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REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CO-TEACHING MODELS USED IN NORTH GEORGIA MIDDLE SCHOOLS

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Introduction

The intent of this research is to investigate the perceptions of classroom teachers who work in north Georgia and teach in middle school classrooms that implement one of the co-teaching models. To effectively identify middle school teachers’ perceptions, attitudes, and perspectives regarding their instructional experience within the co-teaching model, it is necessary to take an in-depth look at the research and literature surrounding the history of special education and the evolvement of inclusion and programs that include collaboration within the general classroom.

This chapter reveals the analysis of recently published literature discussing various co-teaching perceptions. This chapter also identifies theories, research studies, and significant literature that discuss and analyze the co-teaching model. Along with examining literature that discusses the roles of educators when establishing professional development for co-teaching models, the theoretical framework that guides this study will also be presented.

Historical Background

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Education of the Handicapped Act of 1970 became the focus of the United States congress as children with disabilities entered public schools across America (Blankstein, 2004). During and prior to these legislations, most students with severe disabilities were taught in separate facilities away from their general education peers. Students with mild disabilities were not identified, and sometimes they were referred to as “slow learners” and did not receive special education services (Pasternak, 2002, p. 2).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (P.L. 93-112) was the first piece of legislation that changed how educational systems were to teach students with disabilities (Bender, 2002; Shinn, 2007). This act stated that those who were eligible for federal funds must provide an education for every student with a disability with those without a disability. P.L. 93-122 required states to place students with disabilities in the regular school environment. According to Fuchs (2004), concerns of racial inequality led to the first special education legislation. In 1975, the P.L. 94-142 or the Education for all Handicapped Children Act was passed. Special education students were now being instructed for part of the day in the general education classroom. This type of placement was then called mainstreaming which integrated students with disabilities “socially and instructionally into general education classrooms” (Blankstein, 2004, p. 27). By 1977, all 50
states passed laws subsidizing public school programs for students with disabilities. Moreover, many states began to require general education teachers to take course work preparing them for mainstreaming.

In 1986, Madeline Will, then Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education in the U.S. Department of Education, called for children with learning disabilities to have complete integration into the general education curriculum and for administrators to collectively work together to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are achieved (Burnstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004). In 1990, Congress amended the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and renamed it the Individuals With Disabilities Act (P.L.101-476). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) required public schools to make available to all eligible children with disabilities a free and appropriate public education. This law presented language that affirmed the bias toward bringing students with disabilities into general classrooms whenever possible (Cook-Sather, 2003).

Again in 1997, the United States Congress adopted amendments to IDEA (Cook-Sather, 2003). IDEA (1997) specified that a student with disabilities should be removed from a regular educational program only when the nature of severity of the disability was such that education in a regular educational program could not be accomplished satisfactorily even with the use of supplementary aids and services (Hines, 2008). In 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) or Public Law 107-110 (Peterson & West, 2003). This law represented a major change in K-12 education. Title I of the NCLB purposed to ensure that all students have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to a high-quality education and reach, at minimum, a proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

According to Handler (2006), several parallels exist in the legislative language used in both the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA and NCLB. They both focused on the goals of widespread improvements of educational outcomes for all students. IDEA 2004 expanded on NCLB’s emphasis on shared educational responsibilities and student engagement in general education classrooms (Hines, 2008).

Middle School Research and Reform

In 1909, two states established the first junior high schools which included grades seven, eight, and nine (Valentino, Clark, Hackman, & Petzko, 2002). Before that reform, schools were divided as elementary and secondary only. In the early 1960s, schools that focused on the developmental needs of young adolescents began to emerge, and significant research on middle schools was conducted (Valentino, et al., 2002).

In 1989, a national report, Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century, recommended significant advice for schools to address the emerging challenges of young adolescents. The key recommendations were:
Large middle schools should be divided into smaller communities for learning so each student will receive sustained individual attention.

Middle grades schools should transmit a core of common, substantial knowledge to all students in ways that foster curiosity, problem solving, and critical thinking.

Middle grades schools should be organized to ensure success for virtually all students by utilizing cooperative learning and other techniques suitable for this developmental phase.

Teachers and principals should have major responsibility and authority to transform middle grades schools.

Teachers for middle grades should be specifically prepared to teach young adolescents (Jackson & Davis, 2000).

Further research was conducted by several organizations which resulted in several publications presenting reform ideas that would address the recommendations outlined in the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989). Developmental and social needs of middle school students were examined, and strategies focusing on increasing academic achievement were developed. As described by Jackson and Davis (2000), middle grade education should develop adolescents to become problem solvers, creative thinkers, and good communicators. The authors suggested that every student in middle school, including English Language Learners (ELL) and students with disabilities must be learning at a rate commensurate with their peers. Cook-Sather (2003) examined the social impetus of middle school students. The author supported that all children, no matter what their individual exceptionality, should be scheduled together with everyone in a class. Cook-Sather believed “this composition prepared the adolescent for the real world” (p. 24).

By 2003, the National Middle School Association (NMSA) had released its finding related to middle school students. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) research supported the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989). The National Association of Secondary School Principals review listed four of the nine strategies that appeared to focus on issues related to this proposed study:

Rigorous content supported by a rubric of mastery standards within a heterogeneous class; teacher teams with a common planning period; sufficient teacher planning time to align curriculum and involve special education instructional strategies; and ensure that teachers assess individual learning needs of students by working with special education educators (National Middle School Association, 2003, p. 214).

Although this research presented significant ideas regarding middle school students and inclusive heterogeneous classes, no specific model for achieving that purpose was presented. Pertinent research was published by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) which focused on developmental needs of middle school students: “social needs of middle school students; academic strategies for the middle school age group; and adolescents/adult relationship strategies” (p. 164).
Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) conclusive research during the period of reform concluded that middle school education should focus on developing problem solvers, creative thinkers, and good communicators (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Significant discussion explained that students with disabilities must learn at a rate equal to their peers in regular education curriculums. They pointed out in their second report that the original report did not use language that encompassed each and every student. Therefore, “in their second report they changed the wording from all which they believe sends the message of most, to every which clarifies that no one is excluded” (Jackson & Davis, p. 184).

Cook-Sather (2003) approached middle school reform by contributing research on the social, physical, emotional, psychological, and moral development of middle school adolescents. The national report, Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century, extended the focus and released a national report that presented nine cornerstone strategies to reform middle level education and uphold the mission to complete development in the five arenas of personal development. Many authors have discussed the first strategy listed in this national report. According to Slavin (1995), the first strategy emphasized a content designed with specific rigor to prepare middle school students for high school (Slavin, 1995). Instruction was centered around key concepts that included interdisciplinary teams, common planning periods, and literacy across content areas.

**Conceptual Framework**

The collaboration as a predictor for success in school reform was based on the study employed by Friend and Cook (1990; 2003). For the last 20 years, Friend and Cook have prescribed and presented an educational service model for learning about the concept of collaboration used in teaching within K-12 special education settings. The important components of this construct include content, interaction, collaboration, communication, and personal commitment. Usually, a general educator and a special educator work together in a collaborative framework that provides daily instruction to a heterogeneous group of students, including those with disabilities and other special needs. This process occurs in a single classroom (Friend & Cook). In order for this service model to continue to experience success, it is imperative that education researchers contribute scholarly research that examines and analyzes the level of understanding and status of attitudes and beliefs of teachers who live the co-teaching experience daily. Therefore, this researcher believes it is beneficial to research and examine general and special education teachers’ perceptions within an unthreatening environment.

**Inclusion**

Inclusion is a term that began to appear and was widely used in the early 1990s. Allington and Cunningham (2002) suggested that the term is defined as “the instruction of all students, with or without disabilities in the general education classroom” (p. 1). Although the term was not used in IDEA, proponents of inclusion argued that the placement of students with disabilities in the general education classroom is the least restrictive environment (Cook-Sather, 2003). The result of this enactment had provided opportunities for expanding social networks and forming friendships for students who have disabilities. Unlike mainstreaming, inclusion involves
bringing the support services to the child, rather than moving the child to the services. Therefore, the student is able to benefit from the regular class and keep up with regular education students. Fuchs (2004) approached the term as a process of meshing general and special education reform initiatives and strategies in order to achieve a unified system of public education that incorporates all students as active fully participating members of the school community.

Those who support inclusion believe that it fosters a sense of belonging, acceptance of differences, and a common instructional community that accepts everyone’s needs (Friend & 2003). According to Pfeiffer and Reddy (1999), inclusion embraces the values of diversity and learning communities. Student academic and social needs are met through the implementation of combined resources and support within one setting. Pfeiffer and Reddy further postulated that in order for inclusion to be possible, students with disabilities must be provided with the necessary services and support within the general education classroom that will help them become successful. “The increased use of inclusive practices in schools has increased the need for all educators to work together in a collaborative effort” (Pfeiffer & Reddy, p. 109).

As with any reform movement, paradigm change and significant effort have contributed to the opposition of inclusion. Historically, the opponents of inclusion in the 1990s believed that ignoring special academic needs can, in the long run, be harmful to students with special needs. Boucjk (2007) suggested that special education was going to become diluted and no longer “special” (p. 78). At that time they did not believe general education practices were prepared to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities.

Certain opponents emphasized the importance of maintaining a continuum of services. The two most prominent opponents of inclusion are The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the Learning Disabilities Association (LDA). By 1996, these organizations were urging schools to keep service options available to students (Division for Learning Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children, 1996). By 2001, the LDA presented literature that believed the placement of all children with disabilities in regular classrooms was a great violation of IDEA. According to these organizations, inclusion settings were current “bandwagons” (Division for Learning Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children, p. 94). By 2003, the opposition belief was decreasing, and many authors were attempting to validate the premise that inclusion is not here to erase differences but to enable all students to belong within an educational setting that validates and values their individuality (Friend & Cook, 2003).

**The Co-teaching Model**

Cook and Friend (1995) presented the most commonly accepted definitions of co-teaching in the literature. They suggested that co-teaching takes place in a classroom that is taught by both general education and special education teachers. These authors also emphasized that co-teaching, a supplementary aid and service, is brought to not only special education students but general education students as well.
One of the original definitions used expressed co-teaching as a teaching procedure in which two or more educators work in a co-active and coordinated fashion to jointly teach academic and behaviorally heterogeneous groups of students in integrated educational settings (Bauwens & Hourcade, 2005). Slavin (1995) defined co-teaching as an instructional delivery approach in which general and special educators share responsibility of each task required for planning, delivery, and evaluation of instructional techniques for a group of students.

Although co-teaching is considered a strategy used in inclusive classrooms, it may be utilized in any classroom setting. Co-teaching, as applied to special education, commonly results in a general educator and a special educator (and possibly other related service staff) sharing teaching responsibilities within a classroom that includes children with and without documented special learning needs (Dieker & Murawski, 2003). Co-teaching is also labeled as a vehicle for unifying the historically dual systems of general and special education (Hunt, Soto, Maier, & Doering, 2003; Villa & Thousand, 2000). Villa and Thousand (2000) suggested that the co-teaching process presents opportunities for general and special educators and parents to “share knowledge and skills to generate new methods for individualizing learning” (Villa & Thousand). The U. S. Department of Education (2002) indicated:

Each state must establish procedures to assure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled, and that special education, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (p. 304)

The U. S. Department of Education (2002) reported that in 1999 and 2000, that 95.6% of students with disabilities were served in regular school buildings, and 47.3% were served outside the regular classroom for less than 21% of the school day. Based on these numbers, a major increase has occurred in the number of students with disabilities who are taught using the regular curriculum. As practitioners research the components of co-teaching, focus has emerged on the basic theory of learning (Boucjk, 2007). Co-teaching has been linked to the theory of Vygotsky (1975), and Vygotsky’s theory has been used to understand higher and lower mental functions. Vygotsky’s theory is defined as two developmental levels with a level in between called the Zone of Proximal Development (Slavin, 1995). Vygotsky defined this level as the distance between actual development and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1975). Many studies claim that Vygotsky’s theory may be associated with assisting students in reaching their academic levels to problem solve. Moreover, the theory focuses on the skill of collaboration as an imperative component for mainstreamed classes (Slavin, p. 79).

According to Vygotsky (1978), the educational concept of his theory is an essential feature of learning that creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when a child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. “Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child’s independent developmental achievement” (Vygotsky, p. 92).
Vygotsky (1978) viewed language and culture as tools and symbols that help individuals dictate what and how they learn. Moreover, the theory is recognized as the basis of social development. Many educators have interpreted Vygotsky’s theory as an awareness of the zone of sensitivity to learning when interacting with the young learner. “As it relates to mainstreaming and co- teaching, this theory indicates that students should be placed in environments that require them to use social processes and language, thereby impacting higher levels of learning” (Vygotsky, p. 100).

The instructional model, known as co-teaching, has become a practice that is being researched by many educational researchers. Garland and Strosnider (2005) referred to co-teaching as an educational arrangement in which general and special educators work together in a coordinated manner to teach academically and behaviorally heterogeneous groups of students collectively. These researchers stated that the process of co-teaching requires that teachers share a range of responsibilities, such as co-planning, to eliminate fragmented instruction and to support individual student needs in the regular classroom. “Within a co-teaching setting, regular and special educators need a way to plan for the instruction of a class of 25-35 students” (Garland & Strosnider, p. 253).

In a pilot project in a Nebraska school, Boucjk (2007) found that co-teaching promoted successful classroom environments. Boucjk noted that teamed teachers planned lessons, instructed the class, supervised behaviors, and assigned grades. According to his findings, the co-teachers developed a supportive curriculum with accommodations to allow all students to benefit. Activities, including a hands-on approach, replaced much of the typical lecture and worksheet format. This method had an impact on student and teacher performance.

Zigmond and Baker (2001) found that co-teaching is one of many delivery models that has been implemented to ensure that students with disabilities receive the support they need within the context of instruction in the general education classroom. Zigmond also discovered that very little data existed that supported the effectiveness of co-teaching. Co-teaching is an educational initiative that has truly changed the face of education, especially as it relates to the classroom environment. Gately and Gately (2001) focused on the following eight components of the co-teaching classroom that contribute to the development of the collaborative learning environment: “interpersonal communication, physical arrangement, familiarity with the curriculum, curriculum goals and modifications, instructional planning, instructional presentation, classroom management, and assessment” (Gately & Gately, p. 40). With these components, teachers are able to create an environment that may have an impact on the academic achievement of both special education students and their nondisabled peers.

Hines (2008) found that training in different co-teaching models is a significant feature within the success of co-teaching classroom environments. Her study identified four co-teaching designs: (a) parallel teaching, dividing the class into groups for more individualized instruction; (b) station teaching, dividing up content to be taught and rotating the responsibility of the teachers; (c) alternative teaching, having one teacher lead instructional activities while another provides an enrichment type of activity; and (d) team teaching, having teachers work together at the same time and rotating throughout the classroom to present the same material as a team.
Some variables may result in challenging environments for co-teaching. One in particular is social relationships. Generally, students tend to socialize more in group settings, and doing so may have an impact on engagement. However, Cook and Friend (1995) communicated that co-teaching environments promote reciprocal friendships between students with disabilities and their peers, enhancing students’ social satisfaction in the school setting. Farmer and Farmer (1996) studied the social relationships of seven students with learning disabilities and four students with emotional and behavioral disorders in mainstream classrooms. These researchers found that all students with disabilities were integrated into these classrooms but into peer groups that were less positive, overall, than groups to which students without disabilities belonged.

According to Farmer, Van Acker, Pearl, and Rodkin (1996), “The critical point is that peer associations can negatively influence and constrain the social growth of students with disabilities regardless of whether they are in a self-contained or regular class placement” (pp. 250-251). As in situations with regular education students, the social growth of students with learning disabilities may be linked to their academic performance. Therefore, the social relationships formed by special education and regular education students may serve as a factor in the research study of a co-teaching model.

Co-teaching has truly become an initiative to maximize America’s efforts in improving student learning. This particular strategy has been adopted by many schools throughout this country to meet the needs of all students, especially students with disabilities. Co-teaching is part of a reform that has developed into an issue that needs support from local and national levels to have a major impact on America’s achievement in mathematics in schools.

Co-teaching commonly results in a general education teacher and a special education teacher sharing the responsibilities of teaching within a classroom that includes special and regular education students (Wischnowski, Salmon, & Eaton, 2004). Bauwens and Hourcade (2005) introduced the collaboration of the general and special education teacher and advocated educational services being provided by having a special educator within the general education setting. Being one of the trailblazers for special education, Will (1986) set in motion the transition movement to include the nation’s youth and young adults with disabilities in a regular education classroom with their nondisabled peers.

Friend (2008) stated that educators must look past enthusiastic rhetoric to attend to the following myths and misunderstandings that threaten collaborative practices: (a) everyone is doing it, (b) more is better, (c) it is about feeling good and liking others, and (d) it comes naturally. Due to these myths, many educational institutions have found themselves implementing the collaborative model because it is the most current fad for education. However, at the classroom level, Friend (2008) asserted such myths are quickly abandoned and collaboration is, in reality, easier said than done (p. 16).

Co-teaching has gained a great deal of attention over the past few years. It has received the support of federal mandates set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act and No Child Left Behind (Council for Exceptional Children, 2005). The issue itself has become a common objective for families of children with special needs (Downing &
Peckham-Hardin, 2007). Idol (2006) conducted personal interviews with a large number of classroom teachers and special education teachers. The interviewees' responses led the researcher to conclude that the amount of time students spend in general education, the roles of the special education teachers, the rates of student referrals for special education consideration, the attitudes of all staff toward inclusion and toward collaboration, and the skills of the teachers “…were all related to the inclusion of special education students” (Idol, pp. 79-80).

Co-teaching Models

There are currently many different models of co-teaching available. However, according to Zigmond and Baker (2001), each of the models is based on the fact that a special education teacher and a general education teacher co-exist in the classroom together, sharing instruction. Cook and Friend (1995) believe that there are five variations that are frequently used. “They are the one-teach-one assist model, station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching and team teaching” (p. 3). Each of these models has its benefits and drawbacks. However, Zigmond (2006) had completed significant research that proved no one model as the best or worst model. The model used, according to recent research in 2006, depends on the amount of planning time available as well as trust and comfort with one another (Cook & Friend). Regardless of which model is used, Cook and Friend (2008) asserted that in all of the models, modifications in the level and content taught and modifications in instructional methods will have to occur.

Gately and Gately (2001) described co-teaching as a developmental process whereby educators develop varying degrees of interaction and collaboration. They described three stages of development in the co-teaching relationship. When teachers begin co-teaching, they establish communication rules and set professional boundaries. This is labeled the Beginning Stage. Gately and Gately described the second stage as the Compromising Stage in which teachers are “more open and permitted to participate in honest conversation” (p. 49). The teachers are able to give and take. Therefore, they are more ready to compromise due to the trust development that has emerged during communication. The final stage is entitled the Collaborative Stage. Gately and Gately believe that the highest degree of ease is apparent at this stage. Teachers openly communicate and interact (Gately & Gately 2001 p. 42). They complement one another’s teaching style as they work together.

Critical Elements in Co-teaching

Collaboration, planning, roles of teachers, implementation, and the nature of co-teaching have been identified in the literature as the critical elements of co-teaching.

The first study that examined collaboration was in 1991 when co-teaching was in the infant stage of implementation. Adams and Cessna (1991) identified three issues related to the implementation of collaboration. The first issue was that special educators were changing their roles without a true sense of why or how. The second issue centered on co-teaching becoming the one and only service delivery model over choice of others. Third was an imbalance between the teacher role and the appropriate school support role. The authors concluded several outcomes: They listed (a) common understanding of each role in the process, (b) creation of an
addendum to the school’s mission statement, and (c) appropriate professional development regarding the change process (Adams and Cessna (1991) p. 39).

Planning is also a critical component necessary for the co-teaching model to be successful in schools. Walther-Thomas, Bryant, and Land (1996) were the first to identify a comprehensive planning process developed to create a supportive environment for co-teachers and to ensure benefit of children in inclusive settings. These authors also identified comprehensive planning steps that needed to be started, not only in the classroom, but at the building and district level. Walther-Thomas et al. (1996) concluded such factors as adequate resources at the district level and effective leadership at the school level impact creating supportive environments for co-teaching. Problem-solving support systems were discussed at length during this study. The ability to have functioning teams represented of each personnel level in the school system was emphasized.

Weiss and Lloyd (2003) conducted a grounded theory research study to discuss the roles and factors that influenced secondary special educators in co-taught classrooms. The study indicated that the roles of special education teachers in co-taught classrooms were: (a) providing support to students, (b) teaching the same content in separate classrooms, (c) teaching a separate part of the content in the same classroom, and (d) teaching as a team. “The data from the teachers in this study showed that in order for co-teaching to be successful, appropriate establishment of roles must be intertwined in the everyday operational procedure” (Weiss & Lloyd, p. 38).

Washburn-Moses (2005) examined the roles and responsibilities of 378 randomly selected special education teachers in public schools in Michigan. The teachers surveyed in this study were separated in variables according to the number of years taught, highest degree held, and the number of endorsements held. However, in the data analysis, the researcher found no difference in the roles and responsibilities of general education teachers and special education teachers according to the variables of teaching years, highest held, or number of endorsements held. It was also concluded that “special education teachers have excessive teaching loads in areas of content” (Washburn-Moses, p. 35).

When searching the literature to discover studies on co-teaching implementation, the researcher found very little in the literature. However, a study conducted by Rea and Connell (2005) discussed co-teaching from the perspective that educators contemplating implementing co-teaching need to address specific implementation points when presenting a new service delivery model. The study stated that implementation requires changes in the structure of the school as well as the roles and responsibilities of all educators involved. The details focused on levels of school roles. From the administrative perspective, factors such as beliefs, supervision, evaluation, and some of the more intricate components of the co-teaching model were described. “The ultimate goal of the school administrator is to have a well organized, thought out plan for delivering services for all students to achieve in a co-taught setting” (Rea & Connell, p. 32).
Middle and High School Co-teaching

Although the basic co-teaching models are used in middle and secondary schools, specific challenges occur at these levels. According to Keefe and Moore (2004), three major themes are apparent at the higher levels of co-teaching instruction. From an examination of teacher interviews, Keefe and Moore identified: (a) the nature of collaboration, (b) roles of the teachers, and (c) outcomes for students and teachers as themes at middle and secondary school levels (Keefe & Moore, p. 81). Keefe and Moore concluded several outcomes: First, teacher education programs need to prepare pre-service teachers to meet the demands of co-teaching. Second, special education teachers at the secondary level need to have a greater understanding of content areas. On the other hand, general education teachers need to have a deeper understanding about students with disabilities. Keefe and Moore concluded that successful co-teaching models in middle and high school depended upon the degree of classroom teachers’ working relationship. This relationship has to be trusting, collaborative, and loyal. Lastly, the third theme pertained to school administration. A commitment to inclusive education is imperative according to the authors and an embracement of planning time and class size is also necessary.

Mastropieri and Scruggs (2001) proposed that the nature of high school and some middle schools create a challenge for co-teachers because of issues such as content areas skills, the demand for independent study skills, faster pacing of instruction, standardized testing, and negative teacher attitude. In the study, Promoting inclusion in the secondary classroom, the conclusions stated that “limitations at the secondary level include the intensity of the content, stricter scheduling issues, and the pressure on middle school and secondary school students to perform well on standardized examinations” (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001, pp.79-85).

The evaluation of co-teaching at three high schools within one district conducted by Simmons and Magiera (2007) indicated that when co-teaching is not well implemented, schools and co-teachers can experience great frustration. These authors suggested each district should offer intense and ongoing professional development in order that consistency could remain.

General education and special education teachers must meet the challenge of promoting a classroom culture that addresses the diverse learning needs of all of the students. Many researchers examine how collaboration is implemented in school settings (Sawyer & Rimm-Kaufman, 2007). Although many studies have addressed effectiveness, few have addressed teacher collaboration and how it relates to improved student learning. Therefore investigating the importance of collaboration skills as perceived by teachers who work in a co-teaching model has been determined significant to this study.

Benefits of Co-teaching

Austin (2001) conducted a study that used a sample of 139 elementary, middle school, and high school teachers from school districts in the state of New Jersey. Participants completed a survey that investigated co-teachers’ perceived current experiences, effective teaching practices, teacher preparation, and school-based support. The results indicated significant differences where general and special education teachers differed in their perceptions.
Austin’s (2001) study revealed that “general education teachers increased their skills through co-teaching by adapting curriculum and improving classroom management” (p. 248). Special education teachers noted they increased the knowledge of curriculum content. Both groups cited the use of collaborative teaching and small group experiences as the most successful experiences.

During his analysis of the survey, Austin (2001) discovered that the “general education teachers most often assumed the role of lead teachers, and special education teachers most often assumed the role as responsible for remediation and modifying planned lessons” (p. 252).
The final recommendations from Austin’s (2001) study recommended that school administrators should develop and support a more collaborative model of teaching. Austin’s study also recommended that the staff be provided ongoing teacher training in current trends and new instructional techniques. The final recommendation centered on “…the necessity that all co-teams be well-versed in instructional practices and support collaborative teaching” (Austin, 2001, p. 254).

Relevant Studies of Co-teaching

The impact of students with disabilities being educated in co-taught general education classrooms have been mixed in the past 30 years. Some studies show co-teaching benefits students with and without disabilities. Other studies reveal that the co-teaching environment is so complex that it should not be accepted as an appropriate approach (Schumacher, Deshler, Bulgren, Davis, Lentz, & Grossen, 2002).

When conducting the research for this proposed study, the researcher discovered that current research indicated that different research methods can and do yield different results. When analyzing data, it was also revealed the use of descriptive analyses, surveys, qualitative case studies, quasi-experimental studies, and practitioner action research had both benefits and limitations for generalizations. Mastropieri et al. (2006) reported less then desirable gains for students with learning disabilities who had been co-taught for complete school years. Magiera and Zigmond (2005) explored whether co-teaching instructional strategies enhanced achievement of middle school students with disabilities. Findings indicated that co-taught experiences did not enhance the academic achievement, student participation, or student-teacher interactions.

The study by Magiera and Zigmond was replicated twice by only Zigmond in 2004 and 2006. This time, Zigmond noted certain barriers that could interfere with successful co-teaching classrooms. These barriers included a lack of preparation to work in co-taught classrooms, staffing of classes, and knowledge and attitudes of educators.

Thirteen years ago, a study completed by Boudah, Schmacher, and Deshler (1997) examined eight classes of grades 6, 7, and 8. The authors explored and examined the effects of co-teaching on teacher performance, student engagement, and academic outcomes in co-teaching classrooms. Results were mixed, demonstrating that teachers spend more time mediating the learning of students but less time on actual content instruction. Results further indicated “…a low amount of engagement with students in all inclusive classrooms involved in the study” (Boudah et al., p. 313).
However, four years later, Henson (2001) conducted a study that revealed teacher collaboration in co-taught classrooms was consistently related to high levels of general teaching efficacy. Collaboration was also reported in a study by Lantner (2003) that noted collaboration was influenced by teacher efficacy through the power of sharing resources, information, and ideas. Other studies continued to provide mixed results as the years progressed. Walther-Thomas, Bryant, and Land (2006) conducted a three-year study in elementary co-taught classrooms. Results showed that students and teachers valued individual uniqueness, in addition to student academic progress, more appropriate social behaviors, and improved adaption to learning and teaching styles. Despite the varying opinions of the benefits of inclusion and co-taught classrooms, the research findings indicated that the benefits outweigh the difficulties that arise surrounding the establishment of the program reform (Walther-Thomas, et al.).

Fontana (2005) published a study that examined the learning of eighth grade students who were diagnosed as learning disabled and were taught in a co-teaching mode. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of co-teaching on the academic achievement of eighth grade students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms. Research questions were stated to question whether students with learning disabilities received higher grades in co-taught language arts and math classes than those in resource rooms. The second question asked teachers if working in co-taught classrooms with students with learning disabilities helped them to increase the use of their instructional strategies. Sixteen students were in the control group, and the target group consisted of 17 students. Quantitative data were collected by examining students’ grades, scores, and informal surveys with teachers.

Results indicated that significant improvement occurred in the control population. The target group had significant improvement in self-concept and math while writing did not demonstrate any increase. Several recommendations emerged from this study. Co-teaching programs need consistent support was the first recommendation. Second, it was recommended that co-teaching schedules come from teachers who desired to teach in this setting. Third, it was recommended that co-teaching successes should be shared with others, and fourth, co-teachers need to recognize that conflict will arise and an approach or strategy to deal with conflict should be established, formulated, and used on a regular basis (Fontana, 2005; Keefe & Moore, 2004).

**Teachers’ Perceptions of Co-teaching**

Co-teaching has become one of many collaborative strategies that educators are examining in an effort to meet the needs of all students within this educational framework called school (Snell & Janney, 2005; Villa, Thousand, & Niven, 2004). Much of the existing research has described how co-teaching is implemented, but research concerning the effectiveness of co-teaching is minimal. In addition, many teachers have described the model as one that has received a great deal of attention from many individuals in external positions.

Austin (2001) noted that most teachers involved in a co-teaching model found the experience to be positive. In his study, the teachers identified cooperative learning and the use of small groups as the two instructional techniques they found most effective. Co-teachers indicated that they generally considered co-teaching to have contributed positively to their professional
development. Special education co-teachers cited an increase in content knowledge, and general education co-teachers noted the benefits to classroom management and curriculum adaptation. Based on Austin’s research, the teachers demonstrated consistent behaviors that represented the components of a co-teaching model.

According to Kohler-Evans (2006), some teachers have a negative view of co-teaching. Based on their research, co-teaching teams have been forced into the general education classroom where veteran teachers feel insulted to have a special education teacher placed in the room with the expectation that they both teach content area critical concepts. Kohler-Evans explained their frustration:

Special education teachers are frustrated because they have been left homeless, having their room taken from them, and have been thrust into a classroom that has been resided in by a veteran language arts, math, history, or science teacher who knows what to teach and how to teach it (pp. 260-261).

Studies have indicated that, for high-risk students (Dieker, 1998) and for students with learning disabilities (Rice & Zigmond, 1999; Welch, 2000), co-teaching is an effective practice. Moreover, many researchers have indicated that students with disabilities have showed larger gains in math and equal gains in reading when compared to students receiving pull-out services (Bear and Proctor, 1990) and that consultation plus co-teaching was as effective as other service delivery models (Marston, 1996; Schulte, Osborne, & McKinney, 1990).

Kohler-Evans (2006) conducted a study of the attitudes and concerns of secondary teachers from 15 urban and suburban districts in and around Seattle, Washington. She used a structured interview format. General and special education teachers were asked to respond to open- and closed-ended questions pertaining to co-teaching. Of the teachers surveyed, 77% of them said, “co-teaching influenced student achievement”, and, of the 77%, all stated, “the impact was positive and the students made positive gains.” Only 10% of the total number of teachers surveyed stated, “the model had no influence on student achievement” (p. 261).

Ashton (2003) conducted a study with 24 teacher pairs attending a two-day co-teaching in-service in the Northwest. The group consisted of 39 females and 9 males including 17 teacher pairs from elementary schools (kindergarten through Grade 6), 2 pairs from middle schools (Grades 7 and 8), and 5 from high schools (Grades 9 through 12).

The mean age was 48.4 years, and the mean number of years teaching was 7.3. Of the 48 participants, 46 provided responses. Their responses yielded two categories that were addressed most often: planning and time management (n = 24) and teaching styles and educational philosophies (n = 22) (p. 100).

Ashton (2003) found that the teachers’ comments throughout the training indicated that planning and time management was the greatest area of concern in co-teaching. The second largest area of concern fell into the category of teaching styles and the fundamental nature of teaching philosophies. Ashton (2003) commented as follows:
Teachers invest hundreds of hours per year just getting ready to teach. Hands-on time with students is dictated by a school schedule, but preparation time is rarely considered. When teachers are told they will co-teach instead of deciding on their own it might be a worthwhile investment of their time, and then told with whom they will collaborate, concerns may quickly turn into fears and high levels of job dissatisfaction (p. 102).

Weiss and Lloyd (2003) conducted a study in secondary classrooms by interviewing special education teachers in co-taught and special education classrooms. They used qualitative methods and a grounded theory (constant-comparative) method of data analysis. The participating teachers indicated that their roles in special education and co-taught classrooms were influenced by pressures that were internal and external to the school community. In the interviews, teachers identified professional and community pressures that forced their participation in the co-taught classroom. They also recognized four variables that affected their roles in co-taught classrooms: “(a) scheduling pressures, (b) content understanding, (c) acceptance by general educators, and (d) the skills of the special needs students” (Weiss & Lloyd, p. 172).

From the literature focusing on co-teaching, the researcher found that teacher perception is an essential component to the success of this instructional model. Proponents have supported the goals of co-teaching, whereas opponents have contended that co-teaching does not have a significant impact on the academic success of students.
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SPECIAL QUEST LEARNING COHORT REVIEW COMMENTARY

By: Professor Jà Hon Vance, Executive QUEST Journal Director & Founder of the QUEST: African American Learning Cohort

QUEST: The Educational Transformation

Late Summer 2013 Edition of the QJHEE
QUALITY OR QUANTITY: WHICH IS MORE EFFECTIVE IN RESEARCHING APPROACHES TO PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT?

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Abstract

The role of the principal is a key element in effective schools research. How the principal functions as a leader is an important issue to explore for programs and student achievement. To date we have little understanding of which research methodology is best to study the role of the principal. This comparative analysis of quality and quantity examined the effective characteristic for principal leadership development. A search of the literature was conducted to obtain a better understanding of whether qualitative or quantitative research methods and techniques are more effective in researching approaches to principal qualities for leadership development. Data for this comparative analysis were acquired from an electronic search on ERIC and NCREL which yielded 81 articles, 31 studies and eight journals that discussed principal leadership development. Based on the analysis, we concluded that qualitative research and quantitative research are both necessary for research in principal leadership development.

Introduction

The argument regarding the merits of qualitative and quantitative research is clouded by the lack of coherent definitions, approaches to qualitative research versus the design of quantitative research and selecting the best methods to use for educational research. The challenge involved in effectively comparing the two methods results in much confusion for the researcher in determining the appropriate method for specific research studies. This paper examines the qualitative versus quantitative debate by focusing on the definitions, identifying the characteristics attributed to the two, and assessing whether or not there is a fundamental difference between them, in order to select an appropriate method for research in principal leadership development.

In comparing and contrasting qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques: a method will be selected to study qualities in principals for leadership development. How the principal functions as a leader is an important issue to explore for training programs and student success. As two teacher educators who prepare, mentor, and work closely with doctoral students in the Educational Administration program, we are committed to developing quality research and
leadership skills in our students. One aspect of this work is helping future and current
educational leaders and researchers explore the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and
quantitative research. Our focus in this paper is to analyze the relative aspects of using
qualitative and quantitative methods to assess which is best to study the role of the principal.

Definition

In research, there appears to be a fundamental distinction between qualitative and quantitative
research. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2008), qualitative research is multi-method in its
focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means
qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or
interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. According to Hopkins
(2008), in quantitative research the aim is to determine the relationship between one thing (an
independent variable) and another (a dependent or outcome variable) in a population. Gall, Borg
and Gall (2006) describe quantitative research as grounded in the assumption that features of the
social environment constitute an independent reality and are relatively constant across time and
settings. The one characteristic that all these terms share is that they tend to obscure rather than
clarify the theoretical. For example, in quantitative, the goal is to discern the concepts necessary
to treat the hypothesis. Whereas in qualitative, the goal is to understand the concepts used to
classify the experiences and categorize the themes. The concept seems confusing not only
because of the number of terms applied, but also because it carries different connotations for
different people (Charmaz, 2006).

Characteristics of Qualitative versus Quantitative Research

Qualitative research is often contrasted with quantitative research. Typically, (Denzin & Lincoln,
2008) quantitative data is in numerical form and qualitative is a word or text. There are some
critical issues in which researchers have a tendency to jump one way or the other, depending on
the set of beliefs they hold. These issues are more important to researchers based on the question
that is the focus of the study, especially in an age when qualitative and quantitative measures
have such a high profile in the public eye.

Qualitative research methods were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study
social and cultural phenomena. They became standard for sociologists in the 1930s but not
popular among educators (Bogden & Biklen, 2006). According to Myers (2007), qualitative data
sources include observation and participant observation (fieldwork), interviews and
questionnaires, documents and texts, and the researcher’s impressions and reactions. There are
also many perspectives or schools of thought, which interpret qualitative research in different
ways; examples are empiricism, Marxism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, symbolic
interactionism, feminism and structuralism.

Just as there are various philosophical perspectives, which can inform qualitative research, there
are various methods. A research method is a strategy of inquiry which moves from the
underlying philosophical assumptions to research design and data collection. The choice of
research method influences the way in which the researcher collects data. Specific research
methods also imply different skills, assumptions and research practices. While the procedures may vary, certain characteristics are shared by the traditions in the qualitative research genre. For example, case study and ethnography have many similarities, and can use common data collection methods such as observation, interviews, documents, and archival analysis (Tellis, 1997). Data analysis again seems to follow a similar pattern by generally using grounded theory or literature informed inductive methods to extract findings from the data, although Case Studies need not necessarily be bounded by this statement.

Action Research

In education, action research is a means for educators to try to improve teaching and learning. With the added accountability on schools to increase academic achievement, educators are conducting their own research in an effort to examine practices that will provide opportunities for all children to learn. Sagor (2011) identifies three purposes for action research: (a) building the reflective practitioner, (b) making progress on school wide priorities, and (c) building a professional culture in the educational arena. As such, each of these outcomes helps create an environment of learning and progress toward educational goals, and as a result they have become the focus of many school-based activities.

Action research has the potential to generate genuine and sustained improvements in schools. It gives educators new opportunities to reflect on and assess their teaching; to explore and test new ideas, methods, and materials; to assess fellow team members; and to make decisions about which new approaches to include in the team’s curriculum, instruction and assessment plans (Lieberman & Miller, 2004).

The use of peer coaching for elementary school principal leadership and school development researched in an action research study done by Jan M. Robertson in 1995. This research was designed as a conscious effort to not only develop a theory of professional development for school leaders but in so doing, to provide professional development which would help the school leaders to understand and then change their situation. The underlying theoretical principle of praxis was embedded and interwoven throughout the researcher’s and principals’ actions. The research was practical and based on the needs and concerns of the principals involved. In this way it was both a research and development model.

Roberson’s action research study, has been accompanied by the development of a number of different approaches (Lieberman & Miller, 2004): for example, to promote reflective practice; professional development; empowerment; understanding of tacit professional knowledge; curriculum development; institutional change; and development of democratic management and administration. Proponents share the common aim of ending the dislocation of research from practice, an aim which links them with those involved in participatory research and action inquiry.
Case Study

Case study research is the most common qualitative method used in information systems, but is being used more in the field of education. Opponents of case study research make the point that case studies look at only one subject or one case thereby, making it difficult to draw cause and effect relationships and impossible to generalize the findings to a broader population (Yin, 2008; Merriam, 2009). Case studies may appear to be useless because they cannot easily be applied to other cases that could possibly emanate and require practical remedies. However, George & Bennett (2005) point out that case study provide much more detailed information than what is available through a statistical analysis. The case study method also incorporates the idea that students can learn from one another by engaging with each other and with each other’s ideas, by asserting something and then having it questioned, challenged and thrown back at them so that they can reflect on what they hear, and then refine what they say (Boehrer, 1995). Students can direct their own learning by formulating questions and taking responsibility for the study.

The purpose of a case study of school leadership at Sinagua High School in Flagstaff, Arizona was to study the project designed to study how curricula, instruction, leadership, and other factors contribute to exemplary results for all high school students. The conceptual model used to guide the research is built on the framework established by the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award for education, which was established in 1998 to recognize performance excellence in schools (National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST, 1998). Seven category definitions were used as a framework for organizing data. These definitions were used to code all of the data from the interviews and focus groups conducted at the schools. In addition to promoting a single learning community among staff and students, the administration makes concerted efforts to draw people into the school.

Ethnography

A third form of qualitative research is ethnographic. Ethnographic research comes from the discipline of social and cultural anthropology where an ethnographer is required to spend a significant amount of time in the field. Ethnographers immerse themselves in the lives of the people they study (Myers, 2007) and seek to place the phenomena studied in their social and cultural context.

Ethnography is a social science research method. It relies heavily on up-close, personal experience and possible participation, not just observation, by researchers trained in the art of ethnography. These ethnographers often work in multidisciplinary teams. The ethnographic focal point includes intensive language and culture learning, intensive study of a single field or domain, and a blend of historical, observational, and interview methods. Typical ethnographic research employs three kinds of data: quotations, descriptions, and excerpts of documents, and results in one product: narrative description. This narrative often includes charts, diagrams and additional artifacts that help to tell “the story” (Hammersley & Gomm, 1997). Ethnographic methods can give shape to new constructs or paradigms, and new variables, for further empirical testing in the field or through traditional, quantitative social science methods.
Pielstick’s (1998) ethnographic study, *Transforming Leader: A Meta-Ethnographic Analysis* uses a pattern of descriptors to produce a profile of transformational leadership. The profile includes seven major themes with several components within each theme. Components were further defined with code words that provide descriptors of that particular component. The profile of the transforming leader articulated by the results of this meta-ethnographic analysis provides a model that can guide leaders as they reflect on their own leadership. It also provides a guide for professional development and leadership education, when combined with research findings on effective learning.

The qualitative research focuses on the defining characteristics and studies with action research, case study, and ethnology studies. Such a focus was motivated by a desire to understand the methodology of qualitative research for further studies into principal leadership development. Qualitative research is becoming popular in education and other social disciplines (Freebody, 2003). The inclusion and reference of qualitative research in organizations, text, journals and internet access are examples of increase use to understand teaching and learning.

Over the last 50 years, quantitative research has been the leader in educational research. Traditionally, quantitative research rests on the belief that reality is definite and can be seized and implied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Quantitative research is all about quantifying relationships between variables. Variables are things like weight, performance, time, and treatment. You measure variables on a sample of subjects, which can range from animals to humans. You express the relationship between variables using statistics, such as correlation, relative frequencies or differences between means. Quantitative research designs are either descriptive (subjects usually measured once), or experimental (subjects measured before and after a treatment).

The Sarasota County, Florida School District Leadership Training Program, a descriptive case study, described how the Sarasota County, Florida, School District conceived, planned, and designed a four-tier administrator-training program using the Leadership Academy Model. The tiers were designed to serve, respectively, aspiring administrators, assistant principals, new principals, and experienced principals. During the period studied, only the first two tiers were implemented. The case study narrative covers the design concepts and details of all four tiers and the implementation experiences of the first two tiers.

**Descriptive Study**

Descriptive studies are inclined to be easier or simpler to carry out than experimental or analytical studies, yet the importance of the study is not diminished since it provides the background from which each emerges. The simplest descriptive study is a case, which reports data on only one subject; examples are a study of Blue Ribbon principal or of a dysfunctional institution. Descriptive studies of a few cases are called case series. In cross-sectional studies variables of interest in a sample of subjects are assayed once and the relationships between them are determined. In prospective or cohort studies, some variables are assayed at the start of a study, then after a period of time the outcomes are determined. Another label for this kind of study is longitudinal, although this term also applies to experiments, and like many of these definitional attributes can apply to quantitative studies as well. Case-control studies compare cases (subjects with a particular attribute, such as an injury or ability) which control (subjects
without the attribute); comparison is made of the exposure to something suspected of causing the cases. This study is also called retrospective, because they focus on conditions in the past that might have caused subjects to become cases rather than controls. This is a contrast to experimental studies.

**Experimental Study**

Experimental studies are referred to as interventions, because you do more than just observe the subjects. They are also known as longitudinal or repeated-measures studies, for obvious reasons. In an experimental study, you take measurements, try some sort of intervention, and then take measurements again to see what happened, not taking into account that any change you see could be due to something other than the treatment. For example, subjects might do better on the second test because of their experience of the first test. The crossover design is one solution to this problem. Normally the subjects are given two treatments, one being the real treatment, the other a control or reference treatment. Half the subjects receive the real treatment first, the other half the control first. After a period of time sufficient to allow any treatment effect to wash out, the treatments are crossed over. Any effect of retesting or anything that happened between the tests can then be subtracted out by an appropriate analysis.

**Fundamental Differences**

The major points of contrast and debate between the broad categories of qualitative and quantitative research rest heavily upon a structure used by Gomm, Hammersley, and Foster (2009). Where a quantitative researcher might seek to know what percentage of people do one thing or another the qualitative researcher pays much greater attention to individual cases and the human understandings that feature in those cases. This was the case in the study by Powell & Strudler (1993), where action research was used as a model for professional development to help leaders acquire the understanding, skills, and knowledge to become change agents in their schools. Also, this was the case in the action research study by Robertson (2004), where a theory of professional development for school leaders was designed to provide information and support for school leaders to understand and then make changes in their situation. In this respect there are efforts to ensure that the gap between theory and practice is minimized, or more commonly, that theory and practice interact.

Qualitative researchers are concerned to ‘build’ theory from the ground of the experience of practitioners; to research face to face levels of interaction; to focus on the everyday or routine utilizing approaches from action research, case study research and ethnological research. Quantitative research remains more interested in what people do without a very complete understanding of those actions. It tends, therefore, to be concerned with behavior as an end in itself without paying sufficient attention to understanding that behavior. Even where attitudes’ are explored it is usually through pre-structured questionnaires, which do not allow respondents to provide their own agenda.

A tendency among quantitative researchers is to see their studies as centrally concerned with testing an initial hypothesis. This was evident in the experimental and descriptive studies discussed. It is rarer but not unknown among qualitative researchers. One contrast drawn in this
respect is that between explanation and understanding. It is argued that the quantitative researcher seeks to explain an initial hypothesis but the qualitative researcher strives to understand the views of the ‘actors’ in a school or a project, for example. This was particularly evident in the case study and action research study outlined.

Qualitative researchers are interested in answering those “why” questions and are not prepared to simply accept the quantitative answers. That is not to suggest that the quantitative data is not important to know. Simply put, it may not be enough for educators to get a fair assessment of the situation. According to Tronchim (2000), when placed alongside qualitative evidence, quantitative evidence is both clear and powerful. This was also evident in Robertson’s action research. The findings were analyzed using grounded theory techniques within a structure of action research. Thus, the processes of action research in this research study became a method for the analysis process as well as for that of data collection.

Qualitative researchers have been criticized by natural scientists for not providing quantified conclusions, while quantitative researchers have been criticized for not adding the personal value to their work (Glesne, 2010). Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2009), point out that there is more than one research methodology in the natural sciences and a number of interpretations of these. While one research strategy should not be emphasized to the exclusion of others, we advocate the use of action research methodology as a more effective approach in addressing some of the research in principal leadership development.

**Research for Principal Qualities**

The motivation for doing qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative research, comes from the observation which distinguishes humans from the natural world, the ability to express one’s self. Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. Kaplan and Maxwell (2004) argue that the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified.

An essential question, which must be asked by all those who want to engage in research, is why and for what purposes is the research to be carried out? Basically, this is an ethical question. In answering the question, let’s first look at the state of our education system. As a result of school failure, the Elementary and Secondary Act which was reauthorized and then signed into law as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 established the goals of supporting high standards and accountability for the learning of all children. Grants are available to increase academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools. This description “highly qualified” calls for action to improve the current and future school leaders. As such, the qualitative research method could be used for understanding the principal qualities in order to make changes in their behavior. As it is understood, qualitative research pays considerable attention to the action it seeks to bring about. In principal leadership research, researchers seek to identify the qualities of highly effective principals.
Theories of leadership in schools have become ever more apparent. In the 1980s, effective schools literature emphasized the role of the principal as the formal instructional leader. Then in the 1990s the paradigm shifted to acknowledge the role of the principal as a partner in shared leadership. According to a report released in 2005 by the National Partnership for Teaching At-Risk Schools acknowledged the importance of leadership in establishing a productive school. Progressively in the wake of “No Child Left Behind” legislation school leaders are being held accountable for the achievement of all students (Silva, Gimbert and Nolan, 2004). The information from the educational reform literature consistently emphasizes that effective leaders implement an indirect but powerful influence on a school’s ability to improve its programs and upon increasing student academic success (Harris & Muijs, 2003). While student learning depends first, last, and always on teacher quality (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009) it has been demonstrated that the quality of leadership matters in determining the motivations of teachers and the quality of instruction in the classroom (Fullan, 2005).

In doing qualitative action research it is our hope that researchers will model some of the action research done by Robertson (2004). This research was designed as a conscious effort to not only develop a theory of professional development for school leaders but in so doing, to provide professional development which would help the school leaders to understand and then change their situation. The underlying theoretical principle of praxis was embedded and interwoven throughout the researcher’s and principals’ actions. The research was practical and based on the needs and concerns of the principals involved. In this way it was both a research and development model.

Ultimately, it is this engagement which gives subjects a stake in, and an understanding of, the research. It goes without saying that no school, urban or rural, small or large, can improve over the long run without energized faculty and staff who are engaged in the organization, believe in the mission and understand how to achieve it. This is considered the basis for action and change. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) conducted a survey from a sample of 1,762 teachers and 9,941 students in one large Canadian school district to explore the relative effects of principal and teacher leadership on student engagement with school. The results demonstrated greater effects of principal as compared to teacher sources of leadership on student engagement. This study provides evidence for the basis for action and change. Indeed we might consider an understanding of action and change as the stock-in-trade of the qualitative researcher.

Conclusion

On the basis of this comparative analysis, we conclude that qualitative research and quantitative research are both necessary for research in principal leadership development. This comparative analysis of quality to quantity examined the effective characteristic for principal leadership development. As such, a search of the literature was conducted to obtain a better understanding whether quality or quantity is most effective when examining principal leadership. An electronic search on ERIC and NCREL yielded 81 articles, 31 studies and eight journals that discussed characteristic of principal leadership. The results of the study are discussed in terms of their theoretical and practical significance. However, the method of research to be used rests largely
on the question to be answered. Both types of research provide answers that will aid in leadership development.

All research, whether quantitative or qualitative, is based on some underlying assumptions about what constitutes ‘valid’ research and which research methods are appropriate. In order to conduct and/or evaluate qualitative research, it is therefore important to know what these assumptions are in order to ensure valid and usable results. It is also important to understand what your aim is when selecting the type of research to use. In quantitative research your aim is to determine the relationship between one thing (an independent variable) and another (a dependent or outcome variable) in a population. Whereas qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live.

It is equally as important to know and understand the choice of qualitative methods and type of quantitative method of use since it influences the way in which the researcher collects data. The four approaches to qualitative research, action research, case study, ethnography, and grounded theory, will determine the type of results you will get from the study. Quantitative research designs are either descriptive or experimental. In a descriptive study, no attempt is made to change behavior or conditions. Things are measured as they are. In an experimental study you take measurements, try some sort of intervention, and then take measurements again to see what happened. Within the context of the quantitative study alone, one can see the value of and know what it is you expect to get from your question.

However, the research of choice lies in the value that qualitative research attaches to human decision making. Thus, enabling the researcher to explore issues or problems, and serving as a model for evaluating learners, curriculum, or some aspect of program delivery. It has everything to offer those in the “real world.”
References


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Introduction

The terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center in the midtown Manhattan section of New York City, the Pentagon Building in Alexandria, Virginia, and an airliner in the field of western Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001, along with the Oklahoma City bombing at the Alfred P. Murrah Building on April 19, 1995 have changed the way we view crime and criminal justice in America. No longer do terms such as mere suspicion, reasonable articulable suspicion, and probable cause apply to community or neighborhood incidents. Moreover, no longer can a beat cop be concerned with local criminals and the types of offenses that they commit.
The 21st century police officer and correctional personnel in America and throughout the world must also understand national and international political issues as they relate to economics, religion, and technology. The aforementioned phenomenology affects neighborhoods and communities in most American cities and their surrounding counties. The implications of the new criminal justice phenomenon are many. First, the Bill of Rights has been greatly affected at all levels of government. Example, as a result of the Oklahoma City bombings, and the attacks on the World Trade Center, the U.S. Congress passed the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, that tightened the standards for habeas corpus in the United States (Doyle, 1996).

Simply put, a writ of habeas corpus demands that a prisoner be taken before the court, and that the custodian, which could be a police official, state or federal agent, etc... Present proof of authority, which allows the court to determine whether the police or agent has the lawful authority to further detain the prisoner. If the police official or agent is acting beyond their scope of authority, then the prisoner must be released. Any prisoner or detainee, or their lawyer or advocate, may petition the court, or a judge, for a writ of habeas corpus to either formally charge the person detained or release the person from custody. Often the writ is sought by a person other than the prisoner because the prisoner or detainee is held in solitary confinement (Doyle, 2006). This means that law enforcement officials, supported by state and federal courts are allowed to detain suspected terrorist for days and even months without having probable cause to formally charge a suspected terrorist with a specific crime. In other words, writs of habeas corpus are now more difficult to obtain as the government in general and the courts and correctional facilities in specific are now allowing suspects to be held under less strict legal standards. Suspects can now be held on reasonable articulable suspicion of terrorism as opposed to the tradition legal standard of probable cause.

Terrorism in our society has opened the legal door to justify detention for other local and state crimes as well. The US PATRIOT Act is probably the most controversial law that gives local, state, and federal law enforcement the authority to bypass several provisions and protections outlined in the fourth, fifth, and fourteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution in order to prevent, disrupt, or dismantle any potential terrorist acts.

These are just a few of the federal initiatives and programs that challenge the conventional wisdom that the framers provided to ensure that the government protects its citizens while preserving the rights that it provided to individual citizens.

Criminal Justice Defined

There is no universal definition of criminal justice, however, there are many definitions associated depending on the scholar and from what perspective it is being defined. Sociologist often define it as an institution of social control, psychologist often defines it along behavioral terms, and lawyers assert the definition along legislative and constitutional language. However, it is defined it always deals with human behavior and how to regulate and control it. For the purpose of this paper, I will define it as an institution of social control whose primary aim is to get individuals to subscribe to the dominant values of society. The primary institutions that
comprise the criminal justice system are the police, courts, and corrections. However, the criminal justice system is not the only institution that promotes social control. The others are primarily, family, faith based organizations, and school. When family, faith, and school are unable or unwilling to teach, promote, and force those dominant values, then the governments organizations such as the police, courts, and corrections will.

So given the information thus far, why do we need criminal justice more than ever? The answer is both simple and complex. The simple answer could be that crime has increased in many areas of American society and issues such as handgun violence in our schools, churches, colleges and universities are occurring at an alarming rate and the constant threat of terrorism necessitates the need for a stricter, more vigilant criminal justice system. The complex answer could be that the community, family, our social institutions such as churches, synagogues, mosque, and temples need to demand social justice in the areas of economics, education, equality, and the like.

Society also needs to hold our elected officials more accountable to respond to the challenges that we face in our communities that require a criminal justice response. There are many theoretical underpinnings that explain the phenomenology of crime in the community. Also, there are theoretical perspectives pertaining to the types of political responses to crime. Herbert Packer describes two most prominent approaches to the criminal justice process in his 1968 book, The Limits of the Criminal Sanction (Packer, 1968). Packer (1968) describes two models of the criminal justice process, crime control and due process. According to Packer (1968), due process is the rights of individuals that he asserted is politically liberal. Packer, then described crime control as the regulation of criminal conduct and behavior, a sort of assembly line justice more concerned with prosecution and incarceration for violating government sanctioned behavior, it's politically conservative (Packer, 1968).

Dworkin (1969), in his critique of Packer's book summed it up best when addressing the need for criminal sanction and criminal justice:

"Packer has said something that needed to be said. Criminal law discussion is filled with too much fuzzy talk about right and wrong with nothing more than feelings to tell people what falls into each category. Because the public thinks about criminal law, it is important that it be provided with a sensible foundation for its thought. In The Limits of the Criminal Sanction Herbert Packer has provided such a foundation. Now the rational legislators must build upon it a construct worthy of its base” (p. 498).

Another criminal justice view that is antithetical to Packer's is Restorative Justice Interestingly, Mantle, et.al (2005), describes the concept of restorative justice and three "restorative justice seeks to include the community much more directly in the delivery of justice, with the ambition of strengthening social ties" (p. 21). Restorative justice draws from the social, communal, spiritual, and retributive ideas to mete out justice and help bring about heeling to the victims and perpetrators of the crime(s) that were committed.
Conclusion

There are many theories or explanations of crime and how it affects its victims and the community. Whether one subscribes to a classical theory or positive one, criminal justice is the administration of justice through penal sanction, incapacitation, banishment, and many other forms of punishment. The need for criminal justice is more prevalent than ever. American has one of the highest incarcerated populations in the world. Some major cities in the United States arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate more than 100,000 people a year. Police are generally better trained than at any time in our nation's history with state of the art equipment, prosecutors have more resources at their disposal, and the government provides funding to build bigger and more efficient correctional facilities and prisons, yet the criminal justice system faces more challenges today than ever before.

We need criminal justice in a different way. America needs a criminal justice system that takes a holistic approach to solving or minimizing crime problems in our communities. We need more elected officials who once served as police officers; we need retired police to become school teachers. We need judges and prosecutors to become advocates for change in the way we educate our children. We need clergy to integrate community involvement in their sermons. We need to promote service as opposed to adventure. So yes, we do need criminal justice. Not justice for the criminals. We need justice for our victims. We need proactive social and political responsibility to our communities. If we do—then victims will truly get justice when they are victimized, criminals will be meted out justice, and the community will get social and political justice.
References


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