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Low-Incidence Special Education Teachers Lived Experience Teaching During COVID-19

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LOW-INCIDENCE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS LIVED EXPERIENCES

TEACHING DURING COVID-19

By

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APPROVAL OF DISSERTATION IN PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

CHRISTINA SAMONE HATCHER: Low-Incidence Special Education Teachers Lived Experience Teaching During Covid-19

This study's purpose is to identify how the shift has impacted low-incidence special education teachers to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is minimal research regarding the lived experiences of how low-incidence special education teachers teach remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study will consist of evaluating how prepared low-incidence special education teachers felt they were for the demands of remote learning, how they mitigated the demands, what resources and support were received that were helpful, as well as what resources and support low-incidence special education teachers feel they still need to continue to teach remotely, and how their self-efficacy beliefs and feelings have been impacted during the shift while teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Low-incidence active special education teachers will participate in one-on-one interviews to share their experiences as low-incidence special education teachers teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Outcomes to obtain include an evaluation that will be utilized for the preparation of programs and professional development opportunities to guide teachers regarding readiness for online learning, support, and resources for low-incidence special education teachers for school districts and administration.

The study population of interest is self-selected active low-incidence special education teachers from the South Florida area ranging from private to public schools

during spring 2020 and fall 2020. The study will utilize a qualitative narrative design.

This study will also serve as a pilot for future research on the topic.

Order Number: _____

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5

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I want to acknowledge Dr. Jennifer Lesh for her continued encouragement and guidance while obtaining my degree in Educational Leadership.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Belinda and Charles, for always loving and supporting me. You both have been there for me every step of my educational journey, and I thank you for all the support and unconditional love you have given me. To my sister Valerie thank you for the continued encouragement. To my Chaz, thank you for pushing me to finish what I started and constantly motivating me. Extra special shout out to the lady who told me to quit or I should take a break because of her personal life trails she tried to break me but guess what…? Sis has DR in front of her name; thanks to yall.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) announced COVID-19 as a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. This pandemic led to one-by-one state-issued stay-at-home orders, the shutdown of all nonessential business, travel, and gatherings, the loss of jobs, and uncertainty about how to continue education. With the uncertainty of the future, education has hit a critical milestone leaving educators to quickly shift from traditional (face-to-face) learning to an unfamiliar territory of distance (virtual) learning, increasing teachers' understanding of the vital role in their students' lives. The implementation of the distance learning approach in education worldwide was something schools and institutions utilize to continue their teaching practice (Armstrong-Mensah, Ramsey-White, Yankey, & Self-Brown, 2020).

As Code, Ralph, and Forde (2020) stated that K-12 school systems worldwide suspended classroom-based operations in response to public health officials' declarations of emergency. The role of collective teacher efficacy among teachers and other school staff heightened as collaboration to make sure students are receiving the necessary support but are also reaching their fullest academic and social potential became even more important (Hattie, 2017). Through the distance learning approach to teaching, it became clear to educators that they needed to understand the associated impact of traditional learning versus remote learning for students (Cerna, Rutigliano, & Mezzanotte, 2020). In the traditional educational setting, face-to-face instruction receives the highest ratings in terms of helpfulness and support from students in the classroom (Haskell, 2009).

When considering the factors associated with COVID-19 and the potential for not meeting students in person, teachers had to shift to distance learning which still consists of traditional responsibilities such as managing students' behaviors and socio-emotional health while instructing online (Lischer, Safi & Dickson, 2021). How can educators provide effective education while teaching virtually? As COVID-19 has limited people's interaction in society, the education system must find an alternative method to implement education for students worldwide, as the pandemic has impacted the school setting. The aspect of students participating in a traditional school (face-to-face interactions) but now participating in education virtually. Acknowledgment of efforts of distance learning being implemented, according to Zaheer and Munir (2020), lacks student-teacher interaction, face-to-face interactions, and the physical absence of the teachers hinders relationship building. According to Zaheer and Munir (2020), distance learning has posed threats to students as they might feel alone and dejected. Physical distance from the supervisor may make them skeptical about the quality of their work.

Consider the above shift to remote learning and couple it with working with students with severe developmental disabilities. Students become accustomed to the full-time responsibility of distance learning and develop more confidence in their work. Students develop a sense of hope that there is enough time for teachers to support each of them during their work. The problem of isolation, lack of connectedness between students and teachers, and collective teacher efficacy is exasperated. When special education teachers work in settings where students with disabilities have severe cognitive and communications deficits (U.S. Department of Education & Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2021). Low-incidence special education teachers use a

myriad of hand-over-hand teaching techniques and low and high-tech communication devices to teach students with severe cognitive, physical, and communication disabilities (Russell, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic created a paradigm shift for these low-incidence special education professionals and how they instructed their students with severe disabilities. Low-incidence special education teachers could no longer teach their students in a brick-and-mortar environment. These low-incidence special educators had to quickly become ingenious in their remote learning approaches (Tremmel, Myers, Brunow, & Hott, 2020).

Purpose of Study

This study aims to identify how the shift has impacted low-incidence special education teachers to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aims to discover how teachers' lives were changed during the pandemic. This study will investigate how low-incidence special education teachers' readiness for the demands of remote learning, how special education teachers dealt with the associated demands and mitigated problems, what resources and support were provided, and/ or what resources special education teachers feel they need to continue to teach remotely and their sense of collective teacher efficiency during the switch to remote learning.

Role of Special Education Teachers' Preparation During COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the educational system shifted from in-person to remote instruction. As the shift began, teachers' vital roles increased. According to Koenig (2020), teacher preparation programs were not designed to prepare teachers for teaching remotely because the need for this preparation was not as high before the pandemic, leaving all teachers unprepared for the possibility of teaching their students

remotely (Turner et al., 2020; Garcia, 2020). According to the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), a high-quality teacher preparation program provides plenty of opportunities for candidates to demonstrate pedagogical tools and plenty of experiences in the core academic subject areas. Teacher preparation programs for special education teacher candidates often implement the seven standards for initial special education teachers established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) into their program (Mastropieri et al., 2017; CEC, 2023.).

1. Leaner development and individual learning differences
2. Learning environments
3. Curricular content knowledge
4. Assessments
5. Instructional planning and strategies
6. Professional Learning and ethical practice
7. Collaboration (CEC, 2023)

However, despite these efforts, nothing could prepare teachers for the new challenges and demands they faced during the transition to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Turner et al. (2020) and Garcia (2020), while teacher preparation programs prepare special education teachers for the use of technology within the classroom, teachers were unprepared for the possibility of teaching their students and providing services for their students remotely. A language arts teacher in Norman, Oklahoma, said: "I'm not an online teacher. I've not been trained to do any of this, and I do not want my students to be at a loss because I am in uncharted territory," (Times, 2020). According to Koenig (2020), Teacher preparation programs were not designed to

prepare teachers for teaching students remotely because there was not as high of a need for this preparation before the pandemic.

Influence of School and Collective Teacher Efficiency

While education research is constantly shifting, it is primarily with special education with teacher readiness and collective teacher efficacy. It is more crucial now, during a global pandemic, to continue to research the lived experiences of low-incidence special education teachers from their shift from in-person instruction to remote instruction (Tremmel et al., 2020). Adebomi et al. (2012) study evaluated the self-efficacy beliefs of special education teachers and found that job satisfaction of special education teachers was significantly positively related to teacher self-efficacy. These two factors were found to have a high effect on job commitment. The researchers concluded that special education teachers with high self-efficacy will try all instructional approaches for their students to ensure that they learn adequately. According to Lee et al., 2011 lack of support from the school district, lack of resources, including curriculum, supplies, and technology, and heavy workloads were found to negatively affect special education teachers' self-efficacy beliefs.

Directing a focus on the support from school leaders to low-incidence special education teachers during the impactful shift of school culture during the global pandemic. Harris & Jones (2020) research supported that there is no interaction between teachers and principals since the teacher simply received instructions from the principal without any discussion. According to Constantia, Christos, Glykera, Anastasia & Aikatweini's (2021) research findings, the principal has become a bureaucrat who gets lost in order, circulars, and health protocols. Oaltay & Karada (2016) indicate the

behavior of a leader-principal is one of the most critical factors in building successful schools. The principal is the individual who plans and implements curriculum growth and enhances the operations of staff and students by mobilizing and directing them toward the school's objectives (Cogaltay & Karadag, 2016). The principal is also responsible for implementing educational innovations.

According to Charalampous & Papademetriou (2019), the principal is the school's chief who serves as the leader of a social community. He or she is also a designated employee of the education authorities. According to Moore (2009), a principal with emotional intelligence can have a positive impact on the whole school community's culture. Claims that when a school principal inspires both teachers, and students, by recruiting their emotional intelligence, then he or she can achieve pedagogical goals more efficiently.

Statement of the Problem

Low-incidence special education teachers had to shift to remote learning during the 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Their students with severe disabilities were at an instructional disadvantage (Russell, 2020; Tremmell et al., 2020; USDOE, 2021). The stories of how these low-incidence special education teachers mitigated these transitions to remote learning with severely developmental delayed students have not been heard. It is the purpose of this qualitative narrative study to tell their stories.

Theoretical Framework

The shift has impacted low-incidence special education teachers to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. How these low-incidence special education

teachers' lives were changed during the pandemic in the areas of readiness for the demands of remote learning, how special education teachers dealt with the associated demands and mitigated problems, how they created collective efficacy when the occurrence of a situation that one has overcome together.

Bandura's (1997) construction of perceived self-efficacy is the belief that one can perform novel or difficult tasks and attain desired outcomes embedded within the social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy not only affects human lives in highly stressful situations, but it also helps one to develop motivation and envision challenging goals in life. Hence, resilience is empirically closely related to self-efficacy definition by coping adaptively with traumatic stressors, which are linked to the occurrence of situations that one must overcome.

According to Masten (2001), resilient persons bend without breaking, and they quickly rebound from adversity, which reflects the "ordinary magic" of human adaptive systems. Therefore, high self-efficacy beliefs can positively impact motivational processes even if specific stressors are absent as well-being self-efficacious may also be helpful to show resilience in the face of adversity. In the case of these low-incidence disabilities teachers, they had to quickly adapt to virtual learning with students with severe disabilities who were accustomed to working in person using techniques that require hand-over-hand methods coupled with verbal prompts (Russell, 2020; Tremmell et al., 2020; USDOE, 2021). These low-incidence special education teachers' self-efficacy was tested. Special education teachers who normally relied on their colleagues for support, new ideas, and camaraderie were thrust into isolated situations, therefore challenging their collective efficacy (Russell, 2020).

Research Questions

The research question for this study aims to investigate the lived experiences of low-incidence special education teachers to analyze how they were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The research question for this study will be:

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of low-incidence special education teachers switch from brick-and-mortar instruction to remote learning?

Significance of Study

Research on collective teacher efficacy and the influence among low-incidence special education teachers is forever evolving (Russell, 2020). It has heightened because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated challenges surrounding students with severe disabilities and their instructional disadvantages (Russell, 2020; Tremmel et al., 2020, USDOE, OSERS, 2021). There is minimum literature regarding lived experiences of how low the incidence of special education teachers teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature related to low-incidence special education teachers' stories of how they taught remotely during the pandemic. Through narratives, the researcher seeks to investigate how low-incidence special education teachers feel about readiness for teaching in general, the use of technology, opportunities for professional development, allocated support and resources, and collective teacher efficacy. The results of this study may assist with future preparation of programs and professional development opportunities to guide teachers. In the areas of readiness for online learning, support, and resources for special education teachers for school districts and administration on the needs and feelings of current

remote learning, as well as investigate the shift to remote learning effect on special education teacher's collective teacher efficacy.

Definition of Terms

1. **Collective Efficacy:** A group's shared belief in the conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment. (Bandura, 1997)

2. **Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE):** Characterized as the perception of teachers in a school that the efforts of faculty will have a positive effect on students. (Hattie, 2018)

3. **General Education Curriculum:** designed to ensure that students meet these goals through inquiry-based learning across the disciplines. (IDEA, 2020)

4. **Global Pandemic COVID-19:** Coronaviruses are a type of virus. There are many different kinds, and some cause disease. A coronavirus identified in 2019, SARS-CoV-2, has caused a pandemic of a respiratory illness called COVID-19. (WHO, 2020)

5. **Individualized Education Program (IEP):** A written document developed, reviewed, and revised per IDEA that outlines the special education and related services specifically designed to meet the unique educational needs of students with disabilities. (IDEA, 2020)

6. **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** Ensures that all children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. (IDEA, 2004)

7. **Low-Incidence Disabilities:** A visual or hearing impairment, simultaneous visual and hearing impairments, a significant cognitive impairment, or any impairment for which a small number of personnel with highly specialized skills and knowledge are needed for children with that impairment to receive early intervention services or a free appropriate public education (IDEA, 2004).

8. **Special Education Teacher**: A person who works with students who have learning, mental, emotional, or physical disabilities. (IDEA, 2020)

9. **Remote Learning:** Distance education, also known as distance learning, is the education of students who may not always be physically present at a school. Traditionally, this usually involved correspondence courses wherein the student corresponded with the school via mail. Today, it usually involves online education. (WHO, 2020)

10. **Social Cognitive Theory**: An interpersonal level theory developed by Albert Bandura that emphasizes the dynamic interaction between people (personal factors), their behavior, and their environments. (Bandura, 1997)

11. **Specially Designed Instruction:** Adapting the content, methodology, and/or delivery of instruction based on an individual student's needs to ensure access to the general education curriculum (CEC, 2023).

Rationale of Study

According to the National Association of Elementary Principals (2008), in this time of high standards for all children, the concept of teacher efficacy-from the standpoint of individual teachers and the faculty as a whole- is critically important (p.45). Conjoined alongside Bandura's (1993; 1997), Donohoo's (2017; 2018), and Hattie's (

2009; 2018) research that indicates that collective teacher efficacy is the critical piece missing from school improvement efforts, the researcher will investigate the lived experiences of low-incidence special education teachers teaching remotely during COVID-19 pandemic through analyzing how low-incidence special education teachers feel about readiness for teaching in general, the use of technology, opportunities for professional development, allocated support and resources and collective teacher efficacy.

The researcher will position the work around a theory-based evaluation that is utilized for the preparation of programs and professional development opportunities to guide teachers regarding readiness for online learning, support, and resources for special education teachers for school districts and administration on the needs and feelings of current remote learning; as well as investigate the shift to remote learning effect on special education teacher's collective teacher efficacy. The goal will be for educational leaders to utilize the information to help them implement the preparation of programs at their institutions so that future directions may be determined.

Summary

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on low-incidence special teachers and their approach to instruction through remote learning has become forever changing (Tremmel et al., 2020). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, low-incidence special education teachers have changed their already extensive workload, and they doubled the already demanding requirements to maintain their students' level of instruction have shifted to a new era of overwhelming and unknown consequences (Jandric, Hayes & Truelove et al., 2020). Special education teachers are being tasked with maintaining their

rigorous instructional responsibilities in addition to venturing into the realm of newly discovered technology to meet with their students (USDOE & OSERS, 2021; Vegas & Winthrope, 2020; Cerna, 2020). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, education has shifted research investigating special education teachers lived experiences and stories are critical to understanding the level of readiness for teaching, technology usage, support and resources, and the overall knowledge of how special education teachers' collective teacher efficiency have been influenced as a result of the shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Historically, disabilities, as it applies to education, started with Congress enacting the Education for All Handicapped Children Act 1975 or EHA (Public Law 94-142), supporting states and localities in protecting the right to meeting the individual's needs. Shortly after, in 1990, a reauthorization occurred, changing the landmark laws to now identify as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA. Before the EHA, children were denied access to education and opportunities to learn. In 1970, United States schools educated only one in five children with disabilities, and states had laws in place to exclude certain students which were deaf, blind, emotionally disturbed or had an intellectual disability. Since the EHA passing in 1975, the United States progressed from excluding nearly 1.8 million children with disabilities from public schools to implementation to providing more than 7.5 million children (about twice the population of Oklahoma) with disabilities with special education and related services designed to meet their individual needs in the 2018-2019 school year. According to the IDEA, during 2018-2019, more than 64% of children with disabilities were in general education classrooms for 80% or more of their school day, and early intervention services were provided to more than 400,000 infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families (U.S. Department of Education: IDEA 2020).

Prevalence

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines low-incidence disabilities within Section 1462(c):

- A visual or hearing impairment, or simultaneous visual and hearing impairments.

- A significant cognitive impairment; or

- Any impairment for which a small number of personnel with highly specialized skills and knowledge are needed in order for children with that impairment to receive early intervention services or a free appropriate public education,

- Or cognitive disabilities, or any disabilities that need special education services beyond the capabilities of the general education classroom teacher or mild interventionist.

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), less than 1% of the state's student population will have a low-incidence disability. Low-incidence disabilities categories could be considered as the following:

- Deaf or Hard of Hearing/ Auditory Impairment (A.I.)

- Autism (A.U.)

- Deaf-Blindness (D.B.)

- Intellectual Disability (I.D.)

- Multiple Disabilities (M.D.)

- Orthopedic Impairment (O.I.)

- Other Health Impairment (OHI)

- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- Visual Impairment (VI)

According to a 2020 annual report conducted by National Center for Education Statistics, students who received special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) were 7.3 million, or 14% of all public-school students

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). Among students who received special education services under the IDEA during the 2019-2020 school year, 5% to 11% of the student population with autism, developmental delays, intellectual disabilities, and emotional disturbances. Students that suffered from multiple disabilities such as hearing impairments, orthopedic impairments, visual impairments, traumatic brain injuries, and deafblindness represented 2% of those served under the IDEA (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). Statistics obtained from the Florida Department of Education showed that students with disabilities make up 401,745 or 14% of the population (Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, 2020). Although there are programs to support low-incidence disabilities when teachers and students face common educational methods have shifted, and our world as we knew it has changed, including our educational system being impacted.

Low-Incident Special Education Teacher Preparation Program

Attention around special education over the past years has heightened regarding hiring and preparing highly skilled special education teachers. Teacher preparation programs are designed to prepare teachers for everything they should encounter during their first years as a teacher. The Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) requirements standards categories for teacher preparation programs consist of:

- Ensuring to prepare teachers with content knowledge and appropriate pedagogical tools,
- Requirements to partner with districts to ensure quality feedback and practice during student-teacher partnerships and,

- Demonstrating that teacher graduates are successful in improving academic achievement in students, preschool- to 12th grade (Sawchuk, 2013).

According to the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), a high-quality teacher preparation program provides plenty of opportunities for candidates to demonstrate pedagogical tools and plenty of experiences in the core academic subject areas. Teacher preparation programs for special education teacher candidates often implement the seven standards for initial special education teachers established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) into their program (Mastropieri et al., 2017; CEC, 2023.).

1. Leaner development and individual learning differences
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The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) consists of subcomponents of the seven standards categories for initial special education teachers' preparedness being:

- Understand and use both general and specialized curricular content knowledge for teaching across content areas to diverse students,
- Use technologies to support instructional assessment, planning, and delivery for students with disabilities and,
- Use the theory and elements of effective collaboration in practice (CEC, 2023).

The Council for Expectational Children (CEC) standard domain areas for special education teachers in the alignment of INTASC Core Principles defines what a special education teaching candidate should be able to do to begin teaching. A high-quality teacher preparation program would provide ample opportunities for candidates to demonstrate tools and plenty of experience in core academic subject areas (CEC, 2023). Based on the Council for Expectational Children (CEC) implicit to all the knowledge and skills standards focused on individuals with disabilities whose education focuses on an individual general curriculum. Knowledge and skill base for all entry-level special education teachers of students with exceptionalities in individual general curriculums align with a mild/ moderate licensure framework that consists of:

- Foundations

- Characteristics of Learners

- Individual Differences

- Instructional Strategies

- Learning Environments and Social Interactions

- Language

- Instructional Strategies

- Assessments

- Ethics and Professional Practice

- Collaboration (CEC, 2023)

Low-Incidence Special Education Teacher Preparation Training

The Florida Department of Education (DOE) oversees public education and sets the standards and licensure requirements for teaching. All teachers, including special

education teachers in Florida, have a bachelor's degree. The Florida Department of Education (DOE) educator preparation consists of two routes, professional and temporary certification, described on the website. The first route is professional certification through the traditional route of a Florida state-approved initial teacher preparation program, District Professional Development Certification Program, Educator Preparation Institute, or out-of-state approved teacher education program and passing three portions of the Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) consisting of 47 different exams: four general knowledge subtest, one professional education exam, and 42 subject area examinations. A professional certification can also be obtained through certificate reciprocity consisting of out-of-state certificates, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE). Additional professional certification can be issued through college teaching experience by passing scores on the Professional Education Test and the Subject Area Examination and two-semester of acceptable college teaching experience. The professional training option at the undergraduate or graduate level, approved Professional Education Competence (PEC), one year of full-time teaching experience, and passing scores on the General Knowledge Tests: The Professional Education Test and the Subject Area Examination. The Professional Preparation- College course with a minimum of 15 semesters hours of education courses as specified in State Board of Education Rule 6A-4.006, an approved Professional Education Competence (PEC), one year of full-time teaching experience, and passing scores on the General Knowledge Tests.

The second route is temporary certification is valid for three school years and nonrenewable. A temporary certification provides time to complete all requirements for a

professional certificate while teaching full-time. The requirements for the Florida Department of Education temporary certificate are to demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge (art, chemistry, language, mathematics, etc.) or meet subject specialization with a 2.5 GPA for a requested subject.

The Florida Department of Education requires special education teachers are required to gain a professional certificate as exceptional student teacher. Candidates must earn a degree in an area of exceptional education through an approved educator preparation program, obtaining a passing score on the FTCE subject area assessment SAE relevant to the areas of exceptional student education (K-12), hearing impaired (K-12), speech-language impaired (K-12) and visually impaired (K-12).

Low-Incidence Special Education Teacher Instructional Strategies and Methods

Special education services are individualized for each student to equip them with accommodations to meet their specific needs to aid in their developmental progress. Low-incidence special education teachers are tasked with providing their students with the necessary tools based on their assessment which allows for them to have an individual education program (IEP) that special education teachers use to track their students' progress. As stated by the U.S. Department of Education (2020), special education is currently in the spotlight; what instructional strategies and methods are utilized in delivering special education services to students with disabilities?

According to the National Center on Intensive Intervention at American Institutes for Research (2022), data-based individualization (DBI) can help school teams design and implement a prereferral process and high-quality special education services. Also, students with disabilities who receive special education can significantly benefit from the

DBI process, as it enhances the quality of special education services by providing teachers a systematic data-based process for:

- Providing specially designed instruction based on student needs,

- Writing ambitious but realistic individualized education program (IEP) goals,

- Evaluating progress toward IEP goals,

- Intensifying specialized instruction for students who are not making adequate progress,

- Planning for the whole child.

DBI provides schools with a validated approach as data collected through the DBI process can assist teams in assessing the needs for specialized instruction for identifying and supporting students with severe and persistent learning and behavior problems, including students who may require special education, which is a requirement for determining eligibility for special education. Additional DBI can support special education teachers in more accurately developing present levels, goals, and specialized instruction and support that will be included in the initial IEP; without data, the IEP can be hindered by a lack of data about the previous progress followed by a delay in timely provisions to truly target and individualized instruction and a lack of information regarding the successful and unsuccessful approaches to intervention.

Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) consisting of response to interventions (RTI), or positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS), depending on location and area of focus, are the most successful when it is implemented. The intensive intervention DBI approach builds on the lower tiers of the system. Tier 1 and Tier 2 support quality and fidelity using valid and reliable progress monitoring measures.

Implementing data-based decision rules and data meeting structures essential to MTSS set the foundation for implementing intensive intervention through DBI.

Strategies for Setting High-Quality Academic Individualized Education Program Goals

Low-incidence special education teachers are tasked "to meet its substantive obligations under the IDEA, a school must offer an IEP reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances" (Endrew, 2017, p. 16). Low-incidence special education teachers have a duty in monitoring students' progress toward appropriately challenging individualized educational programs (IEP) annual goals and making changes to students' educational programs when needed. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that the IEP include a statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals to include a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives that do the following:

- Meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and

- Meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability.

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- Meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability.

When developing an academic individualized education program (IEP) and setting goals to accommodate students with disabilities that ensure their appropriate progress implementing the Intensive intervention (site date and site) steps for setting a goal is essential. These goals consist of (1) selecting a measure, (2) establishing baseline performance, (3) choosing a strategy for setting the goal, and (4) writing a measurable goal. Along with utilizing these goals, the IEP team will consider multiple factors such as previous student performance, students' age, and grade level after goal setting, developing, and implementing an IEP progress-monitoring plan. The occurrence teams will use the graphed progress monitoring data and the validated data analysis strategies to determine students' overall responsiveness to core and specially designed instruction and adapt instructional programming to maximize efficiency and ensure that the students' needs are met.

Strategies for Setting Data-Driven Behavioral Individualized Education Program Goals

Low-incidence special education teachers are responsible for setting behavioral IEP goals for students with disabilities, as students with disabilities pose challenges for

educators because of their behavior (Amstad & Muller, 2020). Behavioral progress monitoring and goal setting are intended to collect frequent, repeated, and ongoing information regarding student performance to support timely and defensible data-based decision-making about behavioral support. The quality behavioral components of an IEP goal include (1) time frame, (2) assessment conditions, (3) target behavior, (4) supports needed, (5) level of proficiency/ timeline, and (6) measurements. When addressing behavioral IEP goals, the challenges occur as educators are concerned pertaining to behavior change more frequently than review requirements in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). According to the Intensive Interventions (2020), recommendations to support behavioral IEP goal development suggest:

- The behavior should be observable, measurable, and amenable to change.

- The goal should focus on student behavior, not educator behavior.

- The goal should address the present levels of academic and functional performance identified through data collection and,

- The goal should focus on a skill the student needs to master.

Implementing these steps can ensure that the IEP goals appropriately address student needs. A behavioral IEP goal should focus on an observable replacement behavior but can simultaneously monitor the student's behavior of concern to determine if a change to the student program is necessary. Collecting data on both behaviors of concern and replacement behaviors also allows the IEP team to provide more timely information to parents and families.

Low-Incidence Special Education Teacher Brick and Mortar Settings

According to the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics (2019), more than 60 percent of students with disabilities spend at least 80 percent of their school day in general education. Special education teachers are tasked with working alongside general education teachers to develop curricula and create positive student culture. The roles of special education teachers are essential in ensuring that students with disabilities receive a quality education. Special education teachers are tasked with adopting inclusive learning following the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), stating that students with individual education plans (IEPs) must be educated in the least-restrictive environments available.

Special education teachers' roles consist of developing mutual respect and open-minded relationship with general education teachers' philosophy of inclusion, along with establishing strong administrative support and knowledge of how to meet the needs of the student with disabilities. The involvement of special education teachers is crucial to the success of a combined learning environment in classroom instruction and learning assessments. Special education teacher classroom instruction is based on co-teaching models or push-in models in presenting students with disabilities lessons. Special education teachers often sit with or near students with IEPs to monitor their progress and provide special instructions or modifications to the general education teachers' lesson plans through supplemental learning materials based on their unique needs. A special education teacher will also create supplemental learning materials for specific students, including visual, manipulative, text, and technology resources, and determine when one-on-one lessons or sensory activities might be needed. Often special education teachers

advocate for students by arranging for a counselor, paraprofessionals, speech therapists, dyslexia coaches, and other specialized personnel to be present in the classroom at certain times to assist students in cultivating a positive student culture and overall success.

Another role of special education teachers is to conduct learning assessments regularly to determine whether students are achieving academic goals. Teachers must examine students' strengths, weaknesses, interests, and communication methods when conducting these assessments to ensure that students' IEPs were sufficiently challenging without overwhelming the student and tailored toward meeting the student's achievement goals. Special education teachers also organize periodic IEP meetings with students, their families, and staff members to determine whether adjustments need to be made to a student's plan. Regular communication for the students and their needs is essential, as everyone can aid in their overall quality of education.

School District COVID-19 Transition to Remote Learning in Response to Special Education Teachers

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2020), after the outbreak of COVID-19, many schools have considered opting out of distance learning and proceeding with school closure because it inhabits the services of students with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Education (2020) believes that it is vital that nothing stands in the pathway of education being delivered to students online, not even COVID-19. Stated opines that the responsibility of each school district is to provide FAPE to exceptional students in the field of special education (U.S Department of Education, 2020). The belief is that closing schools will not only halt education for the time being,

but students with disabilities will be at a disadvantage if they do not have the opportunity to participate in distance learning.

The education platform of distance learning may be a different experience for most educators and students; it is a method that continues the path of education students; it is a method that continues the path of education being provided to students. Though there may be current conditions that place a hold on delivering special education services from making progress that is similar to the in-person classroom environment, it stated that "FAPE may include, as appropriate, special education and related services provided through distance instruction provided virtually, online, or telephonically" (U.S Department of Education, 2020). COVID-19 has placed an importance on school districts to impart that will assist in the best decisions to make. It considers each student's health and safety during this sensitive time (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Educators, especially special education teachers, may still meet their legal obligations by providing a child with disabilities equally effective alternate access to the curriculum or related services included in their Individualized education program (U.S Department of Education, 2020).

Bandura Self-Efficacy Theory

According to Bandura (1997), the construct of perceived self-efficacy is the belief that one can perform novel or difficult tasks and attain desired outcomes embedded within the social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy not only affects human lives in highly stressful situations, but it also helps one to develop motivation and envision challenging goals in life. Thus, it influences private and professional decision-making throughout the course of one's life (Betz & Klein, 1996; Markman, Balkin, & Baron, 2002). Hence,

resilience is empirically closely related to self-efficacy. It is defined as coping adaptively with traumatic stressors, which are closely linked to the occurrence of situations that one must overcome. Resilient persons bend without breaking, and they quickly rebound from adversity, which reflects the "ordinary magic" of human adaptive systems (Masten, 2001).

Therefore, high self-efficacy beliefs can positively impact motivational processes even if specific stressors are absent, as well-being self-efficacious may also be helpful to show resilience in the face of adversity. Through activating affective, motivational, and behavioral mechanisms in taxing situations, self-efficacy beliefs can promote resilience. Therefore, it has sometimes been conceptualized as one component of resilience (Rutter, 1987).

Furthermore, when low-incidence special education teachers believe that they are equipped with the necessary resources and tools to mitigate these issues that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic transition to remote learning, they create efficacy when the occurrence of a situation that one has overcome. Moreover, the researcher focused on investigating the lived experiences of low-incidence special education teachers to analyze the effect, readiness for remote learning, support, and resources for special education teachers for school districts and administration on the needs and feelings of current remote learning.

Collective Teacher Efficacy & Student Achievement Learning

Hattie et al. (2018) discuss Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE) as the "new number one" influence related to student achievement several times. According to John Hattie (2018), Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE) is the collective belief of teachers in

their ability to positively affect students. The notion of Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE) is not a new concept. It was first introduced during the 1990s by Albert Bandura (1993, 1997) and is rooted in his concept of self-efficacy. Bandura (1993, 1997) defines collective efficacy as "a group's shared belief in the conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment. Bandura (1993, 1997) found that the positive effects of CTE on student academic performance more than outweigh the negative effects of low socioeconomic status. Confirmation was later given by Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) through a study conducted to demonstrate that between-school differences of collective teacher efficacy were more important in explaining student achievement than socioeconomic status. Further research by Hoy, Sweetland, and Smith (2002) found that the strength of CTE helps the positive effects of individual teacher efficacy and vice versa. A more substantial collective teacher efficacy seems to encourage individual teachers to make more effective use of the skills they already have.

Furthermore, according to Hattie's presentation at "The Collective Impact Conference 2017," Collective Teacher Efficacy is not about making teachers feel good about themselves but is more complicated than just believing you can make a difference collectively. An author that aligns with Hattie's (2018) definition of "collaborative conversation-based on evidence" is Jenni Donohoo (2017); as indicated within the text, "by strengthening collective teacher efficacy, teachers will develop the resolve to persist against challenges and realize increased student results." (Donohoo, 2017, pp 36). There is significant evidence that collective efficacy increases effort and positively improves student performance.

Fostering and Cultivating Collective Teacher Efficacy

According to Donohoo (2018), when educators believe in their collective ability to lead the improvement of student outcomes, higher levels of achievement result. Collective efficacy is evident when teachers see themselves as part of a team working for their students. Research conducted by Donohoo & Katz (2017) demonstrated that in schools with a high degree of collective efficacy, teachers display a positive attitude toward professional development, exhibit deeper implementation of evidence-based instructional strategies, and focus on academic pursuits.

Goddard (2000) defines CTE characterized as the perception of teachers in a school that the efforts of faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students (p.480). In contrast, Tschannen- Moran & Bar (2004) classified it as the collective self-perception that teachers in a school make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact on their homes and communities (p.190). Regardless of how CTE is defined, Donohoo (2017) stresses the importance of CTE by stating that because of its effect on student achievement, it must not be understated or overlooked (p.92). Risen, from the work of Bandura (1997), is well acknowledged and accepted among other researchers in the field (Donohoo, 2017; Eells, 2011; Goddard et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran and Barr, 2004); there are four sources of collective efficacy known as mastery experience, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and affective states.

Mastery experiences are often considered the most powerful source of CTE. According to Goddard (2001), earlier work findings show that nearly two-thirds of the between-school variation in collective efficacy resulted from differences in mastery experience based on prior school achievement. Goddard et al. (2015) take a slightly

different approach and reframe the source of efficacy as an enactive experience, in other words, engaging in forms of work. According to Donohoo (2017), when teams experience success and cause for success are credited to be within the team's control, collective efficacy increases, and expectations that results can be repeated are shaped.

The second source of efficacy is vicarious experience. Goddard et al. (2004) explain that vicarious experiences are those in which a skill is modeled by someone else. When an observer sees a model perform well, the efficacy belief of the observer is enhanced; however, the converse is true as well. Bandura (1997) further suggested that vicarious experiences can be so strong that they can supersede direct experiences of failure and provide a model of further behavior even after repeated bouts of poor performance.

Social persuasion as the third source of collective efficacy, is another way teachers in school can strengthen their conviction that they can achieve set goals (Goddard et al. 2004). Within a school setting, social persuasion can take many forms, such as feedback, instructional coaching, or discussions among peers during meetings (Eells, 2011). Verbal persuasion alone has limited power; however, when coupled with mastery experience, it can influence the CTE of the school staff (Goddard et al. 2004).

Lastly, affective states, also known as emotional tone of the organization" as stated by Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) and "emotional and psychological cues" by Eells (2011), are the fourth and least influential the sources of efficacy (Donohoo, 2017). Affective states can influence how schools interpret and react to the challenges they face. Just as individuals react to stress, so do organizations; thus, levels of anxiety or excitement add to perceptions of capability or incompetence. According to Klassen

(2010), while high levels of CTE within a school did not lower stress from the teacher's workload, CTE did partially mediate stress related to student behavior. When considering the associated sources of collective teacher efficacy, all these enabling conditions are the foundation for fostering the influence on student achievement.

Bandura (1997) indicated although mastery experience is efficacy is high, remediation for students who are struggling meant to accelerate learning so that they can catch up to their peers. Donohoo (2017) indicates that more mastery experience builds students with high academic efficacy. The importance of CTE is the indirect influence on student achievement that occurs from productive patterns of teaching behavior (Donohoo et al., 2018). Bandura (1997) indicates that there are several attributes of efficacious schools. These attributes are characterized as conveying high expectations to students and fostering learner autonomy. Bandura (1997) asserts that efficacious schools distinguish themselves from lower efficacious schools through the structure of learning activities. Schools with high CTE promote a sense of personal capability in all students. Donohoo (2017) states that high-collective efficacy schools value students centered teaching approach and encourage student autonomy, which promotes intrinsic motivation of students (p.23). When applying decreasing disruptive behavior, Donohoo (2017) found teachers are less discouraged and feel less stressed by temporary setbacks resulting from student misbehavior.

Implementation of increased commitment by teachers to students and the organization is integral to a school's success in improving student achievement and successful teaching. Donohoo's (2017) findings show that commitment is significantly related to influencing teachers to have in decision-making at the school level. Devos et al.

(2014) brought forward those same findings in their quantitative analysis of teacher commitment and participative decision-making. Donohoo (2017) relation to efficacy, increased commitment, and willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization is correlated with high levels of CTE. Implementation of a collective approach consisting of increased parental involvement Bandura (1997) notes that a child's family plays a key role in their success in school (p.245). Hattie (2009) confirms this, as he ranks parental involvement among the biggest achievement contributions related to the home with an effect size of 0.49. Bandara (1997); and Ross & Gray (2006) found that teachers who have a healthy sense of efficacy are more likely to invite and support parents' educational efforts. Bandura (1997) shines a light on increased parental involvement, creates greater risk, and opens teachers to criticism. Ross and Gray (2006) explain that staff with greater CTE can overcome obstacles of this nature.

Barriers Associated with Cultivating Collective Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy, "teachers' confidence in their ability to promote students' learning (Hoy, 2000) – was first discussed as a concept 30 years ago. According to Dohohoo and Katz (2017), the prevailing theory of action is that expectations influence efforts and achievement. In comparison, Ross et al. (2004) focus on school processes and their relationship to CTE. It does not appear to delve into the reciprocal nature of the school process/ achievement/ CTE relationship and how they interact. Thus, absence has led to the belief that schools should focus on efficacy building to improve schools instead of creating the structure known to be a factor in successful schools. Placing the primary focus on schools will increase achievement, thus building collective efficacy that can help promote future improvement.

According to Leithwood et al. (2010), school leaders are capable of having positive effects on student learning, and leadership has its greatest effects through dimensions such as goal setting and supporting collaborations; as Ross et al. (2004) state, school processes are the strongest predictors of CTE. According to Ross et al. (2004), cohesion and collective influence are likely to be higher in schools in which teachers share a common vision and goals about the directions of the school. Goddard et al. (2015) note that principles of leadership is strongly correlated with creating the conditions for such processes. Ross et al. (2004) adds that when school leadership enacts a supportive approach to goal setting, there is potential to contribute to the sources of efficacy. This may be a stronger indicator of CTE than even mastery experience.

Furthermore, mastery needs to be experienced before beliefs are developed for the collective beliefs to stimulate further progress. Ross et al. (2004) note that leadership can influence teachers' interpretations of achievement as mastery; this can be accomplished through setting the conditions for data analysis meetings and interpreting data with teachers. Schmoker (1999) states without goals, and teachers are not able to communicate meaningfully and precisely about how to determine if they are improving and action planning towards the next steps (p. 25). Thus, Schmoker (1999) asserted that collaboration provides a chance to enjoy the social and intellectual satisfactions of team efforts, thus contributing to the affective state sources of CTE. Therefore, the development of CTE needs to acknowledge how collective efficacy sources are employed in schools and how efficacy, in turn, is affected by and interacts with school processes.

Summary

The literature review found that the individuals with disabilities education act was the foundation for establishing early intervention and school-aged services through the nation's special education law. The IDEA addresses part A: early intervention services, and part B applies to services for school-aged children. The individuals with disabilities act were designed to ensure that all children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education.

Pathing the way for low-incidence special education teachers to have access to students with disabilities offering the necessary interventions and services to aid in positive student culture and overall success. Low-incidence special education teachers' preparation programs and training, instructional strategies and methods, and brick and motor settings prior to COVID-19 are attributes of the growing body of literature as the literature found that teacher preparation programs are designed to prepare teachers for everything, they should encounter during their first years as a teacher. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) indicates a high-quality teacher preparation program provides plenty of opportunities for candidates to demonstrate pedagogical tools and plenty of experiences in the core academic subject areas and often implements the seven standards for initial special education teachers established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

The Florida Department of Education requirements for special education teachers to be accredited; they must obtain a professional certificate as an exceptional student-teacher; candidates must earn a degree in an area of exceptional education through an

approved educator preparation program to conclude preparation training. Although the programs and training were intended to prepare teachers for everything they would encounter, the prediction of transition to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic was unexpected.

The school district's COVID-19 transition to remote learning in response to special education teachers was met with unfamiliar territory. Educators, especially special education teachers, may still meet their legal obligations by providing children with disabilities equally effective alternate access to the curriculum or related services included in their individualized education program (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

Teacher self-efficacy is crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic because the construct of perceived self-efficacy is the belief that one can perform novel or difficult tasks and attain desired outcomes embedded within the social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy not only affects human lives in highly stressful situations, but it also helps one to develop motivation and envision challenging goals in life. The review also found that collective teacher efficacy is linked. According to Donohoo (2018), when educators believe in their collective ability to lead the improvement of student outcomes, higher levels of achievement result. Collective efficacy is evident when teachers see themselves as part of a team working for their students. This study will address a gap in the literature by examining special education teachers who were impacted by the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study will show special education teachers' readiness for teaching in general, the use of technology, opportunities for professional development,

allocated support and resources, and could assist with future preparation of programs and

professional development opportunities to guide teachers.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Research on low-incidence special education teachers' self-efficacy is forever increasing (Barni, Danioni & Benevene, 2019). Research surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic is a newer and faster body of research that has brought forward challenges for teachers and how they are mitigating a new territory of teaching (Russell, 2020; Tremmell et al., 2020; USDOE, 2021). There is minimal research regarding lived experiences of how low-incidence special education teachers teach remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature related to low-incidence special education teachers' stories of how they taught remotely during the pandemic and mitigated the issues. The significance of this qualitative narrative design is telling these low-incidence special education teachers' stories. The approach may bring forward a deep understanding through multiple sources identifying their readiness for online learning, support, and resources from districts and administration on their needs and feelings towards remote learning, as well as the effect on special education teachers' collective teacher efficacy.

Purpose

This study aims to identify how low-incidence special education teachers have been impacted by the shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aims to discover how teachers' lives were changed during the pandemic. This study will evaluate how prepared special education teachers felt they were for the demands of remote learning, how they mitigated the demands, what resources and support low-incidence special education teachers received that were helpful, as well as what resources and support low-incidence special education teachers feel they still need to

continue to teach remotely, and how their self-efficacy beliefs and feelings have been

impacted during the shift while teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Philosophical Perspectives

The researcher's philosophical worldview is the constructivist worldview.

Constructivism is such a perspective, and it is typically seen as an approach to qualitative

research (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Lincolnn, 2011; Martens, 2010; Crotty, 1998).

Social constructivists believe that individuals seek an understanding of the world in

which they live and work through developing subjective meanings of their experiences-

meaning directed toward particular objects or things. Utilizing a social constructivist

approach indicates these meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look

for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or

ideas. The researcher's goal is to rely as much as possible on the participant's views of the

situation being studied.

This approach aligns with the researcher's interest in investigating lived

experiences of low-incidence special education teachers' shift from brick-and-mortar

instruction to remote learning during COVID-19. The researcher's experience as a

practitioner will be phenomena constructed within the frameworks of interpretation of

past experiences, cultural beliefs, and social norms. The researcher's personal bias can

flow when recognizing their background, shaping the interpretation from their personal,

cultural, and historical experiences, and leading to them positioning themselves in the

research. The researcher can decrease their bias by making sense of the meanings others

have about the world. Rather than starting with a theory, inquirers generate or inductively

develop a theory or a pattern. This is a fundamental world stance for lived experiences of

low-incidence special education teachers shift from brick-and-mortar instruction to remote learning during COVID-19. The researcher can develop possibilities through intentional dialogue that examines the underlying socially constructed beliefs and assumptions.

Research Design & Rationale

This study will use the qualitative narrative research approach. A qualitative research method focuses on participants' experiences and embraces the contextual nature of that experiences through their lived experiences and stories. The qualitative researcher is focused more on the process of experience than the product (Bogden & Biklen, 2007; Kramp, 2004). As a result of the research question encompassing the lived experiences, a narrative approach to the study and report would be the best methodology. Their stories will tell the researcher what meaning that experience has in their day-to-day lives, contributing to a unique perspective on practices of low-incidence special education teachers. Narrative research "looks backward and forward, looks inward and outward, and situates the experiences within place" (Creswell, 2006, p.185); it is an approach that examines the completeness of an experience situated within the life and reality of the experiencer.

Narrative research is seen as a method for collecting and analyzing data or a method for reporting or both. The researcher will use an approach that incorporates different elements into the story. That approach is the three-dimensional space approach of Clandinin & Connelly (2000) includes analyzing the data for three elements: temporal, social, and physical.

We experience in narrative, cataloguing and recording our experiences cataloging the context of the settings, plots, and timelines of our lives, creating the stories as we experience before we begin telling the stories to ourselves or others (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). According to Kramp (2004), narrative as a way of knowing, a way of constructing experience, and giving meaning to experience. It is in the story that the participant frames his or her experience, authors it, and in narrative research, tells the researcher what mattered, what meanings the experience had to the participant (Kramp, 2004). The researcher will be in collaborative dialogue with the participants through conducting the investigation and reporting of their experiences (Clandinin, 2013).

Research Questions

The focus of this study is the lived experience of low-incidence special education teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Within this study, there is interest in hearing participants through their stories. There is one grand research question to investigate how low-incidence special education teachers were impacted by the shift from brick-and-mortar instruction to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The grand question is:

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of low-incidence special education teachers shift from brick-and-mortar instruction to remote learning?

Context/Setting of the Study

During limited in-person gatherings due to COVID-19, the researcher will conduct interviews utilizing ZOOM, an online communication service. The researcher will use Survey Monkey, an online survey site, for participants' acknowledgment of the

Consent Form. The researcher will utilize purposive snowball sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) by contacting a small group of participants that are known, active low-incidence special education teachers. The researcher will expand the participants group by asking initial participants to identify other active low-incidence special education teachers that should participate in the study. The researcher will use a professional recording device that will help the researcher to transcribe the narrative response of the participants. The researcher will upload the narrative responses to a USB drive stored in a locked file cabinet until the responses are transcribed. After transcription of the narrative responses, the researcher will delete the information. Once the transcript responses from the interview are utilized in the research, the researcher will shred the transcripts.

Description of Population and Sample

The researchers' participants will consist of five to twenty-five volunteers or, until saturation following Creswell & Creswell (2018), self-selected active low-incidence special education teachers from the South Florida area and ranging from private to public schools during Spring 2020 and Fall 2020. The researcher will conduct purposive snowball sampling by contacting a small group of participants that are known, active low-incidence special education teachers. The researcher will expand the participants' group by asking initial participants to identify other active low-incidence special education teachers that should participate in the study. The researcher will share via email the SurveyMonkey link (Appendix A) Informed Consent Form, including the purpose for their participation and if participants agreed to be a part of the interview process. The rationale for using these participants is they are enrolled or graduated from an education program. As a result, they should have extensive experience in a direct position as a low-

incidence special education teacher working with students as a counselor, paraprofessionals, speech therapists, dyslexia coaches, and other specialized personnel within the school setting. Furthermore, the researcher will have the opportunity to interview a diverse sample from varying areas, as opposed to a specific district or public or private entity.

The study will use the participants' lived experiences to obtain information related to low-incidence special education teachers' experiences and teachers' self-efficacy with the shift to teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instrumentation

The researcher will conduct one-on-one interviews utilizing open-ended and semi-structured questions in the narrative qualitative approach. The researcher will use open-ended questions to allow space for longer narratives and draw out the participant's information that allows for sufficient qualitative data analysis. The researcher will use semi-structured questions to allow participants to focus on the topic of interest while collecting new data and exploring participants' thoughts and beliefs about topics. Examples of these forms of questions can be referenced below and in Appendix C.

A. Grand Question:

    Tell me about your experience teaching during COVID-19?

B. Open-Ended Question:

    How do you deliver special education services to your students?

C. Semi-Structured Question:

    What type of technology was used during teaching during COVID-19?

The researcher developed these questions based on the elements of what is being investigated. Interview questions were inspired by other instruments regarding special education collective teacher self-efficacy, readiness, mitigated problems, resources, and support.

Data Collection

Data collection is unique in narrative inquiry. Connelly and Clandinin (2000) use the term "field text" rather than data to better capture the intersubjectivity and experiential nature of inquiry data. The researcher will conduct one-on-one interviews with participants to collect their narratives about low-incidence special education teachers' lived experiences shift from brick-and-mortar instruction to remote learning and delivering special education services. While participants are given their narrative perspectives, the researcher will video record through a recorder feature in ZOOM and hand-write notes during the interviews. The interviews will be saved to a USB drive and accessed for analyzing data. Data from each interview will be collected and categorized. The researcher has transcribed each interview, which the researcher will destroy to protect the confidentiality of the interviewers.

Data Analysis

Clandinin & Connelly (2000) refined the narrative research approach to specifically a narrative inquiry methodology that begins and ends "in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that made up people's lives, both individual and social" (p.20). Framing the inquiry within what they refer to as a three-dimensional space approach: temporal, social, and physical (p.39).

Following Clandinin & Connelly's (2000), the data analysis and representation by research approach will consist of a narrative approach focused on:

1. Data organization- Create and organize files for data.

2. Reading & Memoing- Reading through text, make margin notes, form initial codes.

3. Describing the data into codes and themes- Describe the story or objectives set of experiences and place it in a chronology.

4. Classifying the data into codes and themes- Identify stories, locate epiphanies, and identify contextual materials.

5. Interpreting the data- interpret the larger meaning of the story.

6. Representing & visualizing the data- Present narration focusing on processes, theories, and unique and general features of life.

Through Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) narrative approach, the researcher will gain insight into the impactful turning points of low-incidence special education teachers' shift from brick-and-mortar instruction to remote learning.

Procedures

The researcher will seek approval from the South Florida University College IRB and conduct purposive snowball sampling by contacting a small group of participants that

are known active low-incidence special education teachers. The researcher will obtain

approval and share via email the SurveyMonkey link (Appendix A) Informed Consent

Form, including the purpose for their participation and if participants agreed to be a part

of the interview process.

The Consent Form consists of a detailed description of access and presentation of

field text, including the use of web environment, interview recordings, transcripts, and

handwritten notes. Upon self-selected participants acknowledging the Consent Form,

participants were asked to select dates and times to conduct interviews via ZOOM. After

selecting dates and times to conduct the interview, an email of interview questions is sent

to participants with open-ended and semi-structured questions (Appendix B). Interviews

with the researcher and the participants were conducted. The researcher will upload the

responses to a USB drive, transcribe responses to transcripts and utilize them to complete

the final research and shred the transcripts.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher will conduct interviews utilizing ZOOM, an online communication

service. The researcher will request the self-selected active special education teachers to

schedule a time to conduct the one-on-one interview. But will not be asked to provide

their true names or work location. The participants will complete an informed consent

before scheduling and conducting the one-on-one interview regarding lived experiences

of low-incidence special education teachers' shift from brick-and-mortar instruction to

remote learning during COVID-19; the participant's names will not be requested, the

participant's I.P. address from their acknowledgment online SurveyMonkey informed

consent will not be disclosed, participants will have the right to stop at any point of the

one-on-one interview if the participates feel uncomfortable. The researcher will secure all field text and use a professional recording device to help them transcribe the participants' narrative responses. The researcher will upload the narrative responses to a USB drive stored in a locked file cabinet until the responses are transcribed. After transcription of the narrative responses, they will be deleted. Once the transcript responses from the interview are utilized in the research, the researcher will shred the transcripts.

Risks & Benefits

The risk for this study will be minimal as participants have the right to stop at any point of the one-on-one interview if the participants feel uncomfortable. The benefits consist of self-selected active special education teachers enjoying sharing their lived experiences of teaching remotely during COVID-19. The researcher will answer questions that will aid in future studies for the preparation of programs and professional development opportunities to guide teachers regarding readiness for online learning, support, and resources for special education teachers for school districts and administration on the needs and feelings of current remote learning.

Secure Data

The researcher will use a recording device that will transcribe the narrative response of the participants. The researcher will upload the narrative responses to a USB drive stored in a locked file cabinet until the responses are transcribed in one month. After transcription of the narrative responses, they will be deleted in one month. Once the transcript responses from the interview are utilized in the research, the researcher will shred the transcripts in one month.

Confidentiality

The researcher will keep the participant's identities confidential by allowing participants to choose their own pseudonyms name.

Summary

In conclusion, chapter three focuses on methodology and the implementation of remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher identifies the approach methods to conduct research that include the study participants, the selection process of study participants, how data gathering, and collection will occur, how data will be recorded and how data analysis will be transcribed. The researcher further identifies regarding data gathering and the collection the method to utilize ZOOM, an online communication service during limited in-person gatherings due to COVID-19. Within the chapter, the researcher indicates the process for study participants being informed of the problem statement, the purpose, the protection of confidentiality and the study's goal.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Introduction

This study identifies how the shift has impacted low-incidence special education teachers teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings will provide insight as to how teachers' lives were changed during the pandemic. This chapter contains the findings and analysis obtained from interviews conducted with low-incidence special education teachers. Participants within the study were all self-selected active low-incidence special education teachers. Participants were sent an email for the appeal for participation which contained a survey monkey link to the informed consent (Appendix A), including the purpose for their participation and, if participants agreed to be a part of the interview process, gained access to dates and times to schedule their interviews. After the selection of dates and times to participate in an interview, an email was sent containing the interview questions. All participants agreed to being audio tapped within the informed consent. Each participant was contacted twenty-four hours prior to their scheduled interview to ensure their continued willingness to participate in the interview. Each participant was audiotaped for approximately four-five minutes. Two tape recorders were used in case of malfunctioning. Before each interview started, the researcher asked each participant if they had any questions and if they understood the informed consent by stating agreed or disagree. All participants stated they "agreed," and no participants withdrew after the tape recorders commenced taping. At the end of each interview, each participant was thanked for their time and participation in the study.

Clandinin and Connelly's narrative inquiry is utilized as the framework for the themes obtained during the interview process. Analysis of the "field text" revealed four

themes; *shift in content, shift in assessments, shift in priorities with low-incidence special education students & low-incidence special education teacher's takeaway.* Due to the framework, further explanation of the commonplace's temporality, sociality, and place is validated became relevant. Participants A1, A2, B1, B2 & C1 stories consisted of recurring themes as they shared their stories and reflected on changes in their priorities as low-incidence special education teachers.

Temporality refers to the fluid "when" of participants' stories, both as told in retrospect and as lived stories, unfolding, and anticipated. Participants A1, A2, B1, B2 & C1's stories are lived stories of the impact of being a low-incidence special education teacher that shifted from brick-and-mortar instruction to remote learning during COVID-19 and how their day-to-day lives were impacted. While they may look backward to before and during the shift from brick-and-mortar instruction in comparison when they are considering the changes they are experiencing, their stories unfolded as the transition occurred from brick-and-mortar to instruction remotely during COVID-19. Participants in this study align with a living storyline from the interview process, reliving and reconnecting with their personal experience while giving instruction to their students remotely during COVID-19.

Sociality in the second commonplace refers to the context of each individual life that consists of both their internal and external relationship with the world. According to Clandinin and Connelly, (2006) the internal relationship as "personal conditions, feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic relations, and moral dispositions. The participants within the research study speak of their internal changes in their ways of being, often using the terms of feelings of being overwhelmed, uneasy and burnout in describing the experience

of being in a way that allows them to focus on others rather than self. The external is comprised of the "existential conditions, the environment, surrounding factors and forces, people and otherwise, that form each individual's context" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2006, p.447). For the participants within the study, their ways of being in relationships with others are related to the experience towards the shift from brick-and-mortar to remote learning, questioning, listening, and thinking.

Sociality commonplace in the third dimension is the relationship between participants and inquirers, the researcher being the inquirer, living alongside the participants, and a part of the social commonplace of their stories. The researcher analyzed participants' experiences shifting from brick-and-mortar instruction to remote learning. The researcher is building from observation and analysis of the impact of the interviews conducted with participants.

The commonplace place is the where of the inquiry. The stories of the participants occur primarily in the place of work, "their homes" during teaching remotely during COVID-19 and within the narratives, in the place of home consisting of personal lives, family and work. The study participants reflect on experiences that occurred in their workplace setting of remote learning during COVID-19. The commonplace emerged as a primary framework for analyzing the themes of changes in roles as fixer vs. facilitator. The second commonplace of sociality frames the third theme identified with participants, although it is also stored in terms of the home becoming the workplace. Finally, the implementation of teaching students remotely reflects the commonplace of temporality and sociality.

Researchers focus Themes

Shift in content

Based on the low-incidence of special education teacher's participation within the interview to share their lived stories of the shift from brick-and-mortar instruction to remote learning during COVID-19. The theme of "shift in content" was revealed during the interviews with the participants sharing that they shifted the academic curriculum they provide their low-incidence special education students. Participants discussed "why" the shift in content which consisted of time constraints as students struggled with their abilities to sit at the computer screen for an extensive amount of time, lack of resources for students to interact during the class instruction, and a lack of parent/ guardian involvement with students. Participants revealed a significant difference in their teaching styles with their low-incidence special education students during brick and motor instruction versus remote learning.

According to the low-incidence special education teacher interview transcripts, the shift to remote learning resulted in a reduction in the amount of academic content low-incidence special education teachers presented to their students. It resulted from the lack of parent/ guardian involvement with their students in assisting with the log-in process and students' abilities to sit at the computer screen for an extensive amount of time to gain instruction and participate. The study consists of five participants that referenced during their interviews the reduction in the amount of academic content to their students.

Participant A1.

stated, *"I struggled! The difficult part of teaching during the pandemic was selecting material for my students. I wanted to make sure the material was something I could make interactive for my students. I had to provide my students with a lot of breaks, they would be restless sitting at the screen, and their parents would have to take a break because they were not used to being the parent and the teacher.*

Participant A2.

stated, *"The content changed so much! I was a first-year teacher right when COVID happened. I had a mentor for support but never met, so it was hard to build a relationship and get guidance in this different world of being a teacher virtually. I tried my best, but the bare minimum was what I felt like I was giving my students. Very few logged in, sometimes just a student or two. So, I met with my students during scheduled blocks for 20-30 minutes twice a week to give the parents time to log in with their students and a few days to help their students with their assignments. I ultimately had to look at the curriculum and determine what was the most important information to teach my students.*

Participant B1.

stated, *"Distance learning made us evaluate the curriculum for our students to be knowledge-driven, interactive, but most importantly pretty straight to the point.*

Participant B2.

stated, *"There were so many things we didn't get to. I used education work, google classroom, and google slides. My students struggled with screen time. I had little participation as my students needed assistance to log into Google Meets parents still had*

their jobs, so meeting times were a conflict. I decided to best help my students would be

to meet once I week and allow my students to have independent work. I opened my

schedule to be available to parents throughout the day to call if they had questions.

Participant C1.

stated, *"I knew this would be new territory. I am Google certified, so I was*

familiar with the platform for teaching my kiddos. I tried to maintain the same

consistency as in the classroom. I struggled with my kiddo's interaction on Google Meets

because they would get distracted and restless for sitting for a long period of time. When

meeting with my kiddos, I would see they did not have the resources. I would drop things

off in my kiddo's mailboxes to make sure they had them for our next class.

Low-incidence special education teachers recognized the detrimental effects of

the shift of content which remote learning posed on their students. These low-incidence

special education teachers understood the compromised rigor and sequencing of concepts

and information accompanying the content within their curriculum. Low-incidence

special education was innovative and adapted to teaching remotely to offer their students

in alternative manners, although their student's academic content and learning were

altered.

Shift in assessment

Based on low-incidence special education teachers' participation in the interview,

share their lived experience stories of the shift from brick-and-mortar instruction to

remote learning during COVID-19. The "shift in assessment" theme was revealed during

the interviews, with the participants sharing that their method of assessing their students

had shifted. Prior to COVID-19 low-incidence, special education teachers assessed their

students on their mastery in knowledge, understanding, and skills. During COVID-19, low-incidence special education teachers shared the challenges posed during remote learning by making assessments or assessing the participation of students based on their coursework.

Participant A1.

stated, *"I did more of a participation grade for my students. The assignments did not have to be 100% correct".*

Participant A2.

stated, *"Assessments were challenging because very few students logged in. Being a first-year teacher not in the building and having a mentor for support but never met. I tried my best during the meetings with my students by assessment of their assignments". But honestly, I tried but could not assess my students.*

Participant B1.

stated, *"Because we were distance learning, assessments of students were made based on the evaluation of the curriculum. We focused on knowledge retained and interaction online."*

Participant B2.

stated, *"I was like, okay! My students struggled with screen time and have little participation. I decided that to assess my students during their meeting or their independent work". I realized I could not really get assessments.*

Participant C1.

stated, *"My kiddos were assessed. I placed my kiddos on a sliding scale that I altered according to my students.*

The participants in the study lacked the expertise to navigate quality assessment which was challenging for low-incidence special education teachers. These low-incidence special education teachers recognized the importance of the shift in assessment during remote learning. The primary focus of teacher assessment shifted from knowledge, understanding, and overall skills based on the interviews to teachers ultimately having to assess their students to the best of their ability and as they deem appropriate.

Shifting In Priorities With Low-Incidence Special Education Students

The theme of the shift in low-incidence special education teachers' priorities with their students was revealed during interviews with participants. During interviews, low-incidence special education teachers reported their shift in priorities with their students being the need to guide their students in their academic endeavors to emotionally supporting them while providing instruction to students remotely. These teachers reported the shift in becoming counselors to their students and no longer focusing solely on providing instruction. This section will provide insight into how students' emotional well-being and mental health during remote learning became the priority and how these low-incidence special education teachers maintained their relationship with their students.

Low-incidence special education teachers reported "check-ins" with their students to gauge their student's emotional well-being. Students were asked things such as "how is your day going"? "Tell me the first thing that comes to your mind!", "What are you most looking forward to this week?" and "Can I help you with anything?" These questions were intended to learn how students were emotional during remote learning and gain insight into how students' home lives, stability, and safety were during remote learning.

Participant A1.

stated, *"I felt like I had the responsibility to maintain consistency and support for my students. They needed positivity! They need to know they have someone that will be positive, encouraging, and supportive. Someone, when they did see them maintained that smile and positive attitude always! "*.

Participant A2.

stated, *"It was really tough for students emotionally, to not be in person meeting surrounded by their peers. Very few students logged in and the one or two which were more consistent of I would make sure the beginning and the end of our class meetings need to consist of wellness check-ins. I wanted to do my best since everything was new and unfamiliar"*.

Participant B1.

stated, *"We were distance learning, my concern became my students feeling of connection to their peers and if they felt they were alone."*

Participant B2.

stated, *"My students were my biggest concern! Their mental health was my biggest concern. They were missing out on a lot of stuff. My students look forward to so many different things and because they couldn't do those things my students were disappointed and discouraged."*

Participant C1.

stated, *"I communicated with my kiddos often I would send emails or leave voicemails if I realized my students were themselves. I would reach out to my kiddo's families, talk with them, and try to figure out what was going on. I would support my*

kiddos by seeing what they need and what can I do for them. I assess submission of

assignments with their emotional well-being. I didn't want my kiddos to be overwhelmed

with home and school".

Low-Incidence Special Education Teacher's Takeaway

The low-incidence special education teachers who participated in the interview

shared their experiences teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the

interview process with participants, they expressed future implications for their teaching

practices and plans for remote learning. Participants shared a shift in content to adapt to

remote learning during COVID-19 as they shifted their content, delivery, and

assessments.

This research study provides insight into how low-incidence special education

teachers shifted to remote learning during the 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-

19 pandemic impacting their profession. The COVID-19 pandemic data revealed the

phenomena of low-incidence special education teachers' lived experiences teaching in

being adaptive to change as remote learning was unfamiliar territory, and these teachers

learned and maneuvered based on their experiences. This research study reveals how

low-incidence special education teachers met and adapted to the demands of remote

learning resulting in a shift in content, shift in assessment, and shift in priorities with low-

incidence special education students and low-incidence special education teachers'

takeaway. The findings revealed that low-incidence special education teachers dealt with

the associated demands and mitigated programs in a manner they can apply to future

traditional and remote learning. Low-incidence special education experiences lead them

to consider how remote learning and their overall students' learning may impact the future of education.

CHAPTER V: RESULTS

This study aimed to identify how the shift has impacted low-incidence special education teachers during remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aimed to discover how teachers' lives were changed during the pandemic by explaining how low-incidence special education teachers' shifted content, shifted assessment, the shift in priorities with low-incidence special education students, and low-incidence special education teachers' takeaway. These teachers desire to maintain academic excellence without overwhelming their students.

The field text revealed themes applied to low-incidence special education teachers teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Analysis of the field text revealed that teachers made modifications of content as a result of time constraints because their students struggled with sitting at the computer for an extensive amount of time, lack of resources, and the lack of parent/guardian involvement with their students. It was also revealed in the field text that low-incidence special education teachers made modifications in assessment but assessed student's participant rather than their proficiency in the instruction provided. Teachers altered their standard format and requirements in the traditional manner. It was revealed that there was a shift in priorities with low-incidence special education teachers needing to guide their students in their academic endeavors to support them while providing instruction to students remotely.

As shown within the literature, educational challenges arose throughout the era of time and for assorted reasons with low-incidence special education students. The global pandemic became known as a worldwide public health officials declaration of emergency. The occurrence of this event impacted low-incidence special education

teachers and their students as they were forced to shift to remote learning while not being able to continue education in the traditional face-to-face manner. The findings within the study brought forward awareness as it applies to low-incidence special education teachers' experience approaching an unfamiliar territory of remote learning and revealed the feelings of uncertainty as they were forced to shift and adapt. The result of this study revealed that the low-incidence special education teacher participants had challenges as a result of their knowledge of traditional (face-to-face) learning and unfamiliarity of the territory of distance (virtual) learning when forced to overcome the challenges cause by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings within the study align with the literature regarding low-incidence special education teachers having limited administrative support and direction. As low-incidence special education teachers assist in transitioning to remote learning and learning how to navigate and manage their students. The responsibilities of low-incidence special education teachers in meeting the demands for implicating instructional strategies and methods to their students were mentioned by participants within the study aligns with the literature that school leaders took a reserved approach during the era of remote learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Research conducted by Baird (2020) stated school leaders tended to take a "hands-off" stance during the period of distance learning as they were unprepared to support teachers. As findings in the field text revealed, low-incidence special education teacher participants did not indicate that they received support and resources from the district and administration while providing instruction to their students remotely. Low-incidence special education teachers became innovative and adaptive to the unfamiliar territory of remote learning with their students

by maintaining engagement and educating their students through academic resources and activities.

The literature further supports the study and its impact on remote learning, time constraints, and delivery of academic content to low-incidence special education teachers. There is minimal research that addresses the factors associated with time constraints. According to Zaheer and Munir (2020), distance learning has posed threats to students as they might feel alone and dejected. This study begins to fill the gap in research on the impact of the educational challenges during COVID-19 in providing academic content to low-incidence special education students. Participants in the study discussed the shift in the academic curriculum and time constraints as their students struggled with their ability to sit at the computer for an extensive amount of time. Low-incidence special education teachers providing remote instruction with a lack of instructional guidance and feedback on how they were providing instruction to their students impacted academic content and their students learning.

As indicated in the literature, the potential for not meeting students in person, shifting to distance learning which still consists of traditional responsibilities such as managing students' behaviors and socio-emotional health while instructing online (Lischer, Safi & Dickson, 2021). Participants reporting their shift in priorities with their students being the need to emotionally support them while providing instruction remotely was not a surprise but a challenge. Low-incidence special education teachers reported "check-ins" with their students to gauge their student's emotional well-being and gain insight as to how students home lives were. The literature validated low-incidence special education students' reasonabilities in managing students' behavior and socio-emotional

health during the duration of online instruction. The findings also revealed the impact on low-incidence special education teachers' lived experiences had on the influence as it relates to shift in content, shift in assessment and the shift in teachers' priorities with their students in being available to provide support.

Implications

The lived experiences of low-incidence special education teachers participating within the study were diverse, but the commonplace within the study was apparent when analyzing "field text." The shift in content, shift in assessment, and the shift in priorities with low-incidence special education students' socio-emotional health. The modifications hinder the rigor of academic content. Remote learning impacted low-incidence special education teachers by shifting their focus from academic and assessment to emotionally supporting their students.

This study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature related to low-incidence special education teachers' stories of how they taught remotely during the pandemic. The findings align with literature reflecting low-incidence special education teachers mitigating their transition to remote learning with severely developmentally delayed students. This study provides insight into the impactful turning point of how low-incidence special education teachers navigated the shift from brick-and-motor instruction to remote learning with a lack of guidance and support from school districts and administration during the COVID-19 global pandemic declared as a public health officials' declaration of emergency.

Recommendations

Preparation in advocating for low-incidence special education teachers, students, and families through support and professional development, establishing and implementing protocols to support low-incidence special education teachers in academic content and assessment. Historically, as shown within the literature, low-incidence special education teachers have had challenges as it relates to their student's educational endeavors. The participants within this study have supported the statements regarding the challenges faced by their students and expressed their discomfort of continuing teaching remotely. The school districts and administrators who support these teachers are responsible for learning from the experiences of low-incidence special education teachers' lived experiences teaching during COVID-19 to plan and prepare for future educational shifts to support their teachers and students. The following recommendation for future research consists of both school districts and administration.

Based upon the "field text" obtained during the study recommendation, school districts, and administration provide the necessary technology, training, and resources to maintain engagement with students during remote learning. Teachers encountered limitations because of a lack of training in teaching remotely. Low-incidence special education students experienced injustice because of being unfamiliar with technology efficiently as it applied to students' socio-emotional health and remote learning recommendations that mental health resources be implemented for teachers, students, and their families. School counselors or third-party mental health professionals provide mental health resources. Lastly, low-incidence special education teachers are supported

by school districts and administration as these teachers were faced with doubts about their abilities to educate their low-incidence special education students.

The study focused on examining and contributing to the growing body of literature related to low-incidence special education teachers' stories of how they taught remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research revealed the shift in learning, which resulted in modifications to how teachers instructed their students, ranging from the shift in content, assessment, and priorities with low-incidence special education students. The study revealed the challenges teachers were confronted with and revealed further areas for investigation, which consist of low-incidence special education teachers' mental health while teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, low-incidence special education students' attendance and engagement during remote learning, and the impact on parents and guardians of low-incidence special education students while assisting in remote learning.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on low-incidence special education teachers during remote learning began to close the gap related to remote learning. This study is situated in the literature concerning teachers' lived experiences teaching remotely during COVID-19 leading to recommendations for future researchers.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the K-12 school system worldwide because of the suspended classroom-based operations brought on by public health officials' emergency declarations. In conclusion, this study of low-incidence special education teachers shifts in their content, assessments, and priorities with their students. Low-incidence special education teachers revealed the impact of the shift of remote learning

on current and future education. Within this study, the need to continue research investigating low-incidence special education teachers and remote learning has become apparent. The concern for low-incidence special education teachers' mental health relates to their belief in having a future in the profession. An extensive investigation in professional development and technology would support low-incidence special education teachers and their students and benefit school districts and administration. Addressing the shift in low-incidence special education teachers' experience teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic can aid in supporting others if it were ever to become a factor again.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

<u>PARTICIPATE INFORMED CONSENT</u>

You are invited to participate in an interview utilizing ZOOM, an online communication service, to share your experience as a low-incidence special education teacher teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study which you are being as to participate in is designed to investigate the lived experiences of low-incidence special education teachers to analyze how they were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study is being conducted by Christina Hatcher, a doctoral candidate student at Lynn University.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study will be to find out how low-incidence special education teachers' lives were changed during the pandemic. This study will investigate how low-incidence special education teachers' readiness for the demands of remote learning, how special education teachers dealt with the associated demands and mitigated problems, what resources and support were provided, and/ or what resources special education teachers feel they need to continue to teach remotely and their sense of collective teacher efficiency during the switch to remote learning.

DESCRIPTION: The researcher will conduct one-on-one interviews with each participant, allowing the chance to share their experiences and tell their stories on the subject at hand. At the interview's completion, the researcher will review each interview thoroughly and transcribe the data collected. The researcher will analyze the data and interpret the results to develop the best action plan.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation is voluntary, and you do not have the answer to any questions you do not wish to answer. You may skip or not answer any questions and have the right to withdraw your participation at any time of the interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The researcher will ensure that all narrative responses and recordings are uploaded to a UBS drive that will be stored in a locked file cabinet until the responses are transcribed. After the researcher transcribes the narrative responses, the researcher will delete the information. At the end of the interview, transcript responses are used in the research, the researcher will shred the transcripts. Your identity will be kept confidential, and the researcher will ask you to choose a pseudonym that will not identify you. All mentions of schools or students on recordings will be given pseudonyms.

DURATION: The researcher wants to ensure there is an efficient amount of time to interview each participant. The researcher believes that each participant will be able to share their experience and message with the researcher regarding the interview question being asked. The duration for each interview will range between 30 to 45 minutes.

RISKS: Taking into consideration the study, here is the minimal risk; participants have the right to stop at any point of the one-on-one interview if the participants feel uncomfortable.

BENEFITS: Taking into consideration the study, here ae the benefits, self-selected active special education teachers enjoying sharing their lived experiences of teaching remotely during COVID-19. The researcher will answer questions that will aid in future studies for the preparation of programs and professional development opportunities to guide teachers regarding readiness for online learning, support, and resources for special

education teachers for school districts and administration on the needs and feelings of current remote learning.

VIDEO/AUDIO:

I understand this research will be video recorded.

Yes or No

and/or

I understand that this research will be audio recorded.

Yes or No

RESULTS: Upon the completion of research, the results obtained after measurements of the study are met, which will conclude the study and disseminate the results for publishing. It will be obtained online through Lynn University.

If you have any questions, you can reach the researcher at chatcher@email.lynn.edu, or the chair of this study, Dr. Jennifer Lesh, at jlesh@lynn.edu. The chair of the Lynn University Institutional Review Board is Melissa Knight at mknight@lynn.edu.

CONFIRMATION STATEMENT: I have read and understand the information above and agree to participate in the study.

Signature: _____ **Date**: _____

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The focus of the interview questions will be to investigate the lived experiences of low-incidence special education teachers teaching remotely during COVID-19. These Interview questions will be a chance to get a better insight into special education collective teacher self-efficacy, readiness, mitigated problems, resources, and support.

GRAND QUESTION

Tell me about your experience teaching during COVID-19.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

How did you deliver special education services to your students? If you did provide services to your student, how was it done?

SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTION

What type of technology was used while teaching during COVID-19?

Developed by the Researcher.