The Peripheral Factors of Inclusive Education and Teacher Self-Efficacy

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The Peripheral Factors of Inclusive Education

and Teacher Self-Efficacy

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College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

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Abstract

Existing literature has indicated that self-reported challenges of general-education (GenEd) teachers often involve the experiences and views of these educators surrounding the peripheral factors of inclusive education (Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010). Bandura (2012) asserted that most sources of hindrance to shaping the dynamics between self-efficacy (SE) and subsequent action are not knowledge-based, but rather, originate from such peripheral factors. The purpose of this current study was to explore the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. A qualitative case study was conducted at a single metropolitan early college high school in central Texas. A sample of six GenEd teachers from core academic inclusive classrooms participated in this research. Data were collected via an online questionnaire and face-to-face, semistructure interviews. Data analysis revealed that the participating GenEd teachers considered the prevailing peripheral factor negatively shaping their SE regarding successful inclusive instruction to be time constraints. Conversely, school administrative support was perceived by the participants as having the most positive impact to their inclusive teaching. Based upon these findings, the following recommendations for future study could extend the results of this current research: (a) investigate strategies related to how school administration achieves the positive perceptions of GenEd teachers, and (b) examine solutions to time constraints by implementing a plan developed from teacher insights drawn from this study.

Keywords: self-efficacy, inclusive education, peripheral factors, general education
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

The rights of students with disabilities include access to public education with their nondisabled peers in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Meeting this federal mandate for a LRE, set forth within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), entails fully including students with disabilities in general-education (GenEd) activities alongside their nondisabled peers to the greatest extent possible (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.a,b). Inclusive education is a concept common to educators addressing LRE mandates (McKenzie, 2015) and concerned with providing a continuum of special-education (SpEd) services. Its application results in an educational setting that allows students with disabilities to receive instruction concurrently with their nondisabled peers within the GenEd setting (Kilanowski-Press, Foote, & Rinaldo, 2010). GenEd teachers are required to provide inclusive education to a combined class of students with and without disabilities within the GenEd classroom; however, related challenges have emerged.

GenEd teachers struggle with the peripheral factors of inclusive education. An example is inadequate provision for collaboration with SpEd colleagues. Researchers have described this factor as affecting the attitudes and self-efficacy (SE) of teachers, as these characteristics relate to the inclusive classroom (Caskey, 2008; McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). Dupoux, Wolman, and Estrada (2007) posited that teaching students with disabilities shapes the notions held by GenEd teachers surrounding these students, as well as their attitudes toward the inclusive classroom. High levels of anxiety have been reported by GenEd educators teaching diverse student populations within
inclusive classroom settings, especially teachers who lack the experience of prior interaction with students who are disabled (Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). These educators have further indicated their perceptions of barriers to adequately serving the needs of students with disabilities within the GenEd classroom due to insufficient and inadequate time for collaboration with SpEd colleagues (McKenzie, 2015).

Other peripheral factors reported by GenEd teachers as influential to their SE surrounding inclusive education are the varied disabilities presented within their classrooms, the ratios of students with disabilities to students without disabilities, and overall class size (Dupoux et al., 2007). GenEd teachers within the inclusive classroom generally struggle with facilitating adequate learning in students with disabilities. Varied peripheral factors indirectly shape effective instruction within these classrooms due to their effect on teacher SE.

Teacher SE is a significant component of inclusive education because it influences the emotional, cognitive, and motivational aspects of classroom learning (Bandura, 1993). Fuchs (2010) stated, “Teachers’ beliefs about inclusion influence their beliefs about their own ability to educate diverse learners in the general education setting” (p. 30). The perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers, in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom, was the focus of this current study. Teaching students with and without disabilities in the same GenEd classroom involves many of these factors shaping teacher SE with regard to inclusive education.
Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem

The practice of inclusive education has significantly increased since the mid 1960s when awareness of the importance of providing rights to individuals with disabilities moved to the forefront of American life. This was demonstrated when 90% of states across the country adopted various laws addressing the education rights of children with disabilities (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996). The contemporary concept of inclusive education reflects an even more concerted focus on including students with disabilities in GenEd. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 addressed the education needs of students with disabilities, and the IDEA pointedly directed attention to lawful considerations surrounding the access to GenEd by this student population (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, n.d.).

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 was passed by Congress July 1, 2016 as a 4-year reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The ESSA facilitates the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 with feasible plans for the successful preparedness of all students for postsecondary education and careers. The intent of the authors of this legislation was to ensure all students are learning, receiving accommodations, and assessed as stipulated within the supporting law of the ESSA (U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2015). GenEd teachers of inclusive classrooms are held accountable by law to meet the federal stipulations; however, the peripheral factors of inclusive education are prevalent and teachers continue to struggle against associated barriers (Lopes, Monteiro, Sil, Rutherford, & Quinn, 2004).
The GenEd teachers who participated in this current study taught within inclusive high-school classrooms that provided SpEd services across a continuum. Inclusive education was delivered via one of the following models:

1. One of five coteaching arrangements with two certified teachers within the classroom at all times—one GenEd and one SpEd.
2. A SpEd paraprofessional with the GenEd classes for all or part of the class time.
3. A GenEd educator teaching students independently with modifications and accommodations.

Campus administration of the study site determines the inclusive model to be implemented for each class, and the GenEd teachers are responsible for the education of all attending students with and without disabilities.

Teachers of inclusive classes must ensure they are prepared in content knowledge, with an understanding of inclusive education as a solution to marginalization and recognition of their foundational responsibility to address the diverse needs of all students within this classroom setting (Broderick, Mehta-Parekh, & Reid, 2005). The expectations of inclusive GenEd teachers are demanding; hence, teacher fulfillment can be difficult to achieve. Bandura’s (1977) theory of SE encompasses outcome expectancy, with particular attention to teachers of inclusive classrooms. Incentives for acting upon an idea or transforming it into a pursued goal is grounded in SE because minimal, if any, motivation exists to exert positive thought, ingenuity, or action without the belief in associated personal ability (Bandura, 2009). The conceptual framework of this current study is aligned with Bandura’s (2012) assertion that most sources of hindrance that
shape the dynamics between SE and follow-through actions evolve from peripheral factors such as constraints within the situational, physical, or social realms. The SE of high-school GenEd teachers, as it relates to the inclusive setting, is the focus of this current research.

Statement of the Problem

The IDEA described the premise of inclusive education as the right of students with disabilities to live as active members of society with opportunities equal to those without disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.a,b). However, the provision of effective instruction within the inclusive setting has been self-reported by teachers as problematic. Researchers have found teachers incapable of providing quality teaching to all students within these classrooms (Berry, 2010; Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Caskey, 2008; Dupoux et al., 2007; Fuchs, 2010; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). The struggles reported by teachers often relate to peripheral factors affecting their SE with teaching diverse student populations such as available time, administrative support, and sufficient training (Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this current study was to explore the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. This qualitative case study was conducted to contribute to the existing base of related knowledge by investigating inclusive education through individual subjective descriptions drawn from GenEd teachers through their completion of a questionnaire and face-to-face interview.
Research Question

The research question that guided the study asked, “How do GenEd high-school teachers perceive the peripheral factors of inclusive education in terms of shaping their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom?”

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study

As noted earlier, a major challenge in the provision of effective instruction for all students at the high-school level has been reported as the peripheral factors impeding the success of inclusive education (McKenzie, 2015; Raudenbush, Rowan, & Cheong, 1992; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). McKenzie (2015) cited the increased number of responsibilities for teachers of inclusive education at the high-school level due to pressures surrounding student performance on standardized state assessments and accountability for the preparation of students for postsecondary life. High school introduces more intense courses, scheduling limitations, and increased expectations for students to score higher on exams (Simmons & Magiera, 2007).

Because existing literature has indicated increased expectations for students at the high-school level, and hence greater challenges for teachers (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007), this current study was focused on the high-school teachers of inclusive education. Findings related to the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers, in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom, provided a valuable collective contribution to existing literature. Bandura (2012) asserted that most sources of hindrance shaping the dynamics between SE and follow-through actions are not knowledge based, but rather, originate from
peripheral factors. It was the seminal work published by Bandura that served as the premise upon which the current study was designed.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used throughout this study and are defined for purposes of the research:

**Classroom diversity.** This term is defined as a class of students with and without disabilities.

**Coteaching.** This term is defined as the inclusive model that incorporates two teachers—one GenEd and one SpEd—assigned to an inclusive classroom throughout the entire class period.

**Effective instruction.** This term is defined as realization of the following outcomes in students with disabilities: successful acquisition of content knowledge and skills, as evidenced in class participation; regular assessment; and achievement of the goals outlined in individualized education plans (IEPs).

**General education (GenEd).** This term is defined as classes and teachers of regular education.

**Inclusive classroom.** This term is defined as the classroom where students with and without disabilities learn together in a GenEd setting.

**Inclusive education.** This term is defined as the legal description of a LRE.

**Inclusive model.** This term is defined as the structure by which instruction is delivered to students with and without disabilities in an inclusive classroom with both GenEd and SpEd support.
**Individualized education plan (IEP).** This term is defined as a legal document outlining the education to be provided to a student receiving SpEd services.

**Least restrictive environment (LRE).** This term is defined as the classroom setting within which a student with disabilities can successfully participate with modifications or accommodations.

**Local education agency (LEA).** This term is defined as a community public school.

**Paraprofessional.** This term is defined as a teacher’s assistant within the realm of SpEd who serves students with an IEP designating either a GenEd or SpEd classroom setting.

**Peripheral factors.** This term is defined as conditions, events, or constructs related to inclusive education.

**Self-efficacy (SE).** This term is defined by the Bandura (1993) description of teacher SE (i.e., the personal beliefs of teachers regarding their own ability to achieve desired outcomes for their students).

**Special education (SpEd).** This term is defined as pertaining to anything within the realm of students served by SpEd including mandates, literature, guidelines, support, classes, services, documentation, meetings, departments, and teachers educating students with IEPs.

**Students with disabilities.** This term is defined as students who are educated with specific provisions outlined within their IEPs.
Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

I approached the interviews conducted in this study from the naturalist-constructionist paradigm described by Rubin and Rubin (2012). Consequently, contrasting information from interviewees was valued as meanings understood by individuals through varied experiential “lenses.” One assumption in this study was that, because the participants were teaching in public education, they had likely either observed or experienced change in various areas of teaching such as with expectations surrounding teaching strategies, grading protocols, curriculum, state assessments, leadership, district expectations, and federal mandates. These areas overlapped with regard to the peripheral factors of the inclusive classroom including adequate training, administrative and SpEd support, time for collaboration and planning, and necessary resources (Fuchs, 2010). The described overall assumption of teacher experiences led me to an expected finding that the teacher participants possessed malleable attitudes and superlative resourcefulness in acquiring skills needed for effective instruction in the inclusive classroom, as well as high levels of SE. However, researcher bias generated by this expected finding was offset by the delimitations and limitations of the study as meanings were drawn from the qualitative data.

The delimitations of this study included all SpEd teachers, as well as GenEd teachers, who did not teach English, math, science, or social studies within the inclusive classroom setting because they were excluded from participation in the research. Further delimitations pertained to the recruitment process because I followed the stipulations of the Institutional Review Board; hence, recruitment targeted the same demographic as the target population. The recruitment process also drew a similar distribution of participants
from each race comprising the core GenEd teaching staff at the study-site school. The objective was to result in even race distribution across the study group. The target sample size of six participants was achieved.

Several limitations were presented in this study such as lack of feasibility with regard to utilizing the variables and the selectivity of the purposeful sampling employed (Patton, 2002). Additionally, the questionnaire and interview responses may have been influenced by teacher emotions or self-seeking or other ulterior motives. The study was conducted during the late-fall and early-spring semesters, which may also have impacted participant responses. Of the total sample, 99% reported belonging to a minority group and 77% reported living within low-income households. The study-site school was an early college high school (ECHS), introducing teacher responsibilities beyond those assigned to educators within regular public high schools. The reason variables were not incorporated and manipulated in this study was because an experimental design was not applied to the research (Creswell, 2009).

Summary

The perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers, in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom, were examined in this study. This examination was conducted from within the context of the Bandura (2012) assertion that most sources of hindrance shaping the dynamics between SE and subsequent actions are not knowledge-based, but rather, originate from peripheral factors. These factors, with regard to inclusive education, have been described in existing related literature (Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010; McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). Broderick et al. (2005) referred to
inclusive education as part of the overall paradigm encompassing the education of students with and without disabilities.

The collection of subjective views of GenEd high-school teachers regarding the peripheral factors of inclusive education, as well as exploring their perceived SE, was the approach taken in this study. The aim was to determine the interpretations, meanings, and insights of the participants leading to how peripheral factors of inclusive education shaped their SE and, in turn, how their SE shaped effective instruction within such classrooms. Challenges in providing students with needed skills within the inclusive classroom have been noted in past studies documenting reports of peripheral factors impeding successful inclusive education (Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010). The SE of GenEd teachers within high-school inclusive classrooms has been shaped by various characteristics of this setting and can change with the level of class taught (Raudenbush et al., 1992). Existing literature has indicated that educators feel inadequate to teach students with disabilities within inclusive classrooms and exhibit lower levels of teacher SE. Therefore, the current exploration was warranted into understanding the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature Review

**Opening.** The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. The operational definition of inclusive education was adopted from that advanced by Kilanowski-Press et al. (2010), which described this educational model as the LRE within which a student can successfully participate with modifications or accommodations. Inclusive education was based upon the concept of the LRE and providing for students with disabilities to be educated alongside their nondisabled peers within the GenEd setting to the greatest extent possible (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.b,c). For purposes of this study, students with disabilities are defined as students with IEPs. Effective instruction within the inclusive classroom is defined by student outcomes such as successful acquisition of content knowledge and skills, as evidenced in class participation and performance on regular assessments, as well as met IEP goals. Teachers provide clear objectives, promote interactive engagement, design class instruction with frequent opportunities for practice related to class objectives, and provide feedback to students (Westwood, 2013).

The measurement of effective instruction within inclusive classroom is through data collected via knowledge and skill testing, as well as by observation of student participation during class. Peripheral factors in this study include influences on inclusive education in the form of constraints within situational, physical, or social realms (Bandura, 2012). The research was focused on the perceptions of GenEd high-school
teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. Teaching students with disabilities within the GenEd classroom involves various factors shaping teacher SE linked to inclusive education. SE is the belief in the personal potential to achieve a behavior necessitated to produce a desired result (Bandura, 1977). Perceived teacher SE within the high-school inclusive classroom can be shaped by various characteristics found within this setting and can change with the level of class taught (Raudenbush et al., 1992). SE is a significant inclusive-education factor because it influences the emotional, cognitive, and motivational aspects shaping the success of classroom learning (Bandura, 1993).

Bandura (1977) advanced that the theoretical constructs of SE are affected by experiential bases that represent some of the most significant factors shaping efficacy expectations. These factors are comprised of accomplishments from personal performance, familiarity gained from the relayed experience of others, verbal influence, and learning gained during current functional states. Expected outcome and efficacy expectations can differ. Bandura explained that expectancy outcomes can be understood as a relative cause and effect, while SE expectancy rests in the personal ability to accomplish actions necessary to achieve a desired outcome.

Peripheral factors shaping teacher SE regarding inclusive education have been reported within existing related literature (Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010; McKenzie, 2015). GenEd teachers have offered the following list of changes needed in peripheral factors to positively shape inclusive education: (a) additional assistants within the classroom;
(b) time allotted for collaboration with SpEd counterparts; (c) additional professional development; and (d) increased support from administration in areas such as adequate planning time, fewer students per class, fewer teacher responsibilities, and a positive culture embracing inclusion support (Berry, 2010). The grade level taught in high school has also been found to yield varying effects on teacher SE (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014).

Why training, or a lack thereof, shapes the SE of GenEd teachers with regard to inclusion has also been a focus of past study (Alfaro, Kupczynski, & Mundy, 2015; Boyle, Topping, & Jindal-Snape, 2013; Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Fuchs, 2010; McKenzie, 2015). The findings indicate that knowledge on specific approaches are needed by teachers within inclusive classrooms that encompass instructional strategies, behavioral strategies, and challenges introduced by students with disabilities. How GenEd teachers perceive the time provided for collaboration with SpEd staff also shapes their attitudes and SE with regard to inclusive education and introduces additional peripheral factors (Caskey, 2008; McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007).

Another peripheral factor shaping the SE of GenEd inclusive teachers with regard to inclusive instruction delivery pertains to how their previous experiences teaching students with disabilities have shaped their perceptions of this student population (Dupoux et al., 2007). Taylor and Ringlaben (2012) reported that teachers experience apprehension when working with students with disabilities, and these educators encounter higher levels of anxiety when they lack prior contact or interaction with such students. How inclusive classes are designed with respect to students with various disabilities, the ratio of students with and without disabilities, and overall class size can
all potentially shape the SE of GenEd teachers surrounding inclusive education (Dupoux et al., 2007). Fuchs (2010) stated, “Teachers’ beliefs about inclusion influence their beliefs about their own ability to educate diverse learners in the general education setting” (p. 30).

Teachers within GenEd settings have experienced a vast change in student diversity with the significant increase in students with disabilities. In 2011, 61% of students with disabilities across the United States were educated alongside peers without disabilities within GenEd classrooms for 80% or more of the school day (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2013a). To ensure the rights of students with disabilities attending public education, the IDEA (2004) mandated, “To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled” (p. 118). Kilanowski-Press et al. (2010) asserted that inclusive models may include the following service provisions: (a) “push-in service,” whereby a paraprofessional or certified SpEd teacher supports student learning within the GenEd classroom for a specified amount of time; (b) one-on-one instruction within the GenEd setting; (c) small-group instruction within the GenEd classroom; and/or (d) coteaching by one certified GenEd teacher and one SpEd teacher within the inclusive classroom. While learner type within GenEd settings has increased in diversity, awareness of the need to address marginalization and segregation has concurrently increased.

While the IDEA does not include specific verbiage stipulating how local education agencies are to meet inclusive criteria for students with disabilities, the directive must be understood to eliminate marginalization and segregation for these
students (Broderick et al., 2005; McCarty, 2006). Broderick et al. (2005) described inclusive education as part of the overall paradigm encompassing the education of students with and without disabilities. The rights of students with disabilities include access to public education with their nondisabled peers in a LRE; however, a mind-set of segregation continues to exist. Broderick et al. described the inclusive paradigm in the following manner: “Historically, the United States has met legal mandates for educational inclusion by bringing first Black, then disabled, then non-English-speaking students into public schools, but keeping them separate” (p. 194).

Broderick et al. (2005) contended that differentiated instruction was designed to provide heterogeneous student groups with enhanced opportunities to learn needed content, and students with disabilities were one of several diverse groups who experienced marginality. While differentiated instruction is not a specific construct consisting of unified explicit protocols for instruction delivery, differentiated classrooms evidence common characteristics exemplifying the aim of success for all students (Tomlinson, 2014). To be considered inclusive education, Broderick et al. advanced that a concentration on meeting the education needs of all students must be present including marginalized and rejected students. Meeting the LRE mandate set forth by the IDEA of 2004 entails fully including students in all classroom activities to the greatest extent possible; however, as noted earlier, related challenges have emerged.

McCarty (2006) provided an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education. She noted that GenEd teachers perceive barriers within the inclusive classroom partially because the law governing the rights of students with disabilities is too indistinct for purposes of translating the legislation into service implementation that
meets the needs of this student population. McCarty indicated that districts and schools interpret the legal language according to their diverging inclusive-education viewpoints and understanding of applicable terminology. This variability among education personnel and other stakeholders contributes to a decreased collaborative forum. Regardless of the effectiveness of collaboration, all GenEd and SpEd teachers must follow the stipulations of the IEPs outlining services, support, and goals for students with disabilities. However, measuring the effectiveness of individualized support is difficult, partially because IEPs are specific to each student. Measuring the effectiveness of interventions is also a challenge due to the diversity in student ability (Laudan & Loprest, 2012). GenEd high-school teachers within inclusive education struggle with various obstacles related to peripheral factors affecting their perspectives and SE within the classroom.

**Study topic.** The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. The subjective views of GenEd high-school teachers related to the peripheral factors of inclusive education, as well as an exploration of their perceived SE within this realm, revealed the related interpretations, meanings, and insights of the participants. McKenzie (2015) asserted that teachers within inclusive classrooms generally struggle with facilitating adequate learning for students with disabilities. Various factors influence this scenario including insufficient training and inadequate time allotted for colleague collaboration. These components can potentially lead to success or failure during the implementation of inclusive tasks.
The responsibilities of GenEd teachers include adherence to mandates and district expectations such as providing intensive differentiated instruction to reach students with and without disabilities, handling disciplinary issues, providing accommodations, and monitoring academic progress (Cox, 2016). GenEd teachers have reported difficulty working with students with disabilities who exhibit challenging behavior within the classroom due to a lack of training on appropriate related techniques (Lopes et al., 2004). Van Reusen, Shoho, and Barker (2001) asserted that teachers are more agreeable to making needed adjustments within inclusive classrooms for students whose disabilities are categorized as high incidence (i.e., students who are mildly affected by their disabilities). These educators commonly describe addressing the needs of students more significantly affected by their disabilities as posing obstacles to overall class instruction due to the more challenging instructional needs of these students.

The challenges associated with providing students needed skills within inclusive classrooms have been reported by researchers who have studied peripheral factors known to impede successful inclusive education (Caskey, 2008; Dupoux et al., 2007; Fuchs, 2010, McKenzie, 2015). Teachers within these classrooms have expressed a lack of preparedness for teaching diverse student populations and insufficient time for collaboration with GenEd and SpEd colleagues (Caskey, 2008). Fuchs (2010) reported that these teachers view the single required survey course in college as inadequate in terms of providing the knowledge and skills necessary to differentiate lessons, provide accommodations, and collaborate productively with professionals knowledgeable in SpEd. Teachers participating in the McKenzie (2015) study also perceived the barriers to adequately serving the needs of students with disabilities within GenEd classroom as a
lack of training and inadequate time for collaboration with SpEd colleagues. Additional barriers included increased responsibilities at the high-school level due to pressure surrounding student achievement on benchmark exams and standardized state assessments, as well as expectations related to preparing students for postsecondary life.

Simmons and Magiera (2007) posited that the secondary level of inclusive education is more demanding than elementary grade levels due to factors such as more intense student courses, tighter scheduling constraints, and increased expectations for higher student scores on exams. High-school GenEd teachers are accustomed to independent teaching and have difficulty accepting special educators into their classrooms to share in the instructional process (Boyle et al., 2013; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010). Whether a SpEd teacher coteaches within the GenEd classroom, serves as a consultative partner, or offers informal training to the GenEd teacher on specific aspects of student IEPs, GenEd teachers who instruct students served by SpEd must often share space and/or resources with the SpEd teachers.

As noted earlier, GenEd teachers have expressed their lack of preparation in teacher-training programs, as well as deficient ongoing training (Aron & Loprest, 2012). Van Reusen et al. (2001) reported that schools serving all grade levels attempt to raise the capacity of their inclusive programs; however, high schools face increased challenges not encountered at the lower levels. Educators are expected to teach a diverse population of students when the curriculum necessitates differentiated instruction, and student socialization is added to these academic responsibilities (Sime-Cummins, 2015). Alfaro et al. (2015) emphasized the responsibility of teachers to prepare students with disabilities for state assessments because this student population must meet academic
standards along with their nondisabled peers. High-school GenEd teachers of inclusive classrooms experience differences in their experiential views of inclusive education (Boyle et al., 2013). These differences have been addressed across existing literature and involve various peripheral factors shaping inclusive education. This current exploration of the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers, in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom, was designed to gain insight into this problem. Toward this end, in-depth data were collected on the subjective perceptions, interpretations, meanings, and insights of participating educators.

**Context.** SpEd services are provided via the following six basic models at the school serving as the study site in the current research:

1. A self-contained setting focused on teaching modified academics and social skills, as well as facilitating transitional life skills, typically for students with low-incidence disabilities.

2. Self-contained behavior unit for students needing intensive behavioral support.

3. Presence of a SpEd paraprofessional in GenEd classes for all or a portion of the class time.

4. One of five coteaching arrangements.

5. A resource setting wherein instruction is modified in content and pace.

Student IEPs determine the type of services received, setting, and modifications or accommodations provided by teachers. Admission, Review, Dismissal Committees use data including that drawn from diagnostic testing performed by a licensed social school psychologist, assessments, teacher reports and artifacts, itinerant input, parent contributions, and student feedback to design individualized services for students based upon their unique needs.

The eligibility process for students not already receiving SpEd services at the school that served as the study site in the current study begins with a review by the Child Study Team. This team reviews reported concerns of students identified as struggling with academics or behavioral or social issues. It is comprised of members such as the administrator/CST lead, GenEd teacher, SpEd teacher, drop-out prevention specialist, school counselor, social-services coordinator, and community liaison. Members of the Child Study Team collaborate on plans for student social and behavior support where needed, academic interventions, follow-up actions, and data collection and review. After all feasible strategies and interventions have been attempted, if the respective student continues to struggle with the same issues addressed, a signed parent-consent form may be obtained to conduct testing to determine eligibility for SpEd services. Students are scheduled for an Admission Review Dismissal Meeting, during which a full individual and initial evaluation report is presented to the committee, inclusive of the eligibility of the respective students to receive SpEd services.

Students needing social skills; transition training; and/or a more modified content, instructional style, and slower pace than can be provided within the GenEd classroom through modifications, accommodations, and/or a behavior intervention plan are served
in self-contained settings. Such services are provided by certified SpEd teachers and paraprofessionals, as assigned, for a portion of the school day, depending upon the stipulations of the respective IEP. Intensive support services are provided in one of two low-incidence classes focused on life skills, in addition to one behavioral support program setting. The resource setting delivers modified instruction in specific academic classes and students have IEPs stipulating the subject taught by SpEd services. This instructional setting is not classified as inclusive education because all of the participating students receive SpEd services and the content is modified. There are no nondisabled peers attending the resource classes and the teacher is designated for SpEd instruction.

Inclusive education is the responsibility of the course teacher of record and is provided through implementation of one of the following six approaches within the study-site school:

1. The GenEd teacher provides instruction independently with a SpEd case manager providing consult support.
2. A paraprofessional assists within the GenEd classroom.
3. Partial professional support is provided by a SpEd teacher present within the classroom for a portion of the class period.
4. Coteaching is provided by one GenEd teacher assisted by one SpEd teacher.
5. Coteaching is provided by one GenEd and one SpEd teacher instructing alternatively.

6. Team coteaching.

In independently taught inclusive classes, it is the responsibility of the GenEd teacher to ensure the provisions outlined in student IEPs are met. To meet the needs of students with disabilities in a coteaching GenEd setting, the GenEd teacher is expected to contribute knowledge and skills (Cox, 2016). However, training is inadequate for inclusion teachers of students with IEPs (Alfaro et al., 2015; Aron & Loprest, 2012; Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010). Researchers have stressed this inadequacy because teacher training is an essential component of inclusive education with classrooms of learners spanning from accelerated learning capabilities to needing accommodations or modifications to achieve academic success.

Students with disabilities receive specialized services within the GenEd setting and with a GenEd content teacher as outlined within their individual IEP. The GenEd teacher is certified and/or highly qualified in the pedagogy for which instruction is delivered. Students attending inclusive classrooms who are on a track to graduate on a Foundations plan, replacing the minimum plan, have curriculum modifications included in their IEPs. Other students on varying graduation plans with endorsements providing tracks of specialized preparation for postsecondary education may have accommodations included in their IEPs that enable access to class content.

**Significance.** Inclusive-education researchers have conducted studies with samples of inclusion teachers educating classes of varying grade levels (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Caskey, 2008; Dupoux et al., 2007; Fuchs, 2010; McCray &
The methodologies applied included both qualitative and quantitative designs and extensive literature reviews. Settings with circumstances that may have contributed to the problem under study in this current research were only evident in the Caskey (2008) study. However, Caskey examined a large school district that had implemented full inclusion with little guidance from inclusive models or practices.

Despite the diverging foci of the greater body of research on inclusive education, general consensus was evident on the overall conception of inclusion being influenced by teacher attitude and training (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Caskey, 2008; Dupoux et al., 2007; Fuchs, 2010; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Monsen et al., 2014; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). In a metasynthesis conducted by Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie (2007), findings indicated greater negativity, less training, and less teaching capacity in SpEd coteachers of inclusive classrooms at the secondary level than was evident among teachers within elementary-school classrooms. These researchers asserted that efficacy-related data within this realm of study are limited, while components of plausible importance related to coteaching have been acknowledged in the area of SpEd.

Aron and Loprest (2012) opined that the increasing effectiveness of SpEd requires improved methods by which educators seek understanding and refined measurement techniques for students with diverse needs, abilities, and inclusion requisites. Numerous factors work both independently and interactively within inclusive-education settings, transforming them into either learning environments conducive to instruction delivery and student learning or promoting barriers introducing more challenging tasks.
(McKenzie, 2016). Studies continue to provide greater insight into these factors shaping the inclusive classroom.

Increasing teacher knowledge in preparation for effective inclusive classrooms is achieved through training modules or courses and has a significant impact on the creation of positive attitudes in educators (Boyle et al., 2013; Van Reusen et al., 2001). When teachers have a greater amount of information and resources by which to teach within the inclusive setting, they not only experience positive attitudes, but their SE and confidence as inclusive educators increase (Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001). Murawski and Swanson (2001) conducted a meta-analysis and concluded that the attitudes of GenEd teachers were contributing factors to the success of coteaching within inclusive education. These investigators posited that an implicit sense of responsibility toward the pursuit of effective practices and the adoption of collaborative methods are directly affected by the attitudes of educators. Moreover, successful inclusive education relies upon the demonstration of such pursuit and adoption by campus administration (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000).

While educators seek to provide the federally mandated inclusive education, they experience inhibiting barriers, such as inadequate pre-service training, which adversely affects their SE with this education model (Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Alfaro et al., (2015) maintained that successful inclusive education necessitates teachers with not only adequate pre-service training, but also ongoing training, support within the classroom, and the necessary resources. Absence of these needs serve as barriers to positive teacher attitudes toward inclusion. According to Kilanowski-Press et al. (2010), negative teacher SE within inclusive classrooms is precipitated by a lack of the requisite instructional
skills to meet the needs of students with diverse capacities. Although many teachers possess the requisite skills to teach students within the inclusive-education setting, these skill sets can be inconsistent due to varied training. Schools individually exercise autonomy in designing and executing inclusive models and practices to meet related federal mandates and initiatives. This can affect training opportunities, instruction, and learning, all of which contribute to shaping the value teachers place on inclusive education (Bruster, 2014).

The most commonly implemented model of inclusive practice is SpEd teachers serving as assistants to students while the GenEd teachers lead instruction. However, the most effective model affecting successful inclusion involves a partnership with both the GenEd and SpEd teacher collaboratively instructing students (i.e., coteaching; Scruggs et al., 2007). Other pertinent understudied factors potentially contributing to shaping the integrity of the inclusive classroom include the ratio of students with disabilities to students without disabilities, teacher experiences with training quality, and support from other education professionals (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010). Keefe and Moore (2004) described secondary teachers as insufficiently trained to teach students with disabilities and demonstrating a greater amount of negativity than educators at other levels of education employing the coteach model.

**Problem statement.** Teachers often perceive themselves as inadequately prepared to instruct students with disabilities within the inclusive classroom (Berry, 2010; Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Caskey, 2008; Dupoux et al., 2007; Fuchs, 2010; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Although a willingness to adjust practices for students with disabilities was evidenced in a large sample of middle-school GenEd teachers examined
in the Caskey (2008) study, a majority of the participants believe this student population does not belong in the inclusive-education setting. The focus of this current study was on determining the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom.

Effort on the part of SpEd and GenEd teachers toward providing instruction to students with and without disabilities within the inclusive setting was found to be affected by their attitudes toward, and acceptance of, inclusion (Caskey, 2008; Dupoux et al., 2007; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Braunsteiner and Mariano-Lapidus (2014) advanced that teachers experience several pressures. Their attitudes are affected by peripheral factors and the structure of services, and their SE regarding successful instruction is impacted by inadequate training. Raudenbush et al. (1992) conducted a high-school study and found increased teacher belief in student potential when educators had developed positive SE related to successful instruction; however, these researchers also found evidence of fluctuating teacher efficacy on a continuum, based upon the types of classes taught. The Raudenbush et al. study site offers 1,258 academic core classes within 16 Michigan and California schools. The context of class level and course type (e.g., an educator teaching inclusive English II classes and Honors English IV classes) correlated with fluctuating teacher SE and could be another factor affecting the high-school inclusive classroom. Scruggs et al. (2007) found that the perceptions of inclusion reported by GenEd teachers were generally positive, despite concerns over their deficient skills, training, and resources.
Organization. Based upon the problems revealed in existing literature related to educators feeling unprepared to teach students with disabilities within inclusive classrooms and experiencing lower levels of SE with successful instruction, a goal of this current study was to understand how effective instruction is achieved or prohibited through the lens of GenEd teachers. Peripheral factors are explored that relate to teacher SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. This qualitative case study was designed to contribute further knowledge to existing literature by investigating inclusive education through the individual subjective descriptions drawn from GenEd teachers via interviews and a questionnaire. The research question guiding this study asked, “How do GenEd high-school teachers perceive the peripheral factors of inclusive education in terms of shaping their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom?”

Conceptual Framework

In this current study, SE was examined in a sample of high-school GenEd teachers, as it relates to the inclusive setting. The Bandura (1977) theory of SE was applied as the basis for interpretation because this research is grounded in distinguishing the operational descriptions and effects of SE and outcome expectancy. Bandura explained that outcome expectancy reflects the belief that a certain behavior will direct particular effects. Incentives for acting upon an idea or transforming it into a pursued goal are based upon SE because individuals have little or no reason to exert positive thought, ingenuity, or action if they do not believe it is within their ability to do so (Bandura, 2009).
The influence of performance and accomplishments was understood from within the context of inclusion teachers needing additional training to raise their levels of proficiency and preparedness to teach within the inclusive classroom setting (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Broderick, et al., 2005; Caskey, 2008). Hamilton-Jones and Vail (2014) reported how pre-service special educators defined collaboration in terms of pursuing shared goals and assisting each other in attaining individual goals. The language used among the participants implied a unified mind-set, with professionals sharing responsibility for student success, which parallels verbal persuasion. Such a mind-set can lend itself to vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion due to the trusted relationships between colleagues when their attitudes support collaboration in a team approach.

Emotional arousal was a focus in a study conducted by Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher, and Saumell (1994) as GenEd and SpEd teachers were becoming newly acquainted with the coteaching inclusive model and expressing predominantly negative feelings regarding inclusive education. The participating teachers reported fears related to student success; potential lawsuits; increased workload; local translation of inclusive practices; and of less concern, inclusion outcomes and student safety. While the Vaughn et al. study was conducted in 1994, some of the same dilemmas continue to exist. The Bandura (1977) theory of cognitive self-influence still applies to contemporary inclusive education, and the influences on teacher SE related to successful instruction within these classrooms continue to be evidenced in this educational setting.

Inclusive education is rooted in educating students with disabilities within a LRE. This is beneficial to all students with and without disabilities due to increased
engagement with the content and the consideration to a diverse population of learners (Skilton-Sylvester & Slesaransky-Poe, 2009). Over many years of increased awareness regarding the needs of students with disabilities, discussions of proposed rights, and federal mandates, 95% of children with disabilities are now educated within neighborhood schools. Of this student population, 61% spend 80% or more of their school day within regular classrooms with nondisabled peers (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2015). In 2010, the drop-out rates for students with disabilities were 21.1%, and in 2011, this statistic fell to 20.1%. Graduation rates associated with these students rose from 62.6% in 2010 to 63.6% in 2011 (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2013b). From 2007 to 2009, the percentage of students with disabilities who had attended a postsecondary education facility increased from 55% to 59.2%; independent living status rose from 35.7% to 44.7%, and the high-school graduates with disabilities who were competitively employed following high school dropped from 61.1% to 53.1% (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2013c). These domains affecting quality of life have improved overall for students with disabilities since passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (as cited in McCarty, 2006).

While the described statistics are significant in that students with disabilities are clearly being served in high percentages within the GenEd setting, attention must be given to another facet of inclusive education. This education model requires additional planning, time, knowledge, and skills while adhering to the LRE prescribed by law. Such education at the high-school level involves supporting transition planning for the postsecondary student outcomes prescribed within IEPs. Because there is no separate classroom with curriculum addressing student transition needs, these goals for post high
school must be addressed during regular school hours, in addition to meeting the needs of students with disabilities within the inclusive classrooms and specialized classes embedded in their schedules.

Models of inclusive education involve heterogeneous classrooms composed of students with disabilities learning alongside their nondisabled peers (Broderick et al. 2005). Inclusive classrooms are individually tailored to serve the needs of students with disabilities as stipulated within their IEPs and as designated by staff. The quality of instruction is contingent upon several variables. Effective inclusion teachers ensure their own knowledge of content and understand inclusive education is a setting appropriate for varied learners. These teachers assume responsibility for preparing diverse student populations.

Utilizing wide-ranging teaching strategies, such as differentiation, is needed to reach all students at varying levels (Jones, 2012; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). Tomlinson (2014) asserted that teachers facilitate student success by identifying their individual needs and extracting and developing student strengths and talents while promoting their self-confidence. Differentiation involves teaching strategies by which instruction is delivered via a multilevel, varied approach to reach all students within an inclusive classroom. This replaces the education strategy of placing students with disabilities in GenEd classrooms with alternate, exclusive instruction (Broderick, et al., 2005).

In addition to curriculum manipulation and varied instructional approaches, the classroom environment is an integral consideration in differentiation (Tomlinson, 2014). Broderick, et al. (2005) asserted that all teachers of an inclusive classroom (i.e., GenEd and SpEd) must ensure their own understanding of the accommodations and various
educational needs of diverse students. These researchers addressed the integral components of differentiated instruction, as well as the need for a shift in the thinking of educators regarding disabilities as an interactive construct within the context of inclusive classrooms. In addition to the differentiated instruction strategies and needed change in mind-set, common planning time for GenEd and SpEd inclusive teachers was emphasized as a necessary facet of inclusive education (Simmons & Magiera, 2007).

Another integral component of the inclusive classroom is collaboration and communication among GenEd and SpEd teachers (Simmons & Magiera, 2007). Jones (2012) emphasized the imperative nature of special educators assisting GenEd teachers with accommodations and student progress monitoring as a systematic process promoting efficiency. Shared ownership of the classroom environment, resources, and student learning were noted as decisive factors in the coteaching classroom and best practice for inclusive classroom models (Simmons & Magiera, 2007). Teachers within inclusive classrooms are highly accountable for meeting the needs of their students; GenEd teachers are expected to educate diverse student populations with and without disabilities (Berry, 2010). These expectations encompass more than academics for students with disabilities.

Inclusive education promotes increased academic and social opportunities for students with disabilities and enhances exposure to, and acceptance of, individuals with diverse needs by those who are nondisabled (Broderick, et al., 2005). Unfortunately, teachers struggle with peripheral factors affecting their SE such as available time, administrative support, and training on the inclusive classroom (Caskey, 2008; Fuchs,
2010). Smith (2008) found that the instructional SE of teachers, as well as their values and attitudes, are integral influences on inclusive classrooms.

I designed this current study to investigate the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. The conceptual framework for the research was derived from existing literature. An aim was to explore the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers, as they relate to inclusive education, by collecting in-depth data in their own words to extrapolate their related interpretations, meanings, and insights. As noted earlier, GenEd inclusive high-school teachers carry tremendous responsibilities. Expectations for effective instruction within inclusive classrooms are derived not only from their immediate districts and schools, but also from a long history of legislation.

**Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature**

**Federal mandates.** Inclusive education originated during the mid 1960s when 90% of U.S. states began passing various laws on education issues that dictated the rights of children with disabilities (Martin et al., 1996). This movement culminated in passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which initiated education changes for students with disabilities (as cited in U.S. Department of Education, n.d.b). This act is now known as the IDEA of 2004. Student rights and the adequate provision of access to GenEd for this population of students had a significant and positive impact on public law.

Historically, students with disabilities have been excluded from every aspect of regular education within public schools including receiving education in the same
buildings as their nondisabled peers. The U.S. Congress reported their findings on humanitarian and civil rights, as they pertained to individuals with disabilities. The overall objective was to provide children with disabilities an education leading to an optimum quality of adult life, as defined within the IDEA of 2004 in the following manner:

Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational [sic] results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. (p. 118)

In addition to stipulations outlined within the IDEA, to which the ESSA was correlated, the ESSA reauthorized programs introduced in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for 4 years (as cited in National Conference of State Legislatures, 2016). The ESSA was designed to advance student-centered overarching goals pertaining to high standards, accountability, and closure of the achievement gap addressed by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The aim was to transform this legislation into feasible plans facilitating enhanced success for states and districts, ensuring all students, regardless of classification, receive opportunities for preparedness in order to succeed in postsecondary education and work careers. A framework was provided to ensure all students are learning, receiving accommodations, and are assessed as stipulated within the ESSA of 2015. Students with significant cognitive disabilities are provided alternate achievement standards according to need, which are determined by the significance of their disabilities. The ESSA stipulated that alternate standards must: (a) align with
regular, rigorous state academic content standards; (b) encourage established GenEd content access; (c) maintain elevated standards for students; (d) be reflected in student IEPs; (e) be utilized to compile student academic-achievement records; and (f) correlate with student standards to ensure students remain on track toward postsecondary engagement in education or employment.

While all states were ordered by the IDEA of 2004 to design and enforce policies to meet the stipulations set forth by federal mandates, the ESSA of 2015 is a reauthorization of education transitioned into districts and schools during the 2016-17 school year. The ESSA provides states and districts with greater autonomy over education issues including accountability systems and assessments (as cited in National Conference of State Legislatures, 2016). The IDEA and ESSA are united in sustaining the right to a free, appropriate public education for students with disabilities in a LRE. Federal funding supports this aim (Laudan & Loprest, 2012). In consideration of federal mandates, interpretations of public law are understood to not only provide stipulations regarding the education of students with and without disabilities together in one classroom, but also to introduce the plausible range of support needed to serve students with disabilities while concurrently abiding by the law (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010).

Teachers have struggled with the legal accountability to educate students with disabilities without regard to the amount of preparation or support necessary (Lopes et al., 2004). Consequently, the positive attitudes of the majority of teachers dissipated toward inclusive education as they continued to remain within the teaching profession (Boyle et al., 2013). Sime-Cummins (2015) noted experience as a factor, asserting that
teacher perceptions of inclusive education are derived from their training and teaching experiences and affect their realized efficacy within the inclusive classroom.

**Teacher concerns.** Through focus-group interviews, Vaughn et al. (1994) discerned that most teachers struggle with fear and worry over their ultimate success within inclusive classrooms. Participating educators recounted encouraging experiences that positively affected their perspectives and gave them hope surrounding the future success of inclusion. Bandura (1993) stated, “People who regard outcomes as personally determined, but who lack requisite skills, would experience a low sense of efficacy and view the activities with a sense of futility” (p. 20). Berry (2010) reported finding a correlation between inadequate experience in inclusive education and elevated anxiety. She further reported lower levels of efficacy linked with this stressful state.

Teachers have reported varied experiences and perspectives of inclusive education, as well as SE in teaching students with and without disabilities within inclusive classrooms. In a study conducted by Fuchs (2010), teachers expressed concern over their experiences with peripheral factors of inclusion such as a lack of support from their administrators, limited interaction with SpEd staff, insufficient training prior to teaching students with disabilities, and inadequate ongoing training. Skilton-Sylvester and Slesaransky-Poe (2009) reported varying teacher mind-sets on how the inclusive paradigm was to look. These investigators conducted a yearlong study examining reinforcement of the LRE mandate. The presupposition was an understanding that SpEd is not a location but rather a service. Conflicting perspectives from stakeholders were reported in this study with varied views of practices and beliefs surrounding student rights—both civil and social—as a pivotal academic endeavor. Diverse perspectives of
inclusion were inevitable; inclusive education was defined by law. Differing conceptualizations and the most suitable courses of action met the education needs of students with disabilities (Ben-Yehuda, Leyser, & Last, 2010).

Inclusion teachers endure a significant amount of stress with the numerous responsibilities of an inclusive classroom. These include implementing accommodations and modifying content when stipulated within student IEPs, as well as becoming familiar with response-to-intervention protocols and practices related to positive behavior intervention support (Hunter et al., 2015). These are national initiatives. Response to intervention is a system by which student performance is documented and change is implemented through the provision of interventions based upon the level of individual student needs (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 2016). Intervention supporting positive behavior is grounded in research-based approaches to improve the academic capacity of schools and reach student families and communities through the reduction of problem behavior within schools. While the combination of these two approaches are valuable in their aims to improve academic and behavior success for all students, they add to the responsibilities of inclusive teachers.

GenEd teachers have greater responsibilities and experience more barriers than other educators due to teaching students with disabilities within the GenEd classroom (Hunter et al., 2015). They have reported feeling frustrated and unprepared to adequately provide instruction to this student population (Fuchs, 2010). They have described barriers to successful teaching within the inclusive setting due to a lack of several aspects needed to fulfill their responsibilities such as training, control over the ratio of students with and without disabilities, class size, and time for collaboration and planning with
SpEd case managers. Fuchs (2010) reported three major themes of concern: “1) Lack of administrative support, 2) teachers’ perceived lack of support from special educators and support staff, and 3) teachers’ lack of sufficient preparation in their preservice [sic] programs” (p. 32). The concerns and perceptions of GenEd teachers also involve external aspects such as lack of preparation and experiences, which they perceive as affecting their efficacy in teaching an inclusive class (Sime-Cummins, 2015).

Raudenbush et al. (1992) conducted research concerning the SE of high-school teachers. The aim of these researchers was to investigate the prediction of variance in teacher SE, as it is influenced by differing factors. Raudenbush et al. contended that SE varies due to factors of distinction between inclusive classes. They predicted that the SE of the teachers would be relative to the classes taught, the level of class performance, the amount of preparation needed for teaching the courses, the ages of students, class size, factors involving teacher characteristics, and organizational components. The Raudenbush et al. sample was drawn from 16 high schools within California and Michigan. Quantitative questionnaires were completed by participating teachers reporting their SE for each of the classes they taught. While the study did not specifically address inclusion, the results indicated teachers having more control over their circumstances within the academic setting, enhanced collaborative opportunities, and greater SE in high-performing classes.

The attitudes of GenEd teachers regarding inclusive education have often exhibited overlap in areas of perceived barriers to success (Monsen et al., 2014). Hamilton-Jones and Vail (2014) investigated collaboration as an underlying component affecting the quality of inclusion under five themes—“defining, outcomes, teacher
behaviors, challenges, and preparedness” (p. 79). Interestingly, the study revealed a source of contention for teachers as they reported experience with power struggles between GenEd and SpEd teachers, which was only marginally related to the focus of the study. Similarly, there were caveats throughout the Monsen et al. (2014) study of inclusion due to adaptive needs within the classrooms. The participating teachers exhibited a lack of willingness to incorporate students with disabilities who also presented with significant needs in GenEd instruction. Their negative attitudes toward including these students in class activities with their nondisabled peers affected the management of their learning environments and their perceptions of available support.

Not only have vast changes been required of GenEd inclusion teachers, but the training and support that are not always under their control were required for them to deliver effective instruction, as evidenced by student success within the inclusive classroom. Decisions regarding training and support extend past the charge of inclusive teachers and were managed by the administrative staff. As noted earlier, teacher SE is affected by their struggles relating to perceived deficiencies in adequate time, training, and support—all of which can affect the skills necessary for educating students within an inclusive classroom (Fuchs, 2010). Bandura (1993) asserted that individuals will have low SE when they perceive outcomes as direct results of their own determination while lacking the requisite skills to achieve the desired outcomes. Bandura found perceptions of personal ineffectiveness when necessary skills were deficient.

Another aspect of inclusive classrooms that frequently manifests is challenging student behavior. While nondisabled students also exhibit disruptive behavior, students with high-incidence disabilities often introduce increased disruptions within the GenEd
classroom and teachers have reported feeling unprepared to manage the class (Westling, 2010). These educators have described inadequate training precluding them from implementing potentially effective classroom-management practices that may have been effective in dealing with the disruptive behavior (Gable & Tonelson, 2012). Negative student behavior can contribute to adverse teacher attitudes toward inclusion issues such as school culture, socioeconomic factors, and experience (Berry, 2010). Teacher perspectives toward inclusive education and students with disabilities were also addressed in a study conducted by Taylor and Ringlaben (2012). These researchers asserted that teacher philosophies surrounding their students with disabilities support their expectations and form self-fulfilling prophesies and collective realities for their students.

**Structure.** Inclusive education is understood as an arrangement by which to address the educational needs of students with disabilities within a LRE (Loiancono & Valenti, 2010). Berry (2010) revealed that GenEd teachers experience difficulties with the increasing demand to provide effective teaching to students with disabilities attending inclusive classrooms. The IDEA (2004) stipulated that inclusive-education opportunities are to be the same for students with disabilities attending all GenEd academic and elective classes in which nondisabled students have the option to enroll. Federal mandates are provided to ensure these opportunities in LREs for students with disabilities, regardless of the necessary planning and logistics at the district and school levels.

Skilton-Sylvester and Slesaransky-Poe (2009) conducted a study of inclusive education with a team of professionals and parents learning about inclusive education and
who collectively envisioned its capacity for the school and designed an action plan. The unique nature of their premise was grounded in the shift from focusing on the individual to opening alternate possibilities from within the construct of inclusive education. Skilton-Sylvester and Slesaransky-Poe provided an approach whereby alternate possibilities replaced standard teaching methods to exhibit student learning. This environment was conducive to a diverse classroom of learners without regard for specific student subgroups. Thus, inclusion was explicated through a study revealing the positive implications of considering civil and social rights within the context of inclusive education as a practice for all students with and without disabilities.

**Effects on students.** The inclusive classroom holds significant potential for students with disabilities. The opportunities are unique to the GenEd setting within schools that lend themselves to students increasing their social skills, forming relationships with nondisabled peers, experiencing regular curriculum, and striving toward raised expectations (Hayes, Casey, Williamson, Black, & Winsor, 2013). Students with disabilities are learning in the inclusive classroom; however, students without disabilities are not always accepting of these student peers. Consequently, students with disabilities often experience loneliness within the inclusive setting (Pavri & Luftig, 2000).

The inclusive structure has created a culture within GenEd classrooms of heightened student interaction, participation, cooperation, and meaningful learning (Skilton-Sylveste & Slesaransky-Poe, 2009). This classroom culture stems from the diversity of student learners with and without disabilities. Not only are the diverse students taught within the inclusive classroom reaping academic benefits from inclusive
education, but most students with disabilities are now educated in their zoned public schools with their typically developing peers within the GenEd classroom (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2013a). Graduation rates for students with disabilities have improved. During the 2 school years spanning from the fall of 2010 to the spring of 2012, when drop-out rates remained constant at 3.3% across the United States, the graduation rates of students with disabilities rose from 59% to 61% (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2016).

**Increased responsibilities.** The amount of time students with disabilities are included with their nondisabled peers has substantially increased. Between 1990 and 1996, 40% to 50% of students with disabilities spent 80% or more of their school day in GenEd classes, compared to 2013 when the percentage of students with disabilities who spent 80% or more of their day within the GenEd setting rose to over 61% (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2013a). While students with disabilities have been increasingly included in the GenEd classroom, their postsecondary outcomes may be correlated with the changes in educational opportunities and settings.

Regardless of the potential benefits following high school, federal law has deemed that GenEd teachers are responsible for ensuring students with disabilities are given access to curriculum presented to students without disabilities and that all students make annual progress in learning (Caskey, 2008). While academic responsibilities for students with disabilities have increased for teachers, as evident in the increase of these students within the GenEd setting, GenEd teachers with greater guidance responsibilities for students with disabilities demonstrate more positive attitudes toward inclusive education. Conversely, teachers who are not as connected with the added guidance
responsibilities portray more negative attitudes (Boyle et al., 2013). Teacher perceptions regarding their own preparedness, student performance, and a sense of being overwhelmed add to factors shaping their attitudes and SE with inclusive instruction (McKenzie, 2015).

Teachers struggle with their perspectives of barriers to inclusive education and with having the SE to meet the demands of successful inclusive education (Boyle et al., 2013). Across inclusive settings, educators have expressed the need for additional training and support. The general perception is that teachers become frustrated with teaching students with disabilities within the GenEd classroom due to this lack of support and training (Fuchs, 2010). Inclusive teachers need to feel prepared to teach within this diverse setting (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Broderick, et al., 2005; Caskey, 2008). Evidence has shown that inclusive practices are effective; however, SE with regard to instruction delivery within the inclusive classroom is affected by teacher perspectives (Boyle et al., 2013).

**Review of Methodological Issues**

Researching studies on inclusive education provided a copious amount of information pertaining to the perspectives of GenEd teachers, as they relate to factors shaping the inclusion classroom. Studies have revealed that these perspectives affect teacher SE surrounding their instruction within the inclusive classroom (McKenzie, 2015; Smith, 2008; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Research has also shown that educator SE can be influenced by a number of factors forming teacher attitudes toward inclusive education (Boyle, et al., 2013; Caskey, 2008; Sime-Cummins, 2015).
Training has been a prevailing theme throughout studies addressing teacher SE within the inclusive classroom. These educators have expressed feeling unprepared, lacking adequate knowledge and skills for teaching students with disabilities within the GenEd setting (Alfaro et al., 2015; Berry, 2010; Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Broderick et al., 2005; Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Research has demonstrated that GenEd teachers possessing the knowledge and strategies required to reach all students within the inclusive classroom demonstrate positive SE (Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010; Sime-Cummins, 2015).

Conversely, lack of such training has had an adverse effect on teacher SE related to successful education delivery within inclusive classroom settings.

While GenEd teachers within inclusive classrooms have been a focus for many researchers (Alfaro et al., 2015; Ben-Yehuda et al., 2010; Berry, 2010; Fuchs, 2010; Lopes et al., 2004), implications also exist for SpEd teachers of inclusive education. Studies have examined GenEd and SpEd teachers in coteaching arrangements including a qualitative metasynthesis study conducted by Scruggs et al. (2007). These researchers presented themes and insights from 32 individual studies and related the data as a collective body of work while recognizing the integrity of each study. Themes for improvement included: (a) a need for additional administrative support; (b) greater initiative from GenEd and SpEd teachers within the inclusive-education design, volunteering for coteaching partnerships rather than being assigned; (c) increased training for coteachers; (d) greater development of cohesive coteaching partnerships; (e) equal roles divided between, and assumed by, coteaching partners; and (f) shared behavior management between GenEd and SpEd teachers within the inclusive classroom.
The methodological approach (i.e., metasynthesis) applied in the Scruggs et al. (2007) study allowed several aspects to be readily determined such as: (a) grade level, (b) content knowledge, (c) planning time available to coteachers, (d) degree of support from administration, and (e) student skill levels. As indicated in other studies, the researchers found that several factors under the control and support of campus administration shape the inclusive classroom including: (a) staff and student perceptions of coteaching as beneficial to GenEd students, some SpEd students, and the professional development of teachers; and (b) teacher-identified conditions needed for successful inclusive education including sufficient available planning time, effective pairing, and adequate training.

Studies reviewed for the current research provided extensive information on the link between teacher SE and effective inclusive education (Bandura, 1993; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001; McKenzie, 2015; Raudenbush et al., 1992; Sime-Cummins, 2015; Smith, 2008; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Quantitative analysis studies provided valuable statistical data explaining the relationships between attitudes and the experiences of teachers within inclusive classrooms (Boyle et al., 2013; Caskey, 2008; Cook, Tankersley, Cook, & Landrum, 2000; Dupoux et al., 2007; Sime-Cummins, 2015; Smith, 2008; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). This aspect of the inclusive classroom has been researched through various methodological approaches. Qualitative research, case studies, and metasyntheses also provided considerable information on teacher perspectives of inclusive education and their understanding as to the implications of statistical data (Ben-Yuhda et al., 2010; Berry, 2010; Fuchs, 2010; Gable & Tonelson, 2012, Lopes et al., 2004; McKenzie, 2015; Raudenbush et al., 1992; Simmons &
The intersection of barriers to success with inclusive education, teacher attitudes toward inclusion, and teacher SE within the inclusive classroom is the point at which further qualitative research can productively contribute to existing knowledge surrounding SE, as it relates to GenEd teachers within this educational setting.

**Synthesis of Research Findings**

Inclusive education is a concept guiding how students with disabilities are educated alongside their nondisabled peers to the greatest extent possible within the LRE required by federal mandates (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Loiancono & Valenti, 2010). Mandates are understood through the philosophies of school districts and individual schools, subsequently translated into practice and implemented to reach all students at varying levels within inclusive classrooms. GenEd teachers of inclusive classrooms need training and support to acquire and maintain requisite skills including the effective implementation of strategies for teaching students with disabilities, the proper provision of student accommodations, and for understanding the various education needs of their diverse students (Broderick, et al., 2005; Jones, 2012; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). Teachers have conveyed perspectives of their own readiness to teach students with and without disabilities in the GenEd setting by describing inadequacies in training, support, and time (Boyle et al., 2013; Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010; McKenzie, 2015). Teacher struggles with peripheral factors affecting the inclusive classroom and their own perspectives of barriers to this education method affect their SE with regard to meeting the demands of successful inclusive education (Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010).
Teacher Perspectives

Inclusive education. Studies have indicated that teachers frequently perceive themselves as inadequately prepared to teach within an inclusive classroom (Berry, 2010; Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Caskey, 2998; Dupoux et al., 2007; Fuchs, 2010; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Their perspectives regarding teacher acceptance of inclusive education, as well as their own knowledge applicable to the inclusive setting, affect instruction with this educational setting (Caskey, 2008; Dupoux et al., 2007; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Conversely, Cook et al., (2000) reported that no empirical evidence exists to support the notion of teacher SE or better student outcomes being affected by positive teacher attitudes.

Barriers to inclusive education. No general consensus exists throughout related literature as to whether teacher SE within the inclusive classroom is affected by educator attitudes. However, considerable consistency was evident in articles pertaining to the perspectives of GenEd teachers regarding barriers to teaching within this setting. Such barriers at the high-school level include more intense courses, unique instructional arrangements, scheduling limitations, and high expectations (Simmons & Magiera, 2007; Van Reusen et al., 2001). Increasing the training, knowledge, and positive experiences of inclusive teachers has been found to affect their perspectives, attitudes, and SE with regard to successful delivery of instruction within the inclusive classroom (Boyle et al., 2013; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001; Van Reusen et al., 2001; Vaughn et al., 1994).

Inclusive education requires adequate pre-service training, ongoing training, classroom support, and necessary resources (Alfaro et al., 2015; Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010; Lopes et al., 2004). The absence of these needs creates barriers to inclusive practices that
manifest in teacher perspectives of their potential effectiveness within the inclusive classroom (Alfaro et al., 2015).

**Self-Efficacy Within the Inclusive Classroom**

SE is affected by individual perspectives; therefore, it is not static, but rather, fluctuates (Bandura & Locke, 2003; Raudenbush et al., 1992). One reason teachers struggle with their SE within the inclusive classroom is their perspectives of this form of education. Researchers have reported that the personal assessment of SE may be based upon personal perspectives, erroneous self-appraisals, and peripheral factors (Bandura, 2012; Boyle, et al., 2013). Teacher belief in their own SE related to successful instruction within the inclusive classroom is influenced by their experiences and the adequacy of their training prior to and during inclusive teaching (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Sime-Cummins, 2015; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012).

The extensive SE research conducted by Bandura (1977, 1993, 2009, 2012; Bandura & Locke, 2003) has been substantially cited in studies addressing inclusive education. Bandura (1993) supports the premise that inadequate training leads to lack of confidence in skills, affecting teacher perspectives of their knowledge base and, in turn, regarding their contributions in classroom activities as ineffectual. Several researchers have found that lack of teacher skills within the inclusive classroom contributes to negative emotions in teachers, which concurrently contributes to lower SE with regard to their instruction delivery within inclusive classrooms (Berry, 2010; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010; Vaughn et al., 1994).

**Critique of Previous Research**

Two articles reviewed for the current study presented extensive reviews of
literature related to teacher attitudes influenced by perceptions, feelings, and training, as well as their approaches and mind-sets affecting the success of inclusive education (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Broderick et al., 2005). Both publications presented viable arguments of inclusive perspectives that were supported by other studies. Although no single, universal measurement tool was administered across all studies to assess what consistently constitutes success in inclusive education, Braunsteiner and Mariano-Lapidus (2014) discussed The Index—an instrument designed for international use.

The Index was intended to serve as an assessment of the culture, policies, and practices of inclusion. The aims included improved communication and collaboration with SpEd services and positive change in inclusive paradigms toward improved competencies (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014). The instrument was introduced as an applicable approach to new ways of thinking about and for implementing values, structures, and practices of inclusive education through ongoing critical self-reflection and global collaboration. While a vast range of inclusive-education models exist within countries, states, districts, and schools, the Index incites engagement in the continuous improvement of effective strategies and tools across settings. It is both a self-monitoring and collaborative paradigm intended to join multiple policies in order to address the diversity of inclusive education.

Several researchers have focused on teacher SE, as perceived through the Bandura (1993) framework, providing arguments related to SE function, vulnerabilities, effects on behavior, and the tendency to be motivated or changed by new information or experiences. Perceived SE was defined by Bandura as core beliefs surrounding the
personal ability to achieve goals. Consistent with Bandura’s findings on the impressionable quality of SE, Raudenbush et al. (1992) researched contextual effects on SE with a sample drawn from 16 high schools within two states. The study revealed that teachers of higher level classes hold more positive views and higher SE than teachers of lower track classes. Raudenbush et al. found that level of preparation, the ages of students, level of student engagement, and class size shape teacher perceptions of SE. While their study focused on a spectrum of classes ranging from honors to GenEd levels, no mention of inclusive classrooms was noted. However, the perceived SE of the participating teachers was combined with their areas of specialization and assigned track. The researchers could have expanded their analytic framework of perceived SE by addressing inclusion across the class content assigned to the teachers.

Researchers have described the effects of lacking teacher knowledge as leading to lower SE and causing educators to perceive class activities as inept endeavors (Bandura, 1993; Sime-Cummins, 2015). From an alternate perspective, when teachers experience increased knowledge in preparation for teaching within the inclusive setting, a positive effect is noted in teacher attitudes (Boyle et al., 2013; Van Ruesen et al., 2001). Similarly, Boyle et al. (2013) and Van Reusen et al. (2001) exemplified the significant positive effects on teacher attitudes from necessary training in support of educating students with disabilities within the GenEd classroom.

Research conducted by Leyser and Tappendorf (2001), as well as Vaughn et al. (1994), indicated teachers have positive attitudes resulting from encouraging experiences and successful encounters with students within inclusive classroom settings. Other investigators of teacher SE within the inclusive classroom have advanced knowledge
surrounding the factors that shape teacher SE within these educational environments (Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010; McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). However, what is being measured and how it is measured varies across studies. McKenzie (2015) emphasized the existence of a gap in plans for addressing the improvement of inclusive classrooms that encompasses the unique needs of students. Further research was needed to add to the base of knowledge related to teacher SE regarding education delivery within this classroom structure. Consequently, a study was warranted into the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom.

Researchers have presented varying data pertaining to the peripheral factors of inclusive education and how they shape teacher SE; however, minimal literature has addressed the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers within this realm of study.

**Chapter 2 Summary**

This review of literature related to the current topic of study has addressed inclusive education and teacher SE as it relates to successful instruction within the inclusive classroom. Teacher perspectives and concerns regarding barriers to success within this educational setting have been discussed, and the peripheral factors of inclusive education, as well as teacher SE with regard to the effectiveness of instructional delivery within this classroom setting, were clarified. Federal mandates have been presented including the most recent ESSA of 2015. LRE was discussed as the legal component upon which the inclusive paradigm was grounded. Lawful considerations related to inclusive education were considered from within the context of applicability to other research. The inclusive-education concepts described are based upon corroborated
frameworks and studies conducted by established researchers within the fields of GenEd, SpEd, and teacher SE.

The conceptual framework of this current study is aligned with the assertions presented by Bandura (2012) who posited that most sources of hindrance shaping the dynamics between SE and follow-through actions evolve from peripheral factors such as constraints within the situational, physical, or social realms. GenEd teachers struggle with various peripheral factors of inclusive education. Among those perceived by these educators as barriers to adequately educating all students within the inclusive classroom are inadequate training and insufficient time for collaboration with SpEd colleagues (McKenzie, 2015). Other factors reported by GenEd teachers encompass the types of disabilities encountered within inclusive classrooms, the ratio between students with and without disabilities, and class size. The GenEd teachers participating in this study perceived these factors as negatively affecting their SE with regard to inclusive education (Dupoux et al., 2007).

SE was of interest in this current study because it is significant to inclusive education. The research question asked, “How do GenEd high-school teachers perceive the peripheral factors of inclusive education in terms of shaping their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom?” This question highlights the focus of this study because teaching students with and without disabilities within a combined GenEd classroom involves various peripheral factors shaping teacher SE with regard to their instructional effectiveness within this educational setting. This review of related literature provided a history of the legislation involved in establishing and further developing inclusive education. Additionally, the review explicated the knowledge
gleaned from existing studies that was expounded upon in this current research. Specific information is subsequently presented regarding the methodological design including a description of the participants, the manner in which the data were collected and analyzed, aspects of validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction to Chapter 3

The methodology design applied in this research is descriptive, qualitative case study to facilitate investigation into the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. The operational definition of perceived SE was derived from the Bandura (1993) description of teacher SE as their personal beliefs in their own ability to achieve desired student outcomes. SE was of interest in this current study because this characteristic influences the emotional, cognitive, and motivational drives of educators, which in turn, shape successful learning within the classroom. GenEd teachers are defined in this research as educators who have been teaching within the regular-classroom setting. Effective instruction within the inclusive classroom is demonstrated by student achievement, as evidenced by regular assessments and class participation. The following teaching components are common to effective inclusive classrooms: (a) students provided with clear objectives, (b) interactive instruction delivery, (c) ample practice opportunities for students to master objectives, and (d) abundant teacher feedback (Westwood, 2013). These components were outlined by Westwood (2013) and adopted in this study as the collective operational definition of effective inclusive instruction.

Simmons and Magiera (2007) found that, along with the inclusion implementation challenges faced by elementary-education teachers, high-school educators must also contend with more intense courses, greater scheduling constraints, and increased expectations for student performance on exams. McKenzie (2015) indicated that the
more intense responsibilities at the high-school level also include adherence to federal mandates and district expectations specific to high school such as meeting benchmarks, maximizing student performance on standardized state tests, and successfully preparing students for postsecondary life. While schools at all levels attempt to raise the capacity of their inclusive programs, Van Reusen et al. (2001) discussed the requirement of high schools to meet the varied, higher level needs of students. These needs extend beyond academics to include social and technological skill development, as well as preventing students from dropping out of school and ensuring student readiness for both academic progression beyond high school and work careers. Due to these specified challenges and limited results in these areas throughout existing literature, this current study maintained a focus on the high-school level.

Smith (2008) recommended future research focused on the manner in which teacher SE shapes inclusive education within the GenEd classroom and suggested further investigation into the aspects of teacher confidence, preparedness, and attitudes. This suggestion stemmed from the findings of her study showing efficacy toward inclusive education yielding influence within the inclusive classroom. Bruster (2014) asserted that many teachers oppose inclusive education. Her research indicated that high-school GenEd teachers exhibit more profound negativity toward inclusive education than their SpEd counterparts. Bruster consequently suggested further research investigating negative educator perspectives of inclusive education. Across studies of inclusive teachers, the respective researchers have asserted a link between inadequate training and educator SE (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Sime-Cummins, 2015; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012).
GenEd teacher candidates across content areas have reported training as correlated with SE in pre-service teachers preparing for certification to educate students with disabilities within the inclusive setting. These teachers need experiences in actual inclusive classrooms, in addition to training, to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for this type of diverse student population and development of the needed SE related to inclusive instruction (Fuchs, 2010; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Sime-Cummins (2015) recommended investigation into the connection between professional development and SE after conducting a study with findings indicating that the SE of inclusive teachers is linked to the quality of their training. In consideration of the recommendations for future research throughout existing related literature, and the limited studies on the SE of GenEd high-school teachers within the inclusive setting, this current research was designed to contribute to existing knowledge within this realm of study.

This research is a qualitative, descriptive case study involving GenEd teacher participants from inclusive classrooms within one high-school study site. Participants completed an online, open-ended questionnaire; participated in face-to-face, semistructured interviews; and conducted member checks of their respective interview transcriptions. The rationale behind the two methods of data collection were to obtain the most complete, in-depth data possible from GenEd teachers and contribute an in-depth exploration into emerging themes found throughout the study. The data collected were triangulated to adhere to the Creswell (2013) assertion regarding the imperative nature of substantiating evidence through collection from varied sources for purposes of validation.
The triangulation also facilitated testing for consistencies and inconsistencies (Patton, 2002).

**Research Question**

The research question that guided this study asked, “How do GenEd high-school teachers perceive the peripheral factors of inclusive education in terms of shaping their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom?”

**Purpose and Design of the Study**

The aim of a case study is to obtain in-depth, meaningful knowledge on one or more phenomenon (Adams & Lawrence 2015). This current study explored the phenomenon presented in the research question from within the context of the Bandura (2012) assertion that most sources of hindrance shaping the dynamics between SE and follow-through action evolve from peripheral factors such as constraints within the situational, physical, or social realms. The GenEd teachers participating in this study provided their input of personal perspectives pertaining to the past, present, and evolving peripheral factors of inclusion education. The semistructured, face-to-face interviews were recorded utilizing two audio recording devices to safeguard against technological failure and the recordings were subsequently transcribed. Individual transcriptions were submitted to each respective study participant prior to finalization of the study for member checking, giving the interviewees an opportunity to review the text for accuracy prior to data triangulation.

Bandura (2012) contended that ambiguity is a factor affecting SE. This current case study contributed to the limited literature existing on this topic by exploring detailed perceptions from the personal accounts of teachers delivering inclusive education. Due
to the in-depth nature of this study in investigating the subjective perceptions, interpretations, and insights of GenEd teachers, the case-study design was optimal toward addressing the research question.

Creswell (2013) explained the case-study approach as a specific analysis aimed at examining a dilemma, whereby the case itself exposes the complicated intricacies of the issue under study. Yin (2009) described research questions as answering the how or why aspects of a phenomenon, often requiring a history or case study rather than frequencies, incidence, and numerical prevalence, which are employed via other methodologies. Researchers who have addressed teacher SE have recommended future studies addressing educator perceptions in an in-depth manner, which numerical data from quantitative study would not achieve. Logan and Wilmer (2013) expressed the need for future study promoting personal narratives from teachers expressing their positive and challenging experiences. Smith (2008) also recommended in-depth research on SE, revealing knowledge and insight from teachers.

This current research adhered to the Yin (2009) approach to qualitative case study, which purported that “case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes” (p. 15). Unlike quantitative studies that involve statistical generalizations, the aim of case study is to develop and broaden theory. Qualitative design is flexible; it is intended to be conducive to unrestricted exploration wherever the investigation of the respective phenomenon leads (Patton, 2002). While Bandura (1993) contended that SE influences the emotional, cognitive, and motivational aspects shaping the success of classroom learning, this study
broadened that idea by exploring plausible successful instruction by GenEd teachers within the inclusive classroom in relation to their perceived SE.

**Inquiry process.** This qualitative case-study research into how inclusion is designed and operates provided themes contributing in-depth information to existing related knowledge (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2013). It “answered the call” for the in-depth knowledge and insight researchers have recommended in past studies. While this study explored the peripheral factors of inclusive education through the perceptions of high-school teachers, my research expectations correlated with the Creswell (2013) assertion that further themes may be expected to emerge. Yin (2009) emphasized the importance of case-study researchers developing the skills necessary to ask pertinent questions and accurately interpret participant answers. The GenEd teachers comprising the study sample in this research were expected to provide rich data from online, open-ended questionnaires and face-to-face semistructured interviews, revealing themes not previously identified to ultimately understand teacher perspectives of inclusive education.

Collecting two or more sources of data, while maintaining focus on emerging themes and patterns, are critical aspects of qualitative inquiry and central to the research process (Creswell, 2009). The inquiry process of this study adhered to the Yin (2009) approach, incorporating the critical components of validity and reliability, as is necessary for case study. Responses to the open-ended questionnaires and face-to-face interviews were combined to provide varied interpretations of the phenomenon under study.

The face-to-face, semistructured interviews conducted in this study involved open-ended questions posed to each interviewee in the same order and with the same wording (Patton, 2002). This allowed the interview tool to be made available to readers
of the study, respected the time of interviewees with decidedly focused questions, and aided in locating particular responses for data comparison during the analysis process. The aim of this study was to understand individual perspectives from the spoken word of the participants in the form of their interpretations, meanings, and insights. Hence, the interview questions did not lead to any constraint, such as that presented with written responses to open-ended questions, and the interview protocol was pilot tested. The questions allowed interviewees to provide fully unconstrained responses derived from their own rich experiences, narratives, and stories combined with their opinions, feelings, and interpretations (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

The procedures outlined in the design of this case study provided comprehensive insight into the multifaceted aspects of the phenomenon under study. Yin (2009) contended that case study can be abstract to the researcher because it lacks a specific construct and protocols; however, it is a valuable methodology for the social sciences. Baxter and Jack (2008) explained the case-study process as involving diverse sources or methods of multiplicity. In-depth data were collected in this current study through open-ended questionnaires and face-to-face interviews.

**Study characteristics.** In addition to procedures common to qualitative case study, Creswell (2013) provided additional characteristics, such as the integral facet of a bounded system, which is an authentic part of life confined by time and place. Bounding defines how a case will or will not be explored in the study of a phenomenon (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this current qualitative case study, inclusive education was the topic of interest and a high school served as the study site. The case study was bound by expectations of the school administration and by ECHS protocols. A bounded case
encompasses characteristics such as concepts, sampling, and context. Defining these boundaries was essential to effectively outlining the aspects of the case that were linked to the research question.

This case study necessitated participants who taught within the study-site school because this was the natural setting within which they practiced inclusive education. Participants were selected from the GenEd inclusion teachers of high-school English, math, science, and social studies at the study-site high school. To sufficiently explore the phenomenon of interest through the perspectives of GenEd teachers while maintaining manageable data and completing the study with respect for the time of the participants, a sample of six GenEd high-school teachers was recruited. A total of 19 potential recruits were drawn in equal number from three groups of respondents self-reporting as Hispanic, African American, and European American. Because only one teacher self-reported as “Other,” this teacher was included for possible participation. Of the 64 teachers at the study-site high school, the described 19 were invited to participate in the research.

The high school chosen for this study was a public high school located within the central region of Texas. The school was designated as one of the 107 ECHSs in the state (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). ECHSs are innovative high schools seeking to serve all students. They have undergone a designation process to ensure goals are met with regard to their student populations who likely would not attend college without ECHS opportunities and support. Student benefits include reduced barriers to college access, participation in intensive college-readiness programs, social and academic support, encouragement to enroll in accelerated courses with support, and the opportunity to earn dual credit with no fees. The designation process was designed to help ensure that the
valuable integrity of the ECHS model is maintained for students experiencing barriers to a collegiate future.

The study-site high school in this research is primarily composed of students who identify with a minority group and report living with families of low-income status. As of 2015, 859 students comprised the total enrollment. Of this total, 848 students reported minority status (i.e., 346 African American, 485 Hispanic, 11 European American, 1 American Indian, and 16 Asian; Texas Education Agency, n.d.). The participating high school is classified as Title I, meaning it receives funding from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act through state and local education agencies. This funding is designated to help schools with high percentages of students from economically challenged families to raise the capacity of education quality and support these students in meeting performance standards. Because 77.6% (i.e., 665 students) of the students served by the school participating in this study identified as economically disadvantaged (Austin Independent School District, 2016), the school qualified as a Title I school. The number of students served by SpEd was 118 (Austin Independent School District, n.d.).

When SpEd is outlined within a student IEP, the plan stipulates the amount of time this support is extended within the GenEd setting and the accommodations or modifications to class content to be provided. One of the following three models is used to deliver inclusive services at the study-site school for content areas:

1. One of five coteaching arrangements with two certified teachers within the classroom at all times—one GenEd and one SpEd.

2. A SpEd paraprofessional with the GenEd classes for all or part of the class time.
3. A GenEd educator teaching students independently with modifications and accommodations.

Inclusive services at the study-site school involve various inclusive models to meet the needs of heterogeneous groups of students within the GenEd setting. This facilitates the logistics involved in scheduling classes and designating particular teachers for the inclusive setting. Due to the unique nature of ECHSs, this study served to contribute to existing literature by addressing inclusive education at this particular study-site high school.

Baxter and Jack (2008) emphasized the appropriate nature of case study when one characteristic includes the condition that the research must be conducted within the context of the respective natural environment. The importance of context in this study is demonstrated by teachers actively instructing within inclusive classrooms and implementing various models of inclusion while assuming responsibility for the additional duties of tracking, supporting, and mentoring students, as stipulated in the protocols for ECHSs. Because the study-site high school was the setting within which the GenEd high-school teachers provided inclusive education to their students, the experiential memory of the participating teachers was recent and the educational environment within which they taught provided contextual prompts. This aided in the processing involved in determining how they perceived and retrieved the personal interpretations, meanings, and insights explored in this study.

The study-site school is situated within a major city in central Texas. While a larger sample and quantitative research would have yielded greater reliability and increased the likelihood of generalized findings, it would not have met the goal of the
study, which was to explore the in-depth, subjective data drawn from GenEd high-school teachers. The criteria used for selecting the participating school included: (a) a public high school providing a continuum of inclusive models for serving students, (b) an ECHS campus, (c) a school size requiring a sufficient number of inclusive GenEd teachers from whom to select study participants, and (d) a principal who expresses positive interest in the poststudy results and continuous improvement.

In addition to the characteristics previously discussed, such as the context and bounded aspects of this research, the features of this study align to the description provided by Baxter and Jack (2008) that included a study focused on an authentic, real-life phenomenon. While quantitative research on the SE of teachers within inclusive classrooms is well documented and detailed, subjective in-depth data from qualitative research is limited. The research question grounding this qualitative case study was formulated to explore in-depth data drawn from the individual perspectives, interpretations, meanings, and insights of GenEd teachers. Qualitative data analysis provided further understanding into the phenomenon under study.

**Research Population and Sampling Method**

Participants in this study included GenEd teachers of inclusive classrooms within a public high school of a large district in a major central-Texas city. The total teacher population of the school was 64 teachers, 22 of whom taught within GenEd, inclusive, core-content classrooms of students with and without disabilities. Stratified purposeful sampling was employed in this study because the sample of GenEd inclusive teachers were a part of the larger sample of GenEd high-school teachers (Patton, 2002). This form of sampling helped to ensure that the collected perspectives of inclusive teachers were
representative of all high-school grade levels and all four core subject areas (i.e., English, math, science, and social studies).

The stratified, purposeful sampling method was the design strategy for this study because the target population was a particular group (i.e., GenEd inclusive high-school teachers) from whom rich insight was sought. As advised by Patton (2002), I designed the research to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. The study-site school employed several teachers of inclusive education and utilized a range of inclusion models to serve students. It was important the study findings were dependable.

The following facets collectively added quality and dependability to this research: (a) clearly written and valid interview questions, as was demonstrated in a pilot study to ensure the open-ended questions sufficiently addressed the research question and were effective in collecting the desired data; (b) a well-planned case-study design strategy (i.e., stratified purposeful sampling); and (c) a specific focus. A holistic perspective was maintained in this research due to the concentration on a phenomenon composed of many complex, entwined aspects (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Additionally, taking steps to add quality to the study findings is proper management and execution of data collection and analysis. Patton (2002) asserted that maintaining researcher focus on meanings within the data throughout collection and analysis is critical during qualitative study. Understanding how individuals are affected at levels deeper than statistical analysis can provide is as crucial.
Creswell (2009) asserted that a characteristic of qualitative research is the selection of a deliberate sample to facilitate arriving at answers to research questions. The participants in this study were chosen using stratified, purposeful sampling from the population of GenEd teachers within inclusive education at the study-site school. Those educators who met the criteria pertaining to teaching assignments within the inclusive classroom setting were asked to participate. Another criterion was the delivery of instruction related to at least one of the four core subject areas (i.e., English, math, science, or social studies). Delimitations considered for this study included all SpEd teachers and GenEd teachers who did not teach English, math, science or social studies within the inclusive classroom setting because this population of educators were excluded from study participation.

**Instrumentation**

The instrumentation employed in this qualitative case study included an open-ended questionnaire and an interview protocol. The questionnaire is composed of five open-ended questions and was accessible to participants through an online survey service. An interview protocol was used in the face-to-face sessions with 12 semistructured, open-ended questions, as well as probing follow-up questions used at my discretion during the interview to incite greater detail and meaning when deemed needed (Patton, 2002). Focused topical research involves the collection of a variety of information from numerous people via a single question that often addresses one issue or dilemma. Conversely, I employed the responsive interview style, developing a relaxed rapport conducive to creating trust between myself as the interviewer and the interviewees. This
format supported the aim to gain interviewee perspectives in their own words from their own thoughts and feelings (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

The interview protocol used in this study was designed specifically for this research. Construct validity was addressed through a pilot study to confirm that the open-ended questions would draw data needed to answer the research question (Yin 2009). The pilot sample was composed of GenEd teachers from a high school other than the study site. As to reliability, the data-collection procedures were designed and implemented in a manner allowing replicability of the study while achieving the same results. Two digital tape recorders memorialized the interview sessions. Data were managed through an analysis process of meticulously organizing, categorizing, and coding the data collected. Computer software supported the coding and identification of connections, patterns, and themes.

**Data Collection**

Data collection in this study was scheduled to accommodate the schedules of the participating teachers during regular school days. Instructions for accessing the questionnaire were provided to all who signed consent forms to participate in the research along with the request to return the instrument within 1 week. The link for questionnaire access led to an online survey service. The teacher participants completed the questionnaire and the service immediately notified me as each questionnaire was completed. This enabled me to begin the process of data analysis as responses were received.

Following the collection and analysis of the questionnaire data, I met with each participant to conduct the face-to-face interviews. The principal of the study-site school
provided a location for the sessions that was conducive to maintaining confidentiality; however, all participants opted to conduct their interviews within their respective classrooms during conference periods when no students were present. To ensure consistency in interview duration among all study participants, each session was scheduled in two equal time frames of 40 minutes each to allow the in-depth perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and insights of the interviewees to be fully expressed. Consistency of the interview methods and sufficient session duration were ensured and the pilot study had confirmed the interview protocol would collect the data needed. The data-collection instruments posed questions suitable for answering the overarching research question (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009).

All members of the study sample voluntarily participated in completing the questionnaire and interview. Data collection was performed in 4 weeks from December 16, 2016 through January 13, 2017. Each participant reviewed their respective interview transcript for any desired editing and content approval. There was no compensation for study participation; however, a $20 gift card was given to each teacher upon completion of data collection to thank the participants for their contributions.

The Yin (2009) premise of employing different sources in case studies was followed in this research; the objective of collecting data from multiple sources is based in the corroboration of facts. When triangulating data, facts are supported by more than one data source as opposed to comparing outcomes of varied sources (Yin, 2009). This method aids in increasing the credibility and quality of the study findings, alleviating the concerns frequently generated with single methods or sources (Patton, 2002). Triangulation was achieved with the use of open-ended questionnaires and semistructured
face-to-face interviews. Analysis was conducted with consideration to the two types of data collected and supported and enhanced the study focus, promoting increased accuracy (Yin, 2009). Patton (2002) underscored the importance of understanding the goal of triangulation. This method is not a tool employed to prove agreement of different data sources, but rather, it is a method by which to test for dependability among data sources.

Yin (2009) explicated the essential understanding a researcher must possess regarding the difference between sources of data during the collection process and those of the collective case study. This current case study was conducted in accordance with this concept. Consequently, although the data were collected from individual participants, emerging themes facilitated exploration of the research question.

**Identification of Attributes**

The peripheral factors shaping the SE of GenEd teachers with regard to inclusive education were addressed in related literature and included: (a) grade level taught (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014); (b) training received on encompassing instructional and behavioral strategies, as well as education on the challenges of student disabilities (Alfaro et al., 2015; Boyle et al., 2013; Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Fuchs, 2010; McKenzie, 2015); (c) perceptions of time provision for collaboration with SpEd staff (Caskey, 2008; McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007); and (d) previous experience with teaching students with disabilities or past exposure to this student population (Dupoux et al., 2007). The following aspects outside the realm of peripheral factors were not included in this case study: (a) teacher willingness and attitude toward meeting the needs of students with disabilities (Monsen, Ewing, & Kowal, 2013); (b) the emotional influence of teachers on the inclusive classroom.
(Vaughn et al., 1994); and teacher mind-sets and presuppositions surrounding inclusion education (Skilton-Sylvester & Slesaransky-Poe, 2009). Attempting to ascertain a link between these nonperipheral factors and teacher SE could have compromised the credibility of this study that was based upon the Bandura (1993) premise that the SE of teachers influences these nonperipheral factors involving the emotional, cognitive, and motivational aspects of inclusive education.

**Data-Analysis Procedures**

Credible analysis within a qualitative case study necessitates thoroughly addressing the research question(s) and demonstrating deliberate consideration of all evidence, while maintaining focus on the primary source of data (Yin, 2009). In this current research, it is teacher perceptions. During analysis, researchers must use skillful knowledge and applicable experiential understanding derived from proficiency and familiarity with the subject matter of the study (Yin, 2009). Data were collected in this case study via an open-ended questionnaire and face-to-face, semistructured interviews. Member checks were also conducted by all interviewees. As a qualitative, descriptive case study, the data analysis provided knowledge from the perspectives of the participating GenEd teachers.

The data analysis conducted in this study correlated to the Yin (2009) assertion that the aim of descriptive theory is defined by the purpose of a study. Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasized the value of qualitative data, which is sourced in the authentic, thick descriptions encompassing the context and revealing the complexity and rich, holistic nature of the data. This current research is a descriptive case study, a holistic account used to distinguish between complexities within the data and report
detected factors relating to how data emerge on a larger scale from multiple data sources (Creswell, 2013). The sample size was small and teacher attributes, such as the core content taught, were of major consideration.

Data were organized in this study first by the demographic information collected via the open-ended questionnaire. The data analysis process subsequently followed the Miles and Huberman (1994) model depicting three simultaneous progressions involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data reduction, data from the questionnaires and interviews were arranged according to themes and rearranged while data were being coded and patterns discovered. In the conclusion drawing and verification phase, computer software designed for qualitative research was utilized for displaying data and maintaining organization and clarity of the data for analysis. After analyzing the data collected from the open-ended questionnaires, which guided the study interviews, all components were analyzed together simultaneously. While all sources of data were evaluated for corroboration of the facts (Yin, 2009), emerging data during all three progressions were continuously evaluated for plausibility and validity as the data analysis progressed.

**Limitations of the Research Design**

This study presented several limitations including a lack of feasibility with regard to incorporating variables, the purposeful sampling due to the necessary selectivity (Patton, 2002), the potential influence of teacher emotions or self-seeking/ulterior motives on participant responses (Patton, 2002), the late-fall and early-spring timing of the study that could have impacted teacher responses, the reports of 99% of the student population belonging to minority groups, the reports of 77% of the student population
living within low-income households, and the ECHS designation of the study site
indicating teacher responsibilities beyond that of regular public high schools. The
manipulation of variables was not a facet of this study because the research was not
experimental in nature (Creswell, 2009).

External validity addressed the generalizability of the findings in this study; however, due to the qualitative case-study methodology, additional information was
required to evaluate transferability of the results. Transferability requires thick
descriptions of the research setting because context is the central component binding
generalizability of study findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The thick descriptions
provide a means of judging the applicability or transferability of the results to an
alternative setting (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, transferability was
evidenced by the provision of ample concentrated information regarding the context;
consequently, particular findings pertaining to a category were apparent. The participants
were all GenEd teachers of inclusive classrooms within a public high school in a major
central-Texas city. The construct of the inclusive program at the study-site high school
was described and further aided transferability of the findings. This was because the in-
depth data provided by the participants were based upon their own perspectives and
experiences specific to the inclusive model implemented at the study-site school.
Validation

**Dependability.** The dependability of a study is evidenced by the consistency of its process and feasibility of its replication by other researchers (Yin, 2009). The current study is dependable due to the meticulous attention to detail, adherence to protocols of the research methodology in relation to data collection and analysis, and the thorough description of processes involved in the research. Validity and reliability are critical components to the quality of a study design. Patton (2002) explained that the degree of validity is determined by the capacity of the researcher and richness of the information presented, as opposed to sample size. In alignment with this Patton assertion, the goal of this qualitative case study was to gain rich information from the in-depth perspectives of the participating GenEd high-school teachers. Yin (2009) described three types of validity that are applicable to this descriptive case study—construct, external, and reliability. In this case study, construct validity was achieved by adhering to the Yin guidelines during data collection and by utilizing various sources of evidence, providing connections strengthening the evidence, and following review protocols.

This case study has established operational measures including explication of the meaning of effective instruction within the inclusive classroom to avoid subjectivity and adhere to the requirements of construct validity (Yin, 2009). For purposes of the research, the inclusive classroom was defined as a classroom wherein students with and without disabilities learn together. The operational measures for effective instruction within an inclusive classroom were determined by and evidenced through class assessments, student participation, the provision of clear objectives, student-teacher
interaction, ample practice toward mastering objectives, and abundant teacher feedback (Westwood, 2013).

As suggested by Yin (2009), the reliability of this qualitative case study was demonstrated by describing the data-collection processes, which rendered replication possible. This case study was conducted by following the organized systematic process previously outlined. The supporting qualitative-research data-processing software utilized to build a database was also recommended by Yin, which added to the reliability of the data collected because it provided an additional reference of evidence. The software was used in processing the qualitative data and provided a formal organized database of collected data that increased reliability of the study findings. The two types of interconnected data within this database were collected from: (a) the teacher questionnaire and interviews, and (b) my narrative report on the data.

**Credibility.** Credibility in this qualitative case study was achieved through the following validity strategies recommended by Creswell (2009): triangulation, rich and thick descriptions of the findings, clear depiction of researcher bias, and member checks of the data collected. For the member checks, all study participants were asked to review their respective interview transcripts for accuracy. Other strategies embedded within the case-study design also lend credibility to this study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Triangulation was employed by: (a) collecting and corroborating two sources of data to verify consistent study findings and (b) conducting member checks of the second data source in the form of the interview transcripts. Yin (2009) stressed the importance of multiple data sources for true triangulation. The sources used in this case study were the online, open-ended questionnaire and the face-to-face, semistructured interviews with GenEd inclusion
teachers. The member checks allowed participants to review their individual interview transcripts for accuracy. Creswell (2013) explained that validation includes triangulating data and member checking, with participants given the opportunity to review and revise data they provided within the study interviews.

**Expected Findings**

The expected findings of this study included the presupposition that participants would adhere to providing unbiased answers to the best of their abilities, as well as truthful accounts of their experiences and perceptions regarding all aspects of inclusive education. I approached the study interviews through the naturalist-constructionist paradigm described by Rubin and Rubin (2012), wherein contrasting information from interviewees are valued as differing meanings understood by individuals through their experiential lenses as they make interpretations. Due to the experiences of GenEd teachers within inclusive classrooms, additional expected findings were that the study participants would have a basic understanding of vocabulary specific to the inclusive classroom and they would have individual perspectives of what was necessary to achieve effective instruction within this educational environment.

Because the educators participating in this study teach within public education, they likely either observed or experienced change in various areas of teaching such as with teaching-strategy expectations, grading protocols, curriculum, state assessments, leadership, district expectations, and federal mandates. Peripheral factors of the inclusive classroom include adequate teacher training, administrative and SpEd support, time for collaboration and planning, and availability of necessary resources (Fuchs, 2010). The overall expected findings regarding the GenEd inclusive teachers participating in this
study were malleable attitudes and superlative resourcefulness in acquiring skills conducive to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom, as well as high levels of SE regarding successful inclusive instruction.

SE encompasses domains comprised of an expanse of performances, such as teachers’ SE, and the effects on student learning (Bandura, 1993). Spheres of influence are produced by SE, as demonstrated in behaviors observed across settings such as teacher SE and its effects on student learning (Bandura, 1993). Bandura (2012) provided references supporting his empirical findings that spanned 40 years. The sources were grounded in social cognitive theory to explicate SE theory. Bandura described SE research of other authors as based upon faulty foundational reasoning, flawed testing, inaccurate influences of SE, misconceptions of SE theory, decontextualized theories of SE, and erroneous measurement. In reference to empirical evidence of SE presented by Bandura, the expected findings of this current study included self-report of positive SE from GenEd teachers, shaped by their perceived peripheral factors of inclusive education.

An expectation implied by the research question formulated for this study was that inclusive teachers have a desire to deliver effective instruction within the inclusive classroom and are concerned over peripheral factors that ultimately shape this desired success. It was also expected that teacher experiences within inclusive classrooms, as well as their related perceptions, would foster plausible answers regarding how to address the peripheral factors that negatively shape their effectiveness within this educational environment. My own personal bias as the researcher in this study was unavoidable due to my experiences in SpEd. I did, however, maintain objective listening and sensitivity to the data during collection (Patton, 2002). My biased perspectives remained present in the
forefront of my mind; hence, I refrained, to the greatest extent possible, from allowing these perspectives to adversely affect field procedures, analysis, and the recorded findings as cautioned by Patton (2002).

**Ethical Issues**

**Conflict-of-interest assessment.** The high school serving as the study site in this study is located in the central region of Texas. My familiarity with the school is due to my past position within the facility as a SpEd teacher and department chair. I resigned from this position in 2014 to accept a new role in the capacity of a SpEd coordinator of high schools in the central administration of another district. Due to the demands of the new position, my pursuit of a doctoral degree, and having a child with disabilities, I did not maintain a connection with the school nor staff since my resignation. I am unaware of any conflict of interest pertaining to the research site or any other facet of this study. In April 2016, I requested a meeting with the principal of the school to request permission to conduct my study at her facility and permission was granted.

**Researcher’s position.** In addition to a doctoral candidate, I am the current owner of an advocacy business serving parents of students with special needs. As a parent with a high-functioning, autistic child, my professional and personal lives intersect. I have developed a passion for SpEd, and raising a child with special needs motivates my endeavor to help parents gain a clearer understanding of SpEd and build healthy relationships within the schools attended by their children. Since 2003, I have filled several SpEd positions within public school districts, ranging from teaching in the secondary-school setting to serving within central administration; hence, my experiences
related to SpEd are varied. My passion toward this research topic is supported by this professional experience.

Following permission to conduct this study from the Institutional Review Board, I adhered to the appropriate protocols for access to the study-site high school and began the preliminary research processes. I contacted potential participants who met the study criteria by serving as GenEd teachers of one of the four core subjects (i.e., English, math, science, or social studies) and delivering instruction to students with and without disabilities within GenEd inclusion classrooms. Upon determining those teachers willing to participate in the study, informed consent was obtained from each teacher. The participants were informed that no monetary compensation would be provided for their involvement in the research. There was no compensation for study participation; however, a $20 gift card was given to each teacher upon completion of data collection to thank the participants for their contributions. The intent of the study to contribute to existing literature was clearly communicated. Approximately 1 week after obtaining informed consent, I disseminated links to the participants, both personally and via e-mail, to the online survey with instructions on accessing the tool and requested their completion within the following week. The study interviews were subsequently scheduled. Following the interviews, participants received their individual transcripts for member checking.

**Ethical issues.** Ethical considerations in this study encompassed prestudy through poststudy issues (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The first of these considerations was the worthiness of the study topic. Of particular importance was the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education.
shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom.

Federal mandates stipulated the LRE for students with disabilities when receiving instruction alongside their nondisabled peers within GenEd settings (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010). The findings of this study contributed to the body of literature on inclusive education, which was the major goal of the research.

Miles and Huberman (1994) stressed the importance of ensuring researcher competence to conduct a quality study. My proficiency qualifying me for this pursuit was derived from 14 years of professional experience with SpEd in public school districts, and serving as an advocate to parents. The role of advocate involved helping parents understand the value of positive relationships with school personnel; working with education professionals to facilitate mediation between parents and schools, with the aim of preserving or repairing relationships; and delivering parent training. I brought 5 years of personal experience to this work with my own child receiving part of her education within the inclusive GenEd classroom of a public school.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout the course of this study. I assumed full responsibility for the security of all recordings, notes, questionnaires, and all other study documentation. All hard-copy data were placed within a locked file cabinet within my home. The confidentiality agreement made with participants to maintain clear and honest communication was shared with the principal of the study-site school. No participant names were disclosed within any study documentation. In addition to maintaining open and honest communication with the school principal during this study, my approach with the participants was founded on honesty and respect. The responsive interview style was implemented to build a relationship of trust that was free of any form
of pressure or harm of any kind (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Many new teachers had entered the study-site school at the time of this research; hence, although I had developed past working relationships with SpEd staff, the pool of GenEd teachers familiar to me was smaller in number than when I served at the school.

A linear-analytic structure was the compositional approach utilized in the documentation of this research, as this was an appropriate construct for use with a dissertation and applicable to this descriptive case study (Yin, 2009). The linear-analytic structure is a standard approach to research reporting, presenting content arrangement typically used in dissertations. I followed the standard requirement of employing a formal format in composing the dissertation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

**Chapter 3 Summary**

GenEd teachers within inclusive classrooms completed the online open-ended questionnaire of this study and participated in semistructured interviews and subsequent member checks of the transcribed interview data. The study instrumentation was designed specifically for this study and the data-collection and analysis procedures have been detailed. To ensure appropriate data-collection instrumentation, a pilot study was conducted to ensure the interview protocol would draw the data needed to answer the research question and that the interview sessions were adequately timed to maintain organization and equity among all participants. The perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers, in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom, was examined within the context of a pivotal Bandura (2012) assertion. Bandura advanced that most sources of
hindrance shape the dynamics between SE and subsequent action evolving from peripheral factors such as constraints within the situational, physical, or social realms.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

The purpose of this current study was to explore the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. Inclusive education involves schools with LREs wherein students with disabilities can receive instruction alongside their nondisabled peers within the GenEd inclusive classroom. The LRE mandate set forth by the IDEA (2004) stipulated, “To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled” (p. 118). The inclusive classroom is characterized by students with disabilities learning concurrently alongside their nondisabled peers within the GenEd setting with the support of a special educator (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010).

I designed this study to gain insight into a dilemma pertaining to the challenges encountered by GenEd high-school teachers within inclusive classrooms at an ECHS serving students who are predominantly members of minority populations. ECHSs are innovative high schools seeking to serve all students, with a focus on those who are unlikely to attend college without ECHS opportunities and support (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). The benefits to students of ECHSs include: reduced barriers to college access, participation in intensive college-readiness programs, social and academic support, encouragement to enroll in accelerated courses with support, and opportunities to earn dual credit without a fee.
Data were collected in this study from inclusive teachers within an ECHS to obtain their in-depth perspectives. Central to the data collected were participant perceptions, interpretations, meanings and insights. Forms of data included the individual contributions of the participants via their responses to five questions posed on the online, open-ended questionnaire designed specifically for this study. Sequential, narrative data were also collected from 12 open-ended questions delivered during semistructured, face-to-face interviews. The purpose of these forms of data collection aligns with that described by Rubin and Rubin (2012), which identified the formats as integral to the data-collection process, drawing distinctive meanings understood by individuals through their experiential lenses as they make interpretations. The variety of data types collected in this current study, coupled with the member checks of interview transcription, contributed to ensure unmodified credibility of the findings.

In this qualitative case study, data were first collected by the online, open-ended questionnaire and subsequently through face-to-face, semistructured interviews, which provided the most conducive sequence for analysis. These qualitative data-collection methods were chosen because they were the most suitable for drawing in-depth, subjective perspectives from the participants in their own words. They allowed the collection of perceptions that numerical data from quantitative study would not draw. Qualitative design is flexible and conducive to unrestricted exploration of phenomena (Patton, 2002). Baxter and Jack (2008) asserted that case-study design necessitates varied strategies to achieve credibility and the design of this study aligns with this assertion.
The objective in this research of collecting data from online, open-ended questionnaires and face-to-face, semistructured interviews was the corroboration of consistent facts and confirmed reliability. When triangulating data, facts are supported by more than one data source, as opposed to a comparison of outcomes from varied sources (Yin, 2009). This study examined data from two sources to support facts emerging in categories and themes. In-depth data were examined and connections among meanings were discerned during data analysis. The process involved the examination of responses drawn from individual participants and their respective meanings. To aid in affirming validity, member checks were conducted with the participants given the opportunity to review and revise the data memorialized within the interview transcripts (Creswell, 2013).

An essential aim of this study was to provide in-depth findings; hence, data were examined in detail to discover layers of meaning within the participant responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In-depth exploration of the findings began with an examination of the data via line-by-line analysis. Further analysis included the categorization of data to determine thematic findings. Creswell (2009) asserted that descriptions of findings, clear depiction of researcher bias, and member data checks facilitate credibility in a qualitative case study. This current study was designed to follow the Creswell assertion allowing authentic findings to emerge from the data analysis to discover meanings through the participant responses.

Patton (2002) described qualitative methods applied in this study, including the triangulation of data collected via online, open-ended questionnaire and face-to-face, semistructured interviews to gain in-depth, detailed information. These methods aligned
with the Creswell (2013) assertion regarding the imperative nature of substantiating evidence through the collection of qualitative data from varied sources. The purpose of the multiple sources in this study were to test for consistencies and inconsistencies (Patton, 2002). To help maintain the integrity of the individual perceptions shared by the participants, definitions of the inclusive classroom were not provided. Rather, the participants were asked to describe how effective instruction would appear within an ideal inclusive classroom. The study interviews also provided inquiry into the individual skills and success levels of the participants in their inclusive classrooms. Participant responses allowed the collection of various individual perspectives.

Purpose and organization. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. The research question guiding this study asked, “How do GenEd high-school teachers perceive the peripheral factors of inclusive education in terms of shaping their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom?” The methods of data analysis were selected and implemented based upon the approaches necessary to explore all facets of the research question. Data collection was conducted systematically to ensure all participants responded to the same verbatim questions, had equal time to respond, and received the same affect from me toward eliciting open and honest responses. The open-ended questionnaire was administered through an online research software tool and the face-to-face, semistructured interviews were conducted with me as the interviewer.
Data analysis was focused on the study purpose of exploring the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. An additional focus was existing literature exhibiting results dissimilar to the findings of this study. Fuchs (2010) proposed that teacher beliefs surrounding their own capacities to facilitate learning in an inclusive classroom with a diversity of learners are influenced by their viewpoints of barriers to successful inclusive instruction. Such barriers include a lack of support from school administration and SpEd staff, as well as inadequate training. Qualitative case study was the optimal methodological approach to examining this scenario. The school that served as the study site in this qualitative case study is located within a metropolitan city in the central region of Texas. The criteria established for selecting this site was: (a) a public high school providing inclusive models for serving students, (b) an ECHS with a minimum enrollment of 500 students, (c) a sufficient number of inclusive GenEd teachers from whom to recruit an appropriate study sample, and (d) a school principal with interest in learning the poststudy results and in obtaining feedback regarding continuous improvement.

McKenzie (2015) described the more intense responsibilities at the high-school level, which include adherence to federal mandates and district expectations such as benchmarks, student performance on standardized state tests, and preparing students for postsecondary life. Due to these obstacles indigenous to the high-school level, and the limited existing qualitative research within this realm, I designed this qualitative case study to explore in-depth data drawn from the individual perspectives, interpretations, meanings, and insights of GenEd high-school teachers within inclusive classrooms.
Qualitative data analysis enabled the collection of various interpretations of the phenomenon under study and a contribution to existing literature by investigating inclusive education at the study-site high school. The importance of context in this study was grounded in the active instruction of GenEd teachers and their implementation of inclusion models while assuming responsibility for additional duties. Such duties are tracking, supporting, and mentoring students, as stipulated in the protocols established for ECHSs. Data were collected from GenEd teachers of core academics because they are consistently responsible for teaching students with and without disabilities within inclusive classrooms.

**Role of the researcher.** Researchers play a central role in data collection, analysis, and the reporting of findings, taking many steps to accurately deduce meanings and overall understanding directly from the data. In this current study, two data sources were employed—an online questionnaire and face-to-face, semistructured interviews. Focusing on these two sources and corroborating the evidence of facts added reliability to the study findings and the subsequent member checks served to confirm validity.

Data-analysis computer software supported data reduction following the line-by-line coding that ultimately revealed prevalent categories and themes. In-depth meanings became apparent through analysis of the individual participant responses regarding their perceptions, interpretations, meanings, and insights. Patton (2002) asserted that it is necessary for researcher focus to remain on meanings evident within the data throughout collection and analysis because, in qualitative study, it is critical to understand how individuals are affected at levels deeper than statistical analysis can reach. In qualitative study, the researcher is considered an instrument for obtaining in-depth, meticulous
information (Patton, 2002). Therefore, in this current study, researcher fidelity was imperative to adhere to appropriate, consistent procedures in the effort to ascertain participant meanings from the data. This procedural fidelity was achieved because I refrained from allowing personal bias to influence the analysis, but facilitated the emergence of categories, themes, and prevalent meanings.

Contrasting information drawn from interviewees was valued in this study as differing meanings understood by individuals through their experiential lenses as they made interpretations (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I remained cognizant of my own ideas formed by professional experiences with inclusive education and how they related to this study. As a result, my level of awareness was elevated with regard to the need to adhere to the critical focus Patton (2002) recommended on those affected at levels deeper than statistical analysis can reveal. Additional techniques employed to mitigate bias in this study included consistent data-collection procedures across participants, use of two data sources, and the reporting of researcher bias.

I have served in public school districts for 12 years as a SpEd teacher, department chair, and district coordinator of high schools. These positions have introduced experiences affecting my perceptions surrounding the inclusive classroom. Two of the six participants in this study taught academic classes during the time when I served as a SpEd teacher and department chair. These participants were not identified within the study documentation to protect their anonymity. One of these educators taught only senior classes with no SpEd students; hence, my interaction with this individual was highly limited. The other participant served as a math teacher so communication between us transpired solely during professional development I presented and when new-student
accommodation sheets were delivered and discussed. I never served in a supervisory role to these participants and overall interaction was minimal. I have no personal or professional history with these teachers that would affect the data collected in this study.

An assumption in this study was, because the participants were teaching in public education, they had likely either observed or experienced change in various areas of teaching such as with teaching-strategy expectations, grading protocols, curriculum, state assessments, leadership, district expectations, and/or federal mandates. Fuchs (2010) asserted that peripheral factors of the inclusive classroom include adequate training, administrative and SpEd support, necessary resources, and available time for collaboration and planning. Another assumption prior to this study was that the participating teachers possessed malleable attitudes and superlative resourcefulness in acquiring skills for the effective delivery of instruction within inclusive classrooms, coupled with high levels of SE with regard to the success of their instruction. However, this researcher bias was not considered as input during data collection and analysis to allow the participant perceptions to dominate. The findings from the data did not align with any bias held by me.

Patton (2002) cautioned that, during data collection, researchers must maintain objective listening and sensitivity and prohibit personal perspectives from affecting field procedures, analysis of the data, and the recorded findings. Techniques for achieving these objectives involve face-to-face, semistructured interviews conducted by an astute observer acclimated to detecting nonverbal cues and establishing interviewer-interviewee interaction (Patton, 2002). In alignment with the Patton guidance, all of the recorded interviews conducted in this study were transcribed verbatim. All questions were posed
to all participants in the same verbiage and in the same order. Field procedures were performed in a consistent manner across all data sources.

Each interview question was scrutinized and a pilot study was conducted to ensure the questions were authentically open ended to elicit participant responses in their own words rather than leading interviewees into constrained answers (Patton, 2002). The interview protocol was designed specifically for this study and the questions were derived from knowledge gained in an exhaustive review of related literature with the intent to answer the research question. The originally crafted questions (see Appendix B) did not require revision following the pilot study. Another technique integral to the credibility of the data analysis was member checking; therefore, the participants in this qualitative study verified their intended words and meanings from their respective interview transcriptions. Implementing these techniques contributed to ensuring credibility of the study data.

Researcher bias was unavoidable in this study due to my own perspectives derived from professional experience in SpEd. Additionally, the same experiences inspired this investigation into the perceptions of GenEd teachers within the inclusive realm of education where SpEd and GenEd learners coexist within the same classroom. I had limited exposure to the perspectives of other SpEd teachers and sought to gain knowledge of the views of GenEd teachers serving all students and the factors shaping their SE within inclusive classrooms.
**Description of the Sample**

The sample in this study was composed of six GenEd high-school teachers. This sample size was selected to include teachers of all four core academic areas at the metropolitan ECHS participating in this study. For purposes of this research, the term *students with disabilities* is defined as students who are educated within the GenEd setting while utilizing the provisions outlined within their IEPs. The high-school level was selected because of the added challenges teachers experience at this level, as well as the gap in qualitative literature related to teacher-perceived peripheral factors of their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom.

Teachers within ECHSs are responsible for providing additional tracking, support, and mentoring of students who are not likely to attend college without the opportunities and support of these schools. Research into the GenEd teachers of inclusive classrooms within ECHSs is necessary because this particular type of school is not represented in literature addressing inclusive education. In this current research, the qualitative case-study methodology was applied to explore the in-depth subjective perspectives of the sample of GenEd high-school teachers. Quantitative research was not conducted, and although this method would yield greater reliability and increase the likelihood of generalizable findings, it would not have met the goal behind this study, which was to explore in-depth data drawn from GenEd high-school teachers. The stratified, purposeful sampling method was the design strategy employed due to the particular group of individuals under study (Patton, 2002).
**Demographics.** The ethnicities/nationalities of the participants in this case study closely mirrored those depicted on the targeted enrollment table provided in Appendix C and submitted to the Institutional Review Board. No bias was expected related to the method of recruitment. The sample included a minimum of one teacher from each core academic area (see Table 1) to help ensure the collection of viewpoints from all academic areas. Thus, if teacher perspectives were influenced by their academic-department experiences, the diversity in core subjects would provide a heterogeneous set of viewpoints.

**Table 1**

*Classes Taught by the Study Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General-education teacher</th>
<th>Core subject</th>
<th>Inclusive classes</th>
<th>In-class special-education support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coteacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recruitment. The study site in this research was an ECHS within a metropolitan city located in the central region of Texas. The total teacher population of the school was 64 educators, 23 of whom met the criteria for participation in this study as teachers of core academic subjects within inclusive classes. Students within inclusive classrooms at the study-site school were taught using one of the following three approaches:

1. One of five coteaching arrangements with two certified teachers within the classroom at all times—one GenEd and one SpEd.
2. A SpEd paraprofessional with the GenEd classes for all or part of the class time.
3. A GenEd educator teaching students independently with modifications and accommodations.

Teachers were qualified to participate in this study if they currently taught a minimum of one inclusive-education section composed of students with and without disabilities.

Invitations to participate in this study were initially e-mailed to 16 teachers meeting the study criteria. Stratified, purposeful sampling was implemented because the target sample was limited to GenEd teachers of core content who taught within inclusive classrooms. The purpose of inviting only 16 of the 23 qualified candidates was to reach the target sample of six participants. Each of the 23 had an equal chance of being chosen because selection was based solely upon the stated criteria. This selection procedure ensured a minimum of one GenEd teacher from each of the core academic subjects, which was sufficient for data saturation (Patton, 2002). Responses from the initial recruitment e-mail yielded two declines with no participants. I subsequently received permission to deliver a brief presentation to teachers attending professional-learning-
community (PLC) meetings to introduce the nature and value of the research. The academic director and principal permitted the provision of $20 gift cards to those willing to participate in the research. Responses from the presentations were positive and six teachers expressed an interest in volunteering for the study; 11 asked questions pertaining to the research.

Another eight invitations to participate in this study were distributed; five were included in the original 16 recruits. One teacher reported not opening her invitation because she had volunteered to participate following my presentation. Three of the invitations were sent to potential participants who had expressed interest in the study after hearing the presentation. To meet the sample-size criterion, two additional invitations were distributed to teachers who had also expressed interest in participating in the study during the presentation. After three attempts, the sample-size goal of six GenEd inclusive teachers was reached. Age-group, gender, and experience were not considerations for participation in this study because these factors are not deemed pertinent to this research. No participants dropped from the study after volunteering and all completed their surveys, interviews, and member checks.

Research Methodology and Analysis

The methodology selected for this study was a qualitative descriptive case study. The aim was to investigate the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. Data were collected by two sources—an online questionnaire and face-to-face, semistructured interviews. The participants provided detailed descriptions of their perceptions surrounding the peripheral factors of
inclusive education. The questions presented to participants in the online, open-ended questionnaire and face-to-face, semistructured interviews were designed specifically for this study. Each query pertained directly to the overarching research question and the interview protocol was pilot tested to verify the applicability of each question to the focus of the study. The pilot study found no lack of validity and the protocol was deemed appropriate for eliciting the desired in-depth data.

Creswell (2013) explained the case-study approach as a specific analysis aimed at examining a dilemma, whereby the case itself exposes the complicated intricacies of the phenomenon under study. In the current case study, the methods implemented for collecting data were aimed at obtaining in-depth, precise perceptions from the participating GenEd teachers and exploring themes that emerged during the analysis process. The methods included an online, open-ended questionnaire and face-to-face, semistructured interviews, which are supported by the Creswell assertion surrounding the imperative nature of substantiating evidence through the provision of data from varied sources to validate the qualitative data. The in-depth, personal, authentic perceptions of the participants regarding the peripheral factors of inclusive education were examined through their questionnaire and interview responses.

Existing related literature provided varied knowledge related to the factors shaping teacher SE related to their instruction delivery within the inclusive setting; training was one peripheral factor addressed by several scholars (Alfaro et al., 2015; Boyle et al., 2013; Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Fuchs, 2010; McKenzie, 2015). Another peripheral factor found by other researchers to affect the SE of GenEd inclusive teachers involved educator perceptions of the time provision to collaborate with
SpEd staff (Caskey, 2008; McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). This included adequate time for planning and common planning times between GenEd teachers and coteachers, as well as between GenEd teachers and SpEd case managers.

For purposes of this study, peripheral factors include influences on inclusive education in the form of constraints within the situational, physical, or social realms (Bandura, 2012). Researchers have addressed such factors as the difficulty GenEd teachers have exhibited with coteaching (Boyle et al., 2013; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010). Simmons and Magiera (2007) noted the greater number of demands on secondary-level educators, which equate to constraints for GenEd inclusive teachers. This current study addresses the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. This topic, applied to the type of school setting within this research, represents a gap in existing literature.

Data analysis in this study was focused on the connection between the teacher-perceived peripheral factors of inclusive education and teacher SE as it relates to effective instruction within these classrooms. Bandura (1993) asserted that the classroom is significantly affected by teacher SE, which influences the emotional, cognitive, and motivational aspects of student learning. GenEd teachers have reported a list of changes needed in peripheral factors for improvement in inclusive education. These changes include: (a) additional assistants within the classroom; (b) time allocated for collaboration with SpEd counterparts; (c) additional professional development; and (d) increased support from administration in areas such as available planning time, student-to-teacher class ratios, teacher responsibilities, and developing a school culture embracing inclusion.
McKenzie (2015) noted that teachers within inclusive classrooms generally struggle with facilitating adequate learning for students with disabilities. Other factors including collaboration and training can potentially influence success or failure with the implementation of inclusive tasks. The responsibilities of GenEd teachers include adherence to federal mandates and district expectations specific to the high-school level such as providing intensive differentiated instruction to reach students with and without disabilities, handling disciplinary issues, the provision of accommodations, and monitoring academic progress (Cox, 2016).

The methodological strategies used for data analysis in this study included thematic synthesis (i.e., sorting raw data), line-by-line coding of text, the development of categories and themes, and the generation of analytical themes (Thomas & Harden, 2008). After the raw data were collected and the study interviews recorded, the interview data were transcribed and imported into computer software that performed the initial coding with manually entered searches. Data were sorted into the spreadsheet according to questions targeting specific components of the overall research question such as perceived peripheral factors, teacher SE related to successful instruction within the inclusive classroom, and explicit teacher expressions of connections between these components. Data were subsequently coded line by line by terms and phrases. As categories appeared within the data, themes emerged through the progression of analysis. In analyzing the categories and further reducing the raw data, categories were substantiated by themes addressing the research question.
Summary of the Findings

The results of this case study revealed the following four categories derived from participant responses to the online, open-ended questionnaire and face-to-face, semistructured interviews: time constraints, support, communication, and training/knowledge. Data were discussed in terms of the connection between the perceived peripheral factors of inclusive education and teacher SE regarding successful instruction delivery within the inclusive classroom. Themes developed from the individual expressions of the participants indicated their perspectives based upon their own experiences. Similarities related to the four categories were revealed in the participant responses. Participant similarities were also reflected in their perceptions related to the themes; however, the reason behind the similarities was not discerned.

All six participants described time constraints as causing difficulty with serving students within the inclusive classroom in response to Item 8 of the online questionnaire. This item instructed, “Describe how factors outside the inclusive classroom negatively affect your confidence in your ability to achieve effective instruction in the inclusive classroom.” Teachers 1, 2, 3, and 5 explicitly conveyed these constraints as affecting their SE related to instructional effectiveness. Teacher 1 stated, “More time with students could actively influence my confidence and my overall success.” Teacher 2 explained, “Time constraints for planning and time for individualizing assignments, as much as I would like to, negatively affects my confidence.” In their study interviews, Teachers 1, 2, 3, and 5 each named three peripheral factors affecting their confidence in effectuating instructional success. Table 2 displays the related categories.
The interview protocol and questionnaire in this case study were presented to the participating GenEd teachers in the same sequence—the online questionnaire was completed first, followed by the study interview 2 weeks later. Categories were determined initially through line-by-line analysis, followed by coding and sorting. In addition to further manual analysis of the interview transcription and questionnaire responses, computer software facilitated further data reduction revealing prevalent themes. The study questionnaire asked respondents for the subjects they taught within the inclusive classroom setting. The instrument also asked how the teachers felt with regard to educating students with and without disabilities concurrently within the same class, how prepared they were for teaching a diverse population of learners, and how particular factors influenced their effectiveness within such a setting. Question 2 from the instrument asked, “How do you feel about your effectiveness in educating students who are predominantly from minority cultures when the cultures differ from your own?”
Responses to this question were included in analysis because they would not add value to answering the research question.

The study participants openly responded to questionnaire items asking for descriptions of their feelings surrounding multifaceted aspects of teaching students with diverse learning abilities and accommodation needs within their inclusive classrooms. Question 1 asked, “What subjects are you teaching where there are students with and without disabilities learning together in your classes?” This question was not posed for use in data analysis, but rather, the related data were collected to show that the sample was composed of a minimum of one GenEd teacher of each core academic area. Items 4 and 5 addressed their feelings on the learning diversity of students within inclusive classrooms, as well as their own level of preparedness for delivering effective instruction within this setting. Question 4 asked, “How prepared are you to successfully teach in the inclusive GenEd classroom, considering the learning diversity of students?” Question 5 asked, “What are your thoughts concerning how particular factors influence the overall effectiveness in the inclusive GenEd setting?” Responses to these questions were similar among the participants.

The predominant category that emerged throughout data analysis was time constraints. Lack of available time for planning and collaboration was expressed by three participants (i.e., Teachers 2, 3, and 4) as affecting their preparedness for teaching within inclusive classrooms. Teacher 2 stated, “Having enough time to design instruction that’s different for each individual student and ability needing this can be almost impossible at the moment.” Teacher 3 explained, “We have the planning time, but I’m not sure we have enough to be effective. It’s very difficult when you have five kids with five different
disabilities to talk about each one in a planning time.” Teacher 4 asserted, “I need extra time for planning. We need 4 days per week for students and 1 day per week for planning. It takes so much thinking. Coming up with more ways to explain things different and better takes time.” Five participants communicated how time constraints affect their overall effectiveness within the inclusive classroom. Teacher 6 addressed the issue as problematic; however, he did not link such constraints to any loss in effectiveness.

The collective interview responses indicate time constraint as the most prevalent concern, with multiple themes shaping participant SE regarding successful instruction within the inclusive classroom. Data drawn during the face-to-face, open-ended interviews substantiated this finding. Time constraint was cited twice as often as support, the latter of which was the second greatest peripheral factor of concern for the participants. The prevalence of categories was revealed by coding the data and evaluating meanings as themes emerged.

Interview Question 12 asked, “What are your ideas about existing factors that actively influence your success in the inclusive classroom?” Responses were predominantly focused on the category of time constraints. The participants expressed their views on the importance of adequate time for: (a) making up lost instruction time due to students pulled from class; and (b) providing quality instruction inclusive of adjusting instructional pace, (c) providing students individual support, and (d) sufficient planning and collaboration. All teachers comprising the study sample answered Question 12 by emphasizing the aspect of time constraint. Not only did they provide their views,
but each respondent also provided insight into plausible solutions or ideas for improvement based upon their experience.

**Presentation of Data and Results**

Formulation of the qualitative questions presented through the study instrument and face-to-face interviews provided participants with prompts from which to freely express their individual perspectives, feelings, and interpretations of the inclusive-education environment. The questions encouraged their focus on the peripheral factors of this setting. Upon completion of data collection, the recorded interviews were transcribed and the data added to that collected by the questionnaire. Categories and themes emerged through the line-by-line coding, sorting, and data-reduction techniques. The four prevalent categories pertained to participant perceptions of the peripheral factors of inclusive education (see Table 3).

**Time constraints.** Data analysis revealed that the teachers participating in this study perceive a lack of adequate time as the prevailing peripheral factor affecting success within their inclusive classrooms. This factor served as a complex primary category composed of several themes shaping teacher SE related to successful instruction within the inclusive classroom. During the early stages of the analytical process, a word count and line-by-line analysis indicated that time constraints were cited by participants nearly five times as often as the least pervasive of the four themes, which was training/knowledge.

The study participants described available time in terms of necessity and how time constraints are experienced as deficits in their teaching. Time is needed for many facets of effective education that are beyond simply instruction. One participant broadly
Table 3

*Categories and Themes From the Data Collection*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Applicable themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Time constraints              | Students pulled from class  
Instruction pace and individual support  
Planning and collaboration  
Meeting expectations |
| Support                       | Administration  
Classroom  
Case manager |
| Communication                 | Colleagues  
Parents  
Students |
| Training/Knowledge            | Training depth and complexity  
Special-education strategies  
Quality support for the inclusive classroom |

stated, “I try to never have any wasted time; time is something we don’t have enough of.”

Teachers 1, 2, and 4 expressed a desire to gain bilingual skills due to the perceived benefit to their students; however, all three expressed a lack of time for such training.

Teacher 5 confided,

I already take a lot of my personal time to give my students the best instruction I can to facilitate their success. I, and my counterparts, try to make ourselves as available as possible for the students, but we don’t get paid for that extra time that we spend with those students.

Time constraints emerged as an overarching category requiring further data reduction into themes during data analysis. The themes drawn from the data pertaining to time were: (a) students pulled from class, (b) instruction pace and individual student
support, (c) planning and collaboration, and (d) meeting expectations (see Table 3). The most prevalent theme within the participant responses involved students pulled from class for various reasons. Of the six teachers comprising the study sample, all highlighted the negative impact on instruction from students being pulled from class. Teacher 5 expounded on this factor in the following manner:

Kids get pulled for all kinds of things, whether it’s pulling students for assemblies or other reasons. Sometimes it’s a campus-wide thing or it’s a whole grade-level thing. The fact is, when we lose time with students, it makes me feel like my attempts to give them quality instruction will be futile, even when I give my best, because of lost time and instruction. How am I going to get that one class caught up that missed an entire period? We have an instructional calendar, and we plan everything out to the day, so kids being pulled out affects our regular planning and getting through our material; it decreases the effectiveness in the classroom. When our effectiveness is lessened, it especially makes a greater hardship in inclusive classes where we have kids who already need the extra time as it is.

The second most predominant theme within the category of time constraints involved instructional pacing and individual support. This is where two themes interconnected. Teacher SE with regard to effective instruction is shaped by students pulled from class, and the effect of students missing instructional content is linked with the time needed for instructional pacing and individual student support.

District curriculum and campus-based academic calendars determine the order and pace of teaching the required state standards known as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, which are taught by subject and also influence teacher SE with
regard to successful instruction within inclusive classrooms. Perceptions of instructional content and pacing were expressed by Teacher 4 in the following interview excerpt: “I need time to slow down, but I don’t have enough time. I will get further behind, and my effectiveness will suffer more if I slow down like the students need me to.” Pacing is an instructional technique to help ensure teachers cover all knowledge and skills required by the state-approved curriculum. The participants in this study perceive the rigor and magnitude of material to be covered, combined with the limited available time, as an obstacle for effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. Teacher 2 provided her perspective of individual student support by stating, “I don’t have enough time to design and provide instruction that’s different for individual students who need it. I have the skill, but my ability doesn’t matter because I know it is almost impossible at the moment.” Trepidation from the lack of available time for adjustments to instructional pace and individual student support was expressed by five of the six study participants.

Planning and collaboration emerged as a collective theme within the time-constraints category and yielded variable data. The study-site school supports PLCs for teacher collaboration on planning and other shared issues; however, the educators participating in this study expressed mixed perceptions regarding their effectiveness. Teacher 6 described the meetings as not worth the time expended, and Teacher 2 described inconsistency in the available time to collaborate at the level needed for inclusive education. Conversely, Teachers 1, 3, 4, and 5 found the time allotted for PLC to be not only appropriate but valuable. Teacher 5 noted that she, her coteacher, and a fellow GenEd teacher all planned together during PLC meetings. She succinctly stated,
“We are able to use the time to have meaningful collaboration.” Consequently, varied perceptions are evident with regard to this subtheme.

The last theme revealed through data analysis related to the category of time constraints was meeting expectations. GenEd teachers of inclusive classrooms are held accountable for all GenEd responsibilities in addition to those unique to the inclusive classroom including meeting the needs of students with disabilities concurrently with those of nondisabled students. Teachers are directly responsible for both campus directives and district instructions. The majority of the study participants expressed positive regard for campus and district intentions, referring to best practices as desired skills they work to possess and implement. Teacher 5 articulated sentiments closely mirroring those of the majority of the study sample, stating,

There are so many well-meaning policies that “come down the pipe” from campus administration and [the] district level. They have a message: “We want you to work well with your partners and have PLC time and collaborate with your colleagues and go to the professional development,” but this is all still very challenging to fit it all in with everything else. This all lowers my belief in me, as far as being able to accomplish what I am here for.

While variability exists in participant perspectives regarding meeting the expectations of both the campus and district, one half of the study sample communicated their satisfaction with common campus goals and spoke of being pleased with the successes achieved from all stakeholders striving for the same outcomes.
**Teacher support.** The data collected in this study revealed similarities and differences among participant perspectives of the support category and in its themes. Interview Item 10 instructed, “Explain how the support you receive from various campus staff affects your feelings toward effective instruction.” Five of the six participants responded positively regarding the administrative theme within this support category. Teacher 3 explained, “The administration here knows what’s going on in our classrooms, and they have positive and constructive feedback. My confidence is affected by my administrator’s input in a positive way. It’s about their involvement and approach that matters so much.” Teacher 5 stated, “It makes me feel good that we are all focused on the students; I have good support from administration, and that is really helpful. Similarly, Teacher 1 expressed,

It’s not only that I receive support that makes my feelings positive toward my instruction, but it’s the amount of support from my administration that is so positive. At this school and from the district level, support is given that makes a difference in how I feel about my position and my confidence in my effectiveness in my inclusive class.

Response similarities were also noted within the realm of support as it pertains to inclusive education. With the exception of one outlier, the study participants felt supported overall. One extreme variation to this response was expressed by Teacher 6. The following response from Teacher 4 represents the perceptions of the majority of the study sample:

Support at this school is good; it’s very good. I always get the support even when I talk to other teachers. The communication has a positive effect on me; I feel
supported. This positively affects my ability to provide the effective instruction my students need from me.

The participants noted the themes of support that most affect their instruction and some expressed their perceptions of how their ability is affected. Three themes that emerged from within the support category during data analysis are administration, classroom, and case management.

Administrative support was expressed by the study participants in terms of administrator accessibility and communication and facilitation of teacher needs. The administrative team at the study-site school was described by participants as accessible. Teacher 2 stated, “When I reach out to campus administration, I get responses. Whenever I have student-centered concerns, they are addressed, and that makes me feel supported.” Participant 5 expounded on this issue in the following interview excerpt:

Administration at this school is very supportive, they “pop in” during our PLC meetings and that’s always helpful to us; it’s very much a good thing. Sometimes they confirm what we’re doing, and other times it’s like, “Oh, that’s something I hadn’t thought about.” We’ve talked among ourselves, and their active input raises our confidence and our capacity toward best practice. It’s very much a good thing.

Administrative support was perceived by the study participants as having the most positive impact of all the support themes on inclusive teaching. Teacher 4 noted, “They also give us ideas and different ways to do activities.” Five of the six interviewees had positive comments regarding the support they received from the study-site administrative
team. However, an opposing perspective was expressed by Teacher 6 in the following manner.

I’ve decided, since our administration has been out of the classroom long enough to not to know how to teach anymore and I’m still in here, I’m going to do it my way. I feel good about the fact that I’m covering the information. I don’t let negative stuff keep me from doing what I want to do. It tends to cause me to think negatively sometimes, but I sure don’t let it affect my confidence.

In-class support was defined by participants similarly to their descriptions of the administrative theme, in terms of their perceptions surrounding how this factor influences inclusive instruction. Their experience of in-class support was primarily positive with a single exception. Teacher 6 described his coteacher as superfluous to his instruction and unneeded. The balance of the interviewees were satisfied with the quality of the coteaching staff, the cooperative effort, and the overall benefits of having a coteacher within their inclusive classrooms. However, although the majority of the data meeting this subtheme were positive, three of the six participants stipulated areas requiring improvement. Teacher 3 stated,

The current coteacher assisting in my inclusion classes definitely helps my feelings about actually succeeding at effective inclusion because he is an effective inclusion SpEd staff. A lot of TAs [teaching assistants] are just another body in the room, and a lot of us who are inclusion teachers are not told what the SpEd staff are supposed to do, so we don’t know what purposes they are serving and what they should be doing. This year is much better though.
Teachers 4 and 5 also affirmed their coteachers and how quality, in-class support positively affects their SE with regard to instruction within their inclusive classrooms. The interviewees expressed concern over the need for clarification regarding strategies to most effectively reach students, paraprofessional responsibilities in class, and the identification of designated case managers for their students.

The case-management theme emerged through repeated reduction of the data during the analysis process. One half of the total study sample did not specifically address case management by name in their interviews; however, while they did not use the term, the same concerns were expressed pertaining to case-manager support. Teachers 2, 3, and 4 described this subtheme, provided sufficient detail surrounding related concerns, and cited the case manager as the responsible individual from whom certain services are needed. In the context of the interview data collected from all three participants who addressed case management, the prevalent concern was a perception of case management as inaccessible. Therefore, Teachers 2, 3, and 4 did not identify this role as viable SpEd support. The participants exhibited little faith in the knowledge of case managers and their ability to answer the in-depth questions of GenEd teachers. Teacher 2 explained her concerns, which effectively encapsulated the case-management concerns of all three of these participants. She stated,

I feel like some SpEd support is there if I reach out. However, I’m not sure who to ask since case management seems ambiguous and that SpEd person for a student is unknown to most of us in the classrooms. I’m not even sure the case manager is able to answer my specific questions. I feel like there is one level of support in the classroom, and there needs to be a deeper level of support that I
haven’t been able to discover. It makes me feel like it will be very difficult to ever achieve my ideal instruction for my students in my inclusive classes without a higher level of support.

Communication. Themes of communication that emerged through data analysis involved case managers, parents, students, and teacher colleagues. The majority of the study participants perceive communication between colleagues and school administration as positive; however, communication between GenEd teachers and case managers was described as deficient in feasibility for teachers. Another important line of communication addressed by the study sample concerned parents and students, which was described as constrained by time. The quality and effect of teacher communication with colleagues was discussed by five of the six interviewees with various individualized terms such as positive, supportive, responsive, and effective. Teacher 4 stated, “The communication at this school has a positive effect on me; I feel supported and it positively affects my ability to teach well.” Teacher 5 provided greater detail by asserting, “Communication and collaboration are very good at this school. We have PLCs where there is collaboration as a regular part of our practice to achieve what is best for students, and we communicate well with each other.”

As discovered during data analysis of the support category and noted under the case-management subtheme, communication between GenEd teachers and case managers was impeded. Three teachers did not know who the case managers were for students served by SpEd within their inclusive classrooms. According to Teacher 3,

As far as the communication, we don’t even have a way to check on who the case managers are right now, as far as I know. I would certainly say more
communication and collaboration is needed between the teachers and the case managers; now, there is none.

Impaired communication with SpEd personnel described by the study participants was isolated to that occurring between the GenEd classroom teachers and case managers. The interviewees reported active communication with coteachers and paraprofessionals, but limited time during this interaction. Communication with parents and students was also perceived by the respondents as hindered by lack of available time. Teachers 1, 2, 4, and 5 expressed the importance of dialogue with parents, but none referenced this facet of communication as having a direct effect on their confidence or instructional effectiveness. Effective learning involves effective communication with students. Teacher 5 stated, “Sometimes, the biggest problem is trying to have effective communication with the kids, [letting] them know what they’re doing and how to do it and answering those questions.” From the perspectives of the study participants, communication refers to the necessary daily dialogue that is frequently impossible during class time. Students attending inclusive classrooms typically have more significant needs requiring a greater amount of one-on-one communication.

**Training/knowledge.** The participants in this study demonstrated significant interest in increasing their knowledge base in areas that would benefit students within their inclusive classrooms. All six of the study sample expressed interest in greater learning surrounding various aspects that would increase their effectiveness in instruction and student learning. Three themes discerned through data analysis and related to training are the depth and complexity of training, SpEd strategies, and quality support for the inclusive classroom. *Leveled training* was emphasized by Teacher 2 during the
discussion related to her perception of a needed training program that is tiered by
difficulty level at the study-site school. She iterated what four other teachers had
described regarding their experiences of repeated professional development that reflected
no increase in complexity or depth. She explained her shared perception of the training
by stating, “The training is not tiered; it’s repeating the basic level. I always feel like,
‘How can we go deeper? How can we go to the next level? What else can we get from
that?’”

With regard to SpEd strategies, the study participants expressed lacking the SpEd
knowledge and strategies to work effectively with disabled students. Five of the six
interviewees expressed a desire for additional training within this realm of knowledge.
Teacher 3 noted that the information he needed was available through his coteacher;
however, the collective view is exemplified in the following comments contributed by
Teacher 2:

We need knowledge on how to work with our kids with disabilities. We need
knowledge on strategies. PD [professional development] needs to be provided
according to level and according to high populations. Going into the
individualized ideas could help teachers improve. Using SpEd strategies could
also be of help. Having a greater knowledge of what works best for each ability
would help. Our administration is good about supporting and providing any
training needed to benefit students at this school; I guess we really need to be sure
this concern is expressed to them.

In addition to training needs for GenEd inclusive teachers, Teachers 2 and 3
highlighted the need for increased quality in SpEd in-class support within the inclusive
GenEd setting. Although only two participants explicitly described SpEd in-class support as, at times, substandard, a third participant regarded such support as of no value. Teacher 3 stated,

Quality of support matters. Just because you have somebody in there, doesn’t mean it’s going to go well or that it helps. I’ve had people say, “But you have support,” and I say, “Can I get support that actually helps?” We need quality support that is trained for inclusion classrooms.

Teacher 4 responded similarly, commenting, “Quality is important—very important. Just someone in the room doesn’t necessarily mean support.” While the study participants were primarily satisfied with their coteaching counterparts, SpEd teachers and paraprofessionals who served as in-class assistance were perceived somewhat negatively by three of the six interviewees.

Chapter 4 Summary

The findings of this qualitative case study answer the following research question: “How do GenEd high-school teachers perceive the peripheral factors of inclusive education in terms of shaping their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom?” The research involves GenEd inclusive high-school teachers at a specific type of facility known as an ECHS. Responses to the study questionnaire and face-to-face interviews provided insight into the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom.

Four categories emerged from the raw data collected in this research—time constraints, support, communication, and training/knowledge. Through examination of
these categories via sorting, coding, word counts, and repeated data reduction, themes were revealed within each category (see Table 2). The participants expressed their most significant challenges with time constraints, which was the most pervasive of all the categories. The participants openly shared their perceptions, feelings, and interpretations. Aspects of the categories and themes were verified as the participants frequently expressed shared concerns and points of discussion regarding peripheral factors of the inclusive classroom and effective instruction. Analysis was conducted on all of the in-depth data collected. The two sources of data—the online questionnaire and face-to-face interviews—were verified in relation to consistent facts of value to the study. Member checks of the interview transcripts were conducted, adding credibility and validity to the study findings.

The methodology selected for this research was qualitative, descriptive case study. In-depth questions probed the confidence levels of the participating teachers and how they view the peripheral factors influential to their beliefs in their own instructional abilities. A discussion of meanings and connections embedded within the findings will be presented in Chapter 5. The meanings derived from the data are expounded upon and the results will be highlighted in terms of existing literature depicting similar or contrasting outcomes. The discussion in Chapter 5 will also inform as to the manner in which this study answered the research question and the contribution of the findings to existing knowledge and scholarly literature.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

In this chapter, a discussion of the findings from this qualitative case study will be presented. The research question that guided this study asked, “How do GenEd high-school teachers perceive the peripheral factors of inclusive education in terms of shaping their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom?” The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore these perceptions. Participants included only GenEd high-school teachers who taught core academic classes within the study-site school and within inclusive class settings. I collected and analyzed data to determine how the perceptions of these teachers shaped their confidence in effectuating successful teaching in the inclusive classroom. The participants provided subjective interpretations, meanings, and insights regarding inclusive education. Students with and without disabilities at the study-site school received concurrent instruction from the participating GenEd teachers at an ECHS within a metropolitan district located in the central region of Texas.

The qualitative, descriptive case-study methodology was chosen to guide how data in this study were collected, processed, and subsequently analyzed. Both connections and contrasting information emerged in reference to the existing literature reviewed and demonstrated how the findings apply to the community of practice. The participant interpretations, meanings, and insights are discussed in detail, and they provided a sufficient in-depth understanding of their perspectives surrounding the perceived peripheral factors of inclusive education. I formulated the study questionnaire and interview protocol to elicit the subjective responses needed in order to explain the
perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom (see Appendices A and B). A pilot study was conducted prior to the onset of the primary research to field test the questions for applicability to the research question and to ensure each question elicited the desired data. The pilot study responses proved to be aligned with the purpose of the study, as well as the overarching research question.

Pivotal facets of the data-collection process included researcher focus on the individual responses of participants on the online, open-ended questionnaire. Recordings, transcription, attentive listening, member checks, and adherence to confidentiality were employed in the face-to-face, semistructured interviews, allowing participants to speak freely. Attentive listening was important in order to obtain in-depth answers to the interview questions aligned with the focus of the study. The purpose of the research was to explore the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom.

The premise for this study was derived from conclusions reported within existing literature regarding the peripheral factors of inclusive education and teacher SE. Berry (2010) found commonalities among GenEd teachers with regard to this twofold topic area and the participants in her study provided a list of needed changes in the peripheral factors positively shaping teacher SE related to inclusive education. The changes included: (a) additional assistants within the classroom; (b) available time for collaboration with SpEd counterparts; (c) additional professional development; and
increased support from administration in areas such as planning time, number of students per class, teacher responsibilities, and developing a school culture embracing inclusion. Bandura (1993) described teacher SE as the personal belief of educators in their own ability to achieve desired outcomes for the students within their classrooms. The lens through which GenEd teachers were viewed in this current study was rooted in the seminal work of this major researcher. For purposes of this study, peripheral factors pertained to influences on inclusive education, coupled with the Bandura (2012) description of these factors as constraints within situational, physical, and social realms.

Summary of the Results

This qualitative case study examined the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. In-depth participant perceptions of these factors were collected from GenEd high-school teachers of inclusive classrooms at an ECHS located within a central-Texas metropolitan school. This teacher population experiences greater demands than educators at other grade levels. Researchers have suggested that high-school GenEd teachers experience increased expectations associated with standardized state assessments, preparing students for postsecondary life, teaching intense courses, and student exam outcomes (McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). While this current study did not include reviews of literature aimed at the SE of GenEd inclusive teachers at the elementary- or middle-school levels, several studies highlighted the increased challenges for teachers at the high-school level (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007; Van Reusen et al., 2001). These heightened challenges spurred the topic
selection for this current study focused on high-school GenEd teachers within the inclusive classroom.

The findings from this study regarding time constraints are similar to results reported within existing related literature, in that such constraints were self-reported by GenEd inclusive teachers as problematic. Researchers of past studies have described GenEd teachers as primarily concerned with insufficient time for collaboration with their SpEd counterparts (McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007; Van Reusen et al., 2001). The findings of this present study reveal GenEd teachers within the study-site school experience time constraints across various facets of their work including planning, individual student instruction, collaboration with colleagues, and communication with students and parents. While investigators have reported teacher time constraints restricting collaborative practices, this current study revealed a wider range of problematic aspects related to such constraints. Teacher attitudes and SE related to the inclusive classroom are also affected by inadequate time allocated for communication with SpEd colleagues (Caskey, 2008; McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007).

The most prevalent peripheral factors reported by GenEd teachers sampled within existing literature, with the exception of time constraints, are administrative support and training related to the inclusive classroom (Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010). While the findings in this current study indicate training as a concern to the sampled GenEd teachers, data analysis revealed administrative support as a prevalent factor in shaping the SE of this teacher population, as it relates to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. The distinction between findings reported in past literature and those of this current study was the self-reported positive support that increased teacher confidence in
their own ability to deliver effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. The current study was meaningful in its purpose and revealed facets of time constraints and administrative support that varied from existing literature. Transferability is of concern in qualitative study, and the specific type of school in this research represents an outlier. Therefore, potential transferability of the findings to similar student populations is of interest among administrators of ECHS campuses.

The participating school in this study is an ECHS, and the focus of the research is on the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. No new studies have been published within the United States since the onset of this current research with its specific focus. However, recent literature has presented a similar focus since the conception of this current study, addressing teacher SE related to student engagement (Shoulders & Krei, 2016). Shoulders and Krei (2016) explored the effects of specific factors on teacher SE within rural-Indiana secondary schools. Perceptions were examined between GenEd and SpEd teachers regarding the prediction of student engagement within the inclusive classroom. The findings of the Shoulders and Krei study indicated that extensive professional development had largely shaped the positive perceptions of the participating teachers regarding their SE regarding effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. Time constraints was the only peripheral factor the research had in common with those addressed in the current study.

**Discussion of the Results**

The results of this current qualitative case study reveal four categories and 13 corresponding themes, which collectively contributed to answering the research question.
The categories are time constraints, support, communication, and training/knowledge. The GenEd teachers participating in this study expressed the need for additional time to sufficiently accomplish planning, collaboration, training, and instruction, none of which are completed in isolation. Time constraints were most often noted during the data collection of this study, and the following related themes emerged: students being pulled from class, needed adjustment to the pace of instruction, necessary individual student support, planning and collaboration, and meeting significant expectations. Teacher 5 articulated her following perspectives of three time-constraint themes, which echoed those of the balance of the study sample:

Students are pulled for all sorts of activities, events, and testing. It’s hard to figure out how to get students caught up, especially for the ones that need the extra help to try to keep up with the other students. We lose a “big chunk” of time when students are pulled for assemblies and testing and other things. Sometimes, when we’re trying to get them caught up, students get tired, and that’s how I feel. Collaboration is another one; I need time for collaboration with the coteacher. That is the main thing. Time for extra planning is also needed. We follow the district timelines, but I need time to slow down the pace sometimes. I want to give my students individual time, but there’s no time in the day, and many students don’t want to stay after school. I guess, all of these issues are really just one issue—we need more time. I don’t feel like I can be a successful teacher when I don’t have enough time to do what’s best for my students.

Although the participating GenEd teachers of inclusive classes considered time constraints the most significant factor shaping their SE regarding effective instruction,
they did not fault the administrative team for this dilemma. Campus administration makes the decisions regarding master scheduling, collaborative planning time, assemblies, and other activities that cause students to be pulled from class; however, five of the six participants comprising the study sample verbalized positive regard for the support extended by campus administrators. Support was cited by one half of the participants as directly shaping self-confidence toward achieving effective instruction, and two participants expressed that campus administrative support is helpful toward this end. With the exception of one teacher, all of the participants mentioned an aspect of administrative support that resulted in a positive viewpoint.

The participants in this study exhibited similar perceptions of how varied types of support are influenced by time constraints. While administrative support at the study-site school was received by the participants as a positive influence on their SE regarding effective instruction, the quality of in-class support was reported as varied in the past but currently good. With one exception, all of the teachers perceived the value of in-class support as positive. Conversely, case management was viewed as having a negative impact on the effectiveness of inclusive instruction because the participating GenEd teachers reported having no access to the case managers assigned to their students. Coteachers are their source of contact, other than e-mailing the SpEd department chair. Teacher 3 asserted, “We need to know who the case manager is for our SpEd students. That information used to be on the students’ profiles and now it’s not. There is simply not enough time to go and hunt to find out who the case manager is.”

Data analysis revealed that time constraints extended beyond a category and are rooted in students being pulled from class, needed instructional pacing, necessary
individual student support, planning and collaboration, and meeting district expectations. Time constraints shape communication with in-class support, collaboration with colleagues, and the quality of relationships with parents and students. Of the total study sample, one half of the participants cited time constraints as a barrier to receiving desired training. Teacher 5 recounted,

I’ve definitely had some good workshops, and I have good support from administration to attend the workshops. They have an attitude like, “You go to trainings when you need to go; you know best what you need. So, that has been helpful, but I just feel like I can’t afford the time away from my students without it compromising their learning. There’s just not enough time.

Although the study participants expressed interest in gaining additional knowledge in SpEd strategies and disabilities, this would entail training on their personal time so classroom instruction is not compromised. The teachers experienced a lack of available time to achieve what they view as necessary conditions in order to positively shape their SE regarding overall instructional effectiveness.

Time constraints were found to be interwoven among all of the categories that emerged in this study. Such constraints influence the quality of in-class support, case management, colleague collaboration, communication with parents and students, and teacher perception of the feasibility of training opportunities. Through the online, open-ended questionnaire and semistructured, face-to-face interviews, participants in this study openly attributed various themes to their SE regarding effective instruction, with time constraints cited the most frequently.
Findings from this study revealed that the participating GenEd teachers perceive the majority of peripheral factors related to inclusive education similarly to reports published in existing literature for the categories of communication and training/knowledge. However, themes pertaining to time constraints and support in existing literature drew perceptions from GenEd teachers that differed from those reported in the current study. A link was evident in this current research between positive administrative support and perceived responsibility for the peripheral factors of inclusive education. The participating GenEd teachers distinguished deficiencies and negative impacts to their SE, and ultimately to their instruction, through this connection.

Because five of the six GenEd teachers in this study highlighted positive support from administration, and two directly related this support to positively impacting their SE, further analysis was conducted in this area. This additional research effort revealed that these teachers perceive administrative support as positively affecting SE. Conversely, time constraint is perceived as a causal agent in the other identified categories of communication and training/knowledge. Teacher 3 explained, “My confidence is affected by my administrator’s input in a positive way. It’s about their involvement and approach that matters so much.” Further research on effective administrative support for GenEd high-school teachers within inclusive classrooms and their SE could prove valuable. Bandura (1993) asserted that learning within the classroom is significantly affected by teacher SE regarding effective instruction, which involves their emotions, cognition, and motivation.
Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

Inclusive classrooms composed of students with and without disabilities meet the federally mandated requirement of the IDEA of 2004 and education within a LRE. The aim of this study was to examine the subjective perceptions, interpretations, meanings, and insights of GenEd inclusive high-school teachers, as they relate to the peripheral factors of inclusive education and associated teacher SE. Researchers have shown that the peripheral factors of inclusive education adversely affect the SE of GenEd high-school teachers with regard to effective instruction within inclusive classrooms (Alfaro et al., 2015; Berry, 2010; Boyle et al., 2013; Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014; Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010; McKenzie, 2015). The findings of this current study closely align with the results reported in existing literature focused on related topics. Time constraints represent a common theme found in literature addressing the peripheral factors of inclusive education, as perceived by GenEd teachers, and it was prevalent throughout this current study indicating a common problem throughout inclusive education. Conversely, through data analysis in this study, the theme of administrative support emerged as a positively perceived influence on teacher SE.

Peripheral factors. The four categories of peripheral factors found in this study to shape the SE of GenEd teachers regarding effective instruction within the inclusive classroom are time constraints, support, communication, and training/knowledge. Existing literature classified these categories as peripheral factors of inclusive education and requiring change to positively shape effective instruction within these classrooms (Berry, 2010). Other peripheral factors have been depicted in existing studies as affecting teacher attitudes and their SE regarding effective instruction within inclusive
classrooms such as inadequate provision for collaboration with SpEd colleagues (Caskey, 2008; McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). Cox (2016) found that GenEd teachers also struggle with handling disciplinary issues, providing accommodations for students with disabilities, and monitoring academic progress. The participating GenEd teachers in the current study did not include disciplinary issues or monitoring academic progress as problematic, and only two participants expressed concern over a lack of individualism in providing accommodations for disabled students.

Other peripheral factors reported by GenEd teachers participating in existing literature were varied student disabilities within the same classroom, the ratio of student disabilities within the classrooms, ratios of students with disabilities to students without disabilities, and class size (Dupoux et al., 2007). In the current study, the participating teachers were primarily concerned over various components connected with time constraints such as students being pulled from class, needed adjustment to the pace of instruction delivery, necessary individual student support, planning and collaboration, and meeting expectations. Teacher 3 commented,

We have planning time, but I’m not sure we have enough to be effective. It’s very difficult when you have five kids with five different disabilities to talk about each one in a planning time. What is each kid going to do in the lesson? This is what shakes my confidence most about my effectiveness in teaching and reaching all of the students in my classes.

Time constraints also serve as an obstacle to training and growth in knowledge surrounding students with varied disabilities (Dupoux et al., 2007). Teacher 2 stated,
Expanding my knowledge about SpEd and strategies that work best with different types of learning disabilities, would give me faith in my ability to achieve more quality instruction for all my students, but I’m not sure how that can happen. There’s simply not enough time.

The participants expressed a distinct perceived connection between time constraints and other themes of concern. The findings suggest the prevalence of time constraints throughout the majority of the theme that emerged during the data analysis.

Challenges encountered by GenEd high-school teachers with educating students within the inclusive classroom has origins in the teacher-perceived peripheral factors of inclusive education. Teacher SE regarding effective instruction within inclusive classrooms has been addressed in existing literature. Bandura (1993) asserted that classroom learning is significantly affected by teacher SE, which influences the emotional, cognitive, and motivational aspects of teaching. The focus of this current study is the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. Scholars have conducted extensive research within this realm of study. Consequently, the categories found in this current study are not new; however, the findings regarding how time constraints and administrative support connect with other peripheral factors make a significant contribution to established knowledge surrounding inclusive education. This form of education continues to present teacher challenges necessitating further study.
**Administrative support.** The findings in this case study suggest that perceived administrative support at the study-site school is a positive influential component of how the participating GenEd teachers identify certain peripheral factors of inclusive education as shaping their SE regarding effective instruction. This conclusion is significant because existing literature has identified administrative support as a negative influence to teacher SE associated with inclusive settings (Berry, 2010; Caskey, 2008; Fuchs, 2010). In a metasynthesis of qualitative research addressing inclusive coteaching, administrative support was a prevailing peripheral factor negatively influencing: (a) attitudes and perceptions among staff and students regarding coteaching and professional development, (b) teacher-identified conditions needed for successful inclusive education, (c) amount of available time for planning, (d) coteacher pairing, (e) training opportunities, and (f) appropriate student placement and class ratios of students with and without disabilities (Scruggs et al., 2007). While the findings of this current study align with evidence found by Scruggs et al. (2007) regarding factors adversely shaping teacher SE with effective instruction in the inclusive classroom, the study participants of the current research do not perceive campus administration at fault for these factors. Rather, time constraints are blamed for negatively affecting teacher confidence in their abilities to achieve effective inclusive instruction. Administrators at the study-site school are also not held accountable for factors adversely affecting teacher SE, but rather, administration support is viewed as a positive influence in this regard.

The community of practice could benefit from more information on how the administrative team at the school participating in this study achieved such positive regard
from the study sample. Such data could add significant value to the existing base of related knowledge. Additional information on the strategies utilized by the campus administration could contribute to this realm. Among the categories of time constraints, collaboration, support, and training/knowledge, support was cited by the participating GenEd teachers in the most positive light, and time constraints were found to be a common component influencing multiple themes within the categories. While this study supported existing literature in terms of the categories and prevalent themes, the findings indicated that administrative support was perceived by the teachers as effective, and time constraints were identified as an isolated dilemma not attributed to school administration.

Researchers have maintained that SE is affected by teacher challenges related to their perceived deficiencies in adequate time and training and support, all of which can affect the skills necessary for effectiveness within the inclusive classroom (Fuchs, 2010). Existing literature has indicated that GenEd teachers perceive the need for increased support from administration in areas such as available planning time, number of students per class, teacher responsibilities, and developing a school culture embracing inclusion (Berry, 2010). Studies have provided rich, detailed data regarding the peripheral factors of inclusive education; consequently, I expected similar results in this current research. While many similarities between categories and themes emerged, fundamental contrasts were also evident.

Participants in the current study perceived positive support from the administrative staff of the study-site school. It is noteworthy that the researcher has no current connection to the district or study-site outside the current research, and confidentiality with regard to their responses was emphasized to all participants within
the consent form and verbally. While there may be underlying causes for the positive regard by the participating teachers for campus administration, such causal factors were not ascertained in this current study. This is clearly dissimilar to findings in previous studies that indicated GenEd teachers attributed many peripheral factors affecting their confidence in instruction delivery to administration.

The teachers in the current study perceived time constraints as the cause of negative self-confidence in relation to their effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. Time constraints was the most prevalent category found during data analysis. The participating teachers not only emphasized such constraints as the most significant barrier to effective teaching within the inclusive classroom, but this category also had the greatest number of themes upon which the interviewees elaborated. The findings indicate that perceived administrative support is a strong influence on positive teacher SE, and time constraints serve as an underlying component to several themes, according to data collected from the GenEd high-school teachers of inclusive classrooms at the study-site school.

**Limitations**

Several limitations apply to this study, including the inability to generalize findings to a larger context, because the researcher deemed qualitative case study to be the best-suited methodology for investigating the in-depth perspectives of GenEd high-school teachers. Purposeful sampling was employed, which is selective by design (Patton, 2002). Only six GenEd teachers of core academic subjects within inclusive classrooms at a single high school were included in the study, introducing a limitation pertaining to drawing perspectives from one regional area and one school. Another
limitation involves the inability to utilize variables. The manipulation of variables was not involved in this study because it was not an option with research not experimental in nature (Creswell, 2009).

This study was conducted early during the spring semester, which holds implications due to the impact on teacher responses as they prepare students for high-stakes testing. Limitations to transferability are introduced because the study-site school is an outlier in demographics. Of the total student population, 99% report belonging to a minority group, 77% report living within low-income households, and the study site is an ECHS wherein teachers have responsibilities beyond that of regular public high schools.

**Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory**

GenEd teachers struggle to provide effective instruction within inclusive classrooms. The findings in this study reveal several similarities with those reported in existing literature regarding the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. Factors include the lack of available time for communicating with SpEd colleagues (Caskey, 2008; McKenzie, 2015; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). Another peripheral factor of inclusive education has been reported as lack of teacher training (McKenzie, 2015). Berry (2010) reported the following list of changes in peripheral factors needed to positively influence inclusive GenEd teachers: (a) additional assistants within the classroom; (b) additional time for collaboration with SpEd counterparts; (c) additional professional development; and (d) increased support from administration in areas such as planning time, number of students per class, teacher responsibilities, and developing a school culture embracing inclusion.
The perceived peripheral factors of inclusive education, as they influence the SE of teachers with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom, were confirmed in this study as aligning with those found in past related literature. However, the similarities lie in the categories and themes. Data analysis in this study revealed underlying bases for the teacher perceptions regarding peripheral factors. Bandura (2012) asserted that these factors include influences on teacher SE in the form of constraints within situational, physical, and social realms. The findings from this current study align with the Bandura theory. The GenEd teachers participating in this study perceived time constraints as responsible for peripheral factors such as lack of available time for collaboration and lack of training and support.

The GenEd teachers participating in this study reported positive perceptions of the campus administrative team at the study-site school, and that positive stance manifested in their responses to study questions directly aimed at their self-confidence in their own ability to deliver effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. Fuchs (2010) proposed that teacher beliefs surrounding their own capacities to facilitate learning with a diverse class of learners within the inclusive setting is influenced by their viewpoints related to barriers to successful instruction. Such barriers include lack of support from administration and SpEd staff, as well as inadequate training. For the concept of inclusive education to sufficiently serve students with and without disabilities in a concurrent fashion within inclusive classrooms, further studies and metasyntheses are needed to continue this examination of related peripheral factors.

The transferability of the findings in this study to similar campuses is feasible with similar demographics. Because the study-site school in the current research is a
metropolitan ECHS, similar schools would be suggested for transferability. Other demographics of the study-site school in this current research include a student population with over 99% self-reporting minority status and 77% residing within households of low income. The study site also reported enrollment of 854 students.

A discrepancy in findings between existing literature and this current study is reflected in how GenEd teachers perceive school administrative support. Because administration personnel were not included in the data collection of this study, this cannot be examined further from the data of this research. Although the participating GenEd teachers clearly expressed how administration support directly shape their self-confidence, no data were collected to determine strategies employed by the school to elicit this positive regard. What was distinctly evident from the data analysis was the positive influence of administrative support self-reported by the participating GenEd teachers. The implication is that future research is needed to determine how campus administration achieves this positive perception.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The findings of this research could be extended through investigating how school administration achieves a positive influence on the SE of GenEd teachers. Solutions to time constraints could be examined by implementing a plan devised from the insights collected from GenEd teachers within inclusive classrooms. Adding in-class observation to a study could contribute valuable data in this regard. Qualitative case study would be the preferred methodology to achieve further in-depth exploration into the phenomenon under study. Adding in-class observation to the methodology of the current research
would provide another lens through which to view this issue. Thus, triangulation could again be used to verify the consistency in effective instruction.

School administrators could provide another perspective, especially because they were perceived by the GenEd teachers in this study as validated support, positively affecting their SE regarding effective inclusive instruction. Therefore, exploring the manner in which this encouraging support is achieved could provide valuable knowledge. Time constraint represents a barrier that negatively influences the SE of GenEd teachers with regard to effective instruction in the inclusive classroom. This is significant to inclusive education. As Bandura (2012) stated, “Self-efficacy beliefs affect the quality of human functioning through cognitive, motivational, affective, and decisional processes” (p. 5). Studying and analyzing related results can lead to viable answers to the problem of an insufficient amount of time to accomplish all that is needed to positively influence the SE of GenEd teachers, as it relates to effective inclusive instruction.

Conclusion

Federal law has stipulated that students with disabilities have the right to public education with their nondisabled peers within a LRE. Inclusive education has served as the answer to a LRE, providing students with and without disabilities concurrent instruction within the GenEd setting (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010). Although inclusive education affords students with disabilities the same opportunities to learn as their nondisabled peers, as mandated, GenEd teachers continue to struggle with their SE regarding the delivery of successful instruction within the inclusive classroom.

This qualitative study explored the perceptions of GenEd high-school teachers in terms of how the peripheral factors of inclusive education shape their SE with regard to
effective instruction within the inclusive classroom. In-depth, qualitative case study was the appropriate methodology for data collection and analysis conducive to answering the following research question: “How do GenEd high-school teachers perceive the peripheral factors of inclusive education in terms of shaping their SE with regard to effective instruction within the inclusive classroom?” The individual subjective views of the GenEd teacher participants, in terms of peripheral factors of inclusive education, coupled with an exploration of their perceived SE within inclusive classrooms, revealed their related interpretations, meanings, and insights.

The findings from this study aligned with those reported in related literature; however, unforeseen discoveries emerged from this qualitative case study revealing how GenEd teachers perceive the overarching positive and negative peripheral factors of inclusive education. These educators perceive campus administration of the study site as a strong source of support, positively affecting their SE related to achieving effective instruction within the inclusive-education setting. Conversely, data analysis indicated that time constraints are a prevalent source of negative influence to teacher confidence in their abilities to achieve effective instruction with inclusive classrooms.

Not only did the data collected in this study provide conclusive evidence surrounding how time constraints negatively shape teacher SE, and how administrative support can positively shape teacher SE, but the participating GenEd teachers provided what they perceived as plausible solutions to alleviating time constraints. Utilizing a portion of PLC meeting time and redesigning advisory periods were ideas offered by the teachers in this study to release additional time for tutoring students, colleague collaboration, and planning and training. The insightful ideas generated by these
educators provided the perspectives needed to address this dilemma of challenge for GenEd teachers struggling within inclusive classroom. The findings of this case study indicate two opposing peripheral factors—positive administrative support and negative time constraints—as core facets shaping the SE of these educators, as it relates to effective inclusive instruction. Implications of the findings for the community of practice, as well as recommended future research, were discussed for the continued contribution of knowledge to this field of study.
References


Appendix A: Study Instrument

Online Questionnaire

1) What subjects are you teaching where there are students with and without disabilities learning together in your classes?

2) How do you feel about your effectiveness in educating students who are predominantly from minority cultures when the cultures differ from your own?

3) How do you feel about educating students with and without disabilities together in the inclusive general education setting?

4) How prepared are you to successfully teach in the inclusive general education classroom considering the learning diversity of students?

5) What are your thoughts concerning how particular factors influence the overall effectiveness in the inclusive general education setting?
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

1) Describe how your effective instruction would look in an ideal inclusive classroom.

2) Discuss your ability to achieve effective instruction in the inclusive classroom you described.

3) How do you feel about your current level of success in the inclusive classroom?

4) What factors are needed for you to have the ability to raise the level of effective instruction in your inclusive classrooms?

5) Talk about skills you need to effectively teach students in the inclusive classroom that extend beyond those needed for the non-inclusive GenEd classroom.

6) What skills do you need to develop further for effective instruction in the inclusive classroom?

7) How do you believe you might be able to achieve this?

8) Describe how factors outside the inclusive classroom negatively affect your confidence in your ability to achieve effective instruction in the inclusive classroom.

9) How do current communication and collaboration you experience affect your ability to provide effective instruction in the inclusive classroom?

10) Explain how the support you receive from various campus staff affects your feelings toward effective instruction.

11) How does professional development affect your personal ability to achieve instructional effectiveness in the inclusive classroom?

12) What are your ideas about existing factors that actively influence your success in the inclusive classroom?
Appendix C: Targeted Enrollment Table

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Appendix D: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does “fraudulent” mean?

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

What is “unauthorized” assistance?

“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.
Statement of Original Work

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University-Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.

2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*. 

Debra L. Harper

Name (Typed)

8-13-2017

Date