daily work of all professionals in the school. Pugach and Johnson suggested that the principal receive training in peer collaboration. Other important principal’s actions identified by these researchers were (a) helping to develop structures, (b) organizing schedules so that peer collaboration could function in meaningful ways on a regular basis, and (c) assisting in finding time for teachers to collaborate.
In her qualitative study of co-teaching teams, Walther-Thomas (in press) reported that co-teaching endeavors seemed to do better over time when the principal was actively involved in the development of the initiative. Principal involvement included a variety of roles such as those of an advocate, promoter, advisor, team leader, and official spokesperson. Other supportive actions of the principal in developing and maintaining co-teaching teams included (a) demonstrating commitment to co-teaching, (b) providing resources, (c) providing time, (d) helping with schedules, and (e) recognizing teacher accomplishments.

An additional number of studies examined the principal's role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs. K. A. Gladder (1990) investigated principals' behaviors that influence cooperative learning in the classroom and collegiality among the staff. In five elementary schools, data were collected using semistructured teacher and principal interviews, observations, and document review. Most teachers in the study expressed some feelings of isolation. These feeling were diminished when teachers regularly engaged in peer observations. On the other hand, when given the choice, most teachers did not opt to engage in peer observations. Teachers and principals attributed low collegiality among teachers to lack of available time. The study identified four behaviors of the principal that increased collaboration: (a) communicating expectations for collaboration to teachers, (b) involving staff in setting school-wide goals, (c) involving staff in school decision making, and (d) providing teachers release time for joint planning. One school in the study was substantially engaged both in implementing
cooperative learning and in increasing collaboration among the staff. Data from this school suggested that collaboration and cooperative learning may facilitate one another (K. Gladder, 1990).

Another study examined teachers' willingness to participate in collaboration as well as the organizational conditions of large high schools that constrain or support collaboration (B. Gladder, 1990). In two high schools, data were gathered through direct observations, questionnaires and interviews of teachers, interviews of principals, and document reviews. Results suggest although high school teachers work together cooperatively and believe in supporting one another, serious barriers to collaboration existed (B. Gladder, 1990). These barriers were the school schedule, physical facilities, time, norms of privacy and isolation, teachers rewards, autonomy, and competitive relationships. Principals reduced these barriers and fostered collaboration by (a) involving teachers in school decisions in ways that allowed them to influence the outcome of school goals, (b) researching new practices and choosing the best alternatives, (c) setting time aside for joint planning, and (d) linking the collective work of teachers to the classroom. Teachers who engaged in such activities described them as professionally rewarding and as well worth the time invested. Teachers reported that giving up some autonomy and privacy made them somewhat anxious, but this did not diminish their enthusiasm for collaborative activities. B. Gladder (1990) stated that only a handful of teachers in each school were involved in collaboration and concluded that in large high schools beginning collaborative endeavors with a small number of teachers may be the most feasible strategy.
Meyerowitz (1990) looked at the principal's role in a collaborative culture and its relationship to the mainstream process. The researcher collected data by interviewing principals and observing teachers at five schools. These schools were selected by a nomination process. Data indicated that principals thought about collaboration in the following ways: total involvement, shared planning, participatory decision-making, shared decision-making, shared facilitating opportunities to implement new ideas, advancing organizational goals, and developing professional skills. Although their ideas of collaboration differed, all principals shared the belief that collaboration was essential to the success of mainstreaming. Two principals perceived collaboration as a learning experience that enhanced teachers' professional growth. Principals believed more collaboration was occurring between special and general education teachers than was actually taking place. The constraints on the teachers' daily schedule and teachers attitudes were found to be significant barriers to collaboration.

Furthermore, Meyerowitz (1990) reported that in all five schools principals were leaders who initiated and continued to nurture and maintain a collaborative culture. All principals were contributors to and influencers of the collaborative culture. Transforming leadership was found to be the most successful. A transforming leader was defined as one who builds an atmosphere of trust, openness, and opportunity. All five principals were involved in transforming leadership.

Kruger, Struzziero, Watts, and Vacca (1995) examined the relationship between organizational support (administrator support, perceived purpose of the TAT, social support of peers, and TAT training) and teacher satisfaction with teacher assistance teams.
Findings from a regression analysis indicated that organizational support has a strong, positive relationship to teacher satisfaction. Specifically, the administrator support variable accounted for over 50% of the variance in consumer satisfaction with TAT services. Descriptors of the principal's associated with teacher satisfaction included that principals were (a) supportive, (b) demonstrated commitment, (c) facilitated relevant training, (d) provided resources, (e) provided time, (f) communicated a purpose for the TAT, and (g) provided positive feedback to teachers (Kruger, Struzziero, Watts, & Vaca, 1995).

In a qualitative study on integrating students with disabilities into general education classes, Janney, Snell, Beers, and Raynes (1995) explored the educational change process and the perceptions of general educators about the factors that added to and reduced their resistance to integration. Principals, general education teachers and special education teachers were interviewed in ten schools in five school districts. Qualitative analysis of the interviews yielded findings on teachers' perceptions of the success of the integration and their advice to other educational personnel (districts administrators, principals, general education teachers, and special education teachers) who may be considering integrating students with disabilities into the general classroom. Recommendations for principals integrating students with disabilities into the general classroom included (a) being supportive, (b) having a positive attitude, (c) starting with volunteers, (d) involving the staff in preparation and planning, (e) providing training,
(f) giving teachers freedom to make decisions and act on them, (g) involving the staff in the planning stage, (h) demonstrating commitment, (i) providing resources, (j) providing time, (k) recognizing teacher efforts, (l) helping with scheduling, (m) maintaining good communication, and (n) starting small when developing a program (Janney, Beers, & Raynes, 1995).

Summary

This review examined three major topics: teacher collaboration, teacher collaboration for students with special needs, and the principal's role in fostering teacher collaboration. Studies on teacher collaboration for general educational purposes and teacher collaboration for students with special needs revealed specific benefits of teacher collaboration, such as more effective staff development and implementation of innovations as well as professional growth of teachers and academic, emotional, and social growth for students. Studies on teacher collaboration also revealed that the role of the principal is central and critical to successful teacher collaboration. These studies suggested that principals are promoters of collaborative cultures as well as supporters of teachers' collaborative endeavors. According to the research, some ways that principals promote collaborative cultures are by valuing, communicating, modeling, and rewarding teacher collaboration. Additionally, studies indicated that some ways principals support teacher collaboration are by providing time, training, and resources, as well as by helping with scheduling. Finally, the literature indicated that principals who are trustworthy, open, and demonstrate their commitment to collaborative practices are more likely to be effective in fostering collaboration among teachers.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter dealing with the research methodology is divided the following sections: (a) a description of the qualitative multiple-site case study method, (b) a rationale for the use of a qualitative case study in examining principals' roles in teacher collaboration, (c) a rationale for the use of the comparison of role descriptors of the principal, (d) a statement of bias, (e) a discussion of the site and participant selection procedures, (f) a discussion of the data collection sources and methods, (g) a discussion of the data analysis procedures, (h) a discussion of validity and reliability considerations, and (i) a discussion of ethical safeguards and other considerations.

The Qualitative Case Study Method

Merriam (1988) defined the qualitative case study method as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 21). Additionally, she identified four distinguishing features of the qualitative case study method. The case study is (a) particularistic in that it focuses on a specific instance, phenomenon, social unit, event, or program; (b) descriptive in that it offers thick description using prose and literary techniques to describe and analyze situations within the context; (c) heuristic in that it can provide the reader with the discovery of new meaning and extension and/or confirmation of what is already known; and (d) inductive in that understandings emerge from the examination of data. Yin (1994) contributed to
the description of the qualitative case study method by identifying and defining five types of studies (single, multiple, exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory). A single-case study focuses on only one case; whereas, a multiple-case study includes two or more cases. An exploratory study defines questions or hypotheses of a subsequent study or determines the feasibility of specified research procedures. A descriptive study provides a complete description of a phenomenon within its context. Finally, an explanatory study examines cause-effect relationships.

The present study is a multiple-case, descriptive study. Multiple sites rather than a single site were chosen because consistent findings over multiple sites are considered more robust (Herriott & Firestone, 1983). A descriptive case study was chosen because the researcher was seeking to describe, as completely as possible within the school context, specific behaviors of the principal in initiating, developing, and continuing teacher collaboration for students with special needs.

A Rationale for the Use of the Qualitative Case Study Method

The intent of this study is to explore two questions: (a) How do principals foster teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs and (b) how do these behaviors relate to leadership behaviors that have been identified as facilitative of teacher collaboration? To examine the first question, a multiple-site, descriptive case study was conducted.

A qualitative case study approach was particularly appropriate to examine the first research question for several reasons. First, the criteria for the qualitative case study method as stated by Yin (1984) were congruent with the nature of this inquiry. Yin
suggested that a case study is the preferred method when (a) how or why questions are pursued, (b) the examiner has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a phenomenon in a real life setting. Secondly, experienced investigators such as Bird and Little (1986), and Wolcott (1973) selected the qualitative case study method for describing and analyzing educational phenomenon. Moreover, as evidenced in the literature review, a number of noted researchers (for example, Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Little, 1981) employed case study methods when examining aspects of the principal’s role in the school setting.

A Rationale for the Use of the Comparison of Role Descriptors

To address the study’s second question, a four-step sequence was followed. First, empirical studies relating to the principal’s role in teacher collaboration were analyzed to determine specific role descriptors of the principal associated with fostering teacher collaboration. These studies included research on teacher collaboration for students with special needs as well as research on teacher collaboration for other purposes such as staff development and organizational change. Secondly, the role descriptors detected in these studies were divided into two categories: role descriptors most frequently cited in the literature (see Table 1) and role descriptors not as frequently cited in the literature (see Table 2). Next, role descriptors of the principal found in the cross-site analysis of the five case studies were classified and compared with the role descriptors derived from the literature analysis (see Tables 18 and 19). Finally, the role descriptors identified in the cross-site analysis of the case studies but not cited in the literature were identified (see
Table 20). The primary reason for doing the role descriptor comparison was to give greater credibility to the research findings from the descriptive case study (Yin, 1994).

Statement of Bias

One of the characteristics of qualitative research is that the researcher is the primary data-gathering instrument (Borg & Gall, 1989). Instead of the more objective measurement instruments used in quantitative research such as paper-and-pencil tests, the "researcher as instrument" in qualitative research involves a subjective interpretation of the participants' perspectives. Because of this subjective interpretation of research data, it is important to inform the reader of possible researcher bias. The following statement of bias is divided three sections: (a) the researcher's professional experience in education, (b) the researcher's professional knowledge base regarding teacher collaboration and the principal's role in teacher collaboration, and (c) the researcher's present assumptions. All of this information should be taken into account by the reader as he or she considers the results of this research.

Professional Experience

During the researcher's 27 years in the field of education, she has held positions in three major areas: (a) eight years as a teacher in general education, (b) 12 years as a special education teacher and coordinator, and (c) seven years as a professor in higher education. As a special education teacher and special education coordinator the researcher highly valued and participated in collegial relationships with other professionals. Furthermore, in addition to her present position as a university professor, the researcher for the last three years has served as a consultant to the National Institute
of Learning Disabilities. In this position, she has assisted this organization with developing and implementing structures of teacher collaboration for general purposes and for students with special needs.

**Professional Knowledge Base**

During her doctoral studies at the College of William and Mary, the researcher acquired knowledge about teacher collaboration by reading extensively and attending symposiums and workshops on the topic. When preparing a proposal for this study the researcher reviewed the literature on teacher collaboration for general purposes and for student with special needs. Also prior to conducting this study, the researcher analyzed selected empirical studies on teacher collaboration with findings related to the principal’s role. From these studies the researcher developed a list of role descriptors of the principal in fostering teacher collaboration.

**Researcher's Present Assumptions**

Drawing from past experiences and the review of literature, the researcher began this study holding two major assumptions: (a) behaviors of principals influence relationships within a school (Barth, 1986; Rosenholtz, 1989), and (b) principals play an important part in fostering teacher collaboration (Dawson, 1984; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). The researcher maintained these assumptions throughout the research study.

**Sites and Participants**

**Site and Site Selection**

Herriott and Firestone (1983) reported that multiple-site qualitative studies allow for cross-site comparison without intruding on within-site understanding. Additionally,
these researchers suggested that one researcher collecting the data from each site aids in standardization of the data collection instruments. In this study, within-site understanding was achieved through: (a) the presentation of thick, narrative description for each of the five sites and (b) the comparison of the descriptors of the principal's role identified in each of the case studies with the descriptors cited in the literature.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) advocated the deliberate choice of sites and participants in order to maximize conditions for gathering data related to the research questions. In this study, five schools were intentionally chosen for the purpose of maximizing conditions related to the investigation of the principal's part in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs. The schools were located in four school districts in Virginia. Virginia was chosen because of the convenience of accessibility for the researcher. The school districts were selected for several reasons. First, many of the district's schools were engaged in teacher collaboration for students with special needs as indicated by their active participation as attendees and presenters in the last three years at the College of William and Mary's annual Resource/Consulting Teacher Symposium. Additionally, all four districts were suburban districts with similar demographics.

**Nomination Process**

Sites were selected through a nomination process. The steps in the process were as follows:

1. Access to do the study was granted on the district level.
2. A letter (see Appendix A) was sent to the identified director of special education or a designee that included (a) the purpose of the letter, (b) nomination criteria, (c) date of the researcher’s call to request a brief telephone interview to discuss the study and answer any questions related to the study, and (d) an abstract of the study.

3. The researcher called the director of special education or designee on the date specified in the letter to discuss the study and answer any questions.

4. On the date determined by the director of special education or the designee, the researcher called to obtain the nominations.

In two school districts the researcher followed the above steps to obtain nominations. However, in the two other school districts, nominations were obtained by different means for the following reasons: (a) in one district the director of research and development made the nomination instead of the director of special education, and (b) in another district a district policy required the researcher to notify all elementary and middle school principals of the research study by letter so that each principal would be given the opportunity to volunteer to participate in the study. The first principal to volunteer whose school met the nomination criteria was selected to participate in the study. Although the aforementioned discrepancies in the nomination processes occurred in these schools districts, all five sites in the study met the nomination criteria.

**Nomination Criteria**

The intent of the nomination criteria was to pinpoint schools where teachers were meeting frequently in established collaborative structures that were considered exemplary by directors of special education or their designees. Additionally, these schools had
principals who were employed at the school a year preceding and three years following the initiation of teacher collaboration for students with special needs. The specific nomination criteria were as follows:

1. Two of the following structures of teacher collaboration as identified by Laycock, Gable, and Korinek (1991), had been functioning within the school for at least three years: (a) collaborative teams (teachers meeting together as a problem-solving unit to generate intervention strategies), (b) collaborative teaching (general educators and specialists jointly planning and delivering instruction in the context of the general classroom), (c) collaborative dyads (a general educator and a specialist, or two general educators meeting to problem solve and plan around the needs of students).

2. Teachers collaborating in these structures met frequently which would include at least a 30-minute session each week for collaborative pairs and cooperative teaching and at least one 30-minute session each month for collaborative teams.

3. The collaboration structures were considered to be exemplary by the nominees. This meant that these sites would be recommended by the special education director or designee to interested individuals who wanted to observe teacher collaboration in action.

4. The principal had been at the school for the year preceding and three years following the initiation of the collaborative structures.

Research Stages

The research proceeded in two stages. In the first stage, the researcher verified the nomination criteria of the nominated schools in the order that they were nominated. The verification procedure consisted of an observation of each of the structures using a
verification checklist (see Appendix B). The first school in each district to meet the nomination criteria was selected to go to the second stage of the research. In the second stage, the researcher conducted principal interviews, teacher interviews, and document reviews. The specific steps in the research stages were as follows. In the first stage of the research, a letter (see Appendix B) was sent to each principal of the five nominated sites which included (a) the purpose of the letter; (b) the date of the researcher's telephone call to discuss the study, answer any questions, and request permission to conduct stage one of the study; and (c) an abstract of the study. The letter was followed by a telephone call on the date designated in the letter. Following the call, on a date determined by the principal, the researcher began stage one of the study with a visit to the site to verify the nomination criteria. The verification process included an observation of the two collaborative structures for students with special needs using a verification checklist (see Appendix B). In addition to the observations, data for the verification checklist were obtained by (a) questioning the teachers concerning the frequency of their meetings to plan and problem solve, (b) reviewing team minutes and/or lesson plans and schedules, and (c) questioning the principal concerning his or her years of service at the school. After the nomination criteria were verified at each site, the initial principal interview was scheduled and letters of consent distributed to the principal and the two participating teachers. Then a date was determined for the first principal interview. Teacher interviews followed the first principal interview. After the teacher interviews, the second principal interview and document review were conducted.
Participants

Participants included five principals, one from each of the four sites, and ten teachers, two from each of the four sites. The teachers were selected by principal recommendation. The principal nominated the first teacher using the following criterion: a teacher leader who is presently involved in one collaborative structure and who has been involved in collaboration since the initiation stage. The principal recommended the second teacher using the following criteria: (a) a teacher who has been involved in collaboration for one year, (b) a teacher who represents the other collaborative structure in the school, and (c) a teacher who is a general educator, if the first teacher selected is a specialist, or a specialist, if the first teacher selected is a general educator. The intent of the selection criteria for teachers was to have the nominated teachers represent both collaborative structures as well as special education and general education in order to gain a broader perspective and to provide greater detail, depth, and clarity.

Data Collection Sources and Methods

As is typical in qualitative studies, the researcher was the sole collector of data. Data collection sources included observations, principal and teacher interviews, and document reviews. Observations of the collaborative structures were used to verify the nomination criteria. Once the nomination criteria were verified, interviews and document reviews were conducted. The principal interviews served as the primary data source, while teacher interviews and document reviews were secondary sources. Yin (1993) recommended multiple sources of evidence to capture the richness of the context.
Additionally, Merriam (1988) reported that the use of multiple sources or triangulation is a major strength of the case study method since the weaknesses of one source can be overcome by other sources.

**Observations**

According to Yin (1995) observations provide additional information about the topic under examination and allow the researcher to view the phenomena in present time. Whereas interviews provide reflective data and document reviews furnish historical data, observations supply the researcher with a view of reality in the present. In this study, the observations of the collaborative structures served two purposes: the verification of the nomination data and the acquisition of a clearer understanding of the collaborative structures through a first-hand inspection of the reality.

**Interviews**

**Principal Interviews**

A number of studies cited in Chapter Two (for example, Harchar, 1993; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Meyerowitz, 1990) used principal interviews to ascertain principals' beliefs, values, traits, leadership style, leadership functions, and leadership effectiveness. Because principals have unique and intimate understandings and experience related to their part in teacher collaboration in their particular setting, they were considered the primary informants. Each principal interview was conducted during an hour-long session. In the first interview, foundational questions were explored. In the second interview, follow-up questions were addressed to provide greater detail, depth and clarity.
Although interviewing is a valuable technique, it has limitations. Borg and Gall (1989) related that informants may seek to manipulate interviewers. Additionally, Wolcott (1973) pointed out that informants may not be completely dependable in self reporting. One recommendation to counteract these limitations is the use of multiple data collection methods (Borg & Gall, 1989). In this study, the inclusion of teacher interviews and document reviews fulfilled this recommendation.

Teacher Interviews

When investigating principal behaviors in school settings, researchers (for example, Bird & Little, 1985; Harchar, 1993) used teacher interviews in conjunction with principal interviews. This researcher followed their example. Teacher interviews served several purposes. First, they added depth and detail to the study by presenting other perspectives. Additionally, teacher interviews offered vantage points representing both structures of collaboration and general and special education. Lastly, the teacher interviews strengthened the study by supporting the data from the principal interviews.

Interview Methods

Principal and teacher interviews were recorded by note taking and audio taping. Before the first interview session, the researcher requested permission from the interviewee to audio tape the interview. Audio taping provided the researcher with an accurate account of each session which could be reviewed a repeatedly to gain understanding of complex and lengthy responses. Additionally, audio taping during the interview allowed the researcher to concentrate more on listening than note taking. The audio taping was transcribed to a printed copy and used to complete the researcher's
notes. Within two weeks after the interview, a summary of the interview data was sent to
the each of the interviewees for verification and clarification of the data. When
corrections or additions were made by the interviewees, the researcher noted the
corrections next to the original comments. Corrections in the transcripts involved minor
details such as correcting a name and adding detail to give clarity to a response.

**Interview Protocols**

Patton (1980) stated that qualitative interviews allow the interviewees to express
their understandings in their own terms. Moreover, Stainback and Stainback (1990)
reported that semistructured interviews are a good method to learn about the perceptions
of people. Semistructured or focused interviews introduce a topic and guide the
discussion by asking specific questions to obtain detail, example, and context. This type
of interview is especially appropriate when researchers are studying “how” questions and
are interested in gathering detail (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Because the researcher
investigated “how” questions and sought detail as well as depth on the principal’s part in
teacher collaboration, semistructured interviews were used for the primary data collection
method.

The principal interview contained a core of 14 semistructured questions which
were divided into seven foundational questions for the first interview and seven follow-up
questions for the second interview (see Appendix D). The teacher interview consisted of
ten foundational questions (see Appendix D). For both principal and teacher interviews,
the researcher used probes to request further information or for clarification of a response.
when responses to the foundational questions needed greater detail, depth, or clarity. The same principal and teacher interview protocols were used at all of the sites.

**Document Reviews**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) document reviews are useful because documents are (a) usually available and free, (b) a stable source of information, (c) contextually rich, and (d) nonreactive. In order to track written evidence of the principal’s involvement and actions relating to teacher collaboration, selected documents as available were reviewed. These documents included (a) the school’s strategic plan, (b) service delivery plans, (c) collaboration plans, (d) memos and newsletters to faculty, (e) newsletters to parents, (f) annual reports to the superintendent, (g) yearly school schedules, (h) collaborative lesson plans, (i) teacher assistance team notebooks and forms, (j) school handbooks and brochures, (k) guidelines and/or program descriptions for collaboration, (l) training manuals for collaboration, (m) committee reports, and (n) personal files and notebooks of the principal on collaboration. The type of available documents varied from school to school. Additionally, although the researcher desired to review documents over a three-year period, only one of the principals had retained documents such as newsletters and memos extending over that length of time. Most principals kept newsletters and memos for only one year. In the reviewing process, the researcher recorded the type of document and a description of the principal’s behavior.

In summary, four types of data gathering methods were used for this study: observations, principal interviews, teacher interviews, and document reviews. First, observations accompanied by the verification checklist substantiated the nomination.
criteria. Then principal interviews, teacher interviews, and documents reviews provided additional perspectives on the principal’s behaviors in fostering collaborative endeavors among teachers. Observations, teacher interviews, and document reviews were used collectively to deepen, expand, and verify data collected from the principal interviews. Together the four sources provided balance and supplied detail, examples, depth, and clarity to the data. Also, consistent findings from all four sources strengthened within-site findings and thus strengthened cross-site findings.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to assure the appropriateness of the data collection instruments and procedures. First, to determine the suitability of the protocol questions, the length of the interview, and researcher’s interviewing skills, four pilot interviews (two principal and two teacher interviews) were conducted. The pilot interviews were audio taped. Next, the tapes were transcribed and the contents analyzed to determine if the data properly addressed the research question. The tapes also were examined by the researcher to evaluate interviewing skills.

Secondly, to ensure that the verification checklist yielded the desired data, the researcher observed two collaborative structures using the checklist. Finally, the researcher conducted a record review. The analysis of the interviews, the observations and verification checklist, and the record review revealed the need to revise one question on the first principal’s interview. The question was complex and made it difficult for the principal to remember. The researcher simplified the question by dividing it into two parts. An experienced qualitative researcher who was well acquainted with the study
reviewed the researcher’s analysis of the data collection instruments and procedures and confirmed the researcher’s decision to revise one question. The school used as the pilot study was included as one of the sites in this research.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis refers to the process in which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together again in a novel way by use of induction. Induction is a process in which the researcher moves from specific facts to general conclusions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Data analysis consists of three components: (a) data reduction, (b) data display, and (c) conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Data reduction is the process of transforming raw data by writing summaries and coding into categories (for example, principals’ leadership style). Data display refers to the way data is organized and presented to permit drawing conclusions. Data displays include narrative text, matrices, graphs, networks, and charts. Conclusions from and/or verifications of the data relate to the meaning of the data, which includes noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions. Data from this study were analyzed using an analytic induction approach that was operationalized by developing a contextual description, conducting a literature analysis and within site and cross-site analyses.

Literature Analysis

The literature analysis involved two steps. First, empirical studies relating to the principal’s role in teacher collaboration were analyzed to determine specific role descriptors of the principal associated with fostering teacher collaboration. These studies
included research on teacher collaboration for students with special needs as well as research on teacher collaboration for other purposes, such as staff development and organizational change. Second, role descriptors of the principal detected in these studies were divided into two categories: role descriptors most frequently cited in the literature (see Table 1) and role descriptors not as frequently cited in the literature (see Table 2). The descriptors most frequently cited in the literature were classified using the following decision rule: They were descriptors that were cited in four or more studies with at least two studies relating to teacher collaboration for students with special needs. All other descriptors identified in the literature analysis were classified as “not as frequently cited in the literature.”

**Contextual Description**

The researcher developed a contextual description for each site. This involved a general description of the school (physical description of the school, information related to parents, students, staff, and the school vision); a history and description of the principal (education, experience, leadership style, and communication strategies); and a history and description of the collaborative structures (definition, observation, evolution of the structure, barriers and facilitators, and projections for the future).

**Within-Site Analysis**

The within-site analysis included an analysis of the literature, an analysis of the case studies, and a comparison of the role descriptors of the principal identified in the two analyses.
Case Study Analysis

In the first step of the case study analysis, the data from the observations and the interviews (principal and teacher), along with document reviews, were analyzed by structuring categories from the data. These emergent categories were reviewed and confirmed by an experienced qualitative researcher. Second, data from the data sources (observations, interviews, and document reviews) were charted according to the emergent categories. Third, using the charted data, a rich, thick description was written for each of the sites.

Comparison of the Role Descriptors of the Principal

The comparison of the role descriptors of the principal identified in the case study with the role descriptors cited in the literature proceeded in the following way. First, the data from each of the case studies were displayed on charts by classifying and comparing role descriptors of the principal that emerged from the case study with role descriptors most frequently cited in the literature and role descriptors not as frequently cited in the literature. The charted data included the role descriptor as cited in the literature, examples of the role descriptor as found in the case study data, and the four data sources. Second, role descriptors of the principal that were identified in the case study description but not cited in the literature analysis were displayed on charts. These charts included the additional role descriptors from the case study and the four data sources from which they emerged.
Cross-Site Analysis

In the first step of the cross-site analysis, data from the descriptions of each case study were compared across sites and summarized in thick, narrative description. Then the researcher identified emerging themes from the cross-site analysis of this data. Secondly, role descriptors of the principal identified in at least two of the four data sources (principal interview, general educator interview, specialist interview, and document review) from each case study were classified and compared according to the role descriptor “most frequently” and “not as frequently” cited in the literature. Thirdly, role descriptors identified across the cases but not cited in the literature were charted. Finally, findings from the cross-site analysis of the role descriptors from the cross-site analysis were classified into three levels. Level One included those role descriptors of the principal that were cited most frequently in the literature and in all five case studies. Level Two included those role descriptors of the principal that were not as frequently cited in the literature but identified in all five studies. Level Three included role descriptors that were not cited in the literature but cited in all five studies.

Data Management Procedures

Data from the audio-taped interviews were transcribed verbatim. Tapes were then stored in a fireproof box. The transcripts were placed in three-ring notebooks and color-coded files. The two three-ring notebooks were divided into sections by sites in the order of the site visits. Each section included (a) the verification checklist and the researcher’s memoranda notes, (b) principal interview transcripts, (c) teacher interview transcripts, and (d) document review notes. The researcher’s files were color coded by sites and
contained (a) a working copy of the transcripts from the interviews, (b) charts of the categorized information, (c) the thick descriptions of the case studies, (d) an audit trail of the role descriptors as found in the data sources, and (d) additional information from each site such as school handbooks and brochures.

Validity and Reliability Considerations

Eisenhart and Howe (1992) identified various positions on validity and reliability in qualitative inquiry and noted that qualitative research could (a) relate as much as possible to traditional notions of validity and reliability (for example, Yin, 1993); (b) have alternative constructs (for example, Lincoln & Guba, 1985); and (c) take an eclectic approach (for example, Smith & Glass, 1987). This researcher takes Yin's position of relating as much as possible to the traditional notions of validity and reliability in order to enhance the usability for multiple audiences.

Validity Considerations

Internal Validity

Internal validity addresses how research findings match reality (Borg & Gall, 1989). In investigating reality, the qualitative researcher seeks to present a picture of how informants view themselves and their experiences. Threats to internal validity could include researcher bias as well as inaccurate reporting and analysis of the data. To counteract these threats and to assure an honest rendering of the behaviors of the principal in fostering teacher collaboration, the researcher employed the following strategies.
**Triangulation.** Triangulation is the use of more than one source of data to illuminate, elaborate or corroborate the research question. In this study, triangulation was accomplished by the use of multiple cases (n=5), multiple sources of data (researcher observations, principals, teachers, and documents), and multiple data collection techniques (observations, interviews, and document reviews).

**Informant checks.** Informant checks involved returning the data to the informants (principals and teachers) for the purpose of verification and clarification. Informant checks were conducted in two stages of the research. The first informant check related to the content of the interviews. Within two weeks after the interviews, the researcher sent the transcribed interview notes to the interviewees and requested verification and clarification. All interviewees complied with the researcher’s request and all transcriptions were verified. Corrections by the interviewees were minor and included such things as clarifying a statement with additional information or correcting words that may have been unclear on the audio tape. The second informant check involved sending the thick, narrative descriptions of the case studies to the principal and a key informant (an individual in the school who was not connected with the study in any way, yet familiar with the collaborative structures and the principal’s role) for clarification and verification. Again, all principals and key informants complied with the researcher’s request and clarifications were minor.

**Dissertation committee member checks.** Dissertation committee checks relate to the reviewing of data as it is analyzed and interpreted. The researcher met with the
research advisor and another committee member to review data analysis procedures and findings as they emerged.

**Presentation of basic assumptions.** The researcher’s basic assumptions refer the researcher’s assertions about the reality of the principal’s role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs. Researcher assumptions are usually based on the researcher’s past experiences and interaction with the literature review. The researcher’s basic assumptions were clearly acknowledged earlier in this chapter.

**External Validity**

External validity relates to the transferability of the research findings to other settings (Borg & Gall, 1989). Herriott and Firestone (1983) suggested that the use of multiple sites with predetermined questions and the describing of specific procedures for data analysis greatly enhance external validity in the traditional sense. Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended that the researcher provide rich, thick description so that individuals interested in using the study will have a base of information from which to judge.

In this study, external validity was limited in that (a) all sites were suburban elementary schools, (b) the sample included only five schools, and (c) the researcher used purposeful sampling. However, external validity was strengthened in a number of ways that included (a) the use of multiple sites (n=5); (b) the use of the same predetermined questions for each site; (c) the use of the researcher as the sole collector of data; (d) the rendering of thick, rich description for each site; (e) the specific description of the data analysis procedures; (f) the comparison of the data with predetermined descriptors cited.
in empirical studies related to the principal’s role in fostering collaboration among teachers; and (g) the consistent finding across sites.

Reliability Considerations

Reliability means that if two researchers independently conducted the same study in the same setting, they would arrive at the same findings and conclusions (Yin, 1994). Qualitative researchers assume changing conditions and constructed meaning as they try to describe and interpret a multifaceted, changing world (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Therefore, the traditional meaning of reliability does not fit the assumptions of qualitative researchers. To address the matter of reliability in qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended the construct of consistency. Consistency means that given the data collected, the results would make sense to an outsider. Merriam (1988) suggested that the qualitative researcher use three strategies to ensure consistency: (a) triangulation, (b) investigator position, and (c) audit trail.

Consistency Considerations for the Case Studies

Five case studies were conducted to answer the first research question: How do principals foster teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs? To ensure consistency in research, the following strategies were utilized.

Triangulation. Triangulation was achieved through the use of multiple sites (n=5), multiple data sources (researcher observations, principals, teachers, and documents), and multiple methods (interviews and document reviews).
**Researcher position.** Researcher position and bias is explained through a thorough description of the researcher's assumptions earlier in this chapter. Research position is also portrayed through the conceptual framework as well as the selection criteria, participants, and the social context of the study.

**Audit trail.** An audit trail was established in a number of ways. First, a detailed description of data collection and analysis procedures has been presented in this chapter. Next, the researcher's steps in the data analysis process can be followed through (a) the color coding of the categories in the transcripts, (b) data displays of the categorized information, (c) summaries of the principal's role descriptors, and (d) specific documentation of the location of the role descriptors in each of the data sources.

**Consistency Considerations for the Case Study Comparison with the Literature Analysis**

This research study examined a second research question: How do these behaviors (principal’s role in fostering teacher collaboration) relate to leadership behaviors that have been identified as facilitative of teacher collaboration? To strengthen consistency in the comparison of the role descriptors identified in the case studies with the role descriptors cited in empirical studies, the researcher employed several strategies. First, to ensure consistency in matching role descriptors found in the case studies with those cited in the literature, the researcher operationally defined each of the role descriptors (see Appendix E). Next, to strengthen rater reliability, the researcher engaged another educator to read one case study and compare the role descriptors of the principal identified in the case study with the role descriptors cited in the literature using the operational definitions developed by the researcher. The outside rater’s role descriptor
comparison matched the researcher comparison 100%. Lastly, to assure consistency and trustworthiness in the comparison of the case study descriptors with those cited in the literature, the researcher referenced the location (page number and text) of each role descriptor of the principal identified in the case studies.

Ethical Safeguards and Considerations

Procedures

To follow the prescribed procedure for conducting research at the College of William and Mary, a proposal for this study was submitted and approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee. Next, to follow the school division guidelines for research, the following information was sent to the Department of Planning and Evaluation: (a) a copy of the proposal, (b) a copy of each interview form, (c) a copy of the consent form, and (d) a statement agreeing that a copy of the research results will be submitted to the Department of Planning and Evaluation when the project is completed. After the approval of the Department of Planning and Evaluation from each of the four districts, the researcher followed the predetermined procedure for selecting sites and gaining access to interview participants and review documents (any alterations to the nomination procedures required by individual districts were noted earlier in this chapter).

Informed Consent

Once access was gained, the researcher met with each of the participants to obtain informed consent and to set the time, place, and duration of the research activities. Consent forms (see Appendix C) addressed the following: (a) participation was voluntary and at any point, participants could withdraw from the study, (b) information would be
held in strictest confidence, (c) anonymity would extend to written as well as verbal reporting, (d) all participants would receive a copy of the final research report, and (e) all teacher participants would receive vouchers to attend the 1996 Resource/Consulting Teacher Symposium.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality**

The participants' identities were protected so that information collected would not embarrass or harm them in any way. All sites and participants were identified by fictitious names. The researcher, the transcriber, and the researcher's advisor were the only individuals who had access to field notes. Additionally, all identifying information such as the name of the school's mascot were changed to ensure confidentiality.
CHAPTER IV

FIVE CASE STUDIES

This study was designed to investigate the principal's role in fostering teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs. To examine the principal's role, five case studies were conducted in four school districts. In this chapter, for each of the five case studies, data are presented in narrative and in chart form. The first two narrative sections, descriptions of the school and the principal, provide a context for the discussion of the subsequent two sections, descriptions of the collaborative structures and the principal’s role in fostering teacher collaboration. At the end of the narrative sections for each case study are three charts. The first chart compares descriptors of the principal’s role most frequently found in the research literature with role descriptors of the principal as found in the case study. The second chart compares the descriptors of the principal’s role not as frequently found in the research literature with role descriptors of the principal as found in the case study. A third chart displays additional role descriptors of the principal as found in the case study data, but not cited in the research literature. Finally, to aid the reader, the names of the interviewees in the case studies are coded as follows: principal (P), general educator (G), and special educator (S).
Lakeside Elementary

Description of the School

General Description

Lakeside Elementary was described by its principal, Ed (P), as a suburban school located in a middle class neighborhood. The school’s grounds and buildings are well maintained and attractive. Trees line the parking lot and school lawn; flowers and shrubs grace the school entrance. The school’s mission, “to create a place where individuals can become all they are capable of being,” is displayed on a large banner in the entrance hallway. Over the office doorway, another large banner proclaims, “Welcome to Lakeside Elementary.” Evidence of the school’s mascot, the beaver, is everywhere, even on the principal’s shirt pocket and license plate. On one wall of the entrance hallway are numerous framed documents relating to Lakeside’s partnerships with businesses and other organizations. In another area of the spacious entrance hall, two built-in showcases display various class and school projects. Near the entrance to the office is an antique table with a flower arrangement and candles.

According to Ed (P), since Lakeside opened in 1989 the school has been governed by site-based management. He further commented that teachers take part in the day-to-day planning, problem solving, and operation of the school through committees; therefore, they collaborate concerning everything that goes on in the school. Specifically he stated, “Power and resources are put into the teachers’ hands.” For the last two years Lakeside has participated in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools’ school renewal program. Concerning the school in general Ed (P) stated, “We’re generally
regarded as a school that is pretty functional, pretty ‘with-it’, and at the same time real open.”

**School Vision**

Lakeside’s vision, according to Ed (P), is to “serve the community, offer a quality education, and be a place where children want to come.” He commented, “We value people; we believe there is some good in everybody and it needs to be invited out.” When questioned about school vision, one teacher interviewee commented, “We want to be an inviting school.” In the early nineties, according to the annual Superintendent’s Report, Lakeside was internationally recognized as an “Inviting School” by the International Association of Invitational Education.

**Students, Parents, and Faculty**

The annual Superintendent’s Report yielded the following information concerning Lakeside’s students and parents. Lakeside serves approximately 700 students; from this number 126 (18%) receive reduced or free lunch, 14 (2%) are classified as academically gifted, and 84 (12%) are classified as special education. Lakeside’s special education students are all in the mildly handicapped category. Lakeside offers a collaboration/inclusion program to serve these students, as well as the traditional pull-out services. Also Lakeside houses one self-contained class for students with mild retardation. Class size in kindergarten through fifth grade ranges from 21 to 26 students. Lakeside’s students were described in the Superintendent’s Report, as “highly motivated and well behaved with consistently high attendance percentages.”
The report also indicated that Lakeside has a “strong PTA and highly supportive and involved parents.” This statement is evidenced by last year’s Parent and Teacher Association Membership being 100% and the 200 parent volunteers that served 3,700 hours in the school. On a recent parent satisfaction survey 27.9% stated they were satisfied with the school and 67.7% were very satisfied. Each year the guidance counselor at Lakeside offers workshops for parents on parenting skills.

Ed (P) noted that with the exception of a few teachers, Lakeside has retained its original faculty—a group described by the Superintendent’s Report as “dedicated, innovative, and experienced.” Nearly half of the faculty hold graduate degrees. Ed (P) described the faculty as “a good group of people—a real professional group of people.”

Description of the Principal

Experience and Education

Ed (P) provided the following information concerning his experience and education. During his 29 years in education, he has held three positions: teacher, assistant principal, and principal. For the last 22 years, he has served as a principal, and he has been Lakeside’s principal since the school opened in 1989. Ed’s (P) undergraduate degree was in science and physical education. He also holds graduate and post-graduate degrees in educational administration. When asked about his preparation to be a leader for teacher collaboration, Ed (P) replied that he had learned through trial and error. He also felt that his background in sports had helped him because of its strong emphasis on the team concept.
Leadership Style

When questioned about his leadership style, Ed (P) responded that he uses a combination of styles, but if asked to put it in one phrase, it would be “leading by the seat of your pants.” Nevertheless, data from the interviews, document reviews, and observations indicated that he is highly organized, efficient, and able to anticipate and prepare for difficulties before they happen. Ed (P) further stated that when people know what is expected of them and take pride in their work, principals don’t have to do a lot of leading. Joanne (G), a general educator and Cindy (S), a speech specialist, used the following descriptors when interviewed about Ed’s (P) leadership style: democratic, open, honest, positive, organized, efficient, supportive, personable, and inviting. Some of Joanne’s and Cindy’s comments were, “He is very personable and inviting;” “He’s very organized, very efficient, supportive, and willing to share decisions;” and “He’s not a dictator. He is very democratic in that he wants everyone’s input.”

Communication strategies

Ed (P) reported that he uses numerous strategies to communicate with the faculty, parents, and students. He communicates with parents and faculty through memos, newsletters, and monthly calendars. He mentioned that each of these communications has the underlying message that Lakeside wants to be an inviting school. He uses a banner in the hallway to display the school’s mission statement. On a large sign in front of the school, he communicates school information to the community. He also indicated that he has an open door policy. Although Lakeside has never had faculty meetings, the faculty gathers as a group for ten minutes each Monday morning to talk about what will
be happening during the week. The faculty sets the agenda, and the principal encourages individuals to share. Also, Ed (P) carries a hand-held transmitter radio so that he can be reached anytime and anywhere in the building. Concerning the principal’s communication strategies, Joanne (G) related, “He wants to listen to everyone; he wants to know what the problems are so we can seek solutions.” Cindy (S) responded that the principal makes himself understood by his actions; he lets his staff know what is important when he gives support and models what he believes.

Description of Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

Definition

Ed (P) stated he believed teacher collaboration and inclusion were different terms. Although inclusion was not defined, he defined collaboration as “two or more individuals working toward a common goal to solve a common problem” and teacher collaboration as “two or more teachers getting help to a child who has a problem in a certain area.” The teacher interviewees offered similar definitions with Joanne (G) summarizing her definition by saying, “It’s parity!”

Relationship to School Vision

All interviewees agreed that teacher collaboration was necessary to fulfill Lakeside’s vision of offering a quality education and being an inviting school. Ed (P) stated, “No one person can do it!” When discussing the importance of teamwork, he alluded to The Twenty Mule Team Borax commercial explaining that perhaps ten mules could have pulled two different wagons across the desert at the same time, but 20 working together did it better and easier. Both teacher interviewees indicated that teacher
collaboration is related to the school vision in that collaboration enhances the opportunity for all students to achieve their potential.

Need for Collaborative Structures

Among the collaborative structures available at Lakeside to serve students with special needs are a teacher assistance team, collaborative consultation, team teaching, and a collaboration committee. Ed (P) commented that the teacher assistance team emerged from two needs: (a) classroom teachers needed a support when they had problems with students, and (b) the administration and staff felt they needed a prereferral team. All interviewees reported that presently the teacher assistance team rarely meets. The reason they gave for the team's inactivity was that progressively more teacher concerns are being met through collaborative consultation, team teaching, and the collaboration committee.

Collaborative consultation, team teaching, and the collaboration committee grew out of another need—too many students with special needs were missing too much classroom instructional time. A number of stories were recounted by interviewees to illustrate this need. Ed (P) shared the story of a student who he continually had noticed in the hallways. After investigating the student's schedule, he found that the student was out of the classroom for three hours a day and spent 1/6 of his day in the halls going from one service delivery to another. Joanne (G) related that when she and Cindy (S) discovered that seven students with speech problems needed to be pulled out for instruction, they decided to collaborate and deliver the instruction in the general classroom. In both of the above incidences, Cindy (S) was willing to try serving the students through collaborative consultation and team teaching. Regarding this initial
step, Ed (P) remarked, “By moving the place where the goods were delivered, it
necessitated a philosophical change on the part of some people, and once they agreed to
it, collaboration grew out of it.” Therefore, the year that Lakeside opened a few teachers
began to engage informally in collaborative consultation and team teaching.

Observation of Collaborative Structures

The researcher observed Lakeside teachers collaborating in two structures:
collaborative consultation and team teaching. Both structures have functioned for three
years and met the criteria on the researcher’s verification checklist. For collaborative
consultation, the general educator and the specialist reported that they meet every
Monday and as needed to plan jointly and problem solve in a systematic way. In the
session that the researcher observed, Joanne (G) and Cindy (S) developed lesson plans for
team teaching language arts, as well as problem solved and developed an action plan for a
shared student. During the team teaching session, Joanne (G) and Cindy (S) used a
jointly developed lesson plan and engaged in two team teaching options. In the first part
of the lesson, Cindy (S) taught the lesson and Joanne (G) offered examples and
comments; then during the guided practice, both teachers monitored student response. In
the second part of the lesson, Cindy (S) explained an independent activity, and then both
teachers monitored and aided students.

Evolution of Structures

From the analysis of the data, teacher collaboration for students with special needs
developed in three stages: initiation, development, and continuance. The initiation stage
refers to the time when teacher collaboration for students with special needs was first
considered, discussed, and attempted in an informal way. The development stage relates to the preparation period and the first year of implementation. The continuance stage pertains to the second year of implementation through the present time.

Initiation (1989-1993). When questioned about this stage, interviewees at Lakeside commented about the beginnings of collaboration for students with special needs. Responses centered around four areas: (a) initial steps to collaborate, (b) acquisition of further knowledge about collaboration, and (c) the principal's role in the initiation stage. Concerning the first steps in collaboration for students with special needs, teacher interviewees offered the following account. When the school opened in 1989 Cindy (S) who had engaged in collaborative consultation and team teaching at her former school, began informally serving students in some other general classrooms. The value and successes of this collaboration spread by word of mouth throughout the school, and more classrooms opened up for collaboration. The collaborating teachers began to attend classes, conferences and workshops to learn more about collaboration. Additionally, they began to share their ideas with Ed (P) and to discuss the development of a plan for teacher collaboration for students with special needs.

When questioned about his role during the initiation stage, Ed (P) answered that he gave the collaborating teachers support and time. He elaborated by saying that he sought to support the teachers in any way that they needed it; however, he liked to be informed of their needs because he couldn't always discern their specific needs. He also stated that he tried to provide collaborating teachers with more time to collaborate. Teacher interviewees confirmed the principal's previous statements. They related that
Ed (P) showed his support by providing professional leave and by covering classes when they were attending sessions related to collaboration. Joanne (G) further reported that during this stage, the principal’s attitude toward the collaborative model was, “Let’s do it, but let’s get together and do it right.” She continued, “He was like our sounding board; he listened to our ideas and thought that they were good ideas and then facilitated our development of a plan.” Concerning the initiation of teacher collaboration for students with special needs, Ed (P) commented, “I think the climate in this school was there for it to take place. It was the right time, the right place and the need was evident to a lot of people, but the main thing, you see if we didn’t have the number of people that we needed to pull it off, it wouldn’t work no matter what I did.”

**Development (1993-1994).** When questioned about the development stage, interviewees described three major areas: (a) the development of a systematic plan, (b) staff development programs for teachers participating in collaboration, and (c) the scheduling of time to plan for collaborative teachers. The teacher interviewees related the following account of the development period. Having found success using collaborative teaching to serve students with speech and language problems, the teacher collaborators desired to have the service expanded to include students with learning disabilities. Joanne (G) related that general classroom teachers became concerned as more students with disabilities were placed in their classrooms. She commented that the year the assistant principal placed students with learning disabilities in general education classes, they realized right away they needed a systematic plan of action. Joanne (G) stated, “we had a real big scuffle at the beginning of that year; it was kind of that ready,
fire, aim instead of ready, aim, fire." As a result, Cindy (S) and Joanne (G) approached Ed (P) about developing a collaboration plan.

In the spring of 1993, the grade group chairpersons and specialists met for a workday to develop a collaboration plan to be initiated in the fall of 1994. The district special education coordinator served as facilitator at this meeting. Cindy (S) described the workday in this way: "That day broke down a lot of barriers. We realized that we were alike more than different in what we hoped for the children." The collaboration plan was then shared with all the other classroom teachers so that their input could be included. Subsequently, a collaboration committee was formed of teachers who were participating in collaborative services for special needs students. This committee continues to meet monthly to deal with issues, concerns, evaluation, and refinements. These meeting are open to all faculty members.

Initial training in collaboration was given by the district special education coordinator. Additional staff development needs were identified by the school's staff development committee. This committee first conducted surveys of teachers' needs and interests and then provided all teachers opportunities for training. Some of this training addressed issues related to teacher collaboration for students with special needs. As a result of these staff development sessions in 1994, teacher collaboration expanded to include students with emotional disturbance and student with mild retardation.

Concerning his part in the development of collaborative services, Ed (P) mentioned that he attended some of the collaboration committee meetings and occasionally provided refreshments to the participants. He also related that he had been
involved with scheduling: “I’ve always seen scheduling as an administrative function. The teachers give me their preferences and I work with that.” Both teacher interviewees indicated that the provision of a workday for teachers was critical in the development of a school-wide plan for collaboration. Joanne (G) expressed it this way, “He allowed us to have time together away from our classrooms and took it out of our staff development budget to pay substitutes.”

Continuance. Interviewees’ responses regarding the continuance stage of teacher collaboration for students with special needs covered four areas: (a) continued training, (b) activities of the collaboration committee, (c) annual evaluation, and (d) the principal’s continued encouragement and support. First, continual opportunity for training in collaboration was available to anyone in the school. Cindy (S) reported that she and Joanne (G) offer a class in collaboration each year. This class is funded by the district and is open to all teachers at Lakeside, as well as all teachers in the district. Cindy (S) further noted that, in her opinion, Lakeside’s most effective staff development experiences have been the collaboration committee and one-on-one interactions with teachers as their needs, questions, and concerns arise. According to Cindy (S), Ed (P) also has given Lakeside teachers time to observe teacher collaboration in action in another school and to participate at conferences. Secondly, the collaboration committee meets once a month for problem solving, planning, evaluating, and refining the practice of collaboration. Ed (P) commented, “We just went through a process of outlining how we’re going to set classes up for next year to remove the possibility that classes get stacked one way or the other.” Thirdly, results of the annual evaluation of collaboration
conducted by the collaboration committee are shared with the school community. This evaluation addresses academic achievement, and teacher and student attitudes and concerns. Joanne (G) related, “We still evaluate continually. We pre and post test students and survey participating teachers and the parents of identified students.” Finally, Ed (P) consistently and continually offers encouragement and support. Joanne (G) commented, “The principal provides the materials we need...and encourages staff development. He’s not forcing teachers to change, but he is encouraging them to attend staff development.” Ed (P) stated, “If somebody wants to go to a conference, we try to make a way for them to go.”

Joanne (G) summed up the continuance stage as problem solving, expanding teacher collaboration for students with special needs, and providing an open forum for teachers to air their grievances and seek solutions. When asked about his role in the continuance stage, Ed (P) replied, “You would think that the hard part is over, but it isn’t because you have to keep people pumped up about what they’re doing. They’ve got to see successes; they’ve got to know success stories.”

**Barriers, Facilitating Factors, and Benefits**

Ed (P) identified teacher attitude, time, and funding for additional personnel as the major barriers to collaboration. Teacher interviewees concurred with the principal—both teachers mentioned teacher attitude, one listed time, and the other noted funding for additional personnel. Although scheduling was not mentioned when interviewees were questioned about barriers, all interviewees identified it as a significant problem especially in the early stages of collaboration.
Concerning teacher attitude, Ed (P) remarked that a number of the faculty had not been willing to open their classrooms for collaborative consultation or team teaching. He added he doesn’t believe in forcing teachers to collaborate: “We forced it on some people in the very beginning which was a mistake, but it worked out. The problem is that every teacher is not capable of collaborating; that’s an unfortunate thing, but they’re not.” Joanne (G) felt that teacher attitude was a major barrier. She stated, “We are starting to see a split between teachers who are not supportive of collaboration and teachers who are very supportive.” She added that the principal is dealing with this by providing an open forum for all teachers to share their views without being penalized in any way. Cindy (S) described the principal as a mediator who tries to look at both views and problem solve around issues. Cindy (S) also mentioned that change does not come quickly. She told a story about a teacher who initially was very resistant to the idea of teaming, yet three years later this teacher volunteered to attend a workshop on collaboration and continues to show an interest in learning more.

Ed (P) listed time as the salient barrier. He remarked, “The major problem that we had then, and we still have, is finding time for the teachers to plan collaboratively on the clock. They have to give a lot of their time.” He further shared that because Lakeside has collaborated with another school to combine bus runs, teachers now have 30 additional minutes a day of planning time without children in the building.

Additional personnel was listed as the major barrier to collaboration by Joanne (G). She indicated that pull-out services and inclusive services are necessary to meet the needs of their students, and these services require more personnel. She believes
that scheduling would not be a problem if they had additional personnel. Ed (P) related that the district special education coordinator has been very helpful in assisting Lakeside to secure additional personnel; however, the need for personnel still exits. “We do not have the money to add people to take care of our needs,” explained Ed (P).

Cindy (S) reported that scheduling was a great challenge the first year and if the principal and the collaborative teachers had not been committed to teacher collaboration, the principal could have “pulled the plug.” She added that over the years the teachers have become better at scheduling. Joanne (G) mentioned that when some teachers expressed unhappiness with the way students were scheduled, the principal organized a committee called a “pit crew” (putting it together) to find out what every teacher wanted before scheduling for the next year.

According to the Ed (P) and the teachers, Lakeside’s facilitating factors include a receptive climate for collaboration, a stable staff, the involvement and support of the principal, the academic achievement and improved self-esteem of the students as reported by the annual evaluation on collaboration for students with special needs, and the positive response from participating teachers. The major benefits reported by the interviewees included the academic progress of students and the professional growth of the teachers.

Future of Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

When asked about the future of teacher collaboration in their school in the next three to five years, interviewees predicted continual improvement in ways to schedule and to prepare teacher collaborators, as well as an increase in the number of teachers who want to be involved. Cindy (S) remarked that teacher collaboration is not a fad, but a
trend of the future. Ed (P) related that he expects to see more parents wanting their children placed in classrooms where teachers are collaborating. He also hoped to find ways to provide more time for teachers to collaboratively plan and schedule.

The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

Developing a Collaborative Culture

When asked about developing a collaborative culture, Ed (P) provided the following information. In 1989, when the school opened, he was given a faculty drawn from at least ten other schools in the city. At that time he deliberately set out to create a collaborative culture where teachers valued working together to plan and problem solve to improve teaching and learning; however, he did not have the present collaborative structures for students with special needs in mind. First he wanted to try to build a team with everyone working together toward a common goal. Ed (P) used an invitational approach to team building, engaging an outside consultant to work with the faculty. He remarked that at Lakeside “people are valued and everyone is invited to contribute.” Ed (P) frequently uses the acronym TEAM for “Together everyone achieves more.” He commented,

We try to build camaraderie among teaching staff, among all staff members, and also among the students, and we have spirit days where children wear school colors, shirts and hats and things like that. We are constantly pushing things that build spirit and unity and team and things of that nature.

He has an open door policy and encourages teachers to share their successes and concerns. For example, Ed (P) remarked that he encourages teachers to share with him what he calls “rainbows and rocks.” The rainbows are positive things such as compliments and successes, while the rocks are concerns and grievances. He stated,
“I’ve made it a point that if somebody complains about something, even if it’s that the coffee is not hot enough, I’ll investigate it to find out why or at least get some answers. I promised them from day one that if they asked a question they will get an answer.” He further disclosed that “There’s hardly anything in this building that comes off without input from anybody that wants to give it.” Additionally, he stated, “Overall people feel free to collaborate in the school; so, this naturally leads to collaborating about instruction.” He is sensitive to details such as lighting and furniture that may help create an atmosphere for collaboration. When asked about an attractive round table in the teachers’ conference room, he replied, “Yes, I put the round table there because with a round table there is no head and no foot.”

Role Descriptors

Coach, cheerleader, and sounding board were three metaphors used by the interviewees to portray the principal’s role. Ed (P) described himself as a coach, especially in the continuance stage. He stated that people have to keep up their intensity and he, like a coach, makes the effort to keep everyone encouraged and then “gets out of the way and lets them run.” Both teacher interviewees remarked that they see the principal as a cheerleader because of his positive attitude and the encouragement and support that he provides for teachers. Joanne (G) described the principal as a sounding board because he actively listens to the teachers’ ideas and concerns.

Specific descriptors of the principal’s role mentioned in the interviews and previously cited in this chapter were listener, facilitator, mediator, encourager, supporter, provider, organizer, communicator, and problem solver. Attributes ascribed to Ed (P) by
the interviewees were openness, fairness, honesty, dependability, availability, and visibility. Concerning visibility and availability, Cindy (S) noted, “He’s around; he sees what is going on; he talks to students; he talks to teachers; he’s not behind a closed door.” Actions attributed to the principal by the interviewees included showing interest; communicating successes; providing resources, time, climate, and opportunity for training; allowing for diversity of thought; monitoring progress; helping with scheduling; sharing decision making; and seeking to prepare and encourage others to be involved in teacher collaboration.

**Changes in Role**

Concerning changes in the principal’s role over time, Cindy (S) reported that after the first evaluation of teacher collaboration for students with special needs yielded positive results, Ed (P) was willing to take even more risks. Joanne (G) remarked, “He is still supportive, very supportive. He is not as vocal about his support. We know that he supports our program, but other teachers know that he supports their views also. He is working to change their views in a positive way.” Ed (P) shared that he has sought to provide more time for the teachers to collaborate. He stated, “I’ve become more realistic...I’ve become attuned to the fact that a lot of successes of collaborative efforts are directly related to the amount of assistance you can give people.”

**Reflections**

When asked what he would do differently if he could start over, Ed (P) replied that ideally he would open a school and begin collaboration for special needs students at the same time. Then he could recruit and employ teachers who were willing and able to
collaborate. Cindy (S) offered this same response. Ed (P) also related that he would go a little slower in the initiation stage, giving teachers more time to adjust to the idea. Joanne (G) remarked that if Lakeside could start again, she would like the principal to take the first year to develop a collaboration plan which included a plan for scheduling. She also stated that she would like to see more teacher input in scheduling.

Summary

Lakeside is a suburban elementary school governed by site-based management. The school has a stable faculty and strong parental support. Ed (P), Lakeside’s principal, was described as democratic leader who deliberately set out to develop a collaborative culture. Although initially Ed (P) did not envision the currently operating collaborative structures to serve students with special needs, he responded positively when teachers approached him with the idea. After collaborating informally for a number of years, Lakeside teachers enlisted the support of the principal and the district special education coordinator to develop a collaboration plan for Lakeside in 1993. As a result, collaborative consultation, team teaching, and a collaboration committee are presently functioning in the school.

The interviewees reported that the major barriers to their collaborative endeavors are teacher attitude, time, funding for additional personnel, and scheduling. Facilitating factors are a receptive climate, a stable staff, the principal’s encouragement and support, the positive evaluation results, and the positive response from the collaborating teachers. The reported benefits were academic progress for students and professional growth for teachers.
Data from the interviews and document review indicate that the principal played a central and critical role throughout the evolution of teacher collaboration for students with special needs. The interviewees described the principal as a coach, cheerleader, and sounding board as well as attributing to the principal various role descriptors which included listener, facilitator, mediator, encourager, supporter, provider, organizer, communicator, and problem solver.
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptors Most Frequently Cited in the Literature</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors as Found in Lakeside's Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Be supportive</td>
<td>Provides time</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Demonstrate commitment</td>
<td>Has a systematic plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continued during difficulties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide training and participate in training</td>
<td>Provides training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attends training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide resources (human and material)</td>
<td>Provides materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides furniture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provide time</td>
<td>Provides time for training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides time for planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provide recognition of accomplishment</td>
<td>Shares successes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaks to individual teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Help with schedules</td>
<td>Works with the master schedule</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Decision rule for descriptors found in the literature: Cited in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs (see Table 1).
Table 4
The Principal’s Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School: Lakeside Elementary</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Role Descriptors Not As Frequently Cited in the Literature</em></td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples of the Role Descriptors found in Lakeside’s Data</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Build trust</td>
<td>Is consistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeps his word</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Show confidence in teachers and give freedom</td>
<td>Lets teachers try new things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lets teachers make decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Be open</td>
<td>Listens to teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is receptive to new ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Model a collaborative style</td>
<td>Shares decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Encourage teachers</td>
<td>Recognizes accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheers teachers on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Talk about teaching and learning</td>
<td>Discusses teacher concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks about student outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Check readiness</td>
<td>Stated “The time was right”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Communicate a compelling purpose</td>
<td>Relates to the vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relates to student needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Communicate and describe norms</td>
<td>Uses Acronyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models collaboration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Defend norms</td>
<td>Continues during difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages reluctant teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Set clear goals (involve staff)</td>
<td>Has committee write goals with input from the faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Relate collaborative activities to teacher concerns and priorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Help develop structures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Facilitate faculty participation in defining collaboration and developing structures</td>
<td>Has committee with faculty input develop a collaboration plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*Role Descriptors Not As Frequently Cited in the Literature</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors as found in Lakeside’s Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>15. Provide assistance where needed</strong></td>
<td>Provides time Mediates when difficulties occur</td>
<td>▶ ▶ ▶ ▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16. Provide opportunity</strong></td>
<td>Provides time Provides training</td>
<td>▶ ▶ ▶ ▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17. Provide positive feedback</strong></td>
<td>Recognizes successes Cheers teachers on</td>
<td>▶ ▶ ▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18. Provide a systematic plan</strong></td>
<td>Has Committee write plan with input from the entire faculty</td>
<td>▶ ▶ ▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19. Recruit teachers</strong></td>
<td>Recruits teachers from within and without</td>
<td>▶ ▶ ▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20. Use symbols and rituals</strong></td>
<td>Uses analogies Has “Rocks and Rainbows”</td>
<td>▶ ▶ ▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>21. Acquire and utilize specific skills to enhance a collegial culture</strong></td>
<td>Attends some training Attends collaboration meetings</td>
<td>▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>22. Engage in frequent and direct communication</strong></td>
<td>Has an open door policy Is available</td>
<td>▶ ▶ ▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>23. Project a positive attitude</strong></td>
<td>Speaks positively Uses positive slogans</td>
<td>▶ ▶ ▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>24. Start with volunteers</strong></td>
<td>Uses only volunteers</td>
<td>▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>25. Start small and build</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>26. Evaluate</strong></td>
<td>Evaluates satisfaction Evaluates student progress</td>
<td>▶ ▶ ▶ ▶</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Decision rule: Cited in the literature, but not in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs (see Table 2).*
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

Lakeside Elementary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Descriptors of the Principal's Role as Found in Lakeside's Data</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors from Lakeside's Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Relates collaboration to school vision and mission</td>
<td>Relates to &quot;inviting&quot; schools Relates to student benefit</td>
<td>Principal General Educator Specialist Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Listen to teachers</td>
<td>Is a sounding board Welcomes input</td>
<td>• •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Help solve problems</td>
<td>Mediates when difficulties occur Encourages problem solving</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Schedule and place students in advance</td>
<td>Schedules and places students in the spring</td>
<td>• •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Disseminate information</td>
<td>Welcomes observers Encourages teachers to teach other teachers</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Monitors</td>
<td>Visits collaboration committee Talk with teachers</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greenwood Elementary

Description of the School

General Description

Greenwood Elementary was described by its principal, Jim (P), as a suburban school in a middle class neighborhood. Although the school is nearly 40 years old, it has a well-maintained appearance. The one story, rambling brick building is nestled in mature trees. Under a large oak at the school entrance is an outdoor reading center with brick benches. At the school entrance a giant picture window provides an abundance of natural lightning for the entrance hallway. Displayed in the hallway are large banners. One banner announces the school’s mission, “Academic excellence for all learners” and the school’s shared values, “We value people, ideas, and learning, encourage communication and growth, and provide opportunities and challenges so that we may all grow and learn.” Another large banner over the entrance doorway proclaims, “Through these doors walk some of the best students in the world.” In the hallways, attractive signs written in children’s language mark important places such as Boo Boo Station (the nurse’s station), and Feeding Grounds (the cafeteria). Beside the Greenwood Den (office) door, one finds a Wee Deliver mailbox and next to the mailbox is a desk occupied by a parent volunteer who is there to provide information and assistance. In the center of the hallway is a free-standing showcase which displays the special projects of various classes.

According to the assistant principal, Greenwood has been governed by site-based management for the last five years. Two important decision-making bodies are the
faculty council and the school planning council. Moreover, according to the annual Superintendent’s Report, for the last three years, Greenwood’s inclusion/collaboration program was the model program for the district.

**School Vision**

When asked about the school vision, the principal responded with, “academic excellence for all.” At a later time when the researcher questioned the principal about the difference between the school vision and mission, he stated that the vision and the mission are the same. A teacher response, “to educate every child the best that we can” was similar to the principal’s. According to the Superintendent’s Report, Greenwood’s faculty and staff believe that the school personnel, the parents, and the students share the responsibility for accomplishing the school vision.

**Students, Parents, and Faculty**

The Superintendent’s Report yielded the following information concerning Greenwood’s students, parents, and faculty. Greenwood serves approximately 700 students. From this number, 98 (14%) receive reduced or free lunch, 42 (6%) are classified as special education, and 35 (5%) are classified as academically gifted. Class size ranges from 21 to 26 students. Students at Greenwood have a high daily attendance record (96%). Greenwood is receiving increasing numbers of at-risk students. Special assistance for this population is provided by using strategies from Greenwood’s At-Risk Strategic Plan Team and by expanding the Collaboration/Inclusion Program. In addition to the Collaboration/Inclusion Program, Greenwood offers a continuum of special
education services to its special education population, which includes students with mild handicaps. Jim reported that Greenwood also houses the Southeastern Educational Cooperative Educational program which serves primarily autistic children.

Greenwood’s parents are described as “predominately middle class with high expectations for their children.” The two parent organizations, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the Volunteers-in-Education (VIE) are very active. For example, for the past three years, PTA membership has been 100%. Greenwood reaches out to its parents in a number of ways. First, workshops in parenting skills and school curriculum are offered. Secondly, parent forums are held to discuss major changes in curriculum or organizational structure. Thirdly, Greenwood also has a Parental Involvement Team. One task of this team is to conduct a series of workshops “Parents on Your Side” for interested faculty members. Finally, results of an annual Parent and Community Survey revealed that 94% of the parents agreed or strongly agreed that communication between home and school is effective.

Jim (P) described the faculty as “a good group of teachers who work well together.” Approximately 40% of the faculty hold graduate degrees, and the faculty average 13 years of teaching experience. Greenwood’s assistant principal reported that faculty turnover is rare. On a recent Faculty Council Survey, Greenwood’s faculty rated working conditions and staff morale as very high.
Description of the Principal

Experience and Education

Jim (P) provided the following information concerning his experience and education. During his 28 years in education, he has held three positions: teacher, assistant principal, and principal. For the last eight years he has served as a principal at Greenwood. Jim’s (P) undergraduate degree was in biology, health, and physical education. He holds graduate and post graduate degrees in educational administration. When questioned about his preparation to be a leader for teacher collaboration, he responded that he attended the workshops with the district special education coordinator and engaged in formal and informal conversations and sharing sessions with teachers who were collaborating. He also has read about collaboration and has collected information not only on teacher collaboration for students for special needs, but also on the principal’s role. Furthermore, he has compiled his own personal resource notebook on collaboration and inclusion.

Leadership Style

Jim (P) described himself as “a situational leader, but primarily based in collaborative leadership.” Concerning a collaborative style, he stated, “I think it’s just the way that I prefer to deal with people--more on a collegial level--more on a participatory level. That’s just what I am more comfortable with.” The teacher interviewees, Nancy (G), the general educator, and Kay (S), the LD Specialist, also portrayed
Jim's (P) leadership style as collaborative. They stated, "He leaves a lot up to us as long as it is in the guidelines of what is proper and best for the children;" "he really trusts you; he is flexible;" and "he's here for us and wants us to have a part in decision making."

Nancy (G) described the principal as a "do-ahead person." She elaborated by stating that he always seeks to prepare teachers for school changes and he publishes a schedule of meetings for the purpose of placing students in classes for the following year.

**Communication Strategies**

Interviewees reported that Jim (P) employs numerous and various communication strategies. He displays the school mission and shared values on large banners at the entrance of the school for everyone to see. Additionally, he places the school mission at the top of every newsletter. To communicate with parents, Jim (P) uses newsletters, monthly calendars, parent forums and formal and informal meetings. Kay (S) reported that every quarter he sends a newsletter to all parents whose children are in inclusive classrooms. He also holds an open forum each year in the summer for all parents who will have children in inclusive classrooms for the coming year. Furthermore, Greenwood has a school information line and a homework hotline available for parents and students. To communicate with the faculty, Jim (P) uses faculty meetings, newsletters, memos, individual notes, and formal and informal meetings. He instituted what he termed "The Wonderful Greenwood Club Cards"—special cards for anyone on the staff to use to write notes of encouragement and appreciation to others. Jim (P) commented, "...one of my goals is to make sure I write something positive to everyone in this whole family." To communicate with students, Jim (P) visits in their classrooms and other places throughout
the school. Occasionally he invites students into his office for a conversation. To communicate with the community, Jim (P) maintains a large sign near the road in front of the school. Nancy (G) mentioned that the principal communicates by his actions. He gives teachers freedom to do what is best for students; he is positive and gives lots of feedback; and he compliments teachers when they have done well. In general, Jim (P) reported that he seeks to maintain open communication with everyone in the school. He stated one way he accomplishes this is by always keeping his door open and by, “talking with everybody, being visible, and letting them know you care about what they’re doing.”

**Definition**

When defining collaboration, Jim (P) differentiated between collaboration and inclusion by describing collaboration as “a way, or method or process of working together collegially with a group of people.” He added that with inclusion “everyone in the school works in a collaborative way.” Jim (P) elaborated by saying that collaboration is “coming together and talking about what’s best for kids--identifying what we can do to help them learn.” The teachers response, “teachers working together planning, providing, checking on, just meeting the needs of a child the best way we can,” while similar to the principal’s definition, added specificity.

**Relationship to School Vision**

Interviewees agreed that teacher collaboration for students with special needs advances their school vision of “academic excellence for all learners.” They remarked that teachers who collaboratively organize and plan on a daily basis enhance learning for
all students. To illustrate the relationship of collaboration to the school mission and
vision, Jim (P) used a story about geese in flight. The following main idea was drawn
from this story: working together is more powerful than working alone; and goals are
reached more easily and quickly when we travel on the thrust of one another (by flying in
a “V” formation the flock of geese adds approximately 71% greater flying range).

**Need for Collaborative Structures**

Among the collaborative structures serving students with special needs are the
teachers’ assistance team, collaborative consultation, team teaching, and the exceptional
children’s committee. Interviewees reported that the teacher assistance team emerged
from two needs: (a) classroom teachers needed assistance and support because the school
was receiving more at-risk students and (b) too many students were being referred to
special education. Collaborative consultation, team teaching and the exceptional
children’s committee grew out of another need, the principal and teachers’ belief that
students in pull-out programs were not making as much academic progress as they
should. These students also were missing too much classroom time.

**Observation of Structures**

The researcher observed Greenwood teachers collaborating in two structures: the
teachers assisting teachers (TAT) team and team teaching. Both structures met the
criteria on the researcher’s verification checklist in that both structures meet regularly,
use a systematic planning and problem solving process, and document their sessions
using forms or lessons plans. According to the teacher interviewees, the TAT team has
been in place for five years and team teaching has been practiced for four years. The
chairperson, Nancy (G) (third grade teacher), reported that the team meets at least once a month or as needed. During the researcher's observation of the TAT team meeting, a first grade teacher brought a concern about a student's behavior. The session proceeded in the following manner: (a) the chairperson opened the meeting and introduced the referring teacher; (b) the teacher related the problem, the necessary background information, and the interventions that she had tried that had proven unsuccessful; (c) members of the team asked questions for clarification and began brainstorming for solutions; (d) a solution acceptable to all members was chosen; (e) a plan of action was developed; (f) the recorder completed the TAT team form and filed it in the TAT team notebook; and (g) the team reviewed follow-up information from previous cases.

The observation of team teaching took place in a third grade classroom during a language arts lesson. The researcher observed Kay (S) and Nancy (G) simultaneously teaching a reading lesson to small groups. The teachers reported that they had formed two groups because of the limited number of trade books. Kay (S) and Nancy (G) further stated that they are flexible in the way they team teach and may use a number of options such as complementary teaching, jointly teaching the lesson, or taking turns doing supportive learning activities. They choose the option that best meets the needs of the students. Finally, they recounted that they meet for 45 minutes every Thursday and Friday for problem solving and planning.

**Evolution of Structures**

From the analysis of the data, teacher collaboration for students with special needs emerged in three stages at Greenwood: initiation, development, and continuance. The
initiation stage refers to the time when teacher collaboration for students with special needs was first considered, discussed, and attempted in an informal way. The development stage relates to the preparation period and the first year of implementation. The continuance stage pertains to the second year of implementation to the present time.

Initiation (1991-1992). For this stage, interviewee responses centered around two areas: (a) events that prompted the initiation of the TAT team and team teaching and (b) the principal’s role in initiating the structures. Regarding the initiation of the TAT team, Jim (P) related that in the early 1990’s the state recommended to the district that schools consider forming a type of prereferral team for the purpose of screening referrals to special education. In conjunction with this recommendation, he also felt more at-risk students entering the school, a type of teacher assistance team would be a valuable resource for classroom teachers. Therefore, Jim (P) discussed forming this kind of team with the faculty.

Team teaching was initiated through another set of events. First, Jim (P) related, Kay (S) acquainted him with research which questioned the efficacy of pull-out programs and discussed the possibility of servicing students with learning disabilities in the general classroom. Kay (S) commented that years before the school had a collaboration/inclusion plan, she engaged informally in collaborative consultation and team teaching with some classroom teachers. Similarly, Nancy (G) stated,

Kay (S) and I have always, if I had her LD children, worked together before we ever knew there was anything called collaboration or inclusion. I’ve been here ten years and we did it for years with some monitoring and some ‘let me try to incorporate part of this child’s day in your room and then I’ll work with you’ type of thing.
Kay (S) and a few classroom teachers were collaborating informally before they developed a collaboration plan. During the initiation stage, Kay (S) and Nancy (G) stated that Jim (P) listened, showed interest, and gave his support and encouragement for them to try collaborative services.

Development (1992-1994). When questioned about the development stage of the TAT team and team teaching, Jim (P) described two areas: (a) the principal’s role and (b) technical assistance. Jim (P) gave the following account of the TAT team development. After he had discussed the idea with the faculty and received a positive response, he asked for volunteers. He also helped organize a notebook of procedures and forms for the team use. Once the team was organized and formed, the district special education coordinator supplied technical assistance as it was needed.

The development of team teaching was more complex. The interviewees addressed four areas: (a) planning and organization, (b) implementation procedures, (c) teacher concerns, and (d) the principal’s role. The interviewees offered the following account. After a number of years of collaborating informally, Kay (S), having the principal’s encouragement and support, sought the help of the district special education coordinator to set up a collaboration/inclusion program at Greenwood.

Next, an exceptional children’s committee was formed. This committee included all the special education teachers and their assistants, the speech therapist, the assistant principal, the district special education coordinator, and a representative from each grade level. Over the course of a year, this committee developed a plan for what Greenwood called the collaboration/inclusion program. As each section of the plan was developed, it
was taken by the grade representatives to the classroom teachers for their input. The final plan was approved by the administration, the faculty council, the school planning council and sent to the Office of Exceptional Children. The plan stipulated that all participants would be volunteers. The plan also stipulated that team teaching would begin in the third grade the first year, then the fourth grade the second year, and the fifth grade the third year.

To help sell the program during the first year, the students with learning disabilities that were placed in the general classroom were carefully chosen. During the year of preparation, the district special education coordinator provided awareness level training in collaboration for the teachers. In June, before the first year of implementation, Jim (P) reported that he invited all parents of children placed in classrooms where students with learning disabilities would be included and teachers would be team teaching to a parent forum where he explained the collaboration/inclusion program and answered questions. Jim (P) stated, "I told the parents that if there was anyone there who didn't want their child to participate or be in an inclusion program to let me know--put it in writing to me and I would take their child out of that classroom." He further related that only two parents responded. After the first year, he has not received any requests for classroom reassignment because of the success of the program.

During the preparation stage, Jim (P) requested that the collaboration/inclusion committee keep him informed about their activities. He also let the committee know that he was available if the teachers needed him in any way. Jim (P) commented, "I trusted them because I think that they're outstanding teachers and that they do a great job."
They’ve shown me before that they could; so, I knew that they would be able to pull it off.”

All interviewees remarked that the first six months of the program were the most time consuming and the most difficult. Although they were committed to team teaching, the teacher interviewees expressed that they went through a number of adjustments. For example, Kay (S) said, “This is not what I thought it was going to be. I suffered a lot because I felt that I couldn’t do my part. I didn’t know the curriculum. I wanted to do this. The kids were doing fine, but I wasn’t doing fine.” She continued by saying that Jim (P) encouraged her greatly by making comments such as (a) he could see the program was working, (b) new endeavors took time and (c) everything would be fine. Jim (P) mentioned that during this implementation time, his primary role was to give the teachers emotional support and in the beginning of the first year, he did this almost daily. He stated, “We were breaking new ground ...My part was encouraging people to do it and to sit down and talk about their feelings.”

During the first year Jim (P) explained that he reduced the classroom size of teachers who were engaged in team teaching by three to five students. The other interviewees reported that Jim (P) fostered collaboration in various other ways: (a) maintaining continuous communication with the collaborating teachers, (b) providing professional leave and substitutes so that teachers could attend a workshop in collaborative problem solving, (c) monitoring the progress of all students in inclusive classrooms and sending parents quarterly reports, (d) providing materials, (e) celebrating successes at faculty meeting, (e) attending training sessions, and (f) listening and problem
solving. Jim (P) remarked that his role the first year was to supply proper staff
development. He believed that continuous training during the year prior to initiating a
program will provide teachers with a full awareness of their roles and responsibilities, as
well as an understanding of how the program works. Teacher interviewees related that
Jim (P) had arranged for them to attend a full-day workshop away from the campus on
teaming and problem solving; during this experience they had bonded as a team.

Continuance (1993-1996). Interviewee's responses relating to the continuance of
the TAT team addressed two areas: (a) the principal's role, and (b) monitoring and
evaluation. Regarding his role, Jim (P) stated that the teachers on the team, "...work so
well together that is really runs itself. They rarely come to me to ask for support or
assistance." Jim (P) further remarked that his major role is one of support and making
referrals to them. Additionally, every year in May he meets with each grade level and
asks for volunteers to serve on the team. Teachers on the team have the option to rotate
or remain on the team. Nancy (G), who is the present team chairperson, remarked that
since service on the TAT team takes a significant amount of time, Jim (P) counts TAT
team membership as committee service and also submits the paperwork for team
members to receive recertification points. Concerning monitoring and evaluation, Jim (P)
related that he monitors the team by periodically looking at the team notebook and at the
end of the year, he takes up the notebook and reviews it. The team's performance is also
evaluated yearly by a Faculty Council Survey.

When questioned about the continuance of team teaching, interviewee responses
centered around four areas: (a) continual staff development, (b) rotation of team teachers,
(c) monitoring and evaluation, and (d) the principal’s role. According to teacher interviewees, staff development was continued in a number of ways. First, the district offers a 16 hour workshop each semester for beginning collaborators. Secondly, the principal encouraged and provided time for participating teachers to attend workshops, conferences and observations of team teaching in other schools. Jim (P) reported that during the second year of the program, Greenwood’s collaborating teachers presented at a state-level conference. He further remarked that to encourage these teachers, he attended their conference session and took them to lunch afterwards. Thirdly, the exceptional children’s committee and the district special education coordinator continually provide information and assistance as it is needed. To keep himself informed, Jim (P) reads about collaboration and inclusion. He showed the researcher a notebook that he had compiled on these topics. Included in the notebook were the collaboration/inclusion plan, a checklist for inclusion, articles on collaboration and inclusion that Jim (P) had highlighted, notes on the principal’s role, and all memos and other information related to the collaboration and inclusion endeavor.

Jim (P) commented that as the collaboration inclusion program expanded, teachers should serve as team teachers on a rotation basis. He stated, “On all grade levels we had some people to volunteer, but they can’t always do that.” Jim (P) further stated that after the first year he began to encourage other classroom teachers to prepare to take their turn as a collaboration/inclusion teacher. Because he believes that eventually each teacher on each grade level should take a turn, he has encouraged non-collaborating teachers to attend workshops and observe teacher within the building who are
collaborating. He reported that he advised these teachers, "if you really don't want to be a part of the team on your grade level then you probably ought to think about transferring to another school where you can be an individual, but I want you to work as a team."

Teacher interviewees reported that Jim (P) continually monitors the program by:
(a) visiting classrooms and talking with students, and reviewing students' report cards,
(b) talking with the team teachers, (c) talking with the grade level teachers on a monthly basis, (d) sending parents a quarterly update, (e) conducting a parent forum each year,
(f) overseeing the yearly evaluation, and (g) tracking the progress of students who are or have been in the collaboration/inclusion classrooms on the Literacy Passport and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Jim (P) related that the yearly evaluation addresses the progress of all students in the collaboration/inclusion classes as well as satisfaction data from parents, students, and teachers. Teachers report that the exceptional children's committee uses the annual evaluation to refine the program. Interviewees related that Jim's (P) role during the continuance stage involved: (a) providing for continual staff development,
(b) keeping the school community informed about the program, (c) continually celebrating successes and applauding efforts, (d) providing time for teachers to collaborate, (e) including collaborating teachers in the hiring of new teachers,
(f) preparing other teachers to be involved, and (g) monitoring and evaluating the program and communicating the results. The district special education coordinator remarked that Jim (P) and collaborating teachers participated in the making of a video on collaboration and inclusion that has been disseminated throughout the district.
Barriers, Facilitating Factors, and Benefits

Jim (P) identified time to collaborate and funding for additional personnel as barriers during the first year of the program. He addressed lack of planning and problem-solving time for collaborating teachers by scheduling a 45 minute physical education period each day for students. The barrier of additional personnel was overcome when the district special education coordinator provided additional personnel (one specialist and aide for kindergarten through second grade and one specialist and aide for each of the grades three through five).

Jim (P) remarked that teacher misconceptions and negative attitude have been continuing barriers throughout the process. He seeks to reach these teachers through talking with them, encouraging them to observe other teachers collaborating, and encouraging them to attend workshops. He commented, “I have talked to those teachers who I know feel that way and I’ve asked them to go into the inclusion classroom to observe to see what’s going on. I’ve asked them to go to workshops so they can tell what’s going on.” Kay (S) agreed that teacher attitude was a barrier. She described how Jim (P) instituted a rotation method for general classroom teachers. As mentioned previously, during the first year of the initiative the principal began to prepare classroom teachers concerning his expectation for every teacher to take a turn as an inclusion teacher. Concerning this, Jim (P) stated,
grade level because you need to share this. You’re a team and all team members share in what’s coming down the road; so, you need to talk about it and decide who are going to be the inclusion teachers next year’.

Jim (P) further stated that so far the teachers have decided among themselves who would be the collaboration/inclusion teacher each year. However, should a teacher refuse to take a turn, he is prepared to step in and encourage them to take their turn or consider transferring to another school.

All three interviewees stated that the transition from teaching in isolation to team teaching was a barrier during the first six months of the program. As mentioned previously, Jim (P) provided much support during this period through listening and discussing teachers’ feelings and concerns in a positive manner. Kay (S) remarked that Jim’s (P) door was always open and he was ready to listen to the good as well as the bad.

Concerning facilitating factors, all three interviewees pinpointed the willingness and positive attitude of the collaborating teachers. Kay (S) identified principal support as an important facilitating factor. When asked to give specific incidences of the principal’s support, she related that he supported them by (a) listening; (b) saying, “Yes, you can do it”; (c) constantly bragging on them; (d) sharing their successes with people outside of the school; (e) continual monitoring and evaluation; and (f) just being there when he was needed to help with scheduling, student placement and relationship problems. Jim (P) noted other facilitating factors which included (a) the program was planned a year in advance, (b) the program had a good organizational structure, (c) the program was voluntary in the beginning, (c) unreasonable demands were not placed on teachers who were participating, (e) children in the collaboration/inclusion classrooms were not
deprived of any learning opportunities, (f) teachers offered the students with learning disabilities the full curriculum; modifications were made only when absolutely necessary, (g) everyone involved was informed on the status of the program, (h) teachers had the necessary resources of time and materials, and (i) students in the collaboration/inclusion classrooms made progress in each year of the endeavor.

Jim (P) stated that greatest benefit of the collaboration/inclusion program was the progress of the students. He remarked, “I remember the end of that first year, we had children on the Honor Role who had never been on the Honor Roll before. We had an honors assembly... to see those kids come up... I shook their hand and gave them their honor certificate... You know, their faces were just beaming with their smiles and their eyes were so bright.” Additionally, Jim (P) mentioned the continual professional growth for the collaborating teachers as a benefit. When asked about benefits, Kay (S) stated, “I can really take my children further than I could ever take them if I was in here by myself.”

Future of Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

When asked about the future of teacher collaboration in the next three to five years, all interviewees responded that they see it continuing. Jim (P) remarked that if Greenwood can maintain the appropriate ratio of staff to students, then the program will be in excellent shape. He believes that general and special educators will continue to work closely in a collaborative style which will continue to benefit the students. Teacher interviewees see more teachers engaging in collaboration. Kay (S) commented, “...it has been proven right here at our school that the more hands you have, the better you can
meet the needs of these children.” Nancy (G) added that in addition to more teachers trying collaboration, she believes that their program will serve more students with special needs in the general classroom.

The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

Developing a Collaborative Culture

When asked about developing a collaborative culture, Jim (P) responded that he deliberately set out to establish a collaborative culture. In the summer of 1988 when he became the principal of Greenwood, one of his first actions was to survey the teachers to find out their interests. He then scheduled an interview with each teacher and distributed the interview questions in advance. These questions related to the teachers' views on the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how the principal could help them become better teachers. At the interview Jim (P) not only listened to the teachers' responses, but also related his philosophy of education. Jim (P) stated his philosophy by saying that he believed it was important

for everybody to get along and work together well and to collaborate together. The number one thing we are all here for is for kids, and for them to learn and grow. As long as it is good for the kids, then I will be for it. If it isn't good for them, then I would question what they were doing.

He further stated, “I want their (teacher) input into everything that they are willing to share with me.”

One example Jim (P) gave regarding teacher input was always asking teachers to participate in the hiring of new teachers. He remarked, I tell prospective teachers who come here that we're big on relationships; we're big on getting along together, working together and that if they're not willing to do that I'd rather they not come.” Furthermore
Jim (P) remarked that he believed that teacher collaboration was the ideal situation for teachers and that every teacher in every classroom should be involved in collaboration.

According to Jim (P), another way that a collaborative culture was established was through Greenwood's five strategic planning teams. Each teacher volunteers to be a member of a strategic planning team. Every quarter the principal publishes a one page report of each team's activities. This report goes to every member of the school community and to the school planning council. Jim (P) commented that the teachers have a lot of involvement, but "so far, they are doing an excellent job of keeping their heads above water and working closely together, so collaboration is the key."

Jim (P) concluded his discussion of developing a collaborative culture by saying, "I think for the most part the collaborative approach is the way to go. I think you get much more out of people when you work together as opposed to when you're trying to pull in different directions. I'd also have to say that it's like a family--when you have discord in your family from time to time, some people don't want to work together as a family, so you have to call them, get them back in line and just talk to them about it. Usually when you do this, things work out. It's the same here, you try to treat each other like you're a member of the family."

Role Descriptors

From an analysis of the data, Jim's (P) role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs fell into four major categories: communicating, supporting, and monitoring and evaluating. First, according to the data, the principal as a communicator is open and available and continually communicates by (a) expressing a
philosophy of and a commitment to teacher collaboration, (b) modeling a collaborative style, (c) encouraging shared decision making, (d) listening, (e) giving large amounts of feedback, (f) seeking faculty input, (g) writing personal notes of encouragement and appreciation, (h) conducting parent forums, (i) sending quarterly reports to parents, (j) meeting with participating teachers, (k) sharing clear expectations with all teachers, (l) publishing schedules for meetings concerning collaborative matters, (m) putting his words into actions, (n) sharing evaluation results, and (o) sharing the collaboration/inclusion program with the community. Secondly, according to the data, the principal supports teacher collaboration by (a) trusting teachers and giving them the freedom to do what is best for students, (b) being flexible, (c) giving teachers a time to get ready to collaborate, (d) showing interest, (e) giving encouragement, (f) organizing the TAT team’s notebook, (g) facilitating the development of the collaborative structures, (h) seeking volunteers for the program, (i) being willing and available to offer any assistance when it is needed, (j) listening, brainstorming, and problem solving with teachers, (k) reducing class size, (l) providing time for collaborating and attending workshops and conferences, (m) providing materials and resources, (n) celebrating successes, (o) attending training sessions, (p) providing for continual staff development, (q) being positive, (r) becoming knowledgeable of collaboration and inclusion by reading, discussion, and collaboration with teachers, and attending workshops and conferences, (s) having an understanding of what teachers are feeling and experiencing, and (t) preparing other teachers to engage in collaboration. According to the data, the principal monitors teacher collaboration by (a) visiting collaboration/inclusion classes,
(b) meeting and talking with teachers, students, and parents, (c) reviewing TAT team minutes, and (d) checking the report cards of all students in the collaboration/inclusion classes. Finally, the principal evaluates teacher collaboration by (a) surveying the faculty and parents, (b) pre and post testing of all students in collaboration/inclusion classes, and (c) tracking progress on the Literacy Passport Test and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills of all students in the collaboration/inclusion classes.

Changes in Role

Concerning changes in the principal's role over time, Kay (S) commented that the principal has become even more committed to the program since the program has proven itself by the positive results on the annual collaboration/inclusion program evaluation. She further stated that he still monitors the program, but not as intensely as in the first year. Nancy (G) related that the big change in the principal's role is his expanded focus in involving all of the faculty. Jim (P) agreed that he is still very involved, but not as directly and no longer on a daily basis, as he was in the first year of the program.

Reflections

When asked what he would do differently if he could start over, Jim (P) replied that he would give the following message to the teachers on the first day of the program. “Yes, it (collaboration for students with special needs) is voluntary the first year or so, but after that teachers will have to take turns.” Nancy (G) said that she could not think of anything she would like for the principal to do differently, while Kay (S) remarked that she would request that the principal provide time for special educators to study the
general classroom curriculum and attend the grade level meetings before beginning to collaborate.

Summary

Greenwood Elementary is a suburban elementary school governed by site-based management with a stable faculty and strong parental involvement. The principal, Jim (P), was described as a situational and collaborative leader, who had deliberately set out to create a collaborative culture. Teacher collaboration was defined as "teachers coming together and talking about what is best for kids" and was reported to be related to Greenwood’s vision, "academic excellence for all learners," because teachers who collaboratively work together on a daily basis enhance learning for all students. In the early 1990's, Jim (P) and the teachers at Greenwood developed a teacher assistance team (TAT) and team teaching. The TAT was initiated in response to a district recommendation and recognized needs in the school. Team teaching was initiated by Kay (S), the learning disabilities specialist, who believed that many students with learning disabilities could be better served in the general classroom. With Jim’s (P) support and the help of the district special education coordinator, an exceptional children’s committee was formed. A plan for a collaboration/inclusion program was written over the course of a year. As a result of this plan, team teaching, collaborative consultation, and the exceptional children’s committee are presently functioning in the school. Interviewees reported that the major barrier to teacher collaboration was the negative attitude of teachers who were not collaborating, while the major facilitating factors were the willingness to collaborative and the positive attitude of the participating
teachers, the progress of the participating students, the well-designed program, and the principal’s support. Interviewees indicated that the greatest benefit of teacher collaboration was the academic progress of the participating students. All interviewees were optimistic about the future of teacher collaboration for students with special needs at Greenwood. They see teacher collaboration for students with special needs continuing and expanding to include more teachers and students. All of the data indicated that Jim (P) played a central and critical role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs. Overall, Jim’s (P) role can be described in four major categories: communicating, supporting, monitoring, and evaluating.
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration

Within-site Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School: Greenwood Elementary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role Descriptors Most Frequently Cited in the Literature</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Be supportive</td>
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<td>2. Demonstrate commitment</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3. Provide training and participate in training</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4. Provide resources (human and material)</td>
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<td>5. Provide time</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>6. Provide recognition of accomplishment</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>7. Help with schedules</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Decision rule for descriptors found in the literature: Cited in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs (see Table 1).
Table 7
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*Role Descriptors Not As Frequently Cited in the Literature</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors found in Greenwood's Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Build trust</td>
<td>Has open door policy Has been consistently supportive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Show confidence in teachers and give freedom</td>
<td>Says &quot;I know they can do it&quot; Gives teachers a budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Be open</td>
<td>Listens to teachers Seeks teacher input</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Model a collaborative style</td>
<td>Shares decision making Seeks input from school community</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Encourage teachers</td>
<td>Compliments teachers Attends teacher presentations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Talk about teaching and learning</td>
<td>Discusses student progress Solves problems with teachers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Check readiness</td>
<td>Interviews new teachers Talks with reluctant teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Communicate a compelling purpose</td>
<td>Focuses on school mission Focuses on positive evaluation results</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Communicate and describe norms</td>
<td>Uses stories States specific expectations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Defend norms</td>
<td>Engages in problem solving Encourages reluctant teachers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Set clear goals (involve staff)</td>
<td>Has committee with faculty input set goals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Relate collaborative activities to teacher concerns and priorities</td>
<td>Relates to helping students Relates to student achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Help develop structures</td>
<td>Helped develop procedures and forms for TAT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate faculty participation in defining collaboration and developing structures</td>
<td>Has committee with faculty input develop a collaboration/inclusion plan</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Provide assistance where needed</td>
<td>Provides materials</td>
<td>• • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Provide positive feedback</td>
<td>Helps problem solve</td>
<td>• • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Provide opportunity</td>
<td>Provides training</td>
<td>• • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Provide opportunity</td>
<td>Provides time to collaborate</td>
<td>• • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Provide a systematic plan</td>
<td>Compliments teachers</td>
<td>• • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Recruit teachers</td>
<td>Helps problem solve</td>
<td>• • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Use symbols and rituals</td>
<td>Has Committee write a plan with faculty input</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Acquire and utilize specific skills to enhance a collegial culture</td>
<td>Recruits teachers from within and without the school</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Engage in frequent and direct communication</td>
<td>Writes notes on reports</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Positive attitude</td>
<td>Has Committee write a plan</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Start with volunteers</td>
<td>Provides training</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Start small and build</td>
<td>Provides time to collaborate</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Evaluate</td>
<td>Conducts surveys</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Decision rule for descriptors found in the literature: Cited in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs (see Table 1).
Table 8
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

Greenwood Elementary School

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Additional Descriptors of the Principal's Role as Found in the Data</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors from the Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
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<td>1. Relates collaboration to school, shared values and mission</td>
<td>Says it's &quot;what's best for children&quot;</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Listen to teachers</td>
<td>Is open</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Help solve problems</td>
<td>Mediates when difficulties occur</td>
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<td>4. Schedule and place students in advance</td>
<td>Meets with teachers</td>
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<td>5. Disseminate information</td>
<td>Participates in district video</td>
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<td>6. Monitor</td>
<td>Reviews progress reports</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Involve and inform parents</td>
<td>Holds parent forums</td>
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Magnolia Elementary

Description of the School

General Description

Magnolia Elementary was described by its principal, Helen (P), as a rural school rapidly becoming suburban. The almost 60 year old school is located in a middle class neighborhood. Large magnolia trees shade the entrance of the imposing two-story brick building. Between two of the magnolias is a courtyard with picnic tables surrounded by flowers and shrubs. In the entrance hall a large, bright yellow, canvas banner displays Magnolia’s mission statement, “Magnolia will provide a caring environment where students will enjoy learning and will reach their highest potential.” Also exhibited in the entrance hallway is an enormous picture of a bluebird, the school’s mascot, around which are arranged the names of students who have received the Blue Bird Bonus award for outstanding behavior. Bright and colorful murals of characters from well-known nursery rhymes and children’s literature decorate the walls and stairways in various parts of the well-maintained building. The school mission statement and shared values are posted on the wall in the school office. The shared values include (a) a receptive atmosphere for mutual communication; (b) high expectations for academic excellence; (c) positive self-esteem; (d) accountability for self discipline and good citizenship; (e) life-long learning; (f) positive role modeling; (g) a clean, safe, drug-free environment; and (h) a caring, friendly, and accepting climate.

According to Helen (P), Magnolia is governed in a participatory manner. A leader’s team composed of a representative from each grade level and the resource
teachers meet with Helen (P) monthly. Helen (P) also meets regularly with a financial advisory team. Helen (P) remarked, "...everything we do here is by consensus—there's no win-lose." Moreover, Magnolia is involved in a district-wide school renewal program in which teachers work collaboratively in committees. Helen (P) related that Magnolia is distinguished as being the first school in the district formally to engage in teacher collaboration.

School Vision

When questioned about the school's vision, all interviewees responded with, "Magnolia will provide a caring environment where students will enjoy learning and will reach their highest potential." When asked at a later time about the difference between the school vision and mission, Helen (P) replied that the vision and mission are the same. Concerning Magnolia's vision/mission, Sandi (S), the learning disabilities specialist stated, "...when you come into the building, there's just a feeling here that alludes to the philosophy. It's a warm and caring environment."

Students, Parents, and Faculty

Helen (P) provided the following information concerning Magnolia's students, parents, and faculty. Of Magnolia's 640 students, 32 (5%) receive free or reduced lunch, 51 (8%) receive special education, and 26 (4%) are classified as academically gifted. Class size in kindergarten through fifth grade ranges from 24 to 26 students. Helen (P) indicated that all special education students at Magnolia are students with mild disabilities. Students with more severe disabilities are served at a sister school.
Magnolia offers collaborative services as well as traditional pull-out services for its special education population.

Magnolia has strong parent involvement as evidenced by its Parent Teacher Association (PTA) membership and parent volunteer hours. This year PTA membership was approximately 90% and parents volunteered 6,000 hours of their time. One of the many services of the parent volunteers is their participation in the Books in a Bag Program—a reading program for at-risk students. Each year Magnolia offers family math workshops for parents and their children. This popular program is the result of a collaborative effort of Magnolia’s general and special educators.

Helen (P) described Magnolia’s faculty as a “great supporting team.” She also characterized them as “hard working and dedicated.” Approximately 50% of the faculty have graduate degrees and faculty turnover is rare.

Description of the Principal

Experience and Education

Helen (P) provided the following information concerning her experience and education. During her 25 years in education, she has held three positions: teacher, assistant principal, and principal. She has served as principal of Magnolia for the last four years. Helen (P) has an undergraduate degree in elementary education, a graduate degree in reading, and a post graduate degree in administration and supervision. To prepare to be a leader for teacher collaboration, she attended workshops and conferences, read material on the topic, served as a member of the district integration team, and held the position of building administrator responsible for special education for seven years.
For six of these years, Magnolia’s teachers were engaged in teacher collaboration. Additionally, Helen (P) has compiled a large file on teacher collaboration. Included in her file are articles on collaboration and inclusion, handouts from workshops she has attended, and handouts and notes from workshops she has presented, as well as various documents and information on collaboration.

**Leadership Style**

When asked about her leadership style, Helen (P) described it as “management by walking around.” She elaborated by saying that she is very direct and prefers face-to-face interactions. Holly (G), the general educator, described Helen’s (P) leadership style as democratic. Holly (G) used descriptors such as cares, supports, listens and encourages everyone to participate, has confidence in the teachers, creates a family environment of respect, and models what she believes. Sandi (S) described Helen’s (P) leadership style by using descriptors and descriptive phrases such as supportive, good communicator and listener, problem solver, open to listen to your ideas and concerns, is willing to go the extra mile to assist you, and fosters a warm and caring environment. Overall, Helen (P) was described as a democratic leader who models a collaborative style.

**Communication Strategies**

Data indicated that Helen (P) uses various communication strategies. First, she keeps the school mission in front of everyone by displaying it on a large, colorful banner at the school entrance, by having it printed on the school’s letterhead, brochure and newsletters. The school mission is also found on faculty meeting agendas. Secondly, she likes to walk around the school and interact with the school community because she
prefers face-to-face interactions to memos. Thirdly, she models what she believes. Finally, she communicates through meetings, being visible, being available, and having an open door policy. Helen (P) mentioned that she recognizes teacher accomplishments at the beginning of every faculty meeting and writes individual notes of appreciation to teachers. Finally, Helen (P) remarked that she has an open door policy.

Description of Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

Definition

Helen (P) defined teacher collaboration as "teachers working together for the benefit of the child." She gave an example of the learning disabilities teacher and the fifth grade teacher team teaching and using their strengths to benefit the students. Because the specialist has a background in social studies, he takes the lead in teaching that subject and the general educator does the supportive activities. The general educator, on the other hand, has a background in science and takes the lead in teaching the science lessons, while the specialist performs supportive activities. Helen (P) further stated that "We don't use the term inclusion here; we do use the term collaboration... the message that I send the staff is that the classroom teacher is ultimately responsible for the child reaching his highest potential. The resource teacher is there to support that classroom teacher." Finally, Helen (P) remarked that she viewed teacher collaboration as a "necessity" in a school where educators desire to meet the needs of all students.

Holly (G) defined teacher collaboration as a relationship in which teachers value each other's ideas, share the experience, and work toward a common goal. However, Sandi (S) described some of her team-teaching experiences as a true collaboration with...
general education teachers equally sharing the planning and teaching, while in others, she is more of an assistant. Sandi (S) remarked that you have to start where teachers are and work from there.

Relationship to School Vision

All interviewees agreed that teacher collaboration for special needs students advances their school vision of “Magnolia will provide a caring environment where students will enjoy learning and will reach their highest potential.” Helen (P) commented that since teacher collaboration focuses on benefiting children, it relates to reaching their highest potential. Holly (G) remarked that teacher collaboration is intertwined with the school vision in that educators working together collaboratively create an environment where all have the opportunity to reach their highest potential. Sandi (S) stated that teacher collaboration is related to Magnolia’s vision in that collaboration allows service delivery to be tailored to meet the needs of the students so that they have an opportunity to reach their highest potential. She elaborated by saying that teacher collaboration combines the best elements of classroom, small group, and one-to-one instruction. While discussing teacher collaboration and how it helps especially students with special needs to meet their highest potential, thus fulfilling the school vision, Helen (P) took a framed poem off the wall over her desk and read it with tears in her eyes. The poem began, “Here’s to the kids who are different, the kids who don’t always get A’s, the kids who have ears twice as big as their peers and noses that go on for days...” Helen (P) then commented that her interest in students with special needs drew her attention to teacher collaboration.
Need for Collaborative Structures

Among the collaborative structures serving students with special needs are the Assistance for Magnolia's Children (AMC) team, collaborative consultation, and team teaching. According to an AMC team document, the AMC team grew out of two concerns of the administration and faculty which were (a) that too many students were being referred to special education and (b) that classroom teachers needed a network of support. Sandi (S) stated that the team primarily began as a prereferral team, but has since developed to be primarily a prevention and intervention resource for classroom teachers. On the other hand, team teaching grew out of the need to help students reach their highest potential in the general classroom.

Observation of Structures

The researcher observed Magnolia teachers collaborating in two structures: the Assistance for Magnolia's Children (AMC) team and team teaching. Both structures met the criteria on the researcher's verification. In both collaborative structures, teachers meet weekly, use a systematic problem solving and/or planning process, and document their interactions by either using forms or lesson plans. Helen (P) and Sandi (S) reported that the AMC team has functioned for eight years and team teaching has been practiced for five years.

During the researcher's observation of the AMC team, the referring teacher, a kindergarten teacher, voiced a concern about a student's lack of academic progress. The session proceeded in the following manner: (a) the chairperson opened the meeting and introduced the referring teacher; (b) the teacher related her concerns and offered
background information, including examples of the student’s social and academic behavior and the interventions she had tried with the student; (c) the chairman presented additional historical data on the student; (d) the team asked questions and discussed the data; (e) the team brainstormed solutions; (f) a solution acceptable to all members was chosen; and (g) an action plan was developed and recorded on the appropriate AMC team form.

The observation of team teaching took place in a fifth grade classroom during science and social studies lessons. The general educator taught the science lesson while the specialist monitored the class and interjected examples related to the lesson’s main points. During the independent practice time, both teachers circulated among the students and provided assistance to the students as it was needed. For the social studies lesson the teachers simply reversed roles, with the specialist teaching the lesson and the general educator monitoring the students. Once again both teachers circulated among the students and provided assistance to students as it was needed. The specialist stated that team teachers meet once a week for about 45 minutes or as needed.

Evolution of Structures

From the analysis of the data, teacher collaboration for students with special needs emerged in three stages: initiation, development, and continuance. The initiation stage refers to the time when teacher collaboration for students with special needs was first considered, discussed, and perhaps attempted in an informal way. The development stage relates to the preparation period and the first year of implementation, while the continuance stage pertains to the second year of implementation to the present time.
Initiation (1988 AMC team and 1990 team teaching). Interviewee responses regarding the initiation stage addressed two areas: (a) events that prompted that initiation of the AMC team and team teaching and (b) the principal’s role in the initiation of the structures. Helen (P) related the following account concerning the initiation of the AMC team. In 1988, the principal asked Helen (P), who was then assistant principal at Magnolia, to develop a model for a type of prereferral team. The model that Helen (P) developed became known as the Assistance to Magnolia’s Children (AMC) Team and was the first of its nature in the district. Helen (P) described the momentum of the initiation stage, “We had been moving in that direction for some time so it was a very natural progression.”

Two years later, in 1990, two teachers (a general educator and a specialist) looked at the needs of their students and their teaching styles, organized their ideas about team teaching, and brought them to Helen (P). Sandi (S), who was one of the teachers, explained that as the idea blossomed she and the general educator began talking about their teaching and the needs of their students. According to Sandi (S), Helen (P), who was at that time the assistant principal and the administrator in charge of special education, listened to their ideas in an open and receptive manner, helped to develop these ideas further, and shared their ideas about team teaching with the principal.

Development (1988 AMC team and 1990-1991 team teaching). When asked about the development of the AMC team, interviewee responses focused on two areas: (a) the organization of the team and (b) the principal’s role. According to Helen (P), the AMC team was designed to be more of a general education team. Team members
include two general educators and two special educators representing the lower and upper
grade levels, the reading specialist, the assistant principal, and the referring teacher. At
first, the reading specialist served as the team's chairman. Now the guidance counselor is
currently chairman. The team meets every Monday afternoon in the guidance room. The
team uses a number of forms to collect, organize, and document data such as referral
forms, checklists, documentation forms and observation forms. Written records of all
meetings are filed in the AMC notebook. After the AMC team was developed it became
a model for a district initiative. Interviewees reported that during the development stage
of the AMC team, Helen (P), as the assistant principal, designed the AMC team model,
sought volunteers to participate, served as a member of the team, and publicized the team.

Concerning the development of team teaching, interviewee responses addressed
three areas: (a) organization, (b) training, and (c) the principal’s role. After the general
educator and specialist had discussed with Helen (P) their ideas for team teaching, she
met with them to develop the model. To avoid the "dummy class" mindset, Helen (P)
recommended that they mix the students with learning disabilities with the gifted and
talented students. They began with one fourth grade class of ten students with learning
disabilities, ten gifted and talented students, and some students with emotional
disabilities. Because the general classroom and the special education room were adjacent
to each other, the teachers were able to achieve flexible grouping according to the needs
of the students. Helen (P) remarked, "It was true co-teaching and probably the best
model of co-teaching that we have had because Sandi (S) had no other assignments other
than the one in the classroom of collaboration." However, Helen (P) stated that they were
unable to continue this particular model because of the increased number of special education students, which resulted in the specialists having to service multiple grade levels.

Helen (P) also mentioned that she and the collaborating teachers received on-the-job training and began to attend symposiums and workshops on collaboration. During the development stage, interviewees reported that the principal (a) worked with the general and special educator to develop the model and place the students, (b) provided time for the collaborating teachers to go to other districts to observe collaboration and to attend symposiums and workshops on collaboration, (c) attended the symposiums and workshops with the teachers, (d) remained available to problem solve and assist in any way, (e) monitored the team, and (f) provided resources and materials.

Continuance (AMC team 1989 to the present and team teaching 1991 to the present). Data on the continuance of the AMC team covered four topics: (a) communication, (b) continuity, (c) evaluation, and (d) the principal's role.

Concerning communication about and with the team, Helen (P) related that she encourages teachers to use the team, and that she also stays in close contact with the guidance counselor who has retained the chairmanship of the team.

Helen (P) further mentioned that having the same individual as chairman for the last three years has greatly contributed to the stability and continuity of the team. For a number of years, Helen (P) represented the administration on the AMC team and the child study teams; however, when she became principal, because she was concerned that having the same administrator on both teams could lead to "rubber stamping," she elected
to serve on only one team. Helen (P) presently serves on the child study team and the assistant principal serves on the AMC team. She remarked that having the administrators on different teams keeps the administration informed of the needs of the students and contributes to the team's stability and continuity. According to Helen (P), the AMC team has been evaluated by monitoring the number of referrals to special education. Since the initiation of the AMC team, there have been fewer referrals. Interviewees reported that Helen's (P) role in the continuance of the AMC team has been (a) continually communicating with the chairman of the team, (b) encouraging teachers to use the team services, (c) encouraging team members to keep current on strategies for students with special needs, as well as monitoring the effectiveness of the strategies, and (d) evaluating the team service through the number of referrals to special education.

According to the interviewees, the continuance stage of team teaching centered around four areas: (a) expansion, (b) continued training, (c) promoting the program, and (d) the principal's role. Sandi (S) reported that in the second year the collaboration program expanded to cover three grade levels with one specialist serving all three grades. From the third year until the present, the program expanded to include all grades with one specialist serving kindergarten through second grade and another grades three through five. Helen (P) remarked that she and the collaborating teachers attended a state level training project on teaming as well as symposiums, workshops and conferences. Additionally, for a number of years Helen (P) and Sandi (S) have attended international conferences on learning disabilities. Sandi (S) stated, "She (Helen (P)) has always allowed us to go to workshops, and conferences on collaboration and inclusion and she
Helen (P) also related that she and the teachers who go to these training sessions frequently share what they have learned with the rest of the faculty.

Holly (G) has been team teaching with Sandi (S) for the last two years. Her story on her introduction to collaboration illustrates how classroom teachers are approached and prepared to become team teachers at Magnolia. Holly (G) related that when talking with Helen (P) one day, Helen (P) mentioned that she felt Holly (G) was the type of person who would work well with students with special needs. Holly (G) responded positively to the idea of working with this population in her second grade classroom. Later, Sandi (S) approached Holly (G) and asked if she would be willing to team teach with her. Holly (G) remarked, "I wasn't familiar with co-teaching at all. I just kind of jumped in and said, 'Okay, I'll do it'." Holly (G) continued by saying that Helen (P) made time for Holly (G) to attend a symposium on collaboration, while Helen (P) and Sandi (S) continued to help and encourage Holly (G) to develop her knowledge and practice of collaboration. As a result, Holly (G) is now pursuing a graduate degree in consultation and collaboration. When reflecting on her introduction to collaborative teaching, Holly (G) stated that she felt that it was important that she had been given the opportunity to collaborate and that her participation was allowed to be completely voluntary.

Sandi (S) reported that in the beginning years all the collaborating teachers formed an integration committee and met once a month with the principal to discuss the program by sharing experiences, problem solving and planning. However, she related
that in the last two years the committee has not met because the need to meet was not there as it was in the early years of the program.

Magnolia’s collaboration program is promoted in a number of ways. First, Holly (G) reported that Helen (P) promotes the program by sharing with the faculty, parents, and the community how effective the program is for all students. Secondly, Helen (P) stated that the faculty knows that she strongly supports teacher collaboration and she “looks favorably” on those teachers who are involved in the collaboration program. Thirdly, Helen (P) publicizes the program in the school brochure, which announces that Magnolia’s teachers (general educators and specialists) work collaboratively in remedial education, special services, and gifted education. Lastly, Helen (P) promotes teacher collaboration by hiring teachers who are willing to participate in a collaborative model. She stated, “I say up front when there are new hires that this is a given—that if you would like a position in this school then you will work in a collaborative setting and if that’s not something that you can do or something that does not appeal to you, this is not the school for you.”

When asked about her role in continuing collaboration, Helen (P) replied that she primarily plays a supportive role. She mentioned that one supportive action is to “establish the master schedule so that it is conducive to collaboration and team teaching.” Helen (P) disclosed that “You can’t start it (teacher collaboration) and let it go.” For example, she related that since the beginning of the program, the team teaching classes were the focus of the master schedule. Last year she didn’t make the collaborating classes the starting point and some concerns consequently developed. She also stated that
she writes the teachers notes of appreciation and encouragement, urges them to continue learning about collaboration, and provides the time and opportunity for them to gain additional training.

Sandi (S) stated that Helen (P) is supportive in that she helps schedule time to collaborate, helps place students in the general classroom, disseminates information about collaboration, and provides time and opportunity for training. Regarding the pairing of teachers, Sandi (S) also remarked that Helen (P) "...kind of lets us, you know, form our own relationships (teaching team) and do what we feel comfortable with."

When asked about evaluation of team teaching, Helen (P) related that no formal evaluation had been done along the way. The only documented evidence of effectiveness is fewer referrals for disciplinary problems from the co-taught classes.

**Barriers, Facilitating Factors, and Benefits**

Helen (P) identified scheduling as the greatest barrier to collaboration. She stated that she has been “more successful some years than others.” She continued, “There’s not enough time built into our day for the teachers to do what they really need to do.” Holly (G) remarked that although Helen (P) does all that she can to provide time for them to collaborate, there is never enough time.

Helen (P) and Sandi (S) both remarked that they thought parent attitudes would be a barrier, but this had not been a problem. Helen (P) continued that she tries to balance a collaborative classroom with high achievers, and this action may have help deter parent concerns. Furthermore, she related that “we now have parents begging for their child to
be in a classroom where collaboration is taking place because the idea is you get two for the price of one.”

Another barrier that Holly (G) identified was that some teachers are still not open to team teaching. She remarked that Helen (P) encourages these teachers by suggesting that they talk to and observe teachers who are collaborating.

Concerning facilitating factors, Helen (P) identified the following: (a) the positive attitude of the participating teachers, and their desire to make it successful; (b) her own commitment to collaboration; and (c) the interest of researchers and other individuals who visited and studied the program. As facilitating factors, Holly (G) pinpointed Helen’s (P) willingness to listen to all teachers’ ideas and concerns and the school renewal process which influences individuals to be more open to change and to grow. Moreover, Sandi (S) named Helen’s (P) positive attitude, her openness, and her willingness to work with the schedule to provide time. Concerning scheduling, Sandi (S) stated, “...a lot of times it boils down to having the time within the schedule to make it work, and she’s (Helen (P)) has been a very instrumental part of that.”

When questioned about benefits, interviewees responded that the students and staff have benefited. Helen (P) commented that the teachers who are collaborating carry their collaborative attitude and expertise over into all other areas of the school community, so that the whole school is benefiting. Holly (G) related that she has benefited by growing professionally. Sandi (S) put it this way, “...it’s the best of both worlds because I can still see the children that need to be seen on an intensive basis in my room, but then I can go into the regular classroom and get to work with everybody.”
When asked about the future of teacher collaboration in the next three to five years, all interviewees responded that they see it continuing. Helen (P) believes that collaboration has become a norm in the school and will continue even though she will be leaving the school after this year. Holly (G) stated that she sees collaborative services continuing and expanding to include more students and specialists, such as students with speech problems and the speech therapist. She stated, "I think this school is capable of doing that, but, I also think that you have to have a great leader to do that and with our leader changing, it will be interesting to see what happens. ...if we can get someone that has the skill and the style that she (Helen (P)) does then I think it would be possible."

Sandi (S) remarked that the more teachers collaborate, the better they become at collaborating. She foresees collaboration continuing and teachers collaborating more effectively, especially in team teaching situations.

Developing a Collaborative Culture

When asked about developing a collaborative culture, Helen (P) responded that since she had been at Magnolia for 13 years (as a teacher, then an assistant principal, and for the last four years as the principal), she pictured herself as more of an influencer of the culture than a developer. At Magnolia, Helen (P) influenced the culture to be more collaborative in a number of ways. First, she promoted collaborative endeavors through her words to the faculty. For example, she remarked,

I tell the staff I don’t want them all to be exactly alike--that would be boring... we need people who are strong in some areas and people who are strong in other
areas so that they can complement each other. I work a lot on helping people realize how they can do that.

Helen (P) also remarked that she doesn’t “believe anyone can be effective in isolation.” In education, she sees collaboration as a necessity. Holly (G) agreed, saying, “She (Helen (P)) just really encouraged us to be open and to share ideas and that we need to really respect each other’s ideas, you know, that we all have something different to contribute.” Secondly, as previously mentioned, Helen (P) was instrumental in developing collaborative structures such as the AMC team, team teaching, and the integration committee. She also formed and worked collaboratively with the leader’s team and the financial advisory team. Concerning these teams, Helen (P) stated, “I don’t think there’s anyone that’s really working in isolation in the building at all.”

Thirdly, Helen (P) models collaboration. Holly (G) related that she had been inspired by and learned much from Helen’s (P) modeling of collaborative leadership. Holly (G) stated, “She’s known as a teacher, an administrator, as a leader, as a friend, and I think that’s what makes her so special.”

Fourthly, Helen (P) provides time and opportunities for teachers to collaborate and to attend conferences and workshops so that they can learn more about collaboration. Additionally, Helen (P) recognizes collaborative endeavors with notes and candy bars in teachers’ boxes, refreshments at the integration committee meetings, and by highlighting teacher accomplishments at the faculty meeting.

Finally, Helen (P) stated that she has been given the principalship of a new school with a year to plan for the school, and in this position, she will definitely be a developer.
of a collaborative culture. One thing she plans to do is team building so that teachers will have mutual respect for each other and work as a team to meet the needs of all students.

Role Descriptors

Helen (P) portrays herself as a cheerleader for teacher collaboration for students with special needs. She "cheered" the teams on by continually communicating the purpose and value of teacher collaboration and by supporting teacher collaboration through helping develop the structures, scheduling time, and providing training. From an analysis of all the data, Helen's (P) role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs fell into two major categories: communicating and supporting. First, according to the data, Helen (P) as a communicator is open, receptive, visible, available and communicates by (a) modeling collaboration, (b) listening, (c) publicizing the teacher collaboration, (e) face-to-face interactions, (d) recognizing accomplishments, (e) writing notes of appreciation, (f) being visible, (g) having an open door policy, and (h) urging teachers to continue to learn about collaboration. Secondly, according to the data, Helen (P) supports teacher collaboration by (a) showing interest, (b) encouraging everyone to participate, (c) showing confidence in the teachers, (d) creating a family environment of respect, (e) problem solving, (f) being willing to go the extra mile, (g) seeking volunteers to participate, (h) serving as a member of a team, (i) helping to plan and develop collaborative structures, (j) providing time to collaborate, (k) providing time and opportunity for teachers to attend workshops and observe other collaborative structures, (l) attending training with teachers, (m) presenting workshops for teachers, (n) remaining available to assist in any way, (o) providing resources and materials,
(p) monitoring the team, (q) encouraging teachers to use the AMC team services, (r) looking favorably on teachers who are collaborating, (s) hiring teachers who are willing to collaborate, (t) working with scheduling, (u) trusting teachers to do the right thing, and (v) showing commitment to collaboration in word and in actions.

**Changes in the Principal’s Role**

Concerning changes in the principal’s role over time, Helen (P) related that she has greater influence since she moved from the position of assistant to principal four years ago. She cited as an example the hiring of teachers who share a collaborative philosophy and are willing to collaborate.

Sandi (S), who has been in the school since the beginning of the collaborative structures, noted that although Helen (P) still monitors the program, she is not as directly and intensely involved as she was in the first years of the program. Sandi (S) stated, “Now she just kind of sits back and, you know, lets us do our thing because she knows we’re comfortable with it and... things are working well... she’s there if you need her.”

**Reflections**

When asked what she would do differently if she could start over again, Helen (P) remarked that she would provide more information to the staff and the community at the beginning of the program. Holly (G) suggested that Helen (P) could do an inservice for the whole faculty on a topic such as “Ten Top Things that are Great about Collaboration.” Sandi (S) responded in a playful manner and with a chuckle stated, “Hire more personnel... because it would just allow for more things to get done!” Then in a more
serious manner Sandi (S) added that Helen (P) would have hired more personnel if she
controlled the funds for hiring.

**Summary**

Magnolia Elementary is a rural school that is rapidly becoming suburban. The
school is governed in a participatory manner, has a stable faculty, and a strong parental
involvement. Helen (P), the principal, was described as a democratic leader with a
collaborative style, who seeks to foster a collaborative culture. Teacher collaboration was
defined by Helen (P) as “teachers working together to benefit the child.” Teacher
interviewees added specificity to the definition by using terms such as parity, shared
experience, and common goal.

In the late eighties, Helen (P) developed a teacher’s assistance team called the
Assistance for Magnolia’s Children (AMC) Team. The AMC team grew out of two
concerns of the administration and faculty which were (a) too many students were being
referred to special education, and (b) classroom teachers needed a network of support. In
1990, team teaching was initiated by Sandi (S), the learning disabilities specialist, and a
general educator who believed they could more effectively serve their students by team
teaching. With Helen’s (P) help and support, these teachers began team teaching at
Magnolia. Since this time, team teaching has expanded to cover all grades at Magnolia.

Interviewees reported that the major barrier to teacher collaboration is scheduling
time for teachers to collaborate, while the major facilitating factors were (a) the
principal’s openness, commitment, and support; (b) the positive attitudes of the
collaborating teachers; and (c) the interest of researchers and other educators who were
interested in their program. Interviewees indicated that the greatest benefits of teacher collaboration were the students' progress, the professional growth of the teachers, and the influence of the collaborative endeavors in all other areas of the school community.

Although in the coming school year a new principal will replace Helen (P), all interviewees see the collaboration for students with special needs continuing and expanding. All of the data indicated that Helen (P) played a central and critical role in the development of teacher collaboration for students with special needs at Magnolia. Overall Helen (P) described her role in fostering teacher collaboration for special needs students as similar to a cheerleader. All interviewee responses concerning Helen’s (P) role can be described in two major categories: communicating and supporting.
Table 9
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School: Magnolia Elementary</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors as Found in Magnolia's Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Role Descriptors Most Frequently Cited in the Literature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Be supportive</td>
<td>Provides time</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides training</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Demonstrate commitment</td>
<td>Recruits teachers</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continues program</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide training and participate in training</td>
<td>Sends teachers to conferences</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide resources (human and material)</td>
<td>Provides co-teaching materials</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides teaming materials</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provide time</td>
<td>Provides time for training</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides time to plan</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provide recognition of accomplishment</td>
<td>Writes individual notes</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Announces at faculty meetings</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Help with schedules</td>
<td>Schedules planning time</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helps schedules students</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Decision rule for descriptors found in the literature: Cited in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs (see Table 1).
Table 10
The Principal’s Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School: Magnolia Elementary</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptors Not As Frequently Cited in the Literature</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors found in Magnolia’s Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Build trust</td>
<td>Is consistently committed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listens to and respects staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Show confidence in teachers and give freedom</td>
<td>Lets teachers make decisions and act on them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Be open</td>
<td>Listens to teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is receptive to teachers’ ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Model a collaborative style</td>
<td>Shares decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shares common goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Encourage teachers</td>
<td>Writes individual notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaks encouraging words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Talk about teaching and learning</td>
<td>Talks about student needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talks about teaching strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Check readiness</td>
<td>Interviews teachers when recruiting within and without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Communicate a compelling purpose</td>
<td>Relates to students needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relates to the school mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Communicate and describe norms</td>
<td>Models collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discourages isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Defend norms</td>
<td>Helps problem solve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continues through difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Set clear goals (involve staff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Relate collaborative activities to teacher concerns and priorities</td>
<td>Relates to teacher benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relates to student needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Help develop structures</td>
<td>Developed AMC team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helped with co-teaching model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptors Not As Frequently Cited in the Literature</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors found in Magnolia's Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate faculty participation in defining collaboration and developing structures</td>
<td>Helps with scheduling Helps solve problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Provide assistance where needed</td>
<td>Provides training Provides time</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Provide opportunity</td>
<td>Recognizes accomplishments Sends notes</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Provide positive feedback</td>
<td>Helps with scheduling Helps solve problems</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Provide a systematic plan</td>
<td>Helps with scheduling Helps solve problems</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Recruit teachers</td>
<td>Recruits teachers from within and without</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Use symbols and rituals</td>
<td>Recognizes faculty in meetings</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Acquire and utilize specific skills to enhance a collegial culture</td>
<td>Keeps a file on collaboration</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Engage in frequent and direct communication</td>
<td>Praises teachers Encourages teachers</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Project a positive attitude</td>
<td>Uses only volunteers</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Start with volunteers</td>
<td>Uses only volunteers</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Start small and build</td>
<td>Started with two teachers in one grade</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Evaluate</td>
<td>Checks number of referrals</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Decision rule for descriptors found in the literature: Cited in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs (see Table 1).
**Table 11**
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

**Magnolia Elementary School**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Descriptors of the Principal's Role as Found in Magnolia's Data</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors from Magnolia's Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Relate to school mission</td>
<td>See teacher collaboration as a necessity to meet school mission</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Listen to teachers</td>
<td>Is open and receptive</td>
<td>Is interested and available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Help solve problems</td>
<td>Mediates when difficulties occur</td>
<td>Seeks solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is a member of a team</td>
<td>Participated as a member of SAT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Disseminate information</td>
<td>Opens school to observers</td>
<td>Gives presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Monitor</td>
<td>Talks with teachers</td>
<td>Observes classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ocean View Elementary

Description of the School

General Description

Ocean View Elementary was described by its principal, Sarah (P), as a suburban school located in a middle class neighborhood. The well-maintained, 31-year-old, ranch-style building sits on a knoll some distance from the main road. An island of flowers and small shrubs graces the school entrance. In the spacious entrance hall, the school’s mission, “to prepare each child to meet successfully life’s daily challenges,” and the school’s values, “the lifelong process of learning; effective communication among family, school, and community; shared responsibility; a safe, secure, nurturing environment; positive self esteem; and self-disciplined, respectful, and productive learners,” are framed and placed for everyone entering the school to see. Evidence of the school’s mascot, the seahorse, is everywhere. Two free-standing, four-feet-tall seahorses are exhibited in the entrance hallway and in another hallway seahorses are pictured in a mural of ocean life. Seahorses are also found on bulletin boards, the school brochure, note pads, and even the principal’s coffee cup. The office walls are decorated with pictures of ocean life. One large picture entitled “Synchronicity” features two seahorses swimming together. A rich blue is the predominate color in the entrance hall and the school office.

According to Sarah (P), Ocean View uses a participatory governance. She remarked that she actively seeks faculty input on school decisions. Concerning this, Carole (G), a third grade teacher stated, “She (Sarah (P)) really takes our input into
consideration. You know, we really feel like we make a difference and our opinions count.” Moreover, Ocean View is involved in a district-wide school renewal program and this year completed its first cycle of the program. Sarah (P) related that Ocean View is distinguished as being the district’s model school for inclusion. Additionally, in an executive summary to the superintendent, Ocean View was described as a school with an “inviting school climate where faculty, staff, parents, and community work as a team to instill our students with lifelong learning.”

School Vision

When asked about the school vision, Sarah (P) replied, “We believe all children can learn and our role is to make them productive citizens... we’re all responsible.” Carole (G), the general educator, expressed the same ideas as Sarah (P), but focused on shared responsibility for all students. Debbie (S), the learning disabilities specialist, related the vision in a similar way, describing it as, “everyone accepting responsibility for every student.” Debbie (S) further stated that while the school mission was written and accepted by consensus of the faculty, the vision is not in writing and may not be held by the whole faculty. Carole (G) commented, “In what she (Sarah (P)) says in the faculty meetings and the memos that we get, that message (the vision) comes across.”

Students, Parents, and Faculty

Data from interviews with Sarah (P) and the annual report of the school to the superintendent provided the following information concerning Ocean View’s students, parents, and faculty. Of Ocean View’s 465 students, 19 (4%) are classified as gifted and talented, 56 (12%) receive free or reduced lunch, 153 (33%) are from lower
socio-economic neighborhoods, and 56 (12%) are classified for special education.

Special education students with mild and severe disabilities are serviced through inclusive services as well as some pull-out services for speech, occupational therapy, and physical therapy services. Sarah (P) stated that Ocean View’s student population is rapidly changing. The school is receiving more at-risk students and more students from military families. According to Sarah (P), during the last year Ocean View had at least 75 students transferred in or out of the school.

Many of Ocean View’s parents support the school as evidenced by their Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Membership and their Volunteers in Education (VIE) Program. In 1996 PTA membership was 78% and 165 parents volunteered 400 hours, in the VIE Program, each month. At the beginning of each year, the school staff and the PTA decide on a theme for the year which serves as a common goal for school and home relationships. This year the theme is “Catch the Wave of Excellence.” This theme is found on the school brochure and other written communications. The opening paragraph in the school brochure describes relationships between staff and parents in this manner: “Working together, staff and parents give students an opportunity to feel that they are valued, contributing members of the school team.”

Sarah (P) described her faculty as one composed of teachers with many years of experience and reported that faculty turnover is rare. She stated, “We have excellent teachers.” The school brochure describes the faculty and staff as “creating a safe, orderly environment where learning comes first.” In one of her weekly memos, Sarah (P)
expressed the following to her faculty, “You can be stars and win the awards. I’m going for best actress in a supporting role.”

Description of the Principal

Experience and Education

Sarah (P) provided the following information concerning her experience and education. During her 20 years in education, she has held three positions: teacher, assistant principal, and principal. For the last four years, Sarah (P) has served in an administrative office at Ocean View. She served as a part-time assistant principal for one year and has served as the principal for the last three years. Sarah (P) has an undergraduate degree in elementary education with an emphasis in speech and language and a masters degree in supervision and administration. When asked about how she prepared to be a leader for teacher collaboration for students with special needs, she replied, “...I would be happy to play by the book, but nobody gave me the book; so, you see, to me it is common sense.” Moreover, Sarah (P) remarked that she considers teacher collaboration as “normal professional behavior.” She elaborated by stating that as a teacher she collaborated with other teachers and as an assistant principal she engaged in some team teaching. She also stated that much of her training was on-the-job training. In addition to her beliefs about and experience with teacher collaboration, Sarah (P) has attended workshops and conferences, and has read extensively on the topic.

Leadership Style

Sarah (P) described her leadership style as basically collegial. She said, “I’m always open, you know, they’re (teachers) free to come in and discuss with me anything
that needs to be discussed.” Carole (G), the general educator, portrayed Sarah’s (P) leadership style as democratic. Carole (G) remarked, “…she presents things to us, ‘What do we want? Do we want it this way or that way? Somebody got a better idea?’ Very open to changes, you know, as long as they’re going to benefit the child.” Debbie (S), the learning disabilities specialist, described Sarah (P) as a democratic leader who leads by example, is sensitive toward each individual, and shares decision making and responsibility. Overall the interviewees pictured Sarah (P) as a democratic leader who models a collaborative style.

**Communication Strategies**

Sarah (P) remarked that she believes in on-going and open communication. She shared that results from a faculty survey taken at the end of her first year as principal found open communication and permission to try new things as two major aspects of her leadership that were most appreciated by the faculty. Additionally, the document review revealed that one of Sarah (P)’s professional goals is an “emphasis on shared decision making, team building, school spirit, and honest and open communication.” To sustain on-going and open communication, data indicated that Sarah (P) employs a number of communication strategies. To begin with, the mission of the school is posted in the entrance hall, in the teachers’ lounge, in each classroom, on the school brochure, and on letters to parents at the beginning of each year.

Sarah (P) communicates with the faculty by being visible, open, and available; by conducting faculty meetings; participating in other meetings; providing open forums for discussion on important school-related issues; and writing a weekly memo. Her weekly
memos include accounts of her personal life, teaching techniques, a thought of the week, and general information about and related to the faculty. Sarah (P) also carries a hand-held radio transmitter so that she can be contacted anywhere and at anytime within the school building.

Sarah (P) communicates with parents through a column in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) newsletter, a monthly calendar of school events, letters, the school brochure, general meetings, and being visible and available for parents. Sarah (P) communicates with the community through numerous business partnerships and through speaking at and participating in various community functions. Sarah (P) communicates to all her constituencies by modeling what she believes about leadership and teaching and learning. Finally, Debbie (S) commented that Sarah (P) has raised two children with special needs and has taught students with special needs. Sarah (P) has a unique perspective on students with special needs that enables her to communicate well with teachers, parents, and students. Debbie (S) stated, “I don’t think she’s easily shocked or rocked by anything that happens or, you know, what a student does or says or even negative reactions. And when things aren’t going well... she’s very even; so, she’s kind of a rock.”

**Description of Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs**

**Definition**

Sarah (P) defined teacher collaboration as “professionals working together for the betterment of all” and noted that Ocean View’s special educators are called collaborating teachers. Sarah (P) remarked that teacher collaboration is not only a style of teacher...
interaction between general and special educators used in inclusive services, but also a style of interaction in other teacher relationships within the school. These relationships include grade-level teams collaborating within and across grade levels and student assistance teams.

Carole (G) also defined teacher collaboration as teachers working together, but added that the purpose was to help each other in any way that help was needed.

Carole (G) continued by offering examples,

I collaborate with my teammates as well as the special education teacher and teacher assistants... and I see it as a two-way street. You know, if somebody is in my classroom and sees something I don’t see, I really appreciate them coming and saying, “well, what if we do this?” or I might say “we have this problem and I am at a loss. Do you have any ideas?” I may be explaining something until I am blue in the face and some kids just don’t get it and then somebody else has a different perspective and they can come in... and it clicks just because they have a little different twist on it. And it really is helpful.

Debbie (S) defined teacher collaboration as “shared responsibility for a student.”

She continued by saying the type of collaboration varies according to the needs of the students.

Relationship to Vision

All interviewees agreed that teacher collaboration for students with special needs advances their school vision of educating all children to make them productive citizens. Sarah (P) emphasized that every child belongs to everyone in the school. As such, she views teacher collaboration as a “professional obligation” in order to prepare all students to be productive citizens. Carole (G) and Debbie (S) remarked that combining teacher expertise in collaborative structures enhances learning for all students.
Need for Collaborative Structures

Among the collaborative structures serving students with special needs at Ocean View are a student assistance team (SAT) and team teaching. According to the interviewees, the student assistance team (SAT) grew out of a district concern that too many students were being referred to special education. The administrators at Ocean View shared this concern, as well as the concern that teachers need the expertise and support of other professionals to help solve classroom problems. Team teaching also evolved from a district initiative and a school concern. The district believed that more students with disabilities needed to be included in general classroom with their peers, and that teachers in the school were concerned that students with disabilities were missing too much classroom time.

Observation of the Structures

At Ocean View the researcher observed two collaborative structures: a student assistance team (SAT) and team teaching. Both structures met the criteria on the researcher's verification checklist. Interviewees reported that the SAT and team teaching have functioned for four years. According to Sarah (P), the SAT meets at least once a month and more often if needed. The team teachers and the teaching assistants meet once a month to do long range planning. Then they interact during the week as often as needed. Participants in both structures follow a systematic procedure for problem solving and/or planning and record their collaborative interactions in written form.

During the researcher's observation of a SAT meeting, the assistant principal voiced a concern about a student's progress in reading. It appeared that referral came
from concerned parents who were unable to attend the team meeting. The session proceeded in the following manner: (a) the chairperson opened the meeting and stated its purpose, (b) the assistant principal (the principal was absent for medical reasons) presented the problem and related relevant background information, (c) the reading specialist presented information regarding a reading assessment she had conducted, (d) team members asked questions and discussed the data, (e) team members brainstormed for solutions, (f) a solution acceptable to all members was chosen, (g) a plan of action was developed and recorded on the appropriate form, and (h) the form was signed by members of the team and a copy was sent to the parents.

The observation of team teaching took place in a third grade classroom during a lesson on vocabulary and dictionary usage. The general educator, Carole (G), presented the lesson while the specialist, Debbie (S), circulated among the students and monitored their responses. After Carole (G) finished her presentation, both Carole (G) and Debbie (S) circulated among the students, monitoring student performance and providing assistance to individual students as it was needed. Debbie (S) related that she and Carole (G) vary their style of team teaching according to the nature of the lesson, their expertise, and the needs of the students. They meet with their assistants at least once a month to problem solve and perform long-range planning. Additionally, Carole (G) and Debbie (S) meet during the week as needed.

Evolution of Structures

From the analysis of the data, teacher collaboration for students with special needs emerged in three stages: initiation, development, and continuance. The initiation stage
refers to the time when teacher collaboration for students with special needs was first considered, discussed, and perhaps attempted in an informal way. The development stage relates to the preparation period and the first year of implementation, and the continuance stage pertains to the second year of implementation to the present time.

**Initiation (1992).** Interviewee responses regarding the initiation stage of the student assistance team (SAT) addressed two areas: (a) events that prompted the initiation of the SAT and team teaching and (b) the principal's role in the initiation process. The interviewees related the following account regarding the initiation of the SAT. In 1991 the school district recommended that schools develop a type of teacher assistance team in order to reduce the number of student referrals to special education. At that time the district also provided training for administrators in developing a teacher assistance team. For the first year, like many other schools, Ocean View's child study team also functioned as a teacher assistance team. Then, in 1992, Sarah (P), who was then the assistant principal, obtained the principal's approval to develop a teacher assistance team that would be general education driven and completely separate from the child study team. At this time, Sarah (P) developed Ocean View's student assistance team (SAT). During the initiation stage the principal (a) responded to the district's recommendation, (b) received training, and (c) empowered Sarah (P) as the assistant principal to develop and implement a separate teacher assistance team.

Interviewees reported that the practice of team teaching predated inclusion at Ocean View. Sarah (P) described the initiation of team teaching as a "natural outgrowth of having two teachers working together in the same area" and cited instances of team
teaching at the sixth grade level four years ago. Moreover, Debbie (S) remarked that teachers had been experimenting with team teaching at Ocean View for years without referring to it as such. She cited examples from 1990 of team teaching at the fourth grade level. However, at Ocean View, team teaching began in a formal sense in 1993. This occurred a year after the principal volunteered the school to be the district's model school for inclusion. During the initiation stage of team teaching, the principal (a) volunteered the school to be a model school for inclusion, (b) provided some training, (c) sought volunteers, and (d) facilitated the training and implementation of team teaching at the 6th grade level.

Development (1992 SAT and 1993-1994 team teaching). When questioned about the development of the student assistance team, interviewee responses addressed three areas: (a) the organization of the team, (b) the publicizing of the team, and (c) the principal's role in the development of the team. According to Sarah (P), the SAT was designed to be a general education team. She stated, "...we don't want it to be seen as if you refer a child to the student assistance team that it is, you know, automatically a special education need." All team members are volunteers, and the team includes the guidance counselor, four general educators (two from the primary level and two from the elementary level), the principal, and the referring teacher. Specialists attend the meetings when they possess relevant information related to a student's need, and parents occasionally participate in team meetings, as well. The team uses three basic forms which include a referral form, a form that is filled out at the meeting, and an action plan.
form. The chairman (a fifth grade teacher) is responsible for calling meetings, collecting data, and following through on paperwork.

Concerning publicizing the team, Carole (G) remembered that Sarah (P) first acquainted the faculty with the SAT by describing the practice and successes of a SAT that Sarah (P) had developed at another school. Each year at faculty meetings and in teacher memos, Sarah (P) encourages teachers to use the services of the SAT.

Concerning the development of a team, Sarah (P) remarked that a lot of training is not necessary if you have volunteers who already have knowledge of teaming practices and feel comfortable with each other and trust one another. She elaborated by saying,

At the first of the year we always go over how it works: you know, we’re going to meet; we’re going to listen; we’re going to brainstorm; and then we’re going to help the teacher come up with three or four strategies; and then we’re going to monitor.

Sarah (P) has also provided a resource book of interventions for students with special needs for the members of the team. During the development stage of the SAT, the principal (a) listened to Sarah (P)’s ideas, (b) approved of the ideas, and (c) delegated the development of the SAT to Sarah (P). As assistant principal, Sarah (P) (a) informed the faculty about the team and sought volunteers, (b) acquainted the team with the team procedures, (c) developed team forms, (d) provided the team with a resource book of interventions, (e) served as a member of the team, and (f) encouraged teachers to use the team services.

Interviewee responses regarding the development of team teaching addressed three areas: (a) conditions during the first year, (b) training, and (c) the principal’s role in developing team teaching. Sarah (P) reported that the first year of her principalship at
Ocean View was also the first year of the implementation of inclusion and team teaching. During the previous year of initiation and planning, Sarah (P) had served as the part-time assistant principal and had not participated in all of the initial preparation. She noted that the sixth grade was removed from the school that same year, which resulted in the loss of the specialist and the sixth grade team who had been trained in and were practicing collaboration. She related that she and the teachers learned together, depending heavily on one teacher who had training and experience with collaboration. During this first year, team teaching was implemented at all grade levels where students with learning disabilities and students with severe and profound disabilities needed instruction. According to Sarah (P), at this stage, the learning disabilities specialist and the specialist for students with severe and profound disabilities worked closely with the general educators in classrooms where students with disabilities were included. Sarah (P) added that by the second year, the general educators had acquired expertise in dealing with students with disabilities in the general classroom and were able to pass this training on to their teaching assistants. The specialist, general classroom teacher, and the teaching assistants met at least once a month for long-range planning and then met weekly as needed. Sarah (P) stated that she provided compensation time to teachers who gave up their planning time to meet.

Concerning her role during the first year, Sarah (P) stated, “I think the first thing I did was I let them know that they would have the support they’d need both in manpower and from the administrator.” At the beginning of the first year, Sarah (P) also had an expert on team building come in and do team building with the whole faculty. During the
development stage, Sarah’s (P) role as principal involved (a) providing team-building experiences for the whole faculty; (b) supporting the participating collaborating teachers with manpower, encouragement, and any other assistance that they needed; (c) providing compensation time for team participants; (d) being sensitive to teacher’s feelings and concerns during the beginning stages of team teaching; and (e) serving as a sounding board, mediator and problem solver for teachers experiencing difficulties.

Continuance (1994 to the present). Interviewee responses concerning the continuance of the SAT addressed four topics: (a) communication, (b) continuity, (c) evaluation, and (d) the principal’s role in continuing the team. Sarah (P) related the following information concerning the continuance of the SAT team. At the beginning of each school year, she informs the faculty of the SAT services and reviews the referral process. She also reminds teachers of the team’s service in her weekly memos to teachers.

Continuity on the team is achieved because of many of the team members have chosen to remain on the team for two to three years and they serve as models and mentors for new team members. Sarah (P) remarked that her continued participation on the team also enhances the continuity and credibility of the team. To reward, encourage and recognize team participation, Sarah (P) uses district funds to provide a stipend to all of the team members. Sarah (P) reported that many of the concerns brought to the team relate to student behavior; therefore, she has sends team members to workshops and conferences dealing with behavioral issues. When a team member attends a workshop or
conference, Sarah (P)'s only stipulation is that the team member will teach the other members of the team what she has learned.

Concerning evaluation, Sarah (P) remarked that at the end of the first year, she conducted a teacher survey and checked the number of referrals to special education. Since positive results were found the first year, no other evaluation has been attempted. Sarah (P) stated that the SAT is now accepted as an effective part of the institution.

In her role as principal, Sarah (P) has contributed to continuing the team by (a) informing teachers about the SAT and encouraged them to use the team, (b) serving as a member of the team, (c) providing stipends and further training through conferences and workshops, and (d) evaluating the effectiveness of the team after its first year.

According to the interviewees, the continuance stage of team teaching addressed four areas: (a) promoting the program, (b) further training, (c) expansion, (d) plans for evaluation, and (d) the principal's role in the continuance stage. As mentioned in a previous section, Sarah (P), was a new principal during the first year of implementation and made assumptions about the readiness, willingness, and ability of teachers to collaborate. After the first year, Sarah (P) related that she began to promote the program in a "passionate" way. She reported that this made a difference for a number of teachers, especially the ones she called the "fence sitters." She continues to promote and support the program through her words and actions.

Sarah (P) stated that she feels with the number of students with special needs increasing at Ocean View that all teachers should be knowledgeable about collaboration and skilled at collaborating, although they may not volunteer to team teach. Because of
this, Sarah (P) plans to use some grant money for training in the "how to" of collaboration for the whole faculty. Sarah (P) stated, "One of my jobs is to make sure people grow professionally and I don’t see how they can grow professionally if they’re content to stay within their four walls." Sarah (P) has already used grant money to continue training in team building and the different models of collaboration for the whole faculty, as well as using outside expertise to help with scheduling needs and approaches and techniques to work effectively with students with special needs. Sarah (P) also schedules at least three days a week as a common planning time for all general education teachers. This gives the specialists (called collaborating teachers at Ocean View) an opportunity to schedule so that they can meet with individual teachers or grade level teams to problem solve and plan for students with special needs. Sarah (P) monitors these meetings by occasionally visiting and participating in the meetings.

As more teachers have begun to collaborate and teacher caseloads have increased, Sarah (P) related that she let the appropriate district-level office know that they had need of additional personnel. Sarah (P) stated, "How can they fix a problem for us if we don’t let them know?" Sarah (P) also remarked that if principals aren’t spokespersons for school-level needs at the district level, then the teachers suffer. To date, according to Sarah (P), no formal evaluation of team teaching has been conducted. The informal indicators of success have been the teacher’s desire to continue team teaching as well as teacher requests to team teach with the learning disabilities specialist. Sarah (P) has plans for a five-year evaluation study of the academic progress of students with special needs who are included in the classrooms where teachers team teach. She plans to follow...
students from first grade to middle school by tracking their scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Literacy Passport. Sarah (P)'s role as principal during the continuance stage include (a) promoting the program, (b) grant writing, (c) providing continued training in collaboration for the whole faculty as well as providing training in school-specific needs, (d) serving as a spokesperson to the district to gain additional assistance, (e) scheduling and providing time for teachers to collaborate, (f) monitoring collaborative activities, and (g) planning for evaluation of team teaching.

**Barriers, Facilitating Factors and Benefits**

Sarah (P) and Carole (G) identified time to collaborate as the major barrier to teacher collaboration. Sarah (P) stated, “In the beginning we just didn’t know that it was going to require so much time and planning for it to work successfully.” Carole (G) remarked that Sarah (P) does her best to provide more time; however, more time to plan continues to be a need. Sarah (P) related that teachers who come in early or stay after hours to collaborate are given compensation time. To provide the compensation time, she either hires substitutes or she or the assistant principal covers classes for these teachers. Debbie (S) agreed stating, “Either of them (principal and assistant principal) will take your class so you can have planning time, or take a class for half a day if you want to go and observe. They’ve really been good; they’ve bent over backwards. Whatever we need, they will do.”

Another barrier that Sarah (P) mentioned was communication problems in teams that don’t “click” right away. She stated that she handles this kind of situation by listening to both parties, getting everything “out on the table” and then problem solving.
Debbie (S) viewed the attitude of teachers who are not collaborating as a major barrier. She stated that these teachers don’t like another adult in their room for various reasons. Debbie (S) added that Sarah (P) tries to be sensitive to these teachers, but continues to encourage them to “get on the bandwagon and learn what it’s all about.” Both Sarah (P) and Debbie (S) mentioned that they thought parent attitudes would be a barrier and were surprised that this was not the case. According to Debbie (S), when there has been a parent concern, Sarah (P) has handled each concern by listening to the parents and being open, honest, and fair.

Lastly, Carole (G) identified the sensitive beginning stages of learning to work with another teacher in the room as a barrier to collaboration. She stated, “Even if you know they’re in there for the sake of the children, you can’t help but be affected at first about what you are saying... you are not as confident and comfortable, maybe as open with the kids at first so... I think that you have to experience it to get used to it.”

Carole (G) continued by saying that the first few months were the most difficult and that Sarah’s (P) encouraging words and pats on the back were very helpful. Carole (G) related that Sarah (P) “does that sort of thing, and that it’s an on-going thing.” Now that Carole (G) has been team teaching with the same person for three years, she considers the experience to be a facilitating factor because she and Debbie (S) have learned to flow together in their team teaching.

Interviewees identified a number of facilitating factors. Sarah (P) put trust at the top of her list. She stated, “I just don’t think you can do collaboration unless you’re open and you trust one another.” Sarah (P) added to her list (a) an open and honest atmosphere
with set limits (such as complaining in the right place at the right time); (b) teachers who are able and desire to collaborate; and (c) grant money that provides teachers with release time to plan for student placement, scheduling, and services in the spring of the year so teachers leave for the summer prepared to work with students with special needs.

Carole (G) mentioned the opportunity (a) to plan in advance and (b) to work with the same teacher over a number of years. Lastly, Debbie (S) identified (a) the supportive close-knit staff, (b) the lack of unreasonable paperwork, (c) the principal's flexibility, and (d) the atmosphere of freedom the principal has created to try something new without fear as facilitating factors.

When questioned about benefits, interviewees responded that students and staff have benefited. They related that, in general, all students benefit because they receive the combined expertise of the involved teachers. Students with disabilities specifically benefit because they receive services in the least restrictive environment. Debbie (S) noted that before inclusion and team teaching, many of her students had never been part of a general education class. She put it this way:

I was like the mother duck with my ten little chicks walking down the hallway... they were from different grade levels and different ages and none of them fit together; yet, they didn't fit anywhere else, and now it's like they have a home, you know, they feel the classroom teacher is their teacher.

Carole (G) remarked that the SAT benefited her students. She related, "I've referred two students to it and the suggestions that they provided and the plan that we set up for those kids really helped the kids and that plan continues with them when those kids moved on to fourth grade." Finally, Sarah (P) remarked that, in general, teacher collaboration
energizes teachers, and the SAT in particular provides teachers with a safe place to express their concerns and share new ideas.

**Future of Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs**

When asked about the future of teacher collaboration in the next three to five years, all interviewees see it as continuing and expanding. Sarah (P) remarked that she hopes to provide more time for teachers to collaborate, and she believes more teachers will be willing to collaborate. Sarah (P) stated,

> What I'd like to see five years from now is that people here are so comfortable with talking and establishing professional dialogues and talking about children in a productive way that it will all blend. Everybody, you know, will just be one classroom.

Sarah (P) also plans to use grant money for cross-training of teachers by sending general educators to special education workshops and conferences and specialists to general education workshops and conferences. Carole (G) remarked that she foresees that teachers will refine their collaborative skills, more students and teachers will be involved, and scheduling "kinks" will be worked out. Debbie (S) also sees collaboration continuing, and teachers collaborating more effectively to serve any child who comes through the school door.

**The Principal’s Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs**

**Developing a Collaborative Culture**

When questioned about developing a collaborative culture, Sarah (P) described how she deliberately set out to establish a collaborative culture. When she became Ocean View’s principal three years ago, she had the faculty spend the first two days of staff development participating in team-building exercises and writing a mission statement.
When a common goal was established, Sarah (P) scheduled the teachers so that each grade level had the same resource time for four days a week. Teachers could use the time on three of the days as they desired; however, the fourth was designated as team planning day. Sarah (P) would visit the various grade level teams on that day. Sarah (P) stated,

What I wanted to do was to break down the barriers of the four walls of the classroom and make sure that the teachers on each team worked together as a team and that there was time for the grade before and the grade after to get together so that we could have some vertical teaming as well as just the horizontal teaming.

Sarah (P) continued by stating that she encouraged teachers to take a risk and try new things by saying things like, “Go for it!...Let’s try it!” Carole (G) related that Sarah (P) has communicated that everyone in the school is working together for one goal--to meet the needs of every student. Carole (G) said this is done “with the help of all of the teachers, not just one. The load is not just put on one person.”

**Role Descriptors**

Interviewees used three metaphors to describe Sarah (P)’s role. First, Sarah (P) called herself the “best supporting actress for the star attractions” (the teachers). Secondly, Carole (G) referred to Sarah (P) as a “sounding board” because she listened to teachers in a reflective way. Thirdly, Debbie (S) described Sarah (P) as a “rock” because of her ability to remain consistent, calm, and effective in the midst of student and teacher problems. When analyzing all the data concerning Sarah (P)’s role in fostering teacher collaboration, four categories emerged: communicating, supporting, monitoring and evaluating. As a communicator, Sarah (P) is open, honest, available, visible, democratic,
trusting, and sensitive toward others. She communicates by (a) providing and participating in round table discussions; (b) using a hand-held radio transmitter; (c) modeling collaboration; and (d) listening to teachers, parents and students. Sarah (P) supports teachers by (a) providing training and participating in training; (b) giving teachers permission to try new things; (c) accepting teachers where they are; (d) developing and participating in the SAT; (e) seeking volunteers to collaborate; (f) promoting the collaborative structures to the faculty; (g) providing the SAT with a resource book; (h) encouraging teachers; (i) obtaining additional personnel from the district; (j) providing compensation time; (k) being sensitive to teachers needs especially during the beginning stages; (l) listening, problem solving, and mediating; (m) providing stipends for SAT members; (n) helping with schedules; (o) providing time; (p) being fair; (q) building trust; (r) writing grants; (s) creating an atmosphere of freedom for teachers to try new things without fear of negative consequences; (t) helping with student placement; (u) helping with decision making especially regarding students with severe and profound disabilities; and (v) recognizing teacher accomplishments. Sarah (P) monitors by making spot visits to team meetings and serving on the SAT team. Finally, Sarah (P) has evaluated the SAT by teacher surveys and examining the number of referrals to special education and Sarah (P) is planning to evaluate team teaching by conducting a five-year study of student achievement.

Changes in the Principal’s Role

Sarah (P) stated that in the beginning she made too many assumptions about teachers and collaboration. For example, she thought because the faculty was so close on
a personal level that, given a purpose and a time to collaborate, teachers would naturally collaborate. However, some teachers did not make a natural transition. As a result, Sarah (P) identified two major changes in her role. First, she began to monitor collaborative activities more, such as asking for a schedule of grade level team meetings and making spot visits. Secondly, she began to engage professionals outside of the school to train the faculty how to collaborate. Carole (G) noted that Sarah (P) has become much more comfortable in sharing the decision making. Debbie (S) observed that Sarah (P) has continued learning more about collaboration and has become more involved in the decision making relating to students with severe and profound disabilities.

Reflections

When asked what she would differently if she were to start over again, Sarah (P) listed four actions. First, she remarked that in the beginning she would be more passionate in her communications regarding teacher collaboration. She elaborated by saying that, in the second year when she communicated more about her beliefs concerning collaboration, some “fence sitters” were willing to collaborate because they trusted her. Secondly, Sarah (P) stated, “I would not assume anything; ...you can’t assume that everybody is comfortable collaborating.” Thirdly, Sarah (P) said that she would offer a different kind of training such as using members of the staff who were familiar with collaboration. She elaborated by stating she would like for the faculty to develop a common language concerning collaboration with “everyone reading off the same page.” Fourthly, Sarah (P) related that she would be more directive by making sure everyone had clear expectations relating to collaboration. Lastly, she explained that with
the exception of the SAT, which already has its own set of forms, she would require a written form to be completed at all collaborative sessions. This would allow her to monitor the frequency and nature of interactions, as well as give her a school-wide perspective of the types of problems collaborators were experiencing.

Carole (G) related that she would like to begin with more inservices on the roles of the general and special educator in team teaching. Finally, Debbie (S) remarked that at Ocean View they began teacher collaboration for students with special needs without a formal plan and, if they could begin again, she would like to start by involving the school community in developing a vision and mission statement and five-year plan for collaboration. She further stated that Sarah (P), who had become principal the first year of implementation and had not been fully involved in the initiation, had "done better than I would have expected anyone to do."

Summary

Ocean View is a suburban school governed in a participatory manner by a stable faculty and involved parents. Sarah (P), the principal, was described as a democratic leader with a collaborative style, who deliberately set out to develop a collaborative culture. Teacher collaboration was defined as "teachers working together for the betterment of all." In 1992 two structures, the student assistance team (SAT) and team teaching, were initiated by district recommendations. Sarah (P) designed, promoted, developed, and participated in the SAT team. She also promoted and supported team teaching in many different ways. Presently, teachers are team teaching in kindergarten through fifth grade and serving students with learning disabilities and severe and
profound disabilities. Interviewees reported that the major barrier to teacher collaboration is time to collaboratively plan. Salient facilitating factors include: (a) trust among everyone involved, (b) the flexibility and openness of the principal, (c) the attitude and ability of teachers who are collaborating, and (d) grant money. Interviewees indicated that the greatest benefits of teacher collaboration were enhanced student self-esteem, a sense of belonging for students with disabilities, and professional growth for teachers. All interviewees predict that teacher collaboration for students with special needs will continue and expand. All of the data indicated that Sarah (P) played a central and critical role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs. Interviewees described Sarah’s (P) role in 3 ways: a supporting actress, a sounding board, and a rock. Moreover, all interviewee responses can be described using four major categories: communicating, supporting, monitoring and evaluating.
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School: Ocean View Elementary</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Vice Principal</th>
<th>Special Educator</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role Descriptors Most Frequently Cited in the Literature</strong></td>
<td>Examples of the Role Descriptors as Found in Ocean View's Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Be supportive</td>
<td>Provides time</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides encouragement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Demonstrate commitment</td>
<td>Continues through difficulties</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obtains grants for funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide training and participate in training</td>
<td>Sends teachers to conferences</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attends workshops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Provide resources (human and material)</td>
<td>Obtained grant</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provided resource notebook</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Provide time</td>
<td>Provides compensation time</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schedules common planning time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Provide recognition of accomplishment</td>
<td>Speaks directly to individuals</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognizes in weekly memo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Help with schedules</td>
<td>Schedules common planning time</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helps with student placement</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Decision rule for descriptors found in the literature: Cited in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs (see Table 1).
Table 13
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School: Ocean View Elementary</th>
<th>*Role Descriptors Not As Frequently Cited in the Literature</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors as Found in Ocean View’s Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Build trust</td>
<td>Is sensitive to people</td>
<td>● ● ● ●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes honest and open communication</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Show confidence in teachers and</td>
<td>Encourages teachers to try new things</td>
<td>● ● ● ●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give freedom</td>
<td>Shares decision making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Be open</td>
<td>Listens to teachers</td>
<td>● ● ● ●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has an open door policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Model a collaborative style</td>
<td>Views faculty as co-workers</td>
<td>● ● ● ●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shares decision making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Encourage teachers</td>
<td>Compliments teachers</td>
<td>● ● ● ●</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses inspiring and humorous statements</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Talk about teaching and learning</td>
<td>Participates in SAT meetings and round table discussions</td>
<td>● ● ● ●</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Check readiness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Communicate a compelling purpose</td>
<td>Relates collaboration to mission and shared values</td>
<td>● ● ● ●</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Communicate and describe norms</td>
<td>Communicates in weekly memo and round table discussions</td>
<td>● ● ● ●</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Defend norms</td>
<td>Seeks additional personnel from district</td>
<td>● ● ● ●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Works through problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Set clear goals (involve staff)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Relate collaborative activities to teacher concerns and priorities</td>
<td>Relates to mission, shared values, and student benefit</td>
<td>● ● ●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Role Descriptors Not As Frequently Cited in the Literature</td>
<td>Examples of the Role Descriptors as Found in Ocean View’s Data</td>
<td>Sources of Evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Help develop structures</td>
<td>Developed SAT</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate faculty participation in defining collaboration and developing structures</td>
<td>Has mechanism for crisis meetings Obtained additional personnel</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Provide assistance where needed</td>
<td>Expresses positive comments to individuals Expresses in weekly memos</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Provide opportunity</td>
<td>Provides time Helps with scheduling</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Provide positive feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Provide a systematic plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Recruit teachers</td>
<td>Uses weekly memos</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Use symbols and rituals</td>
<td>Has round table discussions</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Acquire and utilize specific skills to enhance a collegial culture</td>
<td>Attends workshops, conferences Reads about collaboration</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Engage in frequent and direct communication</td>
<td>Has open door policy Visits classrooms and meetings</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Project a positive attitude</td>
<td>Expresses in faculty agendas and memos</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Start with volunteers</td>
<td>Uses only volunteers</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Start small and build</td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Evaluate</td>
<td>Evaluated SAT first year Is planning a five-year evaluation</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Decision rule for descriptors found in the literature: Cited in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs (see Table 1).
Table 14
The Principal’s Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

Ocean View Elementary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Descriptors of the Principal’s Role as Found in Ocean View’s Data</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors from Ocean View’s Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Relates to school vision</td>
<td>Relates to student benefit Relates to teacher responsibility</td>
<td>⬤ ⬤ ⬤ ⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Listen to teachers</td>
<td>Is open Is like a sounding board</td>
<td>⬤ ⬤ ⬤ ⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Help solve problems</td>
<td>Helps solve conflicts Seeks solutions</td>
<td>⬤ ⬤ ⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Help place students, schedule, and prepare teachers in advance</td>
<td>Prepares video boxes Has teachers talk about students</td>
<td>⬤ ⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Disseminate information</td>
<td>Has teachers give presentations within and without the school</td>
<td>⬤ ⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Monitor</td>
<td>Does spot visits Participates in team meetings</td>
<td>⬤ ⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is member of a team</td>
<td>Participates in team meetings</td>
<td>⬤ ⬤ ⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Write and obtain grants</td>
<td>Uses grant money for teacher training and time for planning</td>
<td>⬤ ⬤</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rainbow Elementary

Description of the School

General Description

Rainbow Elementary was described by its principal, Pam (P), as a suburban school located in a lower middle class neighborhood. The 46-year-old, ranch-style, well-maintained building occupies a corner lot on a side street off of a main road. At the back of the building is a spacious parking area lined by trees. Also at the rear of the school is a courtyard with picnic tables where the members of the school community gather for special occasions. The courtyard is unique in that it has been designated by the school as a memorial garden for children who have died while students at Rainbow. To honor the memory of each of these children, a tree has been planted and a plaque placed beside the tree.

Although Rainbow is an older school, the inside of the school is freshly painted and attractive. Colorful banners hang from the ceiling of the front halls, the gym, and the school office. A large poster proclaiming “Everybody Wins with Teamwork” is displayed in the front hall. Throughout the school, bulletin boards and posters reflect the school’s theme for this year, “Go for the Gold.” The school is described in Rainbow’s Parent and Student Handbook as “dedicated to the task of providing the best possible educational experiences for children.”

According to Pam (P), Rainbow is governed in a participatory manner. Two examples of shared governance are the Faculty Advisory Committee and the Biennial
School Plan Committee. Both groups work collaboratively to plan and problem solve concerning school issues and goals.

Rainbow is distinguished as the only elementary school in the district to have closed circuit television which is used in a number of ways. Each day students present Rainbow's morning news and other school information. On special occasions Pam (P) addresses the whole school.

School Vision

When questioned about the school vision, Pam (P) responded with "to provide whatever a child needs." She added that it takes the school community working together to accomplish the vision. Teacher interviewees, Susan (G), the general educator, and Mary (S), the learning disabilities specialist, gave similar answers. They both agreed that working as a team to "provide what is best for each child" is the vision of the school.

Students, Parents, and Faculty

Data from interviews with Pam (P) and a parent and the student handbook provided the following information concerning Rainbow's students, parents, and faculty. Of the 400 students in kindergarten through fifth grade, 4 (1%) are classified as gifted, 156 (39%) receive free lunch, and 48 (12%) are classified for special education services. The special education population is served by traditional pull-out services and Rainbow's Collaboration Model. Overall, Pam (P) described the student population as "extremely high-risk students." She indicated that many students have environmental and developmental delays. She also stated that many of the students are transient. For example, last year, 65 students were processed in or out of the school. To meet the needs
of these at-risk students, the school provides a school-wide social skills program and spelling program. Additionally, Rainbow offers an outreach program funded by local business to assist students financially. This program provides students in need with school supplies, clothes, snacks, mentoring, and summer school scholarships.

According to Pam (P), most of Rainbow's parents are interested in their children's education, but many of them work and/or are single parent families. They simply do not have the hours to volunteer at school. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) membership is about 50%. During the course of the year, the school offers workshops for parents on topics such as attention deficit disorder (ADD), social skill strategies, and math. The school also provides workshops for the faculty on effective ways to work with parents. Rainbow's Parent and Student Handbook states that "Through the cooperative efforts of our total school staff and our parents, we feel that we can help prepare students for meeting the challenges of today's society."

Pam (P) described her faculty as a "wonderful, close-knit" group of educators who are strong in instructional skills. Pam (P) reported that almost one half of the faculty holds a masters degree. Although a core of the faculty has remained at the school for many years, faculty turnover at Rainbow has been considerable. Over the last four years, at least six teachers have transferred from the school. Some teachers transferred in order to follow the previous principal to another school. Other teachers were transferred by the district because of district rezoning.
Description of the Principal

Experience and Education

Pam (P) provided the following information concerning her experience and education. During her 23 years in education, she has held three positions: teacher, assistant principal, and principal. Rainbow Elementary was Pam’s (P) first assignment as a principal, and she has served in this position for the last five years. Pam (P) holds an undergraduate degree in elementary education, and a masters degree in curriculum and instruction with an endorsement in administration. When asked about her preparation to become a leader for teacher collaboration for students with special needs, Pam (P) offered the following account. First, as a general education teacher, she taught students with disabilities in her classroom and had the opportunity to work collaboratively with special education teachers. Secondly, as an assistant principal in another school district, she was in charge of special education programs within her school, and as a result participated in the state-wide systems change project. Through this project, Pam (P) had the opportunity to visit schools in Vermont that were participating in inclusion. Also, as assistant principal, Pam (P) was a member of a integration team in her school. This team met monthly for the purpose of planning for collaborative service deliveries. Thirdly, Pam (P) has attended conferences and workshops related to collaboration. She has also presented workshops at other schools and in other districts. Fourthly, Pam (P) reads about collaboration and has compiled a personal file on the topic. This file includes
surveys to parents, (b) handouts from workshops, (c) examples of schedules for team teaching, (d) notes welcoming visitors who want to observe team teaching, (e) plans for collaboration, (f) articles and research studies on collaboration, and (g) handouts from workshops Pam (P) and/or Rainbow's collaborative teachers have presented. Finally, Pam (P) and her faculty produced videos of team teaching sessions to be used for staff development purposes at Rainbow and in other schools.

Leadership Style

Pam (P) described her leadership style as that of a facilitator, stating, “I try not to be dictatorial although I think people know I have certain expectations.” She stated she seeks to model in her relationship with the faculty the way she would like the faculty to relate to students and parents. Moreover, Pam (P) related that she likes the team approach and, although it is difficult to do both, tries to be visible and available. She encourages the faculty to be involved in the decision-making process and seeks their input, suggestions, and comments. Concerning decisions about school programs, Pam (P) stated, “Teachers decide what works and that’s what we do. Sometimes it’s not always what I want; it’s not my first preference of change, but we do that.”

Susan (G), the general educator, as well as Pam (P), agreed that Pam's (P) leadership style was facilitative. Susan (G) remarked that Pam (P) presents the district and school goals to the faculty, then teachers decide how they will meet these goals. Other descriptors used by Susan (G) about Pam (P) were encouraging, visible, and positive. Mary (S), the learning disabilities specialist, commented that Pam (P) relates to
teachers as a peer, as well as a leader, and gives clear direction. Other descriptors used by Mary (S) about Pam (P) were organized and caring. Overall, the descriptions of Pam’s (P) leadership style tend toward democratic leadership with a collaborative style.

**Communication Strategies**

Interviewee responses and the document review indicated that Pam (P) uses a variety of communication strategies. To communicate with parents, she uses the parent and student handbook, a column in the PTA newsletter, letters, and individual and group meetings. She employs faculty meetings, individual meetings, a weekly memo, notes to individual faculty members and half-day, sharing sessions to communicate with faculty. To communicate with the whole school on school-wide theme days, she uses the closed circuit television. Pam (P) is televised giving “fireside and pool side chats,” and reading stories to students. Finally, Pam (P) communicates with the community by meeting with individuals in the business arena concerning Rainbow’s outreach program and giving presentations in other schools.

**Description of Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs**

**Definition**

Pam (P) defined collaboration as teachers sharing information and expertise. She offered as examples grade-level planning and team teaching. Susan (G) and Mary (S) both used the word, “together,” and added the phrases, “mutual support, equal load, planning, and preparing materials.”
Relationship to Vision

Pam (P) remarked that teacher collaboration is an important part of the school vision of working together “to provide whatever a child needs.” She stated, “I just think it is a very simple thing, if you share, you learn, and children benefit.” Mary (S) commented that teacher collaboration relates to the school vision because it allows for planning, problem solving, and instructing in the best possible environment for each student with disabilities; therefore, teachers can provide what each child needs.

Need for Collaborative Structures

A child assistance team (CAT) and team teaching are two collaborative structures serving students with special needs at Rainbow. According to the interviewees, the CAT meets the needs of teachers who desire help with student academic, behavioral, or attendance problems; therefore, the team serves as an alternative to directly referring students to the special education child study committee. According to Pam (P), team teaching grew out of a need for students with disabilities to have greater interaction with their peers and receive instruction in the least restrictive environment.

Observation of Structures

At Rainbow the researcher observed two collaborative structures: the child assistance team (CAT) and team teaching. Both collaborative structures met the criteria on the researcher’s verification checklist. Interviewees reported that the CAT has functioned for at least six years, and that team teaching has been in place five years. Pam (P) related that the CAT meets as teachers have needs, an average of at least once a week. The team teachers indicated that they meet twice a week to plan and problem
solve. Participants in both structures use a systematic procedure and record their interactions using CAT forms or lesson plans.

The researcher observed Rainbow’s CAT at the end of the school year when, as Pam (P) explained, the team was dealing with concerns related to next school year. On the day of the observation, a team was meeting to review students who were recommended for retention. The team included the principal, resource teacher, Chapter I teacher, a special education teacher, and the classroom teacher who had recommended the retention. The meeting proceeded in the following manner: (a) the principal opened the meeting stating the purpose and distributing the results of a retention scale; (b) the recommending teacher voiced her concerns about the student, exhibited documentation on the student such as work samples, the report card, the attendance card, and other pertinent information, and answered questions about the student from other members of the team; (c) the team discussed the student’s needs and placement options, (d) the team reached consensus regarding placement of the student; and (d) a plan of action was developed and recorded.

The observation of team teaching took place in a fourth grade classroom during a science lesson followed by writing, reading, and vocabulary activities, and computer-assisted language practice. The team-teaching session ended with a math lesson. Both teachers—Susan (G), the general educator, and Mary (S), the learning disabilities specialist—taught the science lesson to the whole class. The teachers then divided the class into four groups with each group performing different activities. When signaled, students rotated from group to group until they had participated in all four
activities. Each teacher monitored two of the groups. Finally, both teachers brought the whole group together again to jointly teach a math lesson. After the math instructional time, both teachers circulated among the students monitoring and assisting students who were engaged in math activity.

**Evolution of Collaborative Structures**

From the analysis of the data, teacher collaboration for students with special needs emerged in three stages: initiation, development, and continuance. The initiation stage refers to the time when teacher collaboration for students with special needs was first considered, discussed and perhaps attempted in an informal way. The development stage relates to the preparation period and the first year of implementation, and the continuance stage pertains to the second year of implementation to the present time.

**Initiation (CAT exact date unknown: team teaching, 1991).** Because the initiation and practice of the CAT (child assistance team) began before any of the interviewees were employed at Rainbow, the precise date of the initiation was unknown by the interviewees. However, interviewees agreed that a type of CAT has been functioning at the school for at least six years.

Pam (P) related the following account concerning the initiation of team teaching. Pam (P) came to Rainbow with the vision of teachers collaborating to educate students with disabilities in the general classroom. In the summer before school opened, she met individually with all of the special education teachers and shared her vision. The only mainstreaming going on in the school at that time involved the fourth and fifth grade students with disabilities eating lunch at the same time, but at different tables, as the
fourth grade general education students. The special education teachers were reluctant to change, but they did agree to mainstreaming their students in music, art and physical education classes. Pam (P) remarked, “We had to start somewhere and we were not at square one, we were in the minus column!” Pam (P) found one special educator who was interested in teacher collaboration: “My first year I was fortunate enough to have a teacher--resource, LD--who had heard about the collaboration symposiums in Williamsburg and asked that she and I would attend; she was interested in starting collaboration here.” Pam (P) and the interested learning disabilities resource teacher attended the symposium on collaboration in the early fall. By January, they found a third grade teacher who was willing to let the special educator come in and teach 30 minutes each day. Before the team teaching began, Pam (P) and the two teachers sent a letter to the parents letting them know that the two teachers would by teaching together in the room for a half hour each day. During the initiation stage, Pam’s (P) role as principal included (a) sharing a vision with the special education teachers; (b) encouraging the special educators toward mainstreaming; (c) finding a teacher who was receptive to team teaching, listening to this teacher, and encouraging this teacher to pursue teacher collaboration; (d) attending a symposium on collaboration with the special education teacher; and (e) sending a letter to parents about team teaching.

Development (CAT exact date unknown: team teaching, 1992-1993). Since the CAT was developed before any of the interviewees were employed at Rainbow, this section will describe how Pam (P) employed the child assistance team (CAT) when she became principal. Since the child study team meets only once a week when the
psychologist and social worker are at the school, Pat uses the CAT as a school-level team that can respond to teachers’ request for assistance when they occur. Because the CAT is school based, it can meet anytime and any day that fits the school schedule to address academic, behavioral, attendance, and parent problems. The members of the CAT include the principal, the resource teacher, referring teacher, and any other teacher who works with the child, such as the Chapter I teacher or the special education teacher. Pam (P) and the resource teacher serve as chairpersons. Pam (P) reported that whenever possible they both participate in the team meetings. The team follows a problem solving procedure of (a) stating and clarifying the problem, (b) presenting relevant background information, (c) discussing the problem, (d) brainstorming for ideas, (e) selecting a strategy, (f) developing a plan for implementation and monitoring, and (g) recording the decision and plan on the appropriate team form. The team meets as the need arises, with Pam (P) or the resource teacher setting the time for the meeting and notifying the participating teachers. The team usually meets in the guidance room.

The interviewees’ description of the development of team teaching addressed three areas: (a) expansion of team teaching, (b) training, and (c) the principal’s role. At Rainbow, team teaching began in January of 1992 with one special education teacher teaching for 30 minutes a day in a general classroom. By the end of the year, the special educator was teaching two hours a day in the classroom. During this period the principal gave both teachers a day to observe and talk with team teachers in another district. By the next year other teachers expressed an interest in collaborating. Pam’s (P) role as principal in the development stage involved (a) providing time for training,
Continuance. When asked about the continuance of the CAT, interviewee responses addressed three areas: (a) promoting the team, (b) providing time for teachers to participate, and (c) monitoring students who have been referred to the team. All three of these areas related to the principal's role. Mary (S), as well as Susan (G), commented on Pam's (P) role in encouraging teachers to use the team. Susan (G) stated that Pam (P) encourages teachers who are having difficulties to fill out a referral form and use the team services. When a teacher has a referral, Pam (P) schedules a time for the team meeting and provides coverage of classes for teachers who need to participate in the team meeting. According to Mary (S), Pam (P) keeps a list of students who are referred and monitors the progress of these students even into the next grade. During the continuance stage, Pam’s (P) role included (a) encouraging teachers to use the team, (b) scheduling team meetings, (c) providing time for teachers to attend team meetings, (d) participating in the team meetings, and (e) monitoring students who had been referred to the team.

Interviewee responses concerning the continuance stage of team teaching centered around the following: (a) expansion, (b) scheduling, (c) training, (d) promoting the collaboration model, (e) problem solving, (f) recruiting, (g) monitoring, (h) evaluating, (i) disseminating information about teacher collaboration, and (j) the principal's role. Team teaching at Rainbow began in one grade with one special education teacher and one general education teacher working with several students with learning disabilities in the general classroom. According to a document describing the
collaboration model and the responses from the interviewees, the practice of team
teaching spread in four years to include grades two through five. Team teachers were
servicing not only students with learning disabilities, but also students with emotional
disabilities, students with speech and language problems, and student who are classified
as other health impaired. As the collaboration model expanded in the second year, Pam
(P) began to give the collaborating teachers first choice in scheduling when she
developed the master schedule. This ensured the collaborating teachers of a block of
uninterrupted time each day to team teach. Pam (P) related that she meets with all the
collaborating teachers in May to place students and to schedule team-teaching sessions
for the next school year. When asked about the principal’s most significant role in
fostering teacher collaboration, Susan (G) and Mary (S) identified scheduling. Susan (G)
stated, “I’m just going to have to say scheduling, because if that piece were not in place
this would never work... it is very crucial.” Similarly, Mary (S) remarked, “It makes it so
easy and it’s so nice to do it in May and you come in September and your schedule is
set... this is just wonderful.” As collaboration expanded and the teacher’s caseload
increased, Pam (P) also furnished a teaching assistant for one hour a day in each of the
collaborative classrooms.

According to interviewees, Pam (P) has provided various kinds of training for
teacher collaboration. She and the teachers continue to attend and present at the annual
collaboration symposium in Williamsburg, as well as attend other workshops and training
sessions. To determine the training needs of the teacher collaborators, a needs
assessment was conducted. As a result, Pam (P) arranged inservices for the group in the
areas of need indicated by the teachers. Other types of training materials include taping and showing videos of team teaching and team planning sessions and the circulation of a planning log that contains a variety of model lesson plans developed by the teams. Additionally, Pam (P) encourages teachers who express interest in collaboration to observe team teaching and planning sessions as well as talk with the collaborating teachers.

Pam (P) remarked that when it comes to teacher collaboration and meeting the needs of students with disabilities in the general classroom, she is definitely proactive. She indicated that she promotes the collaborative model in various ways. One way is by noting the successes, activities, and presentations of the collaborative teachers at faculty meetings, in the morning announcements, and in weekly memos. Other ways of promoting teacher collaboration include (a) showing the team teaching videos made at Rainbow to the faculty, (b) providing inservices for the faculty, (c) visiting collaborative classrooms and writing teachers encouraging notes, (d) encouraging non-collaborating teachers to observe team teaching, (e) planning sessions and recruiting teachers who are willing and able to collaborate, and (f) welcoming other educators and researchers to observe and study their team teaching model. Teacher interviewees reported that Pam (P) has "whole heartedly supported the program" as well as kept collaboration in a "positive light." According to a program description document, Rainbow's Collaboration Model has received both local and state-wide recognition. Evidence of this recognition includes "...requests from colleagues to visit our school for observation in collaborative classes,
invitations from surrounding counties to present faculty inservices, and the requisition of our videos of model lessons."

Finally, Pam (P) offered a word of caution about the promotion and recognition of the model and the collaborating teachers, saying that some of the non-collaborating teachers began to question why the collaborators were getting so much attention. Pam (P) then stated that principals need to be careful about how much they promote and recognize a program because too much attention can "sort of backfire on you too."

Pam (P) encourages collaborating teachers to be open with her concerning the problems they encounter. For example, teachers informed Pam (P) that with the increase in numbers of students to be served, teachers were spending too many hours of their own time after school planning for their team-teaching sessions. Pam (P) responded by scheduling a meeting with the team teachers, the district special education supervisor and herself to brainstorm ways to solve the problem. A number of solutions were generated at this meeting, such as using teacher assistants to give collaborating teachers a 45-minute planning time one day a week to plan. Pam (P) commented that it is important for teachers to inform her of the problems because she knows "that there is a solution to that problem."

Pam (P) considers recruiting teachers who are willing and able to collaborate to be an important part of continuing the collaborative model. One of Pam’s (P) hiring criteria is that the teacher must be open to engaging in teacher collaboration. Nonetheless, Pam (P) admitted that, she can’t always ensure that personalities will mesh when new teachers begin to work together. Pam (P) also recruits team teachers from within the faculty by
encouraging various faculty members to consider team teaching. She related the following, "I have a second grade teacher whom I asked two years in a row to do collaboration; she said no. She would have been wonderful, but I would never make her."

On the other hand, other teachers, such as Mary (S), have responded to Pam’s (P) request for volunteers. Pam (P) and Mary (S) offered the following account which illustrates how a teacher who is reluctant about team teaching can become an advocate. When Pam (P) became principal, Mary (S) was teaching upper elementary students with learning disabilities in a self-contained room. At that time, Mary’s students were mainstreamed only in that they ate lunch at the same time as their peers, but at a separate table. During the summer before Pam’s (P) first year, Pam (P) shared her vision concerning students with special needs and teacher collaboration for these students with Mary (S) and the other special education teachers at a meeting. Pam (P) stated that she and Mary (S) came to a compromise: Mary (S) would try mainstreaming her students for music, art, and physical education. Within two years, Mary (S) approached a friend who was a second grade teacher and asked her to take a student with disabilities into her classroom and team teach for math. Mary (S) reported the experience to be successful for the student and rewarding for her. She then began to do more and more teaming with other classroom teachers. She is now one of the team teachers that visitors observe.

Mary (S) explained that when she felt ready she generated her first move toward team teaching and Pam (P) supported her. Mary (S) also reported that she talks with prospective team teachers and answers any questions or concerns that the teacher may
have about teaming. According to Mary (S), this initial interaction prepares the way for Pam (P) when she approaches the teacher about becoming a team teacher.

Mary (S) related that having co-taught as a specialist in a general classroom for a number of years, she decided she would like to be a general classroom teacher for a change. Since there were no openings at Rainbow, she has taken a general classroom position in a new school. She has already spoken to her new principal about team teaching with one of the specialists at the school. Mary's team teaching has been so effective that Pam (P) and Mary's team-teaching partners stated that they are wondering how they can ever replace her.

Pam (P) related that she monitors team teaching by visiting the classrooms and frequently communicating with the teachers. Moreover, Pam (P) remarked that the collaboration model at Rainbow has been evaluated in several ways. First, at the beginning of the program, a two-year study examined student academic progress. The results indicated students with disabilities who were being taught in collaborative classrooms did not perform any better as a group than they did in the pull-out service; however, lower-performing general classroom students did make academic gains.

Pam (P) commented that because she and the faculty were satisfied with the results of these evaluations, they did not continue this kind of evaluation. The second type of evaluation was a satisfaction survey of parents and students conducted by some of the team teachers. The results of these surveys were described in a program description of the collaborative model which stated,

Parent and student surveys overwhelmingly indicate approval regarding improved student achievement as illustrated in the following quote, "I thought the Collaborative Teaching Program was great! It helped my daughter to make better
grades in these subjects. She has really improved this year in her schoolwork. She has made that honor roll. I think they should have collaborative teaching in more classrooms in the upcoming school year.”

According to interviewee responses and the document review, Pam (P) and/or the team teachers have disseminated their knowledge and experiences using many methods such as (a) welcoming visitors to observe team teaching and planning; (b) sharing examples of team schedules and lesson plans; (c) making and sharing videos of team teaching and team planning; (d) presenting as a team and individually at conferences and inservices at the school, district, and state level; (e) participating in two research studies; (f) writing articles, and (g) writing up their program for award nominations.

Pam’s (P) role as principal in the continuance stage of team teaching was multifaceted. According to the interviewee responses and the document review, during the continuance stage Pam (P) (a) gave team teachers’ priority when developing the master schedule, (b) met with all collaborating teachers in May to place students and set the schedule for the following year, (c) provided time for collaboration, (d) provided training and participated in some of the training, (e) provided teaching assistants for one hour a day (f) recruited new teachers from without and within the school to collaborate, (g) promoted collaboration and recognized success, (h) problem solved and sought solutions when problems occurred, (i) monitored and evaluated the model, and (j) disseminated knowledge and experience.

**Barriers, Facilitating Factors, and Benefits**

A number of barriers to teacher collaboration were identified by the interviewees. Barriers pinpointed by Pam (P) were teacher turnover, teacher workload, and personality...
problems between teacher collaborators. Pam (P) emphasized that teacher turnover was a
major barrier. She related that three teacher collaborators have left the school because of
various personal circumstances. She remarked that although she recruits replacements
who are willing and able to collaborate, it usually takes about a year to get things running
smoothly again. Pam (P) used as an example the new speech teacher who is willing to
collaborate, eventually, but felt she needed a year to get the feel of the school, the
teachers, and her caseload. Pam (P) commented that although they were waiting a year,
collaboration would continue.

Concerning problems of personality and workload between teacher collaborators,
Pam (P) commented that although teachers are willing and able to collaborate, problems
between collaborators do occur. When personal conflicts arise, some teachers are
hesitant to approach the principal—they feel that they are “telling” on someone. Pam (P)
stated that she communicates the following to teachers, “I don’t care what problem you
have, there’s a solution to that problem, you know, but we can’t deal with it if we don’t
know about it.”

Susan (G) agreed with Pam (P) that teacher turnover as a barrier, but also
pinpointed the increasing number of students with special needs. Pam (P) related that in
the past collaborating teachers had four or five students with disabilities in a room, but
now they are servicing seven to eight students in two fourth grade classrooms. Susan (G)
echoed Pam’s (P) thoughts and elaborated by saying that Rainbow does not have the
personnel to service the growing number of students in the upper grade general
classroom.
Susan (G) and Mary (S) identified time to plan as a barrier. Susan (G) stated that when teachers informed Pam (P) that they were spending hours after school to plan, Pam (P) met with the teachers and the district special education supervisor to seek solutions to the problem. As a result of that meeting, Pam (P) built planning time into the schedules, and the special education supervisor offered to teach the collaborative classes one morning a week for four weeks to give the collaborating teachers additional planning time. Finally, Mary (S) described the initial experience of learning to team teach with another teacher as a barrier. She continued by saying that because everything is so new, the first year can be challenging.

Among the facilitating factors identified by Pam (P) were (a) her provision for teacher needs (additional time to plan and giving the needs of team teachers priority when planning the master schedule), and (b) the ability of the principal and teachers to problem solve. Susan (G) noted the positive responses of researchers, visiting observers, and parents as a major facilitator. Mary (S) added the following facilitators: (a) the interest and desire of collaborating teachers, (b) the support of parents, (c) the fact that teacher collaboration is considered a priority by the principal and teachers, and (d) the fact that the principal and teacher collaborators believe that “this is what is best for kids.”

Benefits of teacher collaboration noted by the interviewees include (a) the sharing of expertise between general and special educators resulting in professional growth for both teachers, (b) the increased self-esteem of the students with disabilities and (c) the increased academic progress of lower performer students in collaborative classrooms.
Future of Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

When asked about the future of teacher collaboration in the next three to five years, all interviewees respond that they see it continuing and expanding. Pam (P) stated that she believes that teacher collaboration for students with special needs is here to stay. Teacher collaboration has been designated as a service delivery option on the individual educational plan form in her district. Pam (P) did suggest that an additional specialist is needed to continue to serve the present group of students with disabilities at Rainbow. She continued by saying that ideally she envisions a specialist for each grade level who team teaches with classroom teachers in two hour language arts and math blocks. She added that this model would require additional funding from the school district.

Susan (G) commented that if she could continue with her team teacher of the last three years, she “could give a vision and it would be a beautiful picture.” However, Susan (G) voiced concern because her teaching partner is leaving Rainbow. She has difficulty imagining teaming without her. She did acknowledge that if Mary’s replacement were willing and able to collaborate, teacher collaboration could continue in grades two through five and expand to serve students with more severe disabilities in the general classroom. Although Mary (S) is leaving Rainbow, she foresees that teacher collaboration will continue and that teacher collaborators will continue to try new ways to reach and teach students with special needs.
The Principal Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

Developing a Collaborative Culture

Pam (P) described herself as proactive on teacher collaboration. She deliberately set out to develop a collaborate culture. In the summer before her first school year, she sent a letter to all the faculty which invited them to meet with her. During these meetings she specifically shared her vision of collaboration with all the special educators. She began by identifying one teacher who was interested in team teaching, and then followed up by encouraging and supporting that teacher.

Pam (P) also develops collaborative culture in a number of other ways. One way is the use of an annual school theme. This theme is the focus of instruction throughout the year and the four school-wide theme days. Some of Rainbow's past themes have included “Cheering in the New Year” and “Go for the Gold.” Both themes emphasized teamwork. Pam (P) also uses faculty agendas and her weekly memos to develop a collaborative culture. For example, the cover sheet on a faculty agenda stated, “Team up for Success” and in one of her memos Pam (P) commented, “Cheering in the New Year with team spirit, positive attitudes, and relentless faith.”

Other ways Pam (P) fosters a collaborative culture include (a) special features on the closed circuit television, such as highlighting a teacher each week and sharing something about that teacher each day on the morning telecast; (b) having a school-wide social skills and spelling program, as well as the outreach program; (c) modeling a collaborative style; (d) having half-day sharing sessions where teacher and the principal
talk about teaching and learning; (e) having a faculty advisory committee and (f) the
Biennial School Plan Committee which is composed of parents, teachers and the
administrator. Concerning the Faculty Advisory Committee, Pam (P) reported that
teachers help set the agenda and stated, “I give my input just like everyone else, but it’s a
committee decision.” Moreover, Pam (P) called teaching and learning at Rainbow “a real
team effort” and stated, “I do a lot of getting them (the faculty) involved in the
decision-making process—doing surveys, getting their input, asking for suggestions,
allowing them to make the decisions as to when things happen and how we will handle
them.” Finally, concerning Pam’s (P) fostering of a collaborative culture, Susan (G)
reported that the faculty celebrates at the beginning of the year with team building
exercises and remarked, “She (Pam (P)) communicates it (collaboration) on an on-going
basis so that each and every teacher as well as student knows that, you know, we’re
working together.”

Role Descriptors

Pam (P) described herself as a facilitator of teacher collaboration. She stated that
she liked to think of her role as more than “just providing the time and tools.” Susan (G)
also portrayed Pam (P) as a facilitator and added that Pam (P) is encouraging, visible, and
positive. Mary (S) depicted Pam (P) as a leader who gives clear direction but can relate
as a peer. Mary (S) also characterized Pam (P) as caring and organized. When analyzing
all data concerning Pam’s (P) role in fostering teacher collaboration, four categories of
behaviors emerged: communicating, supporting, monitoring, and evaluating. As a
communicator, Pam (P) is open, available, visible, democratic, caring, and positive. She
communicates by (a) sharing a vision for teacher collaboration for students with special needs, (b) modeling collaboration, (c) involving collaborators in the decision making, (d) listening to teachers, (e) sending encouraging notes to individual collaborators, (f) recognizing accomplishments of teacher collaborators in weekly memos and at faculty meetings, and (g) having sharing sessions. Pam (P) supports teacher collaboration by (a) providing training and participating in some of the training, (b) reading about collaboration and keeping a file on teacher collaboration, (c) encouraging teacher collaborators, (d) giving presentations, (e) recruiting teacher collaborators from within and without the school (f) sending letters to parents about teacher collaboration, (g) providing time for planning and training, (h) being a member of the CAT, (i) promoting the CAT and team teaching, (j) scheduling time for CAT meetings and providing time for teachers to attend the meetings, (k) giving teacher collaborators first choice with the master schedule, (l) providing teaching assistants one hour a day, (m) attending teacher presentations, (n) noting accomplishments of teacher collaborators, (o) producing videos of team teaching and planning sessions, (p) welcoming observers and researchers, (q) problem solving, (r) using only teacher volunteers, (s) placing students and settling schedules ahead of time, and (t) disseminating information concerning team teaching. Pam (P) monitors collaboration by tracking students who have been referred to the CAT and by visiting collaborative classrooms and talking with teacher collaborators. Pam (P) evaluated team teaching through tracking the academic progress of students in collaborative classrooms and through parent and student surveys.
Changes in Role

Concerning the changes in her role, Pam (P) stated that in the beginning she was directly involved in every aspect of team teaching. She promoted collaboration, developed the model, and arranged for training. Presently she is less directly involved. Although she still promotes collaboration and encourages training, her emphasis has shifted to problem solving and maintaining. Pam (P) remarked that one problem currently facing her is the increase in the number of students with disabilities to be served in the general classroom, especially at the upper fourth and fifth grade level. Whereas in the past four or five students were placed in one classroom, there now may be seven or eight. Pam (P) commented that continuing to serve these students in a collaborative classroom requires more personnel, and personnel is a district-level matter. She stated, "...to be real successful, they're (the district) going really have to start looking at funding because it really is difficult to take two teachers and expect to spread them... so, the resources have to be there." Both teacher interviewees agreed that Pam (P) was more directive and involved when she was new to the school and the model was new. Pam (P) released more responsibility to the collaborating teachers over the next two years as the model proved to be effective.

Reflections

When asked what she would do differently if she could begin again, Pam (P) stated that she would give the faculty an awareness-level inservice on students with disabilities and inclusion. Then, when she felt that teachers had enough information and
understanding of inclusion and collaboration, she would want the faculty and staff to develop a shared vision for collaboration and inclusion. When asked what she would recommend that Pam (P) do differently if beginning the model again, Mary (S) suggested the following sequence: (a) have outside experts give a inservice on collaboration at the beginning of the year, (b) give teachers a number of months to think about starting to collaborate, (c) check with the teachers and determine the ones who are interested in collaborating, (d) together develop a plan for starting a model to begin in the next school year. When asked this same question, Susan (G) spoke in terms of the ideal. She stated that her recommendations were probably impossible because of the way the elementary school is organized and the number of students constantly transferring into the school. Susan’s recommendations for ideal conditions included (a) have a set number of students to be involved in the model, (b) ensure planning time for teachers in the school day, and (c) don’t allow any other activities to cut into the collaboration time. Susan (G) ended her answer by stating that considering the actual conditions at Rainbow, Pam (P) has “done very well” in her role of fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs.

Summary

Rainbow Elementary is a suburban school located in a lower middle class neighborhood. Rainbow serves high-risk students and has moderate parental involvement. The school is governed in a participatory manner, but has considerable faculty turnover. Pam (P), Rainbow’s principal, was described as a democratic leader with a collaborative style who deliberately set out to foster a collaborative culture.
Teacher collaboration was defined as teachers sharing information and expertise. The child assistance team (CAT) and team teaching are two collaborative structures that serve students with special needs. The CAT predated Pam’s (P) principalship at Rainbow. Team teaching began in 1992 and services students with special needs in grades two through five. The major barrier of teacher collaboration at Rainbow is teacher turnover. Other barriers include time to plan, the increasing number of students to be serviced, and personality problems between teacher collaborators. Salient facilitating factors involve (a) the provision of teacher collaborators with time and priority in scheduling, (b) the openness between the principal and teachers to solve problems, (c) the recognition and positive responses from individuals within and without the school, (d) the support of parents, (e) the fact that teacher collaboration is considered a priority by the principal, and (f) the belief held by the principal and collaborating teachers that collaboration is best for students and teachers. The professional growth of teacher collaborators, the increase in self-esteem of students with disabilities, and the academic achievement of at-risk students were identified as the greatest benefits of teacher collaboration. All interviewees’ foresee teacher collaboration continuing at Rainbow. The data revealed that Pam (P) played a critical and central role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs. Pam’s (P) role as a facilitator of teacher collaboration can be described using four categories: communicating, supporting, monitoring and evaluating.
Table 15
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School: Rainbow Elementary</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors found in Rainbow's Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Role Descriptors Most Frequently Cited in the Literature</td>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Be supportive</td>
<td>Helps with scheduling Provides training</td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Demonstrate commitment</td>
<td>Makes collaboration a priority Continues the program</td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide training and participate in training</td>
<td>Sends teachers to conference Attends conferences</td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide resources (human and material)</td>
<td>Makes videos for training Provides technical assistance</td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provide time</td>
<td>Provides weekly planning time Provides professional leave</td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provide recognition of accomplishment</td>
<td>Writes notes to teachers Shares successes with faculty</td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Help with schedules</td>
<td>Gives collaboration priority Sets schedules in May for following year</td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Decision rule for descriptors found in the literature: Cited in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs (see Table 1).
Table 16
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptors Not As Frequently Cited in the Literature</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors found in Rainbow's Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Build trust</td>
<td>Is consistently committed</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeks teacher input</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Show confidence in teachers and give freedom</td>
<td>Lets teachers make decisions and choose partners</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Be open</td>
<td>Listens to teachers' ideas and is willing to change</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Model a collaborative style</td>
<td>Shares decision-making</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relates as a peer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Encourage teachers</td>
<td>Compliments teachers</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writes notes to teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Talk about teaching and learning</td>
<td>Participates in sharing sessions and the SAT</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Check readiness</td>
<td>Interviews teachers</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Checks teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Communicate a compelling purpose</td>
<td>Relates to school vision</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relates to yearly theme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Communicate and describe norms</td>
<td>Shares videos with faculty</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communicates in memos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Defend norms</td>
<td>Holds sharing sessions</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continues through problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Set clear goals (involve staff)</td>
<td>Has goals in a program description</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Relate collaborative activities to teacher concerns and priorities</td>
<td>Relates to school vision</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relates to student outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Help develop structures</td>
<td>Helped develop co-teaching model</td>
<td>• •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Facilitate faculty participation in defining collaboration and developing structures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*Role Descriptors Not As Frequently Cited in the Literature</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors found in Rainbow's Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Provide assistance when needed</td>
<td>Helps with student placement</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schedules time</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Provide opportunity</td>
<td>Provides training</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides time</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Provide positive feedback</td>
<td>Visits classes</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Praises teacher</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Provide a systematic plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Recruit teachers</td>
<td>Recruits teachers from without and within the school</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Use symbols and rituals</td>
<td>Sends notes of appreciation</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publicizes successes</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Acquire and utilize specific skills to enhance a collegial culture</td>
<td>Attends conferences</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observes other programs</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Engage in frequent and direct communication</td>
<td>Is visible</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visits classrooms</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Project a positive attitude</td>
<td>Praises collaborators</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Says, &quot;we can do it&quot;</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Start with volunteers</td>
<td>Uses only volunteers for team teaching</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Start small and build</td>
<td>Started with two teachers</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Evaluate</td>
<td>Evaluated academic progress</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducts satisfaction surveys</td>
<td>• • • •</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Decision rule: Cited in literature, but not in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs (see Table 2).
Table 17
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Within-site Analysis

Rainbow Elementary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Descriptors of the Principal's Role as Found in Rainbow's Data</th>
<th>Examples of the Role Descriptors from Rainbow's Data</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Relates to school vision</td>
<td>Relates to student benefit</td>
<td>● ● ● ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Listens to teachers</td>
<td>Has sharing times</td>
<td>● ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responds to teacher concerns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Help solve problems</td>
<td>Helps solve conflicts</td>
<td>● ● ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeks solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Help schedule and place students in advance</td>
<td>Does scheduling and placement in May</td>
<td>● ● ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Disseminate information</td>
<td>Lends videos</td>
<td>● ● ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gives presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Monitor</td>
<td>Tracks student progress</td>
<td>● ● ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Serves as a member of a team</td>
<td>Schedules SAT meetings</td>
<td>● ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitors students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Communicate a personal vision to teachers for teacher collaboration</td>
<td>Shares vision in words and actions</td>
<td>● ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Informed parents</td>
<td>Sent letters to parents</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Summary of the Five Case Studies

In this chapter, case studies of five elementary schools (Lakeside, Greenwood, Magnolia, Ocean View, and Rainbow) were presented using four major headings: (a) the description of the school, (b) the description of the principal, (c) the description of the collaborative structures, and (d) the description of the principal’s role in fostering the collaborative structures. The same major headings along with their subheadings were used in the following summary of the case studies.

Description of the Schools

General Description

An analysis of the general descriptions of the five sites revealed two salient similarities among the schools. First, although the age of the schools ranged from 7 to 60 years, all schools had an attractive external and internal appearance. On the outside, well-maintained buildings and parking areas were enhanced by trees and shrubs, and at three of the schools seasonal flowers graced the school entrance. Additionally, special outdoor areas for students and teachers such as courtyards with picnic tables or reading centers were found at Greenwood, Magnolia and Rainbow.

On the inside, the schools were decorated attractively in a variety of ways. For example, three schools made use of large, colorful banners to display their school mission, and in four schools, evidence of the school’s mascot was everywhere from large, free-standing seahorses in the school entrance to a beaver embroidered on the principal’s shirt pocket. Other examples included the use of murals to decorate the halls at Magnolia
and Ocean View and large showcases used to display students' work at Lakeside and Greenwood.

Secondly, all schools were similar in that they utilized some type of participatory governance such as site-based management at two schools, school renewal committees at four schools, and various forms of advisory councils at all of the schools.

Four sites were similar in that they were classified as suburban schools located in middle-class neighborhoods. Rainbow, which was described as being located in a lower, middle-class neighborhood, was an exception.

School Vision

The schools' vision statements related to serving students in the following ways: (a) offering a quality education and being an inviting school, (b) providing academic excellence for all students, (c) providing a caring environment where students enjoy learning and reach their highest potential, (d) sharing the responsibility for making students productive citizens, and (e) working together to provide for the child's needs. Interviewees from two schools, Greenwood and Magnolia, indicated that their school vision was the same as their school mission. All of the schools had a written mission statement. However, in the three schools where the vision statement was separated from the mission statement, interviewees reported that the vision was communicated by the principal in various ways.

Students, Parents, and Faculty

The number of students in the five schools ranged from 400 to 700 students. Students in all of the schools were described as predominately middle class students with
the exception of Rainbow whose students were described as lower middle-class, at-risk students. In the five schools, the percentage of students classified for special education ranged from 6% to 12%. All schools served students with special needs by offering inclusive services as well as some traditional pull-out services. Moreover, all schools served students with mild disabilities in their inclusive services with the exception of Ocean View which served students with mild disabilities as well as students with severe and profound disabilities in their inclusive program.

As defined by the annual Superintendent's Reports and principal interviewees, all schools with the exception of Rainbow reported high parental support as evidenced by membership in the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) and the parent volunteer programs. To illustrate, in these schools PTA membership ranged from 78% to 100%. Rainbow's principal, Pam, estimated their PTA membership to be close to 50%. Considering the families that Rainbow serves, Pam stated this was a good percentage. She said that, although parents are interested in their children's education, many of Rainbow's students come from families where both parents work or the single parent is working. All schools reported offering instructional programs for parents ranging from parenting skills to family math workshops.

Data from the principal interviews and the document reviews indicated that nearly one half of the faculty in all of the schools holds master's degrees. The faculties were characterized using various descriptors such as experienced, professional, close-knit, dedicated, innovative, and strong in instructional skills. With the exception of Rainbow,
faculty turnover in all of the other schools was rare. Teachers in all of the schools were engaged in shared decision making through school committees and/or school councils.

Overall, students, parents, and teachers in the five schools were more alike than different. The following commonalities were found in all schools: (a) Schools served students with special needs by offering inclusive services as well as some traditional pull-out services; (b) schools offered instructional programs for parents; (c) schools had a high percentage of faculty with master’s degrees; and (d) schools involved teachers in shared decision making through school committees and/or school councils. Additionally, a number of prominent similarities were found in four out of the five schools. Four out of five of the schools (a) served students from predominately middle class neighborhoods, (b) served only students with mild disabilities in their inclusive programs, and (c) had faculties where faculty turnover was rare.

Notable differences were found at Rainbow and Ocean View. Rainbow served lower middle-class, high-risk students and had moderate parental involvement and considerable teacher turnover. Ocean View, in addition to serving students with mild disabilities in their inclusive program, also served students with severe and profound disabilities.

Description of the Principals

Experience and Education

Regarding experience in education, all principals were similar in two ways. First, each had at least 20 years of experience in the field of education. Secondly, each
principal had served in the positions of teacher and assistant principal before becoming a
principal.

Major differences noted among the principals were related to the number of years
and places of experience. To illustrate, Lakeside’s principal, Ed, has been a principal for
22 years, while the range of experience for the other principals was from four to eight
years. Additionally, whereas Ed has served as principal at a number of schools, the other
principals have served as principal only at their present school.

Concerning their educational preparation, the two male principals, Ed and Jim,
hold undergraduate degrees in science and physical education with masters’ degrees and
Certificates of Advanced Study in educational administration. The female principals,
Helen, Sarah, and Pam, all hold undergraduate degrees in elementary education. Helen
holds a master’s degree in reading and a Certificate of Advanced Study in educational
administration. Sarah holds a master’s degree in supervision and administration, and
Pam holds a master’s degree in supervision and instruction with an endorsement in
administration.

When questioned about how they prepared to become leaders for teacher
collaboration, the principals offered various responses. All principals reported attending
some or all of the training sessions provided for teachers who had volunteered to become
teacher collaborators for students with special needs. Many of the principals attended
state conferences and local workshops with their teachers. All but one of the principals
had a notebook or file on teacher collaboration. Two of the principals had engaged in
collaboration as teachers, and two of the principals had served on district-level
committees relating to inclusion and teacher collaboration. Other responses relating to preparation to be a leader in teacher collaboration included (a) reading about collaboration, (b) observing other programs, (c) having experience in sports, (d) talking with teachers who were collaborating, and (e) learning while doing through trial and error.

In summary, regarding their experience and education, the following similarities were noted among all five principals: (a) All principals had at least 20 years experience in the field of education; (b) all principals had served in the positions of teachers and assistant principal before becoming principal; (c) all principals held master's degrees; and (d) all principals attended some of the training on collaboration with their teachers. Two salient differences were noted: (a) Only one principal had more than eight years of experience as a principal and served in that position at more than one school and (b) the principals were prepared in various ways to become leaders in teacher collaboration.

Leadership Style

All principals were reported to have an open and democratic style of leadership as opposed to a closed and autocratic one. Additionally, all five principals modeled a collaborative style. Evidence of their modeling included (a) sharing decision making, planning, responsibility, and common goals and (b) viewing teachers as colleagues. Other descriptors of the principal's leadership style noted by the interviewees included open, caring, trusting, encouraging, visible, flexible, available, facilitative, organized, and giving a clear sense of direction. The descriptor, open, was the one most frequently used by the interviewees.
Communication Strategies

All five principals used a variety of communication strategies such as newsletters, memos, posters, banners, faculty meeting agendas, and individual and group meetings. As communicators, the principals were described as being open, available, visible, and communicating by their actions. In addition to the previously listed similarities, some differences among the principals were identified such as the use and preference of verbal or written strategies. For example, although Helen, Magnolia's principal, used various written communications, she reported that she preferred face-to-face communication. Other examples of communication strategies used by the various principals included (a) large signs in front of the schools that serve as communication boards, (b) round table discussions, (c) half-day sharing times and sharing times at faculty meetings, (d) hand-held radio transmitters, (e) personal notes to teachers, (f) school-wide themes, (g) school brochures, and (h) videos.

Description of Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

Definition

In their definitions of teacher collaboration, all principals included the idea of teachers working together or sharing to benefit students. Teacher definitions added specificity to the principal's definitions by using words and phrases such as parity, planning, monitoring students, providing for students, having mutual goals and support, and carrying an equal load. In their definitions, some of the principals and teachers offered examples of teachers collaboration. These examples included team teaching, teacher assistance teams, and grade-level teams. Four of the five principals differentiated
between teacher collaboration and inclusion by expressing the idea that teacher collaboration is a style of interaction among teachers that can be used not only in inclusive services for students with disabilities but also in various other areas of school life. At two schools specialists were called "collaborating teachers" and the programs were referred to as "collaboration\inclusion programs" while programs at two other schools were identified simply as "collaborative programs."

**Relationship to School Vision**

All interviewees reported that teacher collaboration was related to their school vision or mission. Ed, the principal at Lakeside, whose school's vision was offering a quality education as well as being an inviting school, stated, "No one person can do it!" Ed used an example of a mule team, emphasizing that it took the team working together to accomplish a common goal effectively and efficiently. Jim, the principal at Greenwood, whose school's mission was "academic excellence for all," remarked that teachers who collaboratively plan and organize on a daily basis enhance learning for all students. Jim used a story about geese in flight to express the idea that working together toward a common goal is more powerful than working alone. Helen, Magnolia's principal, commented that teacher collaboration related to Magnolia's mission of providing "a caring environment where students will enjoy learning and will reach their highest potential" by focusing on benefiting children. Helen further stated that she did not "believe anyone can be effective in isolation" and viewed teacher collaboration as a necessity to accomplishing the school mission. Sarah, the principal at Ocean View, remarked that teacher collaboration advances their school vision of working together to
educate all children to make them productive citizens. Sarah elaborated by stressing that every child belongs to everyone in the building. She views teacher collaboration as a "professional obligation" for preparing all students to be productive citizens. Finally, Pam, the principal of Rainbow, stated that teacher collaboration is an important part of the school vision of working together "to provide whatever a child needs." She said, "I just think it is a very simple thing: if you share, you learn, and children benefit." To summarize, in all five schools, teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs was viewed as an important part of a larger school vision and/or mission.

**Need for Collaborative Structures**

Interviewees listed teacher assistance teams, team teaching, collaborative consultation, and collaborative committees as the collaborative structures functioning in their schools for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs. Teacher assistance teams were developed at all five schools in response to two major needs: (a) the need to screen referrals to the child study committee (many students who were not true candidates for special education were being referred to the child study committee) and (b) the need of classroom teachers for assistance and support with student problems. All schools offered inclusive and some pull-out services where teachers engaged in collaborative consultation and team teaching in response to various needs. Interviewees from Lakeside, Greenwood, and Ocean View believed that too many students with special needs were missing too much classroom instructional time and identified this as symptomatic of their need for collaborative consultation and team
teaching. Interviewees from Greenwood and Magnolia stated that the need for collaborative consultation and team teaching grew out of a desire to help students with special needs meet their highest potential by offering services in the general classroom. Finally, interviewees from Rainbow related that team teaching grew out of the need of students with special needs to have more social interaction with their peers and receive instruction in the least restrictive environment. Collaboration committees were organized at three of the schools (Lakeside, Greenwood, and Magnolia) for the purpose of meeting the needs of collaborating teachers—needs such as talking about their practice, supporting one another, and problem solving and planning. In addition to the previously listed purposes, Ed and the collaborating teachers at Lakeside also used their collaboration committee meetings for staff development and as an opportunity for teachers interested in collaboration to interact with collaborating teachers. Helen reported that after the first few years of the program, teachers at Magnolia felt they no longer needed this committee and it was disbanded.

In summary, teacher assistance teams grew out of a need to reduce the number of referrals to special education and a need to provide support and assistance to general classroom teachers. Moreover, team teaching emerged from the need to service a greater number of students with disabilities in the general classroom. Finally, collaboration committees grew out of the need for collaborating teachers to meet together to plan, problem solve, and support one another as well as to monitor, evaluate, and refine the collaborative structures.
Observation of Structures

The collaborative structures observed in the schools included collaborative consultation and and team teaching at Lakeside, and teacher assistance teams and team teaching at the other four schools. The researcher found that all of the observed structures met the criteria on the researcher's verification checklist. Each of the structures had been functioning for at least three years and the principal had been at the school for at least four years. Teachers engaged in collaborative consultation (Lakeside) and team teaching (all schools) reported that they met a least once a week, used a systematic method of planning and/or problem solving, and kept written records of their meetings such as action plans or lesson plans. Team teachers indicated that they used a variety of teaching options such as (a) both teachers jointly teaching the lesson, (b) one teacher teaching the lesson and the other teacher leading the learning activity, or (c) one teacher presenting the lesson and both teachers working with small groups of students during the guided practice. Team teachers reported using a variety of team teaching options and choosing their options according to student needs and teacher expertise.

All of the teacher assistance teams (TAT) met at least once a month, used a systematic problem solving process, and kept written records of their interactions. Major differences among the teacher assistance teams included (a) differences in names such as Assistance to Magnolia's Children Team (AMC), student assistance team (SAT), child assistance team (CAT) or teachers assisting teachers team (TAT); (b) differences in who serves as chairperson (general classroom teacher, a guidance counselor, or the principal);
(c) differences in team membership (some teams were general educator driven and invited the specialists, parents and students as needed, while other teams included the specialists as permanent members); (d) differences in meeting times such as some teams met once a week or once a month on a specified day and time, while other teams met as needed; and (e) differences in team forms (differences in the number of forms, the type of information required, the format of the forms, and the filing and dissemination of the forms). For example, one of Ocean View's SAT forms had places for an action plan and signatures of all the team members. A copy of this form is placed in the team notebook, in the student's file, and a copy sent to the student's parents.

In summary, three collaborative structures were observed by the researcher: collaborative consultation, teacher assistance teams, and team teaching. Although the teacher assistant teams exhibited similarities such as (a) functioning for the same purposes, (b) meeting regularly, (c) using a problem-solving process, and (d) keeping written records of their meetings, a number of differences were noted among the teams. These differences included differences in (a) names of the teams, (b) positions of individuals who serve as chairpersons, (c) membership on the team, (d) frequency of team meetings, and (e) differences in team forms.

Team teaching structures had three similarities. These included that team teachers (a) met frequently, (b) documented their meetings by using lesson plans or action plans, and (c) used a variety of co-teaching options. The notable difference among the team teachers was the variation in the number of grades served by the specialist.
Evolution of Collaborative Structures

From the analysis of the data, teacher collaboration for students with special needs emerged in three stages: initiation, development, and continuance. The initiation stage refers to the time when teacher collaboration for students with special needs was first considered, discussed, and perhaps attempted in an informal way. The development stage relates to the preparation period and the first year of implementation, and the continuance stage pertains to the second year of implementation to the present time.

Initiation. Teacher assistance teams were observed in four schools. The following information relates to only three of the schools because the interviewees from Rainbow were not at the school when the teacher assistance team was initiated and they did not know when and how the team was initiated. The teams from the other three schools were initiated between 1988 and 1992. The formation of the teams at Greenwood and Ocean View were prompted by district recommendation. Jim reported that after receiving the district recommendation, he took the matter to the faculty for discussion and decision. Sarah related that at Ocean View, the child study team had initially functioned as a teacher assistance team. Magnolia’s teacher assistance team was initiated by its principal who asked Helen, then serving as assistant principal, to develop a teacher assistance team at Magnolia.

Team teaching, which was functioning at all five schools, was initiated in various ways between 1989 and 1992. In three schools, Lakeside, Greenwood, and Magnolia, teacher specialists were the initiators while Ocean View’s team teaching was part of a district initiative. At Rainbow, team teaching was initiated by the principal and one
teaching specialist. In all of the schools except Rainbow, team teaching had been practiced informally by a few teachers. Commonalities in the principal’s role at all five schools included providing time and providing training. The major difference in principal’s role was between the teacher-initiated schools where the teachers communicated a vision to the principal and the principal responded in a positive way and the schools where team teaching was initiated through the principal and the principal communicated that vision to the teachers.

**Development.** Teacher assistance teams at Greenwood, Magnolia, Ocean View, and Rainbow were developed between 1988 and 1992. Teams at Magnolia and Ocean View were developed by Helen and Sarah when they were assistant principals. Both Helen and Sarah designed the teams to be general-education driven and completely separate from the child-study teams. Additionally, both Helen and Sarah served as members of the team. The team at Magnolia was the first to be developed in the district and became the model for the district. The team at Greenwood was developed by the principal and the teachers and was designed to be general-education driven. Jim helped the teachers organize the team and develop a notebook of procedures and forms. After the team was organized and formed, the district special education coordinator supplied technical assistance as it was needed. Rainbow’s child assistance team is somewhat different from the others in that the principal and resource teacher serve as the permanent members of the team while other members such as the referring teacher and individuals who are associated with the concern join the team on a case-by-case basis.
During the development stage, the principal's role at Magnolia and Ocean View included (a) developing the team, (b) developing the team forms and procedures, (c) obtaining volunteers, (d) promoting the team, and (e) serving as a member of the team. The principal's role at Greenwood included (a) helping teachers organize the team, (b) helping develop a notebook of team procedures and forms, and (c) encouraging the team to contact the district special education coordinator for technical assistance. Finally, at Rainbow, the principal's role included (a) developing the team design, forms, and procedures; (b) scheduling and notifying individuals of team meetings; and (c) serving on the team. In summary, all the principals at the four schools with functioning teacher assistance teams were involved in the development of the teams, the team forms, and the procedures. Additionally, all principals promoted the team and four of the principals used only members who volunteered. Finally, three of the four principals served as members of the team.

Team teaching was developed in all of the schools between 1990 and 1993. In the five schools, plans for team teaching were developed in various ways. In some schools, teachers collaboratively wrote systematic plans, while in other schools, teachers and principals met and decided on a plan of action to begin team teaching. With the aid of the special education coordinator, teachers at Lakeside and Greenwood wrote belief statements and systematic plans for implementing and continuing team teaching. The plans were alike in that they were written by a committee formed of representatives of all the grade levels and all the specialists. The plans were then circulated by the representatives to all the faculty members for their input and approval. Principals of both
schools stayed informed concerning the plans and provided assistance as it was needed. Lakeside and Greenwood differed in writing systematic plans regarding the period of time that the plans were written. Whereas the teachers at Greenwood wrote their plan over the course of the year before they implemented team teaching, the teachers at Lakeside discovered, during the first year of the implementation of team teaching, that a systematic plan would be helpful and they were then given a workday by the principal to write their plan. The initial team teaching model at Magnolia was developed by a general educator, a specialist, and the principal. At Ocean View and Rainbow, principals worked with teachers, especially with special education teachers, in developing team teaching.

During the development stage, two similarities that were noted among the schools included (a) starting with volunteers and (b) starting small, usually with two teachers and one grade level, and then expanding. Ocean View is an exception in that team teaching was started in all classes where students with disabilities had been placed. All principals reported (a) providing training for team teachers and participating in some of the training, (b) helping with schedules, (c) supporting and encouraging the collaborating, and (d) monitoring collaborative activities. Additionally, during the beginning stage, four out of the five principals helped collaborative teachers to solve problems.

Two major differences noted among the principals were the provision of incentives and notification of parents. The actions of two principals best illustrate the provision of incentives. Jim, at Greenwood reduced class size of the co-taught classes and Sarah, at Ocean View provided compensation time for the team teachers. Secondly,
concerning formal notification of parents, Pam, at Rainbow sent a letter to the parents explaining team teaching, while at Greenwood Jim held a parent forum in the summer prior to the first year of implementation.

Notable teacher comments about the development stage related to the following. Three teacher interviewees mentioned that although they were enthusiastic about team teaching and were compatible with their teaching partners, the first six months were time consuming and difficult for them because of the adjustments necessary in learning to share a classroom, sharing students, and teaching with another teacher. Additionally, teachers from Lakeside and Greenwood remarked that when all the collaborating teachers were given a day to plan or a day to attend workshops, the group experienced a bonding.

Overall, during the development stages of team teaching, the principal’s role included (a) providing time for teachers to develop a plan for team teaching or working with teachers to develop a plan, (b) seeking volunteers, (c) informing parents, (d) providing training and at times participating in the training, (e) helping with schedules, (f) providing encouragement and assistance where needed, (g) solving problems and mediating, (h) providing incentives, and (i) monitoring.

Continuance. Interviewee responses from the five schools regarding the continuance of the teacher assistance teams addressed seven major topics: (a) promoting the team, (b) training of the members, (c) retaining continuity within the team, (d) monitoring the team, (e) evaluating the team, (f) providing incentives, (g) scheduling team meetings, and (h) providing time for the team to meet. Teacher assistance teams were observed in four schools: Greenwood, Magnolia, Ocean View, and Rainbow. In
faculty meetings and in individual encounters with teachers, principals in all four schools encouraged teachers to use the teacher assistance team. At Ocean View, Sarah encouraged teachers in her weekly memos to use their student assistance team.

Concerning further training of team members, Helen indicated that she encouraged the team members to keep current regarding teaching and learning strategies. A successful teaching and learning strategy was included each week in Helen’s newsletters to teachers. At Ocean View, Sarah said that she sent members of the student assistance team to conferences with the stipulation that they share their newly acquired knowledge and understanding with the other team members. Sarah also supplied team members with a resource book of effective teaching and learning strategies. Principals from three of the schools reported that they retained continuity within the team in a number of ways such as (a) having the same individual as chairperson for three of four years, (b) having an administrator as a permanent member of the team, and (c) having some of the team members choose to stay on the team for a number of years. All the principals monitored their team in some fashion. At Greenwood, Jim reviewed the team notebook periodically. Helen kept herself informed by frequently talking with the chairperson. At Ocean View, Sarah monitored the team’s functioning by serving as a member of the team. At Rainbow, Pam also monitored by serving as a member of the team and kept track of the progress of students who were referred to the team. Two of the principals provided incentives for the team members. Jim counted membership on the teacher assistance team as one of the school’s required committee assignments and gave teachers who
served on the team recertification points. Sarah provided stipends for members of Ocean View's student assistance team.

Interviewee responses from the five schools regarding the continuance of the team teaching addressed nine major topics: (a) promotion of the program, (b) training (c) expansion, (d) scheduling, (e) problem solving, (f) recruiting, (g) monitoring, (h) evaluation, and (i) dissemination of information. Concerning the continuance of team teaching, Helen, at Magnolia, remarked, "You can't start it and let it go!" Ed, at Lakeside, echoed Helen's statement by stating that after a program is developed and running smoothly, the principal still plays an important role by encouraging collaborating teachers, by celebrating successes, and by encouraging non-collaborating teachers to try collaboration. Like Ed, Jim at Greenwood continues to celebrate successes at Greenwood and to encourage collaborating and non-collaborating teachers. At Ocean View, Sarah related that she continues to promote the program in a "passionate way" through her words and actions. At Rainbow, Pam commented that she is proactive and keeps the program in a "positive light." Other ways these principals continue to promote the program include (a) writing notes to teachers, (b) providing refreshments for meetings, (c) communicating successes to the school community, (d) welcoming observers and researchers, and (e) continuing to provide time and training for collaborating teachers.

Interviewees from all five schools reported that in the continuance stage, the principal provided on-going training for collaborating teachers and prospective collaborators. On-going training for collaborating teachers involved (a) workshops and conferences, (b) observations of other collaborators, (c) individual sessions with other
collaborators, and (d) videos. Two of the schools reported conducting needs assessments to determine the needs and interests of the collaborating teachers. At Ocean View, Sarah has plans for cross training (sending specialists to general education workshops and conferences and sending general educators to special education workshops and conferences).

Principals from the five schools used a number of strategies to train prospective collaborators. These strategies included opportunities to (a) observe team teachers teaching and planning, (b) view videos of team teaching, (c) attend an annual course on collaboration funded by the district, (d) participate in the collaboration committee meetings, (e) learn about team building in faculty meetings, (f) attend conferences and workshops, and (g) meet in one-to-one sessions with team teachers. Although participation in Ocean View’s collaborative structures for students with special needs is completely voluntary for teachers, Sarah believes all teachers should know how to collaborate; therefore, she provides presentations and workshops for the whole faculty on the “how to” of collaboration.

In the years following the development of team teaching, interviewees from all of the schools reported program expansion. In the five schools, expansion occurred at varying degrees. For example, the program at Greenwood added a grade level each year, while Magnolia’s program added two grades levels after the first year. Teacher collaborators at Lakeside, Greenwood, and Rainbow now service grades two through five, while those at Ocean View and Magnolia service kindergarten through fifth grade.
When asked to name the principal’s most significant role in the continuance process, a number of the teacher interviewees identified scheduling. Principals in all the five schools helped with scheduling. Pam (P), at Rainbow, and Helen (P), at Magnolia, reported that they gave the needs of team teachers priority in the master schedule. Additionally, four of the principals arranged for scheduling the placement of students and time for teachers to team teach in the spring preceding the school year.

Problem solving is another function of the principal during the continuance stage. All of the five principals were reported as encouraging team teachers to express their problems and concerns so that the principals could help in finding solutions. At two schools, Lakeside and Greenwood, collaborating teachers met as a committee once a month for the purposes of planning, problem solving, monitoring, and refinement. Teacher interviewees commented that they appreciated the openness and positive attitude of the principal and appreciated knowing that they could go to the principal with concerns about the program or relationships between teachers with confidence that the principal would listen and help solve the problems instead of “pulling the plug” on the program.

All principals indicated that the recruiting of teachers willing to collaborate from without and within the school was one of their on-going roles during the continuance stage. Jim at Greenwood and Helen at Magnolia reported that they made it clear when interviewing prospective teachers that if these candidates were not interested in collaborating with other teachers to problem solve and plan for special needs, then they would not fit at Greenwood or Magnolia. Since Jim believes in rotating team teachers at the different grade levels, he has continued to prepare non-collaborating teachers to
understand that they will need to eventually take their turn. If these teachers are not interested in collaborating, then Jim suggests that they consider transferring to another school.

Principals at all five schools mentioned monitoring team teaching as another aspect of the principal’s role in the continuance stage. Ed and Jim monitor their program through keeping close touch with teachers on the collaboration committees. Additionally, Jim visits classrooms, talks with collaborating teachers and grade-level teachers on a monthly basis, sends parents a quarterly report, and reviews report cards of all students in the co-taught classes. Helen and Pam monitor by visiting co-taught classes and talking with teachers, and Sarah monitors by making spot visits to team meetings.

Only two of the principals, Ed and Jim, conduct systematic evaluations of team teaching each year. These evaluations are a part of their collaboration plan. Annual evaluations of student progress and student and teacher satisfaction are conducted and results reported through the collaboration committee. Pam said that she conducted student progress evaluations and both teacher and student satisfaction evaluations during the first two years of Rainbow’s program and, having found positive results, did not consider it necessary to continue the evaluations each year. When asked about program evaluation, Helen stated that at Magnolia she used informal indicators of program effectiveness such as the positive response of teachers, students, and parents and the fewer referrals for discipline from co-taught classes. Additionally, Helen stated that as she reflected on their program, she realized that the formal evaluation was a important component, hitherto missing from their team teaching plan. Finally, Sarah, like Helen,
has not yet conducted a program evaluation of team teaching; however, she is presently planning a five-year study of student progress.

Interviewees reported that all five schools were involved in the dissemination of information about teacher collaboration for students with special needs. Team teachers at Lakeside present papers at conferences. Additionally, two of Lakeside's collaborative teachers teach a district-funded yearly course on collaboration for all teachers in the district. Team teachers at Greenwood have also presented at conferences and, along with their principal, have participated in a video on inclusion and collaboration produced by the district special education coordinator. This video is available to all schools in the district. Magnolia has served a model school for teacher collaboration for the district. Team teachers at Rainbow have presented at conferences, written articles, produced videos, and provided examples of co-taught lesson plans and schedules for team teaching. Pam, the principal, has also presented in other schools and in other districts. Additionally, principals of all five school have welcomed individuals from other schools to observe their teacher collaborators in action. Finally, the five principals have allowed researchers to study their collaborative structures for students with special needs.

Barriers, Facilitators, and Benefits

The interviewees from the five schools identified seven barriers to teacher collaboration: (a) insufficient time to plan, (b) uncooperative attitudes of non-collaborating teachers, (c) difficulty of adjustments during the first six months for beginning collaborators, (d) need for more personnel, (e) conflicts among collaborating teachers, (f) challenges in scheduling, and (g) teacher turnover. In respect to the first
barrier--insufficient time to plan--principals employed various strategies, which included (a) collaborating with another school concerning afternoon bus schedules, thereby giving the teachers additional time to plan at the end of the school day; (b) adding additional time to the physical education period; (c) providing teaching assistants at specific times during the week; (d) providing teachers with compensation time; and (e) providing substitutes for special planning days. The second major barrier, which interviewees from four of the five schools identified, was the resistant attitudes of non-collaborating teachers. These interviewees reported that teachers who chose not to collaborate could hinder the expansion of services in the general classroom to students with disabilities. Principals addressed this barrier by encouraging the non-collaborating teachers in a number of ways such as (a) providing inservices and sending them to conferences on collaboration, (b) providing time for these teachers to observe team teachers in teaching and planning sessions, (c) promoting collaborative activities in other areas of the school life, (d) relating teacher collaboration to the school vision and/or mission, (e) communicating the positive results from team teaching and other collaborative endeavors that related to students with specials needs, (f) inviting non-collaborating teachers to the collaborating teachers' group meetings, and (g) talking with these teachers individually about teacher collaboration for students with special needs. One principal (Jim at Greenwood) stated that at the beginning of their program, he began to encourage reluctant and resistant teachers to think about taking their turn as a team teacher. After three years of encouraging and providing opportunity to learn about team teaching, he has
now informed the non-collaborating teachers that if they are not willing to take their turn at team teaching, then they should seek a transfer to another school.

The third barrier that teacher interviewees from three of the schools mentioned was the difficulty in adjustment for new team teachers during the first months of team teaching. In the study, principals supported teachers during this initial period by (a) frequent and direct communication, (b) encouraging words, (c) recognizing successes, (d) listening to teacher concerns and needs, (e) solving problems, and (f) providing any other assistance as needed. Additionally, interviewees from three of the schools identified the need for additional personnel as a barrier—the fourth one mentioned above. Three of the principals expressed the importance of keeping the teacher caseload reasonable; so, as their programs expanded to include additional students or classes, more personnel were needed. Principals provided more personnel by directly communicating their needs to the appropriate district personnel or by going through the special educational district supervisor. Principals from two of the five schools pinpointed the fifth major barrier, which was conflicts among collaborating teachers. When such problems occurred, these principals served as listeners, mediators, encouragers, and problem solvers. Scheduling was also mentioned as a barrier by two schools—the sixth in the preceding list. Two of the principals mentioned that they gave the needs of teacher collaborators priority when developing the master schedule. Finally, teacher turnover was identified as a barrier by interviewees from one site. The principal and teachers in this school pointed out that when teacher turnover occurred, they sought to recruit replacements who were willing and able to collaborate.
Two facilitating factors identified by the interviewees from all five schools were principal support (commitment, openness, flexibility, positive attitude, assistance with scheduling, and provision of resources and time to plan) and the positive attitude of the collaborating teachers. Interviewees from three of the schools pinpointed a receptive climate (openness, honesty, trust, willingness to change and grow influenced by the school renewal program, and freedom to try new things). Additionally, interviewees from two of the schools mentioned student progress and reasonable caseloads for teachers as facilitating factors. Finally, those facilitating factors reported by interviewees from just one site included (a) staff stability, (b) programs planned a year in advance, (c) teachers who are volunteers, (d) continual monitoring and evaluation, (e) provision for all students to receive the full learning experiences of the general curriculum, (f) provision of informing of all participants of the status of the program, (g) acquisition of grant money for release time and training, (h) a staff who are supportive and close-knit, and (i) consideration of teacher collaboration as a priority by the principal and faculty.

Regarding benefits, interviewees from all five schools identified the professional growth of teachers and the progress of the students as major benefits. At Magnolia, Helen said that the collaborative activities for students with special needs had positively influenced other areas of school life. Ed, at Lakeside, and Jim, at Greenwood, remarked that according to their evaluations of student academic progress and satisfaction surveys, all students had benefited in the collaborative classes. Pam, at Rainbow, commented that their evaluations of team teaching revealed that the progress of students with disabilities was comparable to their progress in the pull-out program. However, the progress of
at-risk students was greater in the co-taught classrooms. Carole, the general educator at Ocean View, stated that she and her students had benefited from the service of the student assistance team. She further related that students and teachers continue to benefit because the team’s solutions are placed in students’ records and passed on through the grades.

In summary, the major barriers identified by the interviewees from the five schools included (a) time to plan, (b) attitudes of non-collaborating teachers, (c) adjustments during the first six months for beginning collaborators, (d) need for more personnel, (e) conflicts among collaborating teachers, (f) scheduling, and (g) teacher turnover. Major facilitating factors pinpointed by all five schools were principal support and the positive attitude of the collaborating teachers. Benefits of teacher collaboration for students with special needs included professional growth for teachers and student progress.

Future of Teacher Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

When asked about the future of teacher collaboration for students with special needs in the next three to five years, interviewees from all five schools predicted that it would continue and expand. Even with the principal leaving at Magnolia, interviewees commented that because teacher collaboration was a norm in the school, they believed it would continue and expand. Similarly, at Rainbow, where they had experienced the problem of teacher turnover, the interviewees believed the program would continue. Pam, the principal, remarked that, “when you lose a teacher collaborator, you may have to take one step backward to give the replacement time to get to know the school, the students, and the teachers before you advance again.” Interviewees from the various
schools predicted different kinds of growth in teacher collaboration such as (a) increase in the number of teachers involved, (b) increase in the numbers of parents requesting placement for their children in the co-taught classes, and (c) increase in the number of students and the type of students involved. Interviewees from four of the schools foresaw continued improvement in a variety of areas such as (a) ways to schedule, (b) ways to provide more time for collaborating teachers, (c) ways to reach and teach students, (d) ways to better prepare perspective collaborating teachers, and (e) ways to refine the skills of the present collaborating teachers. At Ocean View, Sarah spoke of the influence that she believed that teacher collaboration would eventually have on the whole school. She foresees all teachers at Ocean View becoming comfortable with talking about their practice so that professional dialogues will be the norm for all teachers on the faculty. At Rainbow, Pam envisions having a specialist for each grade level who will teach a daily two-hour block in each class on that grade level.

The Principal’s Role in Fostering Collaboration for Students with Special Needs

Developing a Collaborative Culture

Four of the five principals stated that they had deliberately set out to establish a collaborative culture in their schools. The fifth principal, Helen, at Magnolia, explained that since she had been at Magnolia for 13 years (first as a teacher, then as a assistant principal and for the last four years a principal), she pictured herself as more of an influencer of the culture rather than as a developer. Whether principals were developing a collaborative culture or influencing the culture to be more collaborative, eleven major similarities among the principals were identified.
1. All principals modeled collaboration by (a) actively listening to teachers, (b) sharing common goals, (c) viewing teachers as colleagues, (d) sharing decision making with teachers, and (e) solving problems with teachers.

2. All principals used various types of symbols and rituals to develop a collaborative culture. Some examples include Ed’s “Rocks and Rainbows”; Jim’s special “Wonderful Greenwood Club Cards”; Helen’s provision of sharing time for the teachers at faculty meetings; Sarah’s round table discussions; and Pam’s slogans on faculty agendas such as “Team up for Success.”

3. All principals provided various kinds of training in collaboration for all teachers such as (a) giving presentations to their own faculty, (b) bringing in outside experts to do team-building activities, (c) sharing videos, and (d) sending interested teachers to workshops and conferences.

4. All principals fostered a receptive climate for teacher collaboration. The climate at the various schools was described using terms such as caring, trusting, inviting, freeing, warm, open, and supportive.

5. All principals provided structures for teachers to collaborate such as advisory teams and collaborative committees.

6. All principals provided resources for teacher collaboration such as technical assistance and materials.

7. All principals engaged in frequent and direct communication such as periodically visiting teachers, having a open door policy, and writing notes to individual teachers.
8. All principals encouraged teachers to collaborate and express their ideas, concerns and problems as well as provided opportunities for all teachers to share (special sharing times at faculty meetings, round table discussions, and half-day sharing times).

9. All principals freely expressed their beliefs about collaboration. For example, Jim, who believed all teachers should collaborate or Helen, who stated teacher collaboration is a necessity.

10. All principals celebrated the successes of collaboration and recognized teacher accomplishments by, for instance, highlighting them at faculty meetings and in newsletters.

11. As stated in an previous section, all principals related teacher collaboration to the school vision and/or mission.

Activities that some of the principals used to foster a collaborative culture included (a) having yearly school-wide themes, (b) having teachers participate in developing the agenda for faculty meetings, (c) providing a specified time one day a week for all teachers to have an opportunity to collaborate, (d) providing furniture such as round tables, and (e) treating the school community as members of a family. In summary, all the principals in the study deliberately set out to develop a collaborative culture or to influence the existing culture to be more collaborative. An analysis of principal responses related to building or influencing a collaborative culture revealed similarities among all of the principals which are (a) modeling collaboration; (b) using rituals and symbols; (c) providing training in collaboration; (d) fostering a receptive climate; (e) providing collaborative structures; (f) providing resources; (g) engaging in
frequent and direct communication; (h) encouraging teachers to express their ideas, concerns and problems; (i) expressing their beliefs about teacher collaboration; (j) celebrating successes and recognizing accomplishments; and (k) relating teacher collaboration to the school vision and/or mission.

Role Descriptors

In describing the role of the five principals, interviewees used various metaphors such as “coach,” “cheerleader,” “sounding board,” “best supporting actress,” and “rock.” The metaphors most frequently mentioned by the interviewees were sounding board and cheerleader. From analysis of the data, three major categories in the principal’s roles emerged: supporting, communicating, and evaluating. As supporters, all principals were described as providing (a) encouragement, (b) a receptive school climate and culture, (c) training, (d) time, (e) scheduling, (f) ways to share concerns and problems, (g) problem-solving assistance and any other assistance as needed, (h) additional collaborative teachers through recruiting, (i) demonstrations of commitment to teacher collaboration, (j) ways and opportunities to disseminate information on collaboration and (k) monitoring. Additionally, all principals supported teacher collaboration for students with special needs by becoming knowledgeable of teacher collaboration through participating in teacher training and various other means. Prominent characteristics attributed to all of the principals as communicators included openness, visibility, and availability. As communicators, all principals (a) communicated a school vision and/or mission and related their school vision/mission to teacher collaboration for students with special needs, (b) listened to teacher collaborators, (c) modeled a collaborative style.
(d) encouraged teacher input and shared decision making, (e) celebrated successes and recognized accomplishments, (f) communicated and demonstrated norms of collaboration and defended those norms, (g) provided teachers with positive feedback, and (h) used symbols and rituals. Finally, although all principals viewed evaluation as one of the principal's roles, only three of the five principals have functioned in that role so far. As evaluators, these principals evaluated student progress and teacher, student, and parent satisfaction.

Changes in Role

Concerning the changes in the principal's role over time, interviewees from four schools believed that the principal was not as intensely and directly involved as in the first year of the program. Moreover, teacher interviewees from three schools reported that after their principals received positive evaluation results at the end of the first year, they were even more committed to teacher collaboration for students with special needs and were willing to take more risks. Sarah remarked that after the first year, she learned not to make so many assumptions about teacher collaboration. Ed commented that he had become more realistic and had learned that the success of teacher collaboration was "due to the amount of assistance you can give people."

Reflections

When principals were asked what they would do differently if they could begin teacher collaboration again and teachers were asked what they would want the principal to do differently if they could start over again, many of their responses related to the initiation stage of teacher collaboration. Interviewees from three schools recommended
that the principal start with a systematic plan developed in a collaborative manner and provide inservices on a variety of topics such as (a) the value of collaboration, (b) the teaching of students with disabilities, and (c) awareness-level information on teacher collaboration for students with special needs. Helen stated that she would make a greater effort to see that the staff and the community were more informed about teacher collaboration for students with special needs. Jim said that, from the very beginning, he would inform the faculty that team teaching would initially be voluntary, but that after several years he would expect every teacher to take a turn. Ed remarked that he would go slower in the beginning and give teachers more time to get used to the idea of team teaching and collaborative consultation. Ed also said that he would hire only teachers who were willing to collaborate. Sarah mentioned that in the early stages of the program, she would make fewer assumptions and be more directive and passionate about teacher collaboration for students with special needs. Moreover, she said that she would make sure all teachers spoke a common language regarding teacher collaboration. Finally, Pam commented that she would have the teachers develop a shared vision for teacher collaboration for students with special needs. Additional suggestions made by the teacher interviewees included (a) hire more personnel, (b) set the number of students to be involved in the program and stick to that number, (c) assure a planning time for teachers each day, (d) let no other school activities interrupt the team teaching time, and (e) allow more time for special educators to study the general education curriculum. Overall, when principals were questioned concerning what they would do differently if they could begin teacher collaboration again and when teachers were asked what they would like for the
principal to do differently, most interviewee responses related to the initiation stage of teacher collaboration. The actions that were addressed most frequently were developing a systematic plan in a collaborative manner and providing inservices related to teacher collaboration for students with special needs for the whole faculty.
CHAPTER V

EMERGING THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was designed to examine the principal’s role in fostering teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs. Two overarching questions guided the study: (a) How do principals foster teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs and (b) how do these behaviors relate to leadership behaviors that have been identified as facilitative of teacher collaboration? To answer the first question, a multiple-site descriptive research study was conducted in five schools. Data gathered from four data sources in these schools were presented in thick, narrative description and displayed on charts in Chapter Four.

To address the second question, a five-step sequence was followed. First, empirical studies relating to the principal’s role in teacher collaboration were analyzed to determine specific role descriptors of the principal associated with fostering teacher collaboration. These studies included research on teacher collaboration for students with special needs as well as research on teacher collaboration for other purposes such as staff development and organizational change. Secondly, the role descriptors detected in these studies were divided into two categories: role descriptors most frequently cited in the literature (see Table 1) and role descriptors not as frequently cited in the literature.
(see Table 2). Thirdly, role descriptors of the principal found in the cross-site analysis of the five case studies were classified and compared with the predetermined role descriptors derived from the literature analysis (see Tables 18 and 19). Next, role descriptors derived from the cross-site analysis of the case studies but not cited in the literature were identified (see Table 20). Finally, the findings from the cross-site analysis were classified into three levels (see Table 21). Level One role descriptors included those descriptors that were most frequently cited in the literature and identified in all five case studies. Level Two descriptors include those descriptors that were not as frequently cited in the literature but cited in all five studies. Level Three descriptors included descriptors that were not cited in the literature but identified in all five studies. This chapter is divided into three sections that include (a) a presentation of the emerging themes from the cross-case analysis and a comparison of the cross-site analysis with the literature analysis, (b) a discussion of the limitations of the study, (c) recommendations for practice and future research, and (d) the researcher's concluding thoughts. Tables 18-21 are located at the end of this chapter.

Emerging Themes

Theme One: The Importance of the Principal's Role

The first emerging theme revealed across the five case studies was the importance of the principal's role. According to the utilized literature, the principal plays a central and critical role in fostering collaboration among teachers. Little (1981) suggested that because of the nature of their office, principals are in a unique position to foster the practice of collaboration. Similarly, Rosenholtz (1989) related that teacher collaboration

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appears to be the result of actions of the principal, while Smith and Scott (1990) reported that the principal is the key player in fostering collaborative relationships in schools.

Findings from this study support the above finding in the literature. Interviewees from all five schools identified the principal's role to be a major facilitating factor in teacher collaboration. Moreover, principals noted that although their role was more direct and intense in the initial stages of teacher collaboration, their involvement remained important even through the continuance stage. Although teacher collaboration was initiated, developed, and continued in various ways within and across the schools, the importance of the principal's role in each of these stages remained constant. Interviewees in all five schools cited specific aspects of the principal's role as being important during each of the stages. To illustrate, some of the salient commonalities identified among the five principals during each of the stages included providing opportunity and relating teacher collaboration for special needs students to the school vision and/or mission during the initiation stage; facilitating planning and in some cases participating in the planning and communicating norms during the development stage; and expanding teacher collaboration, defending norms, and disseminating information during the continuance stage.

**Theme Two: The Supportive Role of the Principal**

The second emerging theme identified in the cross-site analysis of the case studies was the supportive role of the principal. As indicated in the literature, the principal's supportive actions influence teacher collaboration. For example, Chalfant and Pysh (1989) reported that of 96 teacher assistance teams studied, 93% of the teams cited
support from the principal as a key factor in team effectiveness. Similarly, when investigating the relationship of organizational support and member satisfaction with teacher assistance teams, Kruger, Struzziere, Watts, and Vacca (1995) found that principal support variables accounted for over 50% of the variance of teacher satisfaction. The importance of principal support for teacher collaboration was directly cited in 9 of the 11 empirical studies (see Table 1). Noteworthy also is the fact that the remaining most frequently cited role descriptors in Table 1 are specific types of principal support. These descriptors include (a) providing time for teachers to plan and receive training, (b) providing human and material resources, (c) providing training and participating in the training, (d) demonstrating commitment, (e) helping with schedules, and (f) providing recognition of teacher accomplishments. One of these six most frequently cited supportive actions of the principal--demonstrating commitment--may need some clarification. Weiss, Cambone, and Wyeth (1992) reported that because teachers have seen so many reforms in education come and go, it is essential for the principal to clearly demonstrate his or her commitment to collaboration from the initiation stage to institutionalization. On another note, Pugach and Johnson (1989) indicated that when principal commitment is not clearly demonstrated in the implementation stage, the collaborative endeavor may be perceived as only a function of special education.

The comparison of the cross-site analysis with the role descriptors most frequently cited in the literature (see Table 18), revealed that principals in all five sites were described as strongly supportive and that they provided collaborative teachers with the types of support most frequently cited in the literature. Two types of support, providing
time and helping with scheduling, were the ones most frequently mentioned by the
interviewees. Because all the schools in the study were elementary schools where
teachers typically do not have a scheduled planning time, the provision for planning time
within the school day proved a challenging task. Principals in the study met this
challenge in various ways, such as adding time to physical education classes,
collaborating with another school regarding bus schedules, and providing substitute
teachers while collaborative teachers met to plan. Additionally, teacher interviewees
stressed the importance of the principal’s role in scheduling and placing students. These
interviewees reported that the principal gave priority to the needs of the collaborating
teachers when developing the master schedule for the school. The indicators from the
cross-site comparison (see Table 18) upheld the findings from the literature regarding the
supportive role of the principal in fostering teacher collaboration as well as each of the
specific types of supportive behaviors most frequently cited in the literature. For the
purpose of discussion, these descriptors that were most frequently cited in the literature
and observed in all five sites are designated as Level One descriptors.

Other role descriptors of principal support were cited in the literature but not as
frequently as the ones mentioned in the previous paragraphs (see Table 2). The cross-site
comparison with these descriptors (see Table 19) disclosed that, although these examples
of principal support were less frequently cited in the literature, a number of these
behaviors were attributed to principals in all five sites in the study. These descriptors
included (a) showing confidence in teachers and giving them freedom to act,
(b) encouraging teachers, (c) defending norms of collaboration, (d) providing opportunity, (e) providing assistance where needed, (f) providing positive feedback, and (g) using only teacher volunteers for collaborative endeavors. In this study, the five principals were described as showing confidence in the collaborative teachers by giving them freedom to make decisions and to try new ideas. It is noteworthy that in a number of schools, interviewees reported that the principals gave collaborative teachers even greater freedom to act when the collaborative endeavors proved successful for students and teachers. Additionally, principals set parameters on teacher actions and decisions by maintaining that actions and decisions must line up with the school’s vision and/or mission. The five principals encouraged teacher collaborators in various ways, such as giving positive feedback through written notes, giving “pats on the back,” making visits to classrooms and by providing stipends, compensation time, and refreshments for meetings. All of the principals in the study defended norms of teacher collaboration by encouraging teachers in sharing concerns, solving problems, and continuing the collaborative structures through times of difficulty. For the purpose of discussion, descriptors that were less frequently cited in the literature but cited in all five sites in the cross-site analysis (See Table 19) are designed as Level Two descriptors of the principal’s role.

In the cross-site analysis, one additional supportive behavior was identified in all five settings that was not cited in the literature analysis (see Table 20). This behavior involved helping collaborative teachers to solve problems and conflicts related to teacher collaboration. All principals reported encouraging teachers to share problems as they
occurred so that together they could seek solutions. For the purpose of discussion this descriptor not cited in the literature but cited in all five studies will be termed as a Level Three descriptor.

**Theme Three: The Communicative Role of the Principal**

The third emerging theme identified in this study related to the communicative role of the principal. Although behaviors related to the communicative role of the principal were less frequently cited in the literature analysis, specific communicative behaviors were evident in descriptions of all five principals (See Table 19). These behaviors included (a) being open, (b) building trust, (c) modeling a collaborative style, (d) engaging in frequent and direct communication, (e) talking about teaching and learning, (f) communicating and describing norms, (g) communicating a compelling purpose, (h) using symbols and rituals, and (i) projecting a positive attitude. Concerning the importance of openness, Kirby and Blase (1991) reported that when principals are perceived as closed in their relationships with teachers, then teachers will avoid the principal's efforts to involve them in collaborative interactions. Furthermore, Ruck (1986) suggested that a principal's open communication and willingness to learn greatly encourages collaborative interactions among teachers. Hoy, Tarter, and Witkoskie (1992) proposed that an atmosphere of openness leads to trust and further stated that teacher trust in the principal precedes teacher trust in their colleagues. In addition to Hoy, Tarter, and Witkoskie, Little (1981) and Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) found that the principal's modeling of collaboration in his or her interactions with teachers influenced teacher...
collaboration. Similarly, Gerber (1991) suggested that the principal's modeling of collaboration validates teacher collaboration.

Findings from this study present evidence that supports the communicative behaviors of the principal cited in the literature in that all of the five principals were open, available, and visible to teachers; built relationships with teachers based on trust and mutual respect; and modeled a collaborative style in their interactions with teachers. Additionally, all five principals were cited as engaging in frequent and direct communication. This frequent and direct communication involved, but was not limited to, communicating a compelling purpose for teacher collaboration for students with special needs, talking about teaching and learning, and communicating and describing norms. Moreover, the five principals used symbols and rituals to enhance their communication, such as Jim's Wonderful Greenwood Card Club, Ed's Rocks and Rainbows, and Sarah's motivating statements to teachers in her weekly memos. Finally, all five principals projected positive attitudes concerning teacher collaboration for students with special needs, as evidenced by Pam's "We can do it attitude," Helen's praise of collaborative teachers, Jim's examples of student progress, and each principal's vision for the expansion and continuance of teacher collaboration for students with special needs.

Two additional communicative behaviors of the principal were identified in the case studies but not cited in the literature analysis (see Table 20). These included listening to teachers and disseminating information. Concerning listening to teachers, teacher interviewees at each of the five sites described their principal as an active listener.
These teachers described principals as encouraging teacher input by being open and available to listen to teacher ideas and concerns. Although they employed various means, all five principals were engaged in disseminating information about teacher collaboration for students with special needs. For example, all of the principals welcomed individuals to observe and researchers to study teacher collaboration for students with special needs in their schools. Other methods of disseminating information about teacher collaboration for students with special needs included circulating video tapes, giving presentations, teaching courses, and writing articles.

Theme Four: The Leadership Role of the Principal

The fourth emerging theme revealed in the cross-site analysis of the five case studies related to the leadership role of the principal. Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) and Myerowitz (1990) used the term, "transforming leadership," when referring to principals who develop collaborative cultures in schools. According to these researchers, characteristics of a transforming leader include (a) building shared meaning among the teachers about their purposes at the school; (b) fostering strong commitment to the shared purposes; (c) communicating and demonstrating the importance of collaborative interactions among the members of the school community; (d) building an atmosphere of trust; (e) being open to new ideas and practices; and (f) monitoring, evaluating, and engaging in continuous improvement of the new practices.

Grimmett and Crehan (1992) also reported on the subject of leadership in developing collaborative cultures. They described two methods of organizationally
inducing collaboration. One related to imposing collaboration in a situation of low principal-teacher relationship and experience with dissonant beliefs and values. The other concerned interdependent collaboration, which was characterized by high teacher-principal relationship and experience with shared values and beliefs. Grimmett and Crehan (1992) indicated interdependent collaboration was found to be more stable and productive.

The case study descriptions of the leadership of all five principals support the literature’s description of transformational leadership, in that the five principals were perceived to be transformational leaders who engaged in interdependent collaboration. The following discussion elaborates on this theme. To begin with, one of the Level Three descriptors (the principal relates teacher collaboration for students with special needs to the school vision, mission, or shared values) was identified among all five principals. It was evident in the interviews and document reviews that principals and teachers in the schools shared a common purpose, whether it was to be an inviting school, to provide academic excellence for all students, or other purposes. The principal’s commitment to the purpose of the school was demonstrated in repeated comments from principals and teachers, such as “We’ll do it as long as it fulfills the vision or mission of the school.” For these principals, teachers collaboration for students with special needs was viewed as part of fulfilling the school vision and/or mission.

Leaders in the five schools were also concerned with building relationships with and among teachers as evidenced by the descriptions of their leadership style which included descriptors such as democratic, collaborative, open, visible, and available.
Teacher input was welcomed by these principals. Each of the principals provided an atmosphere of trust where teachers felt free to express their ideas, concerns, and problems. Additionally, all five principals engaged in some sort of participatory governance. Four of the five principals were involved in school renewal programs which promoted a school climate for change and improvement.

Principals in all five sites monitored teacher collaboration in a variety of ways such as periodically reviewing teacher assistance team documents, making spot visits to collaborative meetings, periodically visiting classrooms and meeting with teachers, reading quarterly reports, reviewing student progress reports and report cards, and serving as a member of a teacher assistance team. Interviewees reported that principals monitored collaborative endeavors more often in the first years of the initiative.

Although all principals did not evaluate their collaborative structures, evaluation merits attention here for the following reasons. First, all principals reported that students and teachers had benefited from the use of collaborative structures yet only three of the principals had evaluated student achievement and participant satisfaction. Teacher interviewees indicated that when positive results from the evaluations were revealed after the first year of the program, their principals became even more committed to teacher collaboration for students with special needs. The two principals who did not report evaluating student progress and stakeholder satisfaction, related that in retrospect they recognized the need for this kind of evaluation. As a result, one principal has plans for a five-year study of student progress and the other principal has recommended adding an evaluation component to their program.
Theme Five: The Role of the Principal as a Promoter of a Collaborative Culture

As leaders, all the principals in the study reported that they deliberately set out to develop or strengthen a collaborative culture, which leads to the fifth and final emerging theme of the study: Principals in the study intentionally promoted a collaborative culture. The five principals employed various ways to promote a collaborative culture in their schools. Some of their actions included (a) providing team-building experiences for the entire faculty, (b) modeling collaboration in day-to-day interactions with teachers, (c) scheduling sharing times with the faculty, and (d) involving teachers in decision making. The promotion of a school-wide collaborative culture by each of the principals prepared the way for teacher collaboration for students with special needs. To illustrate, Ed related that he had deliberately set out to establish a collaborative culture when his school first opened seven years ago. Then, three years later, when teachers discussed with him the need for teacher collaboration for students with special needs, he remarked that the culture and climate of the school was receptive to this type of collaboration.

Limitations of the Study

When conducting the study, two limitations were identified. First, the sample was limited in that the nominated schools that met the selection criteria were suburban elementary schools; therefore, caution should be exercised in relating the findings to principals in other school settings. Secondly, in the analysis of the literature, it was difficult in most cases to assess or specify the magnitude of importance or discreteness of the role descriptors. To illustrate, some descriptors are specific (for example, provide
time for collaboration), and others are broad (for example, communicate a compelling purpose). Additionally, some role descriptors overlapped (for example, to provide human and material resources could be a way to demonstrate commitment). In order to address this limitation, the researcher operationally defined each of the descriptors (see Appendix E), matched examples from the data to the descriptors, and clustered the descriptors under the emerging themes identified in the study.

Recommendations

**Recommendations for Research**

This study leaves a number of questions related to the principal’s role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs unanswered and suggests the following recommendations for further research.

1. Since the sites nominated for this study were all elementary schools, the study could be replicated at the middle and high school levels to determine if the role of the principal in fostering collaboration among teachers manifests differently at other school levels.

2. The research questions from this study could be investigated in different types of elementary schools (urban and/or rural with student populations from lower socioeconomic backgrounds) to determine if the trends revealed in this study were really a function of the similarity of the sites.

3. More complex designs could be used to study the principal’s role in teacher collaboration such as (a) studies that compare the behaviors and beliefs of principals of productive and stable collaborative structures with the beliefs and behaviors of principals...
in schools with less productive and stable collaborative structures and (b) longitudinal studies to investigate and determine other organizational factors (for example, support of peers) associated with stable and productive teacher collaboration for students with special needs.

4. Other leadership roles related to fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs such as the role of the assistant principal, the special education coordinator and teacher leaders could be examined to determine their influence on teacher collaboration for students with special needs.

5. The whole matter of evaluating the effectiveness of teacher collaboration for students with special needs (does it really improve teaching and learning for this population as well as other students) should be investigated such as (a) do principals evaluate; (b) why and what do principals evaluate; (c) how do principals evaluate and how do they use evaluation results; (d) how often do principals evaluate; and (e) what influence does evaluation have on the commitment and support of the whole school community, the district, and the external community.

6. Specific barriers to teacher collaboration were identified in the literature and in this study such as the reluctance and resistance of non-collaborating teachers to attempt collaboration and the lack of adequate time for collaborating teachers to plan and problem solve. Further research is needed to determine effective strategies that the principal can use to reduce teacher resistance to collaboration and to provide adequate time for teachers to collaborate.
Recommendations for Practice

This study offers a number of recommendations for practice.

1. Since teacher collaboration for students with special needs is projected to be an essential component in education throughout the 21st century (Friend & Cook, 1992; Fullan, 1992; Pugach & Johnson, 1995), it is imperative to use more formal and comprehensive evaluations to validate the impact of teacher collaboration on student progress and teacher professional growth.

2. Given the current and projected emphasis on teacher collaboration, findings from this study could be included in the content in preservice preparations programs for principals as well as used as a resource for professional development programs for principals at the state and district level.

3. Individuals from state departments and school districts who would be interested in developing instruments to screen principals for placement in schools where teacher collaboration for students with special needs is desired as a practice could attend to the emerging five themes and the three levels of role descriptors identified in the study. The five themes offer a global perspective on the principal’s role while the three levels of role descriptors offer a more specific description of the actions of principals in fostering teacher collaboration.

4. Principals could use all three levels of descriptors to self-evaluate their own practice. Moreover, principals who are considering promoting teacher collaboration in their schools especially for students with special needs may gain insight from the case studies in that they portray the development of collaboration from the initiation to the
continuance stage in schools where teacher collaboration for students with special needs is productive, stable, and expected to expand and continue. Additionally, these principals could use the emerging themes and the three levels of descriptors as a guide in the initiation, development, and practice of collaborative structures.

Summary

In this study, a multiple-site descriptive case study was conducted to investigate the principal’s role in fostering teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs. Five emerging themes were identified in the cross-site analysis of the five case studies which included (a) principals play an important role in teacher collaboration for students with special needs, (b) principals play a supportive role, (c) principals play a communicative role, (d) principals are transformational leaders who engage in interdependent collaboration, and (e) principals as leaders intentionally promote a collaborative culture. Additionally, a literature analysis of selected empirical studies relating to the principal’s role in teacher collaboration was conducted to determine specific role descriptors of the principal. Next, the role descriptors of the principal as found in the cross-site analysis of the five case studies were classified and compared to the descriptors as cited in the literature analysis. Then role descriptors not cited in the literature but found in all five case studies were identified. Finally, findings from the cross-site comparison of the role descriptors were classified into three levels of descriptors.

A major contribution of this study is the detailed account of the evolution of two collaborative structures and the principal’s role in fostering the evolution of those
structures. At the time of the study, the researcher had not found a study that offered such an account. The study also supports the role descriptors of the principal cited in other empirical research. Moreover, the study identified additional role descriptors not cited in the empirical research (Level Three descriptors).

Limitations of the study identified while conducting the research included a limited sample of suburban elementary schools and a concern related to the magnitude of importance and the discreteness of the descriptors. Recommendations for further research included (a) replication of the study in other settings, (b) investigation of the principal's role using more focused and complex research designs, (c) examination of the roles of other individuals in leadership associated with teacher collaboration for students with special needs, (d) examination of evaluation practices, and (e) investigation of specific strategies for principals to counteract barriers to teacher collaboration. Finally, recommendations for practice included conducting more formal and comprehensive evaluations of the impact of teacher collaboration as well as using the case studies, emerging themes, and levels of role descriptors for four main purposes: (a) preservice and professional development programs for principals, (b) screening instruments, (c) self-assessment data for individual principals, and (d) information source for individual principals.

Concluding Thoughts

The researcher's concluding thoughts will be divided into two sections: (a) thoughts on the use of qualitative methodology and (b) thoughts on changes the researcher would institute should she do this research again.
The Researcher's Response to the Use of Qualitative Research

When choosing a research strategy, Yin (1994) suggested three considerations: (a) the type of question, (b) the extent of researcher control over events, and (c) the degree to which the subject of the research is contemporary as opposed to historical. Using these considerations, the researcher chose to do a qualitative descriptive case study because the primary research question was a "how" question relating to a contemporary educational phenomenon over which the researcher had no control. The researcher's primary goal was to increase the understanding of the principal's role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs. Embarking on this endeavor with more textbook knowledge than experience, the researcher found that when conducting observations, interviews, and document reviews, the textbook term "thick, rich description" took on greater meaning. The researcher experienced the process of obtaining "thick" description by probing participant's answers to the focused questions for greater depth, detail, and clarity. Some probes led to new insights which precipitated additional questions and provided broader and deeper understandings. The experience was somewhat like mining for silver and finding silver and gold.

"Rich" description came not only through the participants' idiosyncratic expressions but also through their gestures, facial expressions, and voice tones. When answering a question concerning vision for teacher collaboration, one participant took a framed poem from over her desk and meaningfully read it to the researcher with tears in her eyes. Another interviewee when answering the same question likened teacher collaboration to the Borax mule team commercial. In one instance, facial expressions and
voice tone revealed much more than words when one principal was describing the progress of specific students in co-taught classrooms. “Richness” was also captured in the unique verbal expressions of some of the interviewees such as a teacher description of the principal as a “do-ahead” person or one principal’s perception of herself as “the best supporting actress” with the teachers cast as the “stars” of teacher collaboration.

During the data-gathering, data-analysis, transcribing, and writing stages, the textbook term, “labor intensive” also took on greater meaning. Although interviews were limited to an hour, some document reviews took as much as three four-hour sessions. Each of the stages required a greater amount of time than the researcher had anticipated.

An interesting aspect of this research related to that the researcher’s interaction with participants in their natural setting. In this way, the researcher experienced many of the reported participant perceptions. For example, when teachers described the principal as open and available, the researcher in the course of the research experienced these specific qualities of the principal. Another notable aspect of the research related to the insights that participants gained when they reviewed the transcripts of the interviews and the case-study descriptions. To illustrate, a number of principals reported that they acquired new understanding about themselves and the collaborative structures after reviewing the research data.

When beginning the study, the researcher held the assumption that the principal played an important role in teacher collaboration. As a result of the research the researcher was surprised at the consistent importance of the principal’s role throughout the evolution of the collaborative structures. Additionally, in the researcher’s observation
of the collaborative structures, the researcher was amazed how much the teacher collaborators could accomplish in a 30-minute session.

Changes

The researcher would make two changes if she were to do this research again. First, she would collaborate with another researcher in order to have continual interaction in every aspect of the research. Secondly, the researcher would add district special education coordinators to the list of interviewees. In a number of the sites, the district special education coordinators were found to be significant contributors to the collaborative programs. These coordinators would provide an additional perspective on the principal’s role in fostering teacher collaboration for students with special needs.
Table 18
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Cross-site Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptors Most Frequently Cited in the Literature</th>
<th>Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lakeside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Be supportive</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Demonstrate commitment</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide training and participate in training</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide resources (human and material)</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provide time</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provide recognition of accomplishment</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Help with schedules</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Decision rule for descriptors found in the literature: Cited in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs (see Table 1).

Decision Rule for schools: Cited in at least two of the four data sources.
Table 19
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Cross-site Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptors Not As Frequently Cited in the Literature</th>
<th>Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Build trust</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Show confidence in teachers and give freedom</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Be open</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Model a collaborative style</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Encourage teachers</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Talk about teaching and learning</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Check readiness</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Communicate a compelling purpose</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Communicate and describe norms</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Defend norms</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Set clear goals (involve staff)</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Relate collaborative activities to teacher concerns and priorities</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Help develop structures</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Facilitate faculty participation in defining collaboration and developing structures</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Provide assistance where needed</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Provide opportunity</td>
<td>• • • • •</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Role Descriptors Not As Frequently Cited in the Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptor</th>
<th>Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide positive feedback</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a systematic plan</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit teachers</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use symbols and rituals</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquire and utilize specific skills to enhance a collegial culture</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in frequent and direct communication</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project a positive attitude</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start with volunteers</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start small and build</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Decision rule for descriptors found in the literature:** Cited in four or more studies with two or more of the studies addressing teacher collaboration for students with special needs (see Table 1).

**Decision Rule for schools:** Cited in at least two of the four data sources.
Table 20
The Principal's Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration
Cross-Site Analysis

| Additional Descriptors of the Principal's Role as Found in the Data from Five Case Studies | Schools |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Relate to school vision, mission, or shared values |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |
| 2. Listen to teachers (sounding board) |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |
| 3. Help solve problems |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |
| 4. Schedule and place students in advance |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |
| 5. Disseminate information |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |
| 6. Monitor |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |
| 7. Serve as a member of a teacher assistance team |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |
| 8. Involve and inform parents |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |
| 9. Write and obtain grants |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |
| 10. Communicate a personal vision for teacher collaboration |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |  ● |

**Decision Rule for schools:** Cited in at least two of the four data sources.
### Table 21
The Principal’s Role in Fostering Teacher Collaboration

#### Three Levels of Role Descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level One</th>
<th>Level Two</th>
<th>Level Three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Be supportive</td>
<td>1. Build trust</td>
<td>1. Relate to school vision, mission, or shared values</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Demonstrate commitment</td>
<td>2. Show confidence in teachers and give freedom</td>
<td>2. Listen to teachers (sounding board)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Provide resources (human and material)</td>
<td>4. Model a collaborative style</td>
<td>4. Disseminate information</td>
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<td>5. Provide time</td>
<td>5. Encourage teachers</td>
<td>5. Monitor</td>
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<td>7. Help with schedules</td>
<td>7. Communicate a compelling purpose</td>
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<td>8. Communicate and describe norms</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9. Defend norms</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10. Provide assistance where needed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11. Provide opportunity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12. Provide positive feedback</td>
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<td></td>
<td>13. Use symbols and rituals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14. Engage in frequent and direct communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15. Project a positive attitude</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. Start with volunteers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Level One Descriptors:** Descriptors frequently cited in the literature and identified in all five studies.

**Level Two Descriptors:** Descriptors not as frequently cited in the literature but identified in all five studies.

**Level Three Descriptors:** Descriptors not cited in the literature but identified in all five studies.
Letter to Directors of Special Education

__________________, 1996

__________________
Principal
__________________
__________________
__________________, VA

Dear ____________:

To fulfill the requirements of my doctoral program at the College of William and Mary, I will be conducting research on the principal’s part in student-based collaboration among teachers. This inquiry will examine how principals foster teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs. The study has been approved by your school division and the College of William and Mary Research Committee. I am writing to request that your school participate in the study.

Your school has been nominated by the director of special education as meeting the following criteria:

1. Two of the following structures of teacher collaboration as identified by Laycock, Gable, and Korinek (1991) have been functioning within the school for at least three years: (a) collaborative teams (teachers meeting together as a problem-solving unit to generate intervention strategies), (b) collaborative teaching (general educators and specialists jointly planning and delivering instruction in the context of the general classroom), (c) collaborative pairs (a general educator and a specialist or two general educators meeting to problem solve and plan around the needs of students).

2. Teachers collaborating in these structures meet frequently, which would include at least a 30-minute session each week for collaborative pairs and at least a 30-minute session each month for collaborative teams.

3. The collaboration structures are considered to be exemplary by the nominees. These would be the sites that the special education director or designee would recommend for interested individuals to observe teacher collaboration in action.
4. The same individual has been principal for the year preceding and three years following the implementation of the collaborative structures.

Should you decide to participate in the study, I will make an initial visit your school to verify the nomination criteria. This would involve my observing one session in each of the collaborative structures and reviewing documents associated with the structures, such as team minutes and/or lesson plans. If the criteria are verified, the study will progress to the next stage in which I will request two, one-hour interviews with you and one, hour-long interview with two teachers whom I will ask you to select using the following criteria:

**First teacher nomination:** a teacher leader who is presently involved in one collaborative structure and who has been involved in collaboration since the initiation stage.

**Second teacher nomination:** (a) a teacher who has been involved in collaboration for one year; (b) a teacher who represents the other collaborative structure in the school; (c) a teacher who is a general educator, if the first teacher selected is a specialist, or a specialist, if the first teacher selected is a general educator.

*The intent is to have the nominated teachers represent both collaborative structures as well as special education and general education.*

In addition to the interviews, I will ask to review school documents as they are available, such as a collaboration plan, school schedules, faculty meeting minutes, and school newsletters.

Overall, your time investment should be about two hours and the time investment of each teacher will be one hour. All responses will be kept confidential as will your identity and the identity of your school and your school district.

As a token of appreciation, the teachers you nominate to participate in this study will receive vouchers valued at $___ to attend the 1996 Resource/Consulting Teacher Symposium. In addition, your school will receive a copy of the final research report.

On _____ I will give you a call to discuss the study and answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your consideration of this request. Enclosed you will find an abstract of the research proposal. If you have any questions, please call me at (804) 579-4272.

Sincerely,

Evie Tindall
Doctoral Student
156-7 Yeardley Drive
Newport News, VA 23601

Enclosures
Letter to Principals

___________________, 1996

Director of Special Education

___________________

___________________

__________, VA

Dear ____________:

To fulfill the requirements of my doctoral program at the College of William and Mary, I will be conducting research on the principal’s part in student-based-collaboration among teachers. This inquiry will examine how principals foster teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs. The study has been approved by your school division and the College of William and Mary Research Committee.

Because directors of special education and their staff members are recognized as being more cognizant of structured teacher interactions within schools, I am writing to request that you or a designated staff member nominate three schools that meet the following four criteria:

1. Two of the following three structures of teacher collaboration as identified by Laycock, Gable, and Korinek (1991) have been functioning within the school for at least three years: (a) collaborative teams (teachers meeting together as a problem-solving unit to generate intervention strategies), (b) collaborative teaching (general educators and specialists jointly planning and delivering instruction in the context of the general classroom), (c) collaborative pairs (a general educator and a specialist, or two general educators meeting to problem solve and plan around the needs of students).

2. Teachers collaborating in these structures meet frequently, which would include at least a 30-minute session each week for collaborative pairs and at least a 30-minute session each month for collaborative teams.

3. The collaboration structures are considered to be exemplary by the nominees. These would be the sites that the special education director or designee would recommend for interested individuals to observe teacher collaboration in action.

4. The same individual has been principal for the year preceding and three years following the implementation of the collaborative structures.
If you elect to provide nominations, then I will contact the principal of the first of the three nominated schools to gain permission to conduct Stage I of the study, which is a verification check. The first school of the three nominated in which all nomination criteria are verified will be selected to progress to Stage II of the study. Stage II involves two principal interviews and one teacher interview for each of the two teachers selected by the principal.

**Stage I**

1. Letter to principal  
   (purpose of letter, purpose of study, abstract of study, date of follow-up call)
2. Call to principal  
   (discuss study, answer questions, request permission, set date for visit)
3. Visits to school for verification check  
   (observe structures, conduct document review)

*The first school in each district to meet all the verification criteria will progress to Stage II of the study*

**Stage II**

1. Principal nomination of teachers
2. First principal interview
3. Teacher interviews
4. Second principal interview
5. Document reviews

Overall, the time investment for the principal will be two hours and the time investment for each teacher one hour. All responses will be kept confidential as will the identity of all participants, schools, and school districts.

As a token of appreciation, the teachers involved in Stage II of this study will receive vouchers valued at ___ to attend the 1996 Resource/Consulting Teacher Symposium. In addition, the schools and your district will receive a copy of the final research report.

On _____ I will give you a call to discuss the study and answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your consideration of this request. Enclosed you will find an abstract of the research proposal. If you have any questions, please call me at (804) 579-4272.

Sincerely,

Evie Tindall  
Doctoral Student  
156-7 Yeardley Drive  
Newport News, VA 23601

Enclosures
Appendix B
Verification Checklist

School ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Questions for the principal

1. How long have you been principal in this school? ___________________________

2. How many years have your collaborative structures (give specific names) been functioning?

Structure One ___________________________ Number of years ___________

Structure Two ___________________________ Number of years ___________

Observations, document reviews, and teacher question

1. Collaborative teams

__ Use a structured problem-solving process.______________________________

__ Focus on problem identification and generating interventions ___________

______________________________

__ Review of team minutes ___________________________

__ How often do you meet? ___________________________

2. Collaborative teaching

__ Joint planning and problem solving ___________________________

__ Joint teaching in the general classroom in one of the following options:

__ Complementary teaching ___________________________

__ Jointly teaching the lesson ___________________________

______________________________
Supportive learning activities

Review a lesson plan

How often do you meet?

3. Collaborative pairs

Jointly plan and problem solve together in a systematic way

Review a lesson plan

How often do you meet?

Description of Structures

Structure I

Structure II

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Appendix C

Sample Letter of Consent

Dear Participant:

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this investigation of the principal’s part in student-based collaboration among teachers. The primary purpose of the study is to examine how a principal fosters teacher collaboration for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs. The study has been approved by your school division and the College of William and Mary Research Committee.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. At any time, without consequences, you may choose not to answer questions or withdraw your participation.

The information you provide will be held in the strictest confidence. All information will be recorded under fictitious names so that only the researcher will know your identity and the identity of your school and district. An audio tape recording will be made during the interview. This tape will be labeled with the fictitious name and will only be heard by the researcher and a transcriber. Tapes will be erased at the conclusion of the study. All participants will have the opportunity to review a written summary of their interviews and make any additional comments or clarifications.

It is hoped that you will find your participation rewarding. Teacher participants will receive vouchers valued at ____ to attend the 1996 Resource/Consulting Teacher Symposium. In addition, your school will receive a copy of the final research report.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the study or additional information that you would like to provide after the interview, please feel free to call my office (804) 579-4272.

Sincerely,

Evie Tindall
Doctoral Student

I have read this letter and I agree to participate in this investigation.

Participant Name ____________________________ Date ______________
Appendix D

Interview Questions and Forms

Form for Principal's Interview

Background

1. Name ____________________________ M □ F □ Age ____(optional)

2. Description of educational background

   College or university ______________________________________________

   Undergraduate major ______________________________________________

   Graduate major ___________________________________________________

   Post graduate major ______________________________________________

3. Description of work experience

   Positions in education  Years

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

4. Professional preparation and/or experience in collaboration

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________
Main questions for the first interview

1. What is your vision for (name of school)? How did/do you communicate this vision?

2. Describe your leadership style.

3. How do you define collaboration? How does teacher collaboration fit into your vision for (name of the school).

4 (a). Who initiated (name the two structures)? Was there any external support? What was your role?

   (b). How was the (first structure-name) developed and maintained? What was your role in these stages?

5 (a). Who initiated the (second structure-name)? Was there any external support? What was your role?

   (b). How was the (second structure-name) developed and maintained? What was your role in these stages?

6 (a). What barriers were encountered along the way? How did you deal with these barriers?

   (b) What facilitating factors have you encountered in fostering collaboration in (name the two structures)? What part did you play?

7. Did you deliberately set out to establish a collaborative culture where teachers valued working together to plan and problem solve for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students with special needs? If so, how did you do this?
Follow-up questions for the second interview

1. After reviewing the transcript from our last interview is there anything you would like to clarify or add? (The researcher’s specific follow-up questions based on the first interview.)

2. How have your behaviors related to teacher collaboration changed over the last four years?

3. If you were initiating teacher collaboration again, would you do anything differently? If so, what would you do?

4. Have the collaboration structures (name the two structures) been evaluated at any time? If so, when, how, and what did you find? What part did you play?

5. How has your school benefited from the collaborative structures (name the two structures)? What other collaborative structures are functioning in your school?

6. What do you see happening with teacher collaboration in this setting in the next five years?

7. What prepared you to foster collaboration among teachers? (how did you know to do what you have done to foster teacher collaboration?)
Form for Teacher Interview

Background

1. Name ____________________________ M □  F □  Age_____ (optional)

2. Description of educational background

   College or university ______________________________________________

   Undergraduate major ______________________________________________

   Graduate major _________________________________________________

   Post graduate major _____________________________________________

3. Description of work experience

   Positions in education       Years

   _____________________________       ________________

   _____________________________       ________________

   _____________________________       ________________

4. Professional preparation or experience in collaboration

   _______________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________
Main Questions

1. What is the vision of this school? How has the principal communicated this vision?

2. How do you define collaboration? How does teacher collaboration fit into your vision for (name of school).

3. Describe your principal’s leadership style.

4 (a) Tell me the story of how (name of the first collaborative structure) was initiated, developed and implemented in your school.

(b) What was the teacher’s role in each of these stages? What was the principal’s role?

5 (a) Tell me the story of how (name of the second collaborative structure) was initiated, developed and implemented in your school.

(b) What was the teacher’s role in each of these stages? What was the principal’s role?

6. What barriers to collaboration have you experienced and specifically how did your principal deal with these barriers?

7. What facilitating factors have you experienced? What role did your principal play?

8. Have your principal’s role functions relating to collaborative structures changed over time? If so, when did they change and how have they changed?

9. What would you recommend that your principal do differently if your school were to initiate collaborative structures again?

10. What do you see happening with teacher collaboration in your school in the next five years?
Appendix E

Criteria for Role Descriptors

I. Most frequently cited descriptors

1. Be supportive The word, supportive, is directly stated in describing the principal or evidence of the principal’s support is present such as providing time, helping with schedules, giving encouragement, providing training, or providing any assistance that is needed.

2. Demonstrate commitment The words, commitment or committed, are directly stated to describe the principal or the principal shows his/her commitment that collaboration among teachers is important through words and actions such as modeling collaboration, providing time, training, funds, recognition, scheduling, writing grants, promoting teacher collaboration and/or continuing to support teacher collaboration in the face of difficulties. The principal makes teacher collaboration a priority and follows up on it by recruiting teachers from without and within, not just giving it lip service (Janney, Snell, Beers, Raynes, 1995).

3. Provide training and participate in training The principal provides the opportunity for teachers to receive training in collaboration through workshops, conferences, symposiums, observations and formal and informal interactions with teachers who are collaborating. The principal participates in some of the training. Training is provided from a variety of sources (Janney, Snell, Beers, Raynes, 1995).

4. Provide resources (human and material) The principal seeks and acquires additional personnel, provides materials, provides stipends or compensation time and provides experts to help in areas of need. The principal provides books, materials and inservices (Chalfant, Pysh, 1989). The principal provides staff equipment and materials (Janney, Snell, Beers, Raynes, 1995).

5. Provide time The principal provides time for teachers to attend training sessions, observe other teachers, and/or provides time for teachers to plan, to problem solve, or to teach together.

6. Provide recognition of accomplishment The principal recognizes efforts and outcomes of individuals to the individual, faculty, and/or school community verbally and/or in written form. Principal gives pats on the back and notices efforts (Janney, Snell, Beers, Raynes, 1995).

7. Help with schedules The principal works with the master schedule to make time for collaborating teachers, publishes schedules and/or helps schedule students.

II. Less frequently used descriptors

1. Build trust Teachers can rely on the principal’s words. The principal is consistent and acts in the best interests of students and teachers (Hoy, Tarter, Witkoskie, 1992).

2. Show confidence in teachers and give freedom The principal voices confidence in teachers in verbal and/or written words and in actions and gives teachers the freedom to make choices and act on them. Examples: Team teachers choose their partners and teachers are given a budget and they choose how they will use it. Once decisions are made teachers are given autonomy (Janney, Snell, Beers, Raynes, 1995).
3. **Be open** The term, "open" is directly stated when describing the principal or evidence of openness is present such as the principal listens and is receptive to teachers' ideas and/or the principal is willing to make changes if a better way is demonstrated.

4. **Model a collaborative style** The term "collaborative" is directly stated when describing the principal's leadership style or evidence of the principal's collaborative style is present such as sharing decision making, treating teachers as colleagues, listening and being receptive to teachers ideas, sharing problem solving and planning, sharing vision and goals, trusting teachers. The principal shares power of decision making and responsibility (Leithwood, Jantzi, 1990)

The principal seeks out teachers and talk about practices, asking staff for an evaluation of his or her performance (Little, 1981).

5. **Encourage teachers** The term, "encourage" is directly stated when describing the principal or evidence of the collaborative teachers being encouraged by the principal is indicated in actions such as compliments, recognition, incentives, pats on the back, listening and responding positively, giving assistance when needed, showing interest, and/or problem solving.

The principal praises teachers, publicizes the team, and writes notes of appreciation (Chalfant, Pysh, 1989).

6. **Talk about teaching and learning** The principal talks with teachers about teaching and learning. Examples: The principal serves on the teacher assistance team, or discusses students' progress and/or teaching and learning strategies.

7. **Check readiness** The principal checks teachers' readiness to collaborate by interviewing teachers, or having teachers complete a readiness checklist, or giving a readiness survey. The principal also checks the readiness of the system.

The principal checks system readiness (Chalfant, Pysh, 1989).

8. **Communicate a compelling purpose** The principal communicates a purpose for teacher collaboration by relating it to school vision, mission, shared values, student or teacher needs, student outcomes and/or presenting positive results of teacher collaboration.

The principal relates collaboration to teacher needs (Kruger, Struzziero, Watts, Vacca, 1995).

9. **Communicate and describe norms** The principal makes known verbally and/or in writing and/or by modeling the expected typical behavior related to collaboration among teachers. Examples: In this school teachers plan and problem solve together to meet the needs of students. The principal communicates that he/she values teachers talking together about practice and hires only teachers who are willing to collaborate.

The principal communicates collaboration as part of the daily work (Pugach, Johnson, 1990). The principal concretely describes the expectations for teacher interactions (Little, 1981).

10. **Defend norms** The principal provides assistance when needed such as acquiring more personnel, supporting teacher collaboration through inevitable problems and/or failures, only hires collaborative teachers, seeks commitment from reluctant teachers, and helps problem solve and plan.

11. **Set clear goals** A set of clear goals are written with staff involvement.

12. **Relate collaborative activities to teacher concerns and priorities** The principal in written or verbal form relates teacher collaboration to teacher concerns and priorities such as school goals or teacher and student needs (Dawson, 1984).

13. **Help develop structures** The principal works with interested teachers or the principal develops structures and shares with interested teachers.
14. Facilitate faculty participation in defining collaboration and developing structures The principal provides time, assistance, and opportunity for the faculty to help define and develop the collaborative structures.

15. Provide assistance where needed This is directly stated about the principal or evidence of the principal's assistance is present such as providing time, training, additional personnel, encouragement, materials, resolving of conflict, problem solving, etc.

16. Provide opportunity This is directly stated or evidence is present of the principal providing opportunity for teachers to collaborate such as providing time, seeking volunteers, promoting collaboration, providing training, helping with schedules, helping develop collaborative structures, informing parents, or giving teachers opportunity beyond classroom duties.

17. Provide positive feedback This is directly stated or evidence is present of the principal providing positive feedback such as writing encouraging notes, recognizing efforts in faculty memos and/or faculty meetings, writing positive comments on reports, or giving positive feedback verbally to individuals.

18. Provide a systematic plan This is directly stated or evidence is present of the principal's part in providing teachers the opportunity to develop a plan by providing time and assistance or the plan is present in document form.

19. Recruit teachers The principal recruits teachers who are willing and able to collaborate and the principal seeks to recruit reluctant teachers within the building. These teachers are given choices of learning about collaboration, participating in collaboration or transferring to another school.

20. Use symbols and rituals The principal does one or more of the following: (a) has a time at staff meeting to publicly recognize the efforts and successes of teachers, (b) send private notes of appreciation, (c) encourages the faculty to share about their practice with one another, (c) publicly recognizes teachers in school memos or newsletters, and uses metaphors. (Leithwood, Jantzi, 1990)

21. Acquire and utilize specific skills to enhance a collegial culture The principal does one or more of the following: (a) attends workshops and conferences on collaboration, (b) reads on the topic, (c) observes and talks to others who are collaborating, (d) compiles a notebook or file on collaboration, (e) gives presentations on collaboration and/or (f) participates as a member of a committee on collaboration.

22. Engage in frequent and direct communication The principal frequently communicates with collaborative teachers through individual encounters and meetings as well as being available and visible.

23. Project a positive attitude The principal is consistently positive in his/her response to collaborators and about collaborative activities. The principal gives incentives and publicizes successes (Chalfant, Pysh, 1989). The principal has a positive attitude toward students with disabilities, engages in collaborative problem-solving, and the teachers feel that they are trusted and treated as professionals (Janney, Snell, Beers, Raynes, 1995). The principal is a cheerleader, advocate, promoter and spokesperson (Walther-Thomas, 1996).

24. Start with volunteers The principal uses only volunteers. The principal begins with teachers who are interested and willing, open-minded, flexible and willing to take risks (Janney, Snell, Beers, Raynes, 1995).

25. Start small and build The principal begins with a few teachers in one or two grades. Take one step at a time and give yourself time to get used to collaboration (Janney, Snell, Beers, Raynes, 1995).

Start with a core of teachers (Pugach, Johnson, 1990)
26. **Evaluate** The principal evaluates teacher collaboration by using surveys of students, parents, teachers, pre and post tests, and following student progress on standardized tests.
References


Vita

Evie Ruth Tindall

Birthdate: August 15, 1941

Birthplace: Sumter, South Carolina

Education:

1989-1996 The College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, Virginia
Educational Specialist Degree

1980-1983 Regent University
Virginia Beach, Virginia
Master of Education

1959-1963 Winthrop College
Rock Hill, South Carolina
Bachelor of Arts