A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF EXPERT SPECIAL EDUCATORS

EFFECTIVELY NEGOTIATING THEIR JOB DEMANDS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

EDUCATION

MAY 2013

By

Shawna P. Ortogero

Dissertation Committee:

Bryan Cook, Chairperson
Rhonda S. Black
Patricia Edelen-Smith
Stacey Roberts
Richard R. Day

UMI Number: 3572447

UMI

Dissertation Publishing

UMI 3572447

ProQuest®

Abstract

This qualitative case study explored how three expert secondary special education teachers in Hawaii constructed their perceived roles and successfully negotiated their job demands. There is a strong connection between role problems and special education teachers leaving the profession. The special education teacher shortage has a direct impact on the quality of education provided to students with disabilities. Purposeful sampling was used to select one secondary school on the Leeward coast of Oahu. I used reputational-case sampling to select participants that fit Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) expert theoretical construct. I defined expert special education teachers as (a) licensed to teach special education in Hawaii, (b) taught special education in Hawaii for a minimum of 6 years, and (c) nominated by their principals and special education department chair as experts. The data were derived from semi-structured interviews, observations, and teacher-kept time journals. I analyzed the data through individual and cross-case analysis to uncover underlying themes. Most of the participants' perceived roles were consistent with the literature that described the job demands of special educators, which included being the primary teacher to modify lessons and re-teach concepts in their co-teaching relationships, and teaching both students with and without disabilities. Perceived roles not identified in the literature included changing roles conducive to meeting the needs of the students and class advisor. In contrast to the literature, a majority of the participants spent most of their time instructing students and the least amount of time collaborating with colleagues. The major themes that helped the participants juggle their job demands were working beyond required work hours and multi-tasking. The participants mostly displayed components consistent with the proficient and expert stages in Dreyfus and

Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition theory. The results of this study have implications for teacher education programs, administrators, and practitioners regarding the qualities of expert special educators, how to move from novice to expert, and providing role clarification. Replicating this study in other settings can help to expand the literature on how special educators can cope with role overload.

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Although the U.S. Data Accountability Center (2009b, 2009c) reported that there are nearly 425,000 special educators, special education teacher positions are difficult to fill in all regions of the United States leaving 98% of school districts nationwide short of special educators (Thornton, Peltier, & Medina, 2007). With approximately 6.6 million students ages three through 21 receiving special education and related services in the U.S. (Data Accountability Center, 2010) and nearly 425,000 special education teachers employed there is an estimated special education teacher to student with disability ratio of 1:16 (Data Accountability Center, 2009b, 2009c). Although the special education student population decreased by about 50,000 students from 2009 to 2010 (Data Accountability Center, 2009a, 2010) and the special education teacher workforce increased by about 20,000 from 2008 to 2009, the number of special educators who are not highly-qualified increased by nearly 6,000 from 2008 to 2009 (Data Accountability Center, 2008a, 2008b, 2009b, 2009c). A fair amount of research (Billingsley, 2004a; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Wright, Horn & Sanders, 1997) emphasized the positive impact that qualified special educators have on the academic and functional achievement of students with disabilities. According to Billingsley (2004a, 2004b) it is imperative that steps are taken to retain quality special educators for the sake of providing students with disabilities appropriate educational opportunities (Billingsley, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996). The special education teacher shortage likely will continue to get worse as

qualified special education teachers exit the field, and the overall special education population increases (Shimabukuro, Edelen-Smith, & Jenkins, 1999; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010).

There is a strong connection between role problems and special education teachers leaving the profession (Billingsley, 2004a; DeMik, 2008; Plash & Piotrowski, 2006; Shek, 2007; Sultana, 1996; Westling & Whitten, 1996). Lack of time, lack of resources, high caseloads, excessive paperwork, too many meetings, severed relationships with colleagues, lack of support, and excessive job stress are all aspects of role problems cited by special education teachers as reasons for leaving their jobs (Billingsley, Bodkins, & Hendricks, 1993; Plash & Piotrowski; 2006; Shimabukuro et al., 1999; Sultana, 1996; Thornton et al., 2007; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002; Westling & Whitten, 1996).

The special education teacher shortage has a direct impact on the quality of education provided to students with disabilities. Unqualified teachers are often hired to provide services for students with disabilities to make up for the shortage of special education teachers. In these situations students with disabilities often receive services from unlicensed and inexperienced special educators, which can result in inadequate educational experiences and reduced achievement levels for students with disabilities (Billingsley, 2004a; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996). To service the needs of students with disabilities and comply with the standards of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), educators and policymakers "must be aware of the special education teacher shortage, take steps to increase the supply of teachers, and lower rates of attrition" (Thornton et al., 2007, p.

233). In order to achieve this at a local level on the island of Oahu in Hawaii, I explored the experiences, resources, supports, and behaviors that make duties related to the job (e.g., dealing with the demands of non-instructional tasks) manageable for three expert special educators. In addition, I studied how three expert special educators construct their perceived role. To contextualize the issue of how role perceptions and effective job management strategies impact the workloads of special education teachers I: (a) briefly discussed the novice to expert theories used to frame this study and (b) reviewed background information regarding the job demands and role issues of special educators, the importance that qualified special education teachers have to students with disabilities, role problems as a leading contributor to the special education teacher shortage, and strategies that may help special education teachers cope with role issues.

Theoretical Framework

The novice to expert theory was used as the theoretical underpinning to frame this study. The novice to expert theory, first derived from Dreyfus and Dreyfus in 1980, gives insight on the process that an expert special educator may go through to become an expert. The five stages of skill acquisition in the novice to expert theory include (a) novice, (b) advanced beginner, (c) competent, (d) proficient, and (e) expert (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980; Lester, 2005) and can be generalized to almost any profession including special education teachers. Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) expert stage of skill acquisition was used as a framework to analyze how expert special education teachers manage their job demands. For example, an expert special educator's ability to adapt and make adjustments as necessary (Dreyfus, 1981; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980) may give them the

flexibility and intuitive decision-making skills necessary to successfully execute their multiple job demands.

In a study conducted by Stough, Palmer, and Sharp (2001) expert special educators were nominated by their special education supervisors based on the following criteria:

1) had at least five years of teaching experience, 2) were recognized among their peers, parent, or the community as being effective teachers, 3) instructed students that generally made excellent progress in achieving their individualized education plan (IEP) objectives, and 4) were generally viewed by their supervisors as superior special education teachers. (p.4)

In this study (Stough et al., 2001), expert special educators were able to exercise significantly better decision making skills than novice special educators when it came to modifying instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities. In addition, expert special educators utilized a wider variety of instructional strategies (e.g., collaboration/consultation, modeling, scaffolding, repetition of material, presenting information using different sensory modalities) and reflected more on their instruction than novice special educators.

Experience, reflection and the ability to adapt are common themes in the teacher expertise literature (Allen & Casbergue, 2000; Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Findell, 2006; Schempp & Johnson, 2006, Stough et al., 2001), which are comparable to Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) expert category. Expert special educators are important sources of information when it comes to job performance, because they possess more knowledge about classroom practices and are faster and more efficient at carrying out the duties of

their jobs than novice teachers (Stough & Palmer, 2001). Extracting knowledge from the very individuals who are generally able to efficiently deal with the role issues in special education may provide insight on how novice special educators can organize and manage the demands of their job and remain in the field.

Background

The job demands of a special educator require that they juggle a plethora of tasks which may include planning, coordinating, and attending many meetings, completing considerable amounts of paperwork, collaborating with parents, co-teaching with colleagues, supervising paraprofessionals, collecting data, implementing classroom management strategies for students with behavior disorders and other disabilities, and delivering instruction to high numbers of students with varying disabilities under the pressures of federal mandates such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004. Quality teachers have a positive impact on student achievement (Billingsley, 2004a; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997), whereas unprepared and unqualified special education teachers can negatively impact the educational opportunities and outcomes of students with disabilities (Billingsley, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Miller, Brownell, & Smith, 1999). These studies indicated that the academic well-being of students with disabilities is somewhat dependent upon retaining quality special educators.

Role problems include (a) role ambiguity, (b) role conflict, (c) role dissonance, and (d) role overload (Billingsley, 2004b). All four of these role problems can be interrelated (Billingsley, 2004b) and are major contributors to the special education

teacher shortage in the United States (Billingsley, 2004a; 2004b; DeMik, 2008; Plash & Piotrowski, 2006; Shek, 2007; Sultana, 1996; Thornton et al., 2007; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002; Westling & Whitten, 1996). Often times, the stress that comes with role problems derives from paperwork, excessive meetings, teaching a high caseload of students with a wide range of disabilities with inadequate resources under the pressures of federal mandates, classroom management problems, and having colleagues who are unwilling to put forth collaborative efforts to help mainstream students with disabilities into inclusive classrooms, leading special educators to consider leaving the field (Billingsley, 2004a; Billingsley, Bodkins, & Hendricks, 1993; Kaff, 2004; Shechtman & Leichtentritt, 2004; Shimabukuro et al., 1999; Sultana, 1996; Thornton et al., 2007; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002; Westling & Whitten, 1996).

Paperwork is a good example of a task that leads to role overload and stress for special educators. According to a special education paperwork study submitted to the U.S. Department of Education and Office of Special Education in 2003 by the Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (SPeNSE), special education teachers could save time doing paperwork by getting additional help from educational assistants and clerical staff, and getting substitutes to cover their classes (Carlson, Chen, Schroll, & Klein, 2003; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002). In addition, getting more access to technology, using video and phone conferences (Shek, 2007; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002), and getting a generic list of goals and objectives to pull from when developing Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) (Shimabukuro et al., 1999) could help special educators cope with the paperwork burden.

Having inadequate resources for teaching a large number of students with varying disabilities is a good example of role dissonance or special educators' own role expectations differing from others. Throwing special educators into a situation where they do not have ample resources to fulfill the job demands asked of them leads them to feel overwhelmed and stressed out (Gersten, Gillman, Morvant, & Billingsley, 1995; Kaufhold, Alvarez, & Arnold, 2006). A considerable amount of research indicates that special educators do not feel that they are provided with sufficient resources and supplies to fulfill the requirements of their jobs (Gersten et al., 1995, Kaufhold et al., 2006; Sultana, 1996; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002). Sultana, Kaufhold et al., and Tschantz and Markowitz suggested that special educators did not expect to fulfill multiple roles (e.g., clerical paperwork, meeting scheduling, general education teacher collaboration and curriculum planning in conjunction with IEP development) when they came into the profession. Juggling multiple IEPs for a large number of students with a wide range of disabilities without the necessary tools (e.g., classroom supplies, funds, educational assistants) and resources leads to stress, burnout, and potentially, attrition (Gersten et al., 1995; Kaufhold et al., 2006; Sultana, 1996).

Several studies show mentoring to be a promising strategy that can help special educators cope with role problems and decrease attrition rates (Eson-Brizo, 2010; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Kennedy & Burstein, 2004; Whitaker, 2000; White & Mason, 2006). Enlightened professional development (Odom, 2009; Pianta, 2006), and increased administrative support also have potential for lowering special educator attrition rates (Kaff, 2004; Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005). Administrators can offer stress management groups that feature cognitive behavior techniques (Cecil & Forman, 1990;

Cheek, Bradley, Parr, & Lan, 2003) to special educators. Furthermore, administrators have the authority to reduce role problems by reducing caseloads, offering more planning and collaboration time with colleagues, and ensuring that special educators have ample resources and supplies to carry out their job duties.

Despite statistically significant relationships between the intention to remain in the field and administrative support (George, George, Gersten, & Grosenick, 1995) and mentoring interventions (Whitaker, 2000), limitations exist that threaten the internal validity of these studies. Limitations also exist in studies that have shown stress coping techniques, such as music therapy, to be effective (Cheek et al., 2003) in reducing teacher burnout rates. These studies, among others (e.g., Cecil & Forman, 1990; Whitaker, 2000) involve survey responses with questionable validity, vague descriptions of number and qualifications of service providers and protocol procedures, and other threats to internal validity (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010). Furthermore, several studies (e.g., George et al., 1995; Westling & Whitten, 1996) focused on broader variables like job satisfaction. There are also few qualitative studies that focus on solutions to the special education teacher shortage issue (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010). Conducting a qualitative case study may help to extract role perceptions and effective resources, supports, behaviors, and experiences when it comes to effectively managing the job demands involved in special education. A more in-depth, holistic exploration of the phenomenon may provide further insight on how expert special educators construct their perceived roles, and effectively manage the demands of their job while remaining in the field.

Moreover, many of the studies aimed at reducing special education teacher burnout and attrition rates (e.g., Bamford, Grange, & Jones, 1990; Westling, Herzog,

Cooper-Duffy, Prohn, & Ray, 2006) are without theoretical frameworks and "Theory serves to anchor individual research studies to a bigger picture. It functions as a guide wherein one may adapt current knowledge to new situations and develop new interventions" (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010, p.122). Utilizing the Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) skill acquisition theory will function as a guide for exploring what qualities and strategies expert special educators use to juggle their job duties and provide insight on emerging themes/interventions that will help inform special educators on how to effectively manage their job demands and remain in the field.

The data from many studies on reducing special education teacher burnout and attrition rates (e.g., Cecil & Forman, 1990; Cheek et al., 2003; George et al., 1995; Westling et al., 2006; Westling & Whitten, 1996; Whitaker, 2000) does not provide sufficient depth about how time spent on job-related tasks may interfere with a special educator's decision to leave the field. Furthermore, I found only one study, which was published over a decade ago, that explored the working conditions of Oahu special education teachers (Shimabukuro et al., 1999). Little is known about how expert special education teachers on the island of Oahu effectively balance their job demands. Evaluating the job demands of special educators and effective time strategies used by expert special education teachers on Oahu may help yield information that could later be used to design interventions to improve special education teacher retention in Hawaii. As Otto and Arnold (2005) stated, "acquiring feedback from experienced educators can help identify the areas needing reform in order to retain special education teachers" (p. 253).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this case study is to: (a) explore how expert special educators construct their perceived roles and (b) identify the experiences, supports, resources, and behaviors used by expert special education teachers on the Leeward coast of Oahu to successfully negotiate their job demands. In order to inform the understanding of how expert special educators construct their perceived roles and manage the demands of their jobs, purposeful sampling was used to select one secondary school on the Leeward coast of Oahu that employed three expert special educators who participated in the study. Reputational-case sampling was used to select three expert special education teachers in order to find examples of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) expert theoretical construct and examine it in relation to special educators and their job demands. Information was obtained through (a) teacher-kept time journals, (b) multiple observations, (c) interviews, and (d) document analyses. This study provides a rich description of effective strategies to inform how expert special education teachers effectively balance and complete all aspects of their jobs. For the purpose of this study, expert special education teacher was defined as someone who: (a) is licensed to teach special education students in the state of Hawaii, (b) has taught students with disabilities in the state of Hawaii for a minimum of 6 years, and (c) is nominated by their principal and special education department chair as an expert special education teacher generally who effectively deals with the demands of their job. The nomination form was derived from the expert category in the Dreyfus and Dreyfus model of skill acquisition.

Research Questions

1. How do three expert special education teachers construct their perceived role?

2. How do three expert special education teachers on the Leeward coast of Oahu successfully negotiate their job demands?

    a. What supports, resources, behaviors and/or experiences have helped three expert special educators on the Leeward coast of Oahu effectively juggle their job demands?

    b. What skills do three expert special educators on the Leeward coast of Oahu possess that helps them to successfully manage all aspects of their job requirements?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, I review the professional literature regarding the underlying demands of special educators' jobs with the intent to explore how expert special educators construct their perceived roles and find strategies that make duties related to the job manageable. To contextualize the issue of how role perception and effective task management strategies impact the lives, attrition, and effectiveness of special education teachers, in this section I: (a) examine the novice to expert theoretical framework that forms the basis for conceptualizing how expert special educators effectively manage job demands, (b) discuss the job demands and role issues of special educators, (c) examine the issue of role problems as a leading contributor to the special education teacher shortage, (d) review the importance that qualified special education teachers have to students with disabilities, and (e) introduce strategies that may alleviate special education teacher role problems.

Theoretical Framework

When compared to novice special educators, expert special educators are better at carrying out aspects of their jobs such as instructing students with disabilities and collaborating with colleagues (Stough et al., 2001). Expert special educators in the trenches are crucial resources to understanding what qualities, strategies, and resources are used to make the job manageable. The Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) expert model of skill acquisition was used to frame the study.

Novice to expert theory. The Dreyfus and Dreyfus model of skill acquisition first proposed in 1980 to help train aircraft pilots is a useful tool in understanding the

difference between the expert special educator and the novice. Anyone who desires to learn a new skill is faced with two options: (1) learn the skill through imitation trial and error or (2) learn the skill from an instructor or instruction manual (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980). Both skill acquiring options proposed by Dreyfus and Dreyfus may be beneficial when learning to become an expert special education teacher. According to Dreyfus and Dreyfus, when acquiring or developing a skill, one passes through five levels of proficiency: (a) novice, (b) competent, (c) proficient, (d) expert, and (e) master. It is important to note, that Dreyfus and Dreyfus suggested that there is no higher level of mental capacity than expertise. However, they believe that experts are capable of transcending their performance to mastery by using all of their mental energy to monitor performance, producing almost instantaneous decisions that are appropriate to the given situation. In other words, mastery is quick and focused expertise. In contrast to the Piagetian view that proficiency increases as one moves from the concrete to the more abstract (Wadsworth, 1996), Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) argue "that skill in its minimal form is produced by following abstract formal rules, but that only experience with concrete cases can account for higher levels of performance" (p. 5). That is, individuals become progressively more skilled when they depend less on abstract principles and more on concrete experiences (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980).

Similar to how one might advance from novice to expert in Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition theory, Shiffrin and Schneider (1977) concluded in a controlled experiment involving search and attention tasks that:

In novel situations or in situations requiring moment-to-moment decisions, controlled processing may be adopted and used to perform accurately, though

slowly. Then, as the situations become familiar, always requiring the same

sequence of processing operations, automatic processing will develop, attention

demands will be eased, other controlled operations can be carried out in parallel

with the automatic processing, and performance will improve. (p. 7)

Table 2.1, adapted by Lester (2005) from Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980), outlines key

characteristics associated with each stage.

Table 2.1.

Skill Acquisition-From Novice to Expert

Level	Stage	Characteristics
1	Novice	-Rigid adherence to taught rules or plans -Little situational perception -No discretionary judgment
2	Advanced Beginner	-Guidelines for action based on attributes or aspects (aspects are global characteristics of situations recognizable only after some prior experience) -Situational perception still limited -All attributes and aspects are treated separately and given equal importance
3	Competent	-Coping with crowdedness (put job demands into context) -Now sees actions at least partially in terms of longer-term goals -Conscious, deliberate planning -Standardized and routine procedures
4	Proficient	- Sees situations holistically rather than in terms of aspects -Sees what is most important in a situation -Perceives deviations from the normal pattern -Decision-making less labored -Uses maxims for guidance, whose meanings vary according to the situation
5	Expert	-No longer relies on rules, guidelines or maxims -Intuitive grasp of situations based on deep tacit understanding -Analytic approaches used only in novel situations or when problems occur -Vision of what is possible

Benner (1982) generalized Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model to nursing and it appears reasonable to also generalize it to teaching, because it incrementally takes into account performance based on experience and education. As Benner (1982) stated, when one becomes an expert in the Dreyfus novice to expert model, two primary changes in perspective occur:

> One is a movement from reliance on abstract principles to the use of past, concrete experiences as paradigms. The other is a change in the perception and understanding of a demand situation so that the situation is seen less as a compilation of equally relevant bits and more as a complete whole in which only certain parts are relevant. (p. 402)

The Dreyfus and Dreyfus model of skill acquisition (1980) has been applied to education to help assess teacher competency in an effort to reform the National Vocational Qualification's (NVQ) initial teacher training system (Erant, 2005, Chapter 12). In addition, the Dreyfus and Dreyfus model has been used as a tool for teachers to help support their students' development from novice to expert, and to develop curriculum in higher education (Kinchin & Cobot, 2010).

Teacher expertise literature that includes concepts of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model also exists. Schempp and Johnson (2006) characterized expert teachers as focusing on events relevant to student achievement, making inferences from observations, recognizing atypical events (e.g., a student's silent struggle to learn), and observing with a critical eye. Similar to Dreyfus and Dreyfus, Schempp and Johnson (2006) and Owens (2006) classified experts as individuals who can use their intuitive observation skills and experience to make decisions that are relevant to student

performance and learning. Schempp and Johnson and Dreyfus and Dreyfus agree that experts have the ability to envision what is possible and anticipate the likelihood of future events. Experts are able to detect critical cues that provide insight for informed decisions (Stough et al., 2001) whereas "teachers with less expertise see the same cues, but simply fail to recognize their significance for teaching and learning" (Schempp & Johnson, 2006, p. 29).

Experience, reflection and the ability to adapt are common themes in the teacher expertise literature (Allen & Casbergue, 2000; Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Findell, 2007; Schempp & Johnson, 2006, Stough et al., 2001), which are comparable to Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) expert category in their skill acquisition model. Expert teaching skills are acquired and developed mainly by experience and deliberate practice (Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Schempp & Johnson, 2006). "Deliberate practice consists of effortful activities based on the performer's current knowledge and skill level and designed to optimize performance on a single, selected skill" (Schempp & Johnson, 2006, p. 29). In other words, teachers become more experienced with deliberate practice and begin to build their repertoire of different teaching experiences as described in Dreyfus and Dreyfus' skill acquisition model.

Reflective teaching is a means to enhance the development of effective teachers (Allen & Casburgue, 2000) and "an expert teacher never stops learning" (Findell, 2006, p.7). In a study conducted by Allen and Casburgue as teachers gained experience, their focus during teaching shifted from their own behaviors (novices) to their students' behaviors (transition between novice and expert) to a combination of their own and their students' behaviors (experts). Although the expert teachers in this study reflected on their

teaching practices four times more frequently than the novice teachers (see also Stough et al., 2001), experts practiced recall and reflection in a more general and less thorough manner. In Lester's (2005) adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model, the teaching experiences and ability to reflect on teaching practices help experts see what is relevant, allowing them to adapt as necessary. "The only difficulty that can arise from a very carefully planned lesson is that students don't always react in the way the teacher had planned" (Findell, 2006, p. 3). In these types of situations expert teachers are able to recognize the atypical (Schempp & Johnson, 2006) and make intuitive and instantaneous decisions to adapt carefully planned lessons to accommodate the needs of students in the class (Findell, 2006; Schempp & Johnson, 2006, Stough et al., 2001). The Dreyfus and Dreyfus novice to expert tool is comparable to numerous pieces of literature on teacher expertise, and provides a foundation for developing knowledge while special educators perform their job duties and advance from novice to expert.

Special educators moving through the novice to expert continuum. In Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) novice stage, referred to in Lester's (2005) adapted version as the advanced beginner phase, special educators deconstruct their task environment into context-free aspects, which allows them to recognize each component of the job without experience (e.g., when teaching a student with a learning disability a novice teacher is able to implement an instructional strategy found in the literature on effective teaching practices for learning disabled students without having prior experience teaching that population of students). Rules such as school disciplinary procedures are given to the novice and advanced beginner, and the primary ways for them to improve at conforming

to the rules are through self-reflection or instructional feedback from a mentor or field supervisor (e.g., principal, university professor).

Second, in the competent stage of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model, special educators will have had considerable experience coping with real teaching situations, and can begin to point out recurrent meaningful component patterns (e.g., barking orders at students with oppositional defiant disorder triggers a power struggle between teacher and student, providing these students with choices diminishes power struggles). The competent special educator begins to put situations into context, and forms guidelines where all aspects of their job are of equal importance. For example, the competent teacher may begin to discover that appropriate student behavior is just as important as academic achievement; experience allows the competent special educator to realize that appropriate student behavior is conducive to academic gains.

Next, in the proficient stage of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' skill acquisition model, special educators for the first time can make aspects of their job meaningful and relevant to a long-term goal. The proficient special educator can take different aspects of their job and decide which components are more or less important depending on their relevance to the long-term goal. At the proficient state, borderline situations begin to occur, in which they question previously accepted perspectives such as following school discipline procedures to send a student who swears to the office (e.g., the students swearing is not worth the risk of suspension and loss of instructional days). During these borderline situations, proficient special educators use a memorized principle called a maxim to determine an appropriate action relevant to the situation. To illustrate the use of a maxim, a proficient special educator would recognize the need to revise a student's annual

Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) upon collecting data that shows student mastery of particular goals and objectives.

Finally, at the expert stage a special educator no longer depends on maxims or guiding principles to make appropriate job-related decisions. Educators are faced with "Ongoing daily school activity characterized by a plethora of routine decisions intermingled with unique situational considerations and intuitive judgment" (Klein, 2007, p. 156). Expert special educators have a repertoire of experienced teaching situations that allows them to intuitively take appropriate action. Klein found that educators have a difficult time making balanced decisions in a state of high emotional arousal. However, under conditions of low to moderate emotional arousal educators who formulated decisions based on the Simple Decision Process, which combines intuition with a systematic approach of deconstructing dilemmas into hierarchical questions (e.g., what season would best suit a fieldtrip to the zoo?) increased their consistency in making unbiased and accurate educational decisions (Klein, 2007).

According to Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) intuitive decision-making skills are possible for the expert because each situation is now associated with a specific response. In addition, experts are capable of making appropriate decisions almost instantaneously (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980). For example, an expert special educator may be carrying out a lesson plan and is immediately able to recognize that majority of the students are not comprehending part of the lesson. In this type of situation, the expert special educator is able to instantaneously make appropriate adaptations, accommodations, and/or modifications to the lesson plan in order to help students succeed; therefore the ability to

selectively filter information and focus on what is important may help special educators effectively manage their job demands.

In dealing with their job demands, a novice special educator may carry out their plans "by the book" with little or no flexibility to adapt, treat knowledge without reference to context, and have rational decision-making skills. Whereas an expert special educator may carry out their plans with the ability to adapt and make adjustments as necessary, see things holistically with reference to context, and have intuitive decision-making skills. Possessing these expert qualities as outlined in the Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) skill acquisition model may make the job demands of a special educator more manageable, thus contributing to the retention of special education teachers. According to Dreyfus and Dreyfus, expert special educators are able see the whole picture of their role as an educator and how each job demand is relevant to helping their students succeed both academically and functionally. Through specific concrete experiences expert special educators base their everyday decisions on the bigger picture of helping students with disabilities, which allows them to make appropriate necessary adjustments in their day-to-day job requirements. In other words, behaving like an expert who has the ability to see the bigger picture with reference to context due to multiple experiences may make the various aspects of a special educators' job more manageable and effective.

Using the novice to expert theory to explore special educators managing their job demands. Role problems are strong contributing factors to special education teacher attrition (Billingsley, 2004a; Billingsley et al., 1993; Shimabukuro et al., 1999; Thornton et al., 2007; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002; Westling & Whitten, 1996). As referenced by Billingsley (2004a) and Darling-Hammond (2004), students with disabilities are

negatively impacted by the shortage of qualified special educators, and the need for a theoretical framework that allows the field an intimate look at individual expert special educators and how from their perspectives they manage the intricacies of their job demands is essential. Looking at the special education teacher shortage utilizing Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model may help draw out knowledge that exists in individual expert special educators to enlighten other special educators on how they can efficiently manage the demands of their job by moving through the novice to expert continuum, and ultimately remain in the field for the benefit of students with disabilities.

Bridging the gap between novice and expert may be a key to reducing special education teacher attrition rates. That is, expert special educators' personal construction of meaning regarding how they handle their job demands can provide direction for novice special educators moving through the novice to expert continuum in the shared "messy and ill-structured real world" (Zane, 2009, p. 83) of special education teaching. According to Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model, as a special educator moves from novice to expert their thinking moves from relying on generalized abstract principles to see the bigger picture to utilizing selective filtering and multiple concrete experiences in order to see what is relevant in the bigger picture and make appropriate decisions when it comes to their work-related duties. Exploring the knowledge of expert special educators who are effectively juggling their job demands in the trenches by being immersed in their surroundings, experiences, and interactions will provide insights into what qualities make a special educator an expert at managing all aspects of their job.

The Job Demands of Special Educators and Role Problems

The role of special education teachers goes beyond instructional time with students. It seems to have evolved into a managerial position in which teachers complete paperwork; coordinate and plan for excessive meetings; and collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, educational assistants, skills trainers, and outside agencies (Cowne, 2005; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002). According to Cowne, special education teachers are expected to be the jack of all trades and the master of none. In studies by Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, and Harris (2001) and Mastropieri (2001) beginning special educators teachers indicated struggles regarding job responsibilities, time management, and professional support. Sixty-eight percent of special education teachers said that they did not have enough time to complete their job-related duties (Morvant, Gersten, Gillman, Keating, & Blake, 1995).

Many special educators' struggles with juggling the demands of their jobs are due, at least in part, to role problems (Billingsley, 2004b; Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Gersten et al., 2001; Morvant et al., 1995). A considerable amount of research indicates that special educators who struggle with role overload are more likely to leave the field (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Miller et al., 1999; Morvant et al., 1995; Plash & Piotrowski, 2006; Westling & Whitten, 1996). Role difficulties have the potential of dissipating once a special educator moves from novice to expert, because according to Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model experts have a more solid identity of their roles than novices. In other words, expert special educators know what the job demands of them and are able to effectively fulfill all aspects of their job requirements. Billingsley (2004b) stated that, "Additional focus must be given to special educators' roles to help

special educators develop clarity about what they are to do and to ensure that they have the conditions necessary to use validated practices" (p. 372).

Role problems. Billingsley (2004b) classified role problems into four categories: (a) role ambiguity, or necessary information not being available for a given position; (b) role conflict, or inconsistent behaviors being expected from an individual; (c) role dissonance, or the teachers' own role expectations being different from the expectation of others, and (d) role overload, or having to do more than is reasonable. All four of these role problems are related (Billingsley, 2004b). For example, role overload can lead to role conflict and vice versa.

In a regression analyses study conducted by Pearson (2008), role overload was the strongest predictor of psychological health and job satisfaction among employed women. Bliese and Castro (2000) found that in cases where job demands are high (e.g., role overload), high role clarity and leadership support help individuals to cope with their job demands more effectively. Therefore some of special educator role problems may be attributed to the challenge one faces when attempting to find similar viewpoints on what the roles and responsibilities of a special educator consists of. Billingsley's (2004b) suggestion of implementing deliberate role design for special educators may be a viable solution to role problems.

To put into perspective the issue of special educators' entanglement in Billingsley's (2004b) four categories of role problems I will review: (a) the connection between the basic instructional duties of special educators and role ambiguity; (b) special educators experiencing role dissonance while delivering instruction with inadequate resources and the stressors of classroom management; (c) role overload stemming from

spending non-instructional time on excessive meetings and an overwhelming amount of paperwork; and (d) how collaboration with colleagues, administrators, and parents can result in role ambiguity and conflict.

The basic instructional duties of a special educator and role ambiguity. Special educators serve in a wide variety of roles in today's classrooms (Cowne, 2005; Wasburn-Moses, 2005), which may be a contributing factor to special educators experiencing role ambiguity. In the following paragraphs, I will explain how special educators are expected to serve in a multitude of roles through managing student behavior (Wasburn-Moses, 2005), implementing federally mandated reform measures, developing and implementing student IEPs, tracking progress, improving student achievement (Vogler & Virtue, 2007), chairing multidisciplinary teams, collaborating with general education counterparts in inclusive settings, working with related service providers in fully-self contained or resource settings, collaborating with parents, and working with administrators (Casey, Dunlap, Brister, & Davidson, 2011). I will also emphasize how secondary special educators take on additional duties such as creating and implementing post-high school transition plans (Rice & Zigmond, 2000). The many hats a special educator is expected to wear can create role ambiguity.

Special education classrooms may contain students with mild to severe disabilities with varying disabling conditions. All special educators are expected to implement reform measures as outlined in IDEA (2004) and NCLB (2001) in order to track and improve student achievement according to students' IEPs (Vogler & Virtue, 2007). Special educators often chair multidisciplinary teams and collaborate with general educators, administrators, diagnosticians, therapists, and parents to develop and

document appropriate programming and placement in student IEPs (Casey et al., 2011).
The multidisciplinary team considers a variety of recent assessments to create an IEP that
meets the academic and behavior needs of students with disabilities (Casey et al., 2011;
Yell, Shriner, & Katsiyannis, 2006). After the IEP is developed, special educators are
responsible for effective implementation (Casey et al., 2011; Yell et al., 2006).

 Special educators often support students in general education classrooms and co-
teach and/or consult with general education counterparts (Kloo & Zigmond, 2008).
Special educators may also teach in self-contained and resource settings, teach social
skills, and even oversee vocational programs. "Secondary special education teachers may
be responsible for teaching an even wider variety of skills than their elementary school
counterparts" (Wasburn-Moses, 2005, p. 151) as they teach more sophisticated content-
areas in addition to teaching basic reading, writing, and math skills (Rice & Zigmond,
2000; Schloss, Smith, & Schloss, 2001; Wasburn-Moses, 2005). Additionally, unlike
elementary special educators, secondary special educators are at the forefront of helping
students with disabilities develop vocation skills, and create and implement post-high
transition plans (Rice & Zigmond, 2000; Schloss et al., 2001; Wasburn-Moses, 2005).
Reviewing the basic instructional duties of special educators in different settings may
help provide some clarity and consistency regarding the varying roles and inconsistent
behaviors expected of special educators.

 The basic instructional duties of special educators include individualizing
instruction to meet the learning characteristics of children with disabilities and manage
behaviors (Gersten et al., 1995; Wasburn-Moses, 2005; Sultana, 1996). In a study
conducted by Wasburn-Moses (2005) two of the most important roles of special

educators were to make accommodations and modifications to tests, texts, and other learning activities; and manage student behavior daily. Despite the promise of individualized instruction in special education, nearly half the special educators in Wasburn-Moses' (2005) study indicated that they spent less than one hour per week working with students one-on-one, and 68% of participants said they spent two or fewer hours working one-on-one with students. Multiple job demands impede special educators from providing individualized instruction to students with disabilities.

Experiencing role dissonance while delivering instruction under challenging circumstances. Often times, special educators come into the field expecting their primary role to be instructing students with disabilities. Special educators may soon come to find that instructing students with disabilities is more challenging with school administration expecting them to carry out tedious reform measures outlined in federal mandates such as NCLB and IDEA 2004. Meeting the requirements of these federal mandates without sufficient resources (Kaufhold et al., 2006) and the complexities of dealing with the intensified behaviors often found in classrooms that contains students with disabilities (Casey et al., 2011; Stephens & Fish, 2010) can create role dissonance among special educators.

NCLB mandated that special education teachers help students with disabilities achieve grade level standards and benchmarks (Office of Human Resources Hawaii Department of Education, 2006). Special educators must strive for their students with disabilities to achieve at grade level through passing high-stakes tests that assess performance on grade level standards and benchmarks (Vogler & Virtue, 2007). Federal mandates such as NCLB force special educators to juggle two or more separate curricula-

-one that matches the general education grade level curriculum in one or more content areas, and another that is outlined in the goals and objectives of each student's IEP. For example, a special education teacher teaching two content areas (e.g., science and math) with an IEP caseload of 15 could be planning for and implementing 30 different plans and/or curricula at any given time. Adding 15 different IEPs to two different content curricula (science and math) equals the special education teacher having to implement 30 (15 IEPs multiplied by 2 curricula) different plans. Many teachers experience role dissonance in these situations, and feel that this expectation is unrealistic in situations where they have to serve students with diverse disabilities in the same class with increasingly high caseloads, especially when much of their instructional time with students are taken away to complete paperwork (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010; Shimabukuro et al., 1999).

In a special education teacher role study done by Gersten et al. (1995), 58% of participants reported that their high and diverse student caseload caused them to experience high levels of stress and decreased feelings of teaching efficacy. One resource teacher raised a reasonable concern that she was unable to meet her students' needs: "I couldn't do any grouping whatsoever. There were … seven different grade levels and two different languages. The way that they are staffing the new model is doing a definite disservice to the students. The ratio … needs to be lower" (Gersten et al., 1995, p. 3). This is a clear example of role dissonance, because it displays how the teacher had different expectations of her role as a special educator when compared to her administration.

Inadequate resources. Attempting to have students with disabilities achieve proficiency on high-stakes tests without adequate resources makes the job of a special education teacher all the more challenging. Resources and supplies can include but are not limited to classroom and instructional supplies such as books, computers, desks, and educational assistants or paraprofessionals. Gersten et al. (1995), Kaufhold et al. (2006), and Tschantz and Markowitz (2002) indicated that special education teachers may be more likely to leave the field if not provided with sufficient resources and supplies to fulfill the requirements of their jobs. More than half of the participants in Kaufhold et al.'s study indicated that they were tired of spending out of pocket monies to meet their job demands and contemplated leaving the field due to a lack of supplies and resources. In addition, 41% of special educators in Gersten et al. (1995) indicated that they had limited supplies to carry out their job demands. Another example of role dissonance comes into play when a special educator in a study done by Stephens and Fish (2010) commented on not having the expected resources to fulfill their job demands:

> My students are much lower level than 5th and 6th grade. However with NCLB, I am supposed to be teaching 5th and 6th grade content, but of course modified down to their level. It would be easier if I had more materials to do that. Like I said, we don't have anything that is on the first grade reading level, which is where my students are. I am having to use resources off of the Internet and programs that I pay for myself to get reading programs and worksheets at their level. (pp. 588-589)

The impact that federal mandates such as NCLB and IDEA have are unknown until they are implemented on the street-level (Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977). Research that

examined how the people in the trenches were implementing these laws indicated that they have negatively impacted the workloads of special educators (Plash & Piotrowski, 2005; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002; Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977).

Classroom management. On top of trying to ensure that a classroom full of students with diverse disabilities meet rigorous grade level standards with limited resources (Gersten et al., 1995; Kaufhold et al., 2006; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002), special education teachers often spend a lot of time disciplining students with disabilities (Casey et al., 2011). Doyle (1986) defined classroom management as the strategies and actions that teachers use to establish and maintain order in their classrooms. Novice special education teachers struggle with classroom management (Casey et al., 2011), and several studies indicated that discipline problems with students are a role related factor that contributes to special education teacher attrition (Billingsley, Bodkins, & Hendricks, 1993; Casey et al., 2011, Gersten et al., 2001). Special educators of students with emotional and behavioral disorders are more likely to leave the field than special educators that serve students with other disabilities (McLesky, Tyler, & Flippin, 2004; Stephens & Fish, 2010).

Participants in Casey et al.'s (2011) study stated that outside factors (e.g., dysfunctional family life) beyond their control negatively affected how their students behaved in the classroom. In Casey et al.'s study (2001), nearly 40% of special educators indicated difficulty meeting the students' social and emotional needs. One participant stated, "I was not prepared to deal with the challenge of keeping students engaged throughout a lesson" (Casey et al., 2011, p. 187). A participant in a study conducted by Stephens and Fish (2010) expressed frustration with a lack of support from administration

and colleagues in implementing behavior intervention plans for students with behavioral disorders,

> We have a behavior plan that we are following and everyone is on board and administration comes in and says that you are doing it all wrong and interrupts a procedure and sets the child way back and that is where I have had frustration. (p. 586)

The participants in Casey et al. and Stephen and Fish' studies expressed frustrations with role dissonance when it comes to both their roles as special educators and the expectations of their administrators.

Role overload due to non-instructional time spent on paperwork and excessive meetings. Special educators reported that paperwork and other job demands surpassed instructional time spent with students (Cowne, 2005; Shimabukuro et al., 1999; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002). The paragraphs to follow will outline the expectations of special educators during non-instructional time, and emphasize how an excess amount of time spent on meetings and paperwork reduces instructional time spent with students and contributes to role overload among special educators (Billingsley, 2004a; DeMik, 2008; Thornton et al., 2007).

During non-instructional time, special educators are expected to plan, coordinate, and attend meetings; attend workshops and trainings; input grades and progress reports; and deal with instructional planning (Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002). Federal law outlined in IDEA 2004 indicates that an administrator should chair IEP meetings, but in practice this duty often falls on special education teachers (Sultana, 1996). Meetings are often held afterschool when the special educator is usually most tired and parents often come

after school for meetings when teachers are attempting to grade papers, do lesson plans, or run out the door after nine hours of work (Chandler, 1983). In a narrative survey, an overwhelming amount of special education teachers in Hawaii expressed their disappointment in constantly having to sacrifice instructional time spent with students to comply with paperwork demands (Shimabukuro et al., 1999).

Special education paperwork demands can consist of filling out evaluation and eligibility information, creating Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), grading papers, filling out report cards, and creating lesson plans. The evaluation, eligibility, and IEP components involve several categories that create more paperwork. For example, the IEP component for a single student with a disability may require paperwork for categories such as present levels of academic and functional performance, assessments, transition statements, goals and objectives, extended school year, and least restrictive environment (Gartin & Murdick, 2005; Yell et al., 2006).

Federal mandates such as IDEA 2004 and NCLB 2001 put pressure on special educators to ensure that student with disabilities are accessing and making academic progress in the general education curriculum, in addition to justifying services through maintaining data concerning the implementation of the goals and objectives outlined in the students' IEPs (Lingo, Barton-Arwood, & Jolivette, 2011). Furthermore, special education teachers are responsible for receiving referrals for students suspected of having a disability, obtaining consent from parents to evaluate their child, administering assessments, conducting annual reviews of IEPs, assuring compliance with procedural safeguards and developing and implementing behavior support plans (DeMik, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, Special Education Programs, n.d.; Yell et al., 2006). The

paperwork demands of a special educator are like an "avalanche of paperwork which the regular class teacher would go on strike before doing, and the product is a work load which is never finished until school ends in June" (Chandler, 1983, p. 127).

Paperwork has been reported to contribute more to the special education teacher shortage than the following factors: (a) years of experience, (b) district poverty, (c) district size, (d) caseload, (e) class size, (f) salary, and (g) behavior problems of students (Carlson et al., 2003; Shimabukuro et al., 1999). Billingsley (2004a), Billingsley et al., (1993), Sultana (1996), Thornton et al. (2007), Tschantz and Markowitz (2002), and Westling and Whitten (1996) identified paperwork as a leading contributor to the special education teacher shortage in the United States.

There is a serious shortage of special education teachers in the United States (Thornton et al., 2007), and according to Executive Director of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDE), Bill East, paperwork is one of several deterrents. East stated, "We need a certain amount of paperwork to implement special education programs. The problem is when paperwork takes away from time on task with the students" (Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002, p. 2). In a narrative study done by DeMik (2008) a participant commented:

> Oh gosh! The paperwork was unbelievable! The paperwork for this particular district was anywhere from 12-15 pages long (length of IEP and supplementary documents). It was all written out. If you had a behavior plan with it, that made it even longer. It took forever and ever and ever! I was given two weeks off with a sub to complete the paperwork. We did them all in the spring, in March, which was very stressful, not only for us, but for the students, because I wasn't there (in

the classroom). I hated being out of the classroom! It's astronomical! Ridiculous! Redundant! (p. 28)

Paperwork may be a contributing factor to role overload, and the overwhelming job demands that special education teachers face overall.

The amount of non-instructional work involved in the field of special education has a direct impact on whether or not special educators choose to stay in the field, particularly because it takes away from instructional time spent with students (Billingsley, 2004a; DeMik, 2008; Sultana, 1996). Shimabukuro et al. (1999) reported that special education teachers in Hawaii felt that the guidelines and procedures outlined in the IDEA law are muddy and ill-conceived. These teachers overwhelmingly maintained that students with disabilities were receiving a low quality education. Narrative comments reflected that special education teachers felt that they were not providing proper services to students with disabilities when much of their time was spent on adhering to paperwork requirements and other non-instructional duties (Shimabukuro et al., 1999). Billingsley (2004a) and Shimabukuro et al. indicated that not only does paperwork and role overload contribute to special education teacher attrition, but it also takes teachers who stay in the profession away from their instructional activities.

Role conflict and ambiguity when collaborating with colleagues, administrators and parents. The role of special education teachers goes beyond managerial and paperwork tasks and instructional duties that involve pushing students with disabilities to meet grade level standards. According to Gersten et al. (1995) and Kaff (2004), special education teachers also create and deliver lessons with related service providers and their general education counterparts, oversee educational assistants

and/or paraprofessionals to ensure student progress and the use of curricular adaptations and modifications in general education settings, and allocate resources for student support. As schools move towards greater inclusion of students with disabilities, many special educators struggle with changing roles while co-teaching, and the lack of support from their colleagues and administrators for their new and often multiplied responsibilities (Billingsley, 2004b). "Additional focus must be given to special educators' roles to help special educators develop clarity about what they are to do and to ensure that they have the conditions necessary to use validated practices" (Billingsley, 2004b, p. 372).

The major goals of co-teaching are to increase instructional options for all students and enhance the participation and academic success of students with disabilities (Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graetz, Norland, Gardizi, & McDuffie, 2005). These primary co-teaching goals are put to a halt when general education teachers have negative attitudes towards the idea of inclusion, and feel inhibited to adequately support students with disabilities (Fuchs, 2010; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003). General educators often get the impression that having students with disabilities in their classes will lower their schools' test scores and deprive them of rewards for high student performance (Sultana, 1996).

Teachers reported that planning time is key to helping all students in an inclusive setting succeed (Fuchs, 2010), yet secondary special educators found it difficult to nearly impossible to find sufficient planning time with their general education co-teachers, especially those who were assigned to teach with more than one general education counterpart for different periods during the school day (Keefe & Moore, 2004; Mastropieri et al., 2005). Mastropieri et al. also reported a lack of equality among co-

teachers at the secondary level; special educators often felt dominated by their general education counterparts. In a narrative study of special education teacher attrition conducted by DeMik (2008) one participant stated,

> I found myself doing a lot more consulting and collaborating with the regular education teachers, and a lot of time just listening to them vent about having kids with disabilities in their class, and so I ended up educating them versus educating my own students or students with a disability. So I decided that I needed to return to get my doctorate to teach teachers how to teach these kids in their class. (p. 25-26)

In addition to collaborating with colleagues, special educators are often the first point of contact for parents (Kaff, 2004). Special educators spend a lot of their time communicating student progress or lack thereof to parents (Cowne, 2005; Kaff, 2004). Much of a special educators after-school hours are spent on collaborating with parents, and at times their advocates, to develop a free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities (Chandler, 1983; Sultana, 1996). Collaborating with parents can be beneficial for students with disabilities, but sometimes communication between parents and special educators can be difficult and time-consuming.

Due process cases have been on the rise and are often a result of parental disagreement with student placement and the requirement of least restricted environment, as well as other components in the IEP (Yeager, Vela, Giese, & Collavo, 2000). When parents file due process complaints it increases the workload of special educators, schools, and entire school districts (Yeager et al., 2000). For example, one special educator noted,

I can't believe she (parent) is taking us to court! We went above and beyond for

him (student). I'm tired of spending countless hours shuffling through files to

look for ridiculous amounts of data to show that we provided him (student) with

every possible service" (personal communication, January 9, 2011).

The gap in special educators' perceived job demands and actual job

demands. The overwhelming working conditions of many special education teachers can

lead to burnout and attrition (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010; Kaff, 2004). Gersten et al.

(2001) indicated that the degree to which educators perceive dissonance between their

expectations about the job and the job's actual requirements is a strong predictor of stress

related to their job responsibilities. Over two-thirds of special educators in one study

indicated that they "had too much to do and too little time to do it" (Gersten et al., 1995,

p. 2). Given the overwhelming variety of job demands in often-times challenging

environments, "Many special education teachers do not survive the path from hopeful

beginner to highly qualified, experienced teacher" (Billingsley, 2004b, p. 371).

Summing up the job demands of special educators and role problems. To

conclude, role problems have exacerbated special educators' abilities to successfully

carry out their job demands. The many duties expected of special educators including

managing student behavior (Wasburn-Moses, 2005); implementing federally mandated

reform measures; developing and implementing student IEPs; (Vogler & Virtue, 2007),

chairing multidisciplinary teams, and collaborating on different levels with colleagues,

parents, and administrators (Casey, Dunlap, Brister, & Davidson, 2011) are inconsistent

and often times unclear (Billingsley, 2004b). The role of secondary special educators has

been documented to include more job duties than that of special educators at the

elementary level (Wasburn-Moses, 2005). Additional job duties at the secondary level include teaching more complex content and developing and implementing post-high transition plans (Rice & Zigmond, 2000), which may lead to more intensified feelings of role ambiguity among secondary special educators.

When special educators are expected to carry out challenging demands such as teaching a high caseload of students with varying disabilities and difficult behaviors to meet grade level standards without sufficient resources (Casey et al., 2011; Kaufhold et al., 2006; Stephens & Fish, 2011) they may experience a heightened sense of role dissonance. Role overload is added to the equation when special educators spend unrealistic amounts of time in meetings and completing paperwork (Billingsley, 2004a; DeMik, 2008; Thornton et al., 2007). Furthermore, with increased demands for inclusive classrooms (Mastropieri et al., 2005) and due process hearings (Yeager et al., 2000) to comply with NCLB 2001 and IDEA 2004, special educators have the added stressors of experiencing role conflict and ambiguity as they try to figure out how to effectively collaborate with co-teachers who have negative connotations associated with inclusion (Fuchs, 2010; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003) and parents who bring about feelings of insignificance and additional work during due process hearing procedures (Yeager et al., 2000).

Role problems may complicate a special educator's ability to successfully carry their job demands and can potentially increase special education teacher attrition rates. Looking at how expert special educators successfully negotiate their job demands in their present working conditions can help with recruitment efforts and possibly close the gap between supply and demand (Shimabukuro et al., 1999).

Role Problems and Special Education Teacher Attrition

According to Shimabukuro et al. (1999) two major factors have helped to increase the demand for qualified special education teachers. First, many teachers leave the field due to retirement and problematic conditions such as the paperwork burden and high caseloads. The system loses the most experienced special education teachers and the ones with the most potential for longevity (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010) as seasoned teachers retire and many beginning teachers report feelings of frustration and burnout (McLeskey, Tyler, & Flippin, 2004). According to Ingersoll and Smith (2004) 40% of beginning teachers are known to leave the field within their first 4 to 5 years of teaching. The attrition rate of special educators in the U.S., more than 13% annually, is among the highest of any teacher group (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010). As Emery and Vandenberg stated, "Ironically, those who are professionally committed to helping high risk children are themselves a high risk group" (p. 119).

Second, the special education population has increased by nearly 20,000 students from 2008 to 2009 (Data Accountability Center, 2009; Data Accountability Center, 2008c). In 2009, over 6.6 million students ages three through 21 received special education and related services in the U.S. (Data Accountability Center, 2009) and more children are diagnosed as needing special education and related services each year (DeMik, 2008; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010). To achieve the desired 1:15 student to teacher ratio in the field of special education (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010), it is estimated that a population of students with disabilities that sits at nearly seven million calls for approximately 460,000 special educators to meet the needs of these students (Data Accountability Center, 2009), yet the U.S. employed about 400, 000 special

educators (Data Accountability Center, 2008a; Data Accountability Center, 2008b).

Furthermore, 47 states in the U.S. employ noncertified special education teachers to teach

students with disabilities (Data Accountability Center, 2009). The increasing enrollment

of students with disabilities paired with a shortage of special education teachers is

evidence that "well trained, committed professionals available to provide high quality

education to students with disabilities is distressingly insufficient" (Miller, Brownell &

Smith, 1999, p. 202).

Role problems often lead to stress, burnout, and ultimately attrition (Gersten et

al., 1995; Miller et al., 1999; Plash & Piotrowski, 2006; Shek, 2007; Westling & Whitten,

1996). Role problems associated with burnout often involve "a syndrome of emotional

exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur

among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind" (Maslach & Jackson, 1986, p.

99). Plash and Piotrowski reported that stress, often derived from role problems, is a

leading factor in special education teacher attrition. For example, during the first year of

their two-year longitudinal study, Miller et al. found that "stayers" indicated that they

stressed significantly less than "leavers." A dominant theme in multiple studies showed

that special educators who left the field were consumed by role problems and

overwhelmed by multiple job duties (DeMik, 2008; Gersten et al., 1999; Plash &

Piotrowski, 2006; Shek, 2007; Westling & Whitten, 1996). Sultana (1996) reported that

17% of special educators identified work overload as a reason why special education

teachers transfer to general education positions. All participants in Demik's (2008)

special education teacher attrition study struggled with finding time for planning lessons,

meeting with general education teachers, taking a break, or even eating lunch. Workplace

manageability strategies may help special educators stay in the field to service students with disabilities (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010).

The price of burnout and role problems. There are high individual educator and system costs when role problems lead to burnout and the attrition of special education teachers (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010). When burnt out, the individual educator increases their health risks such as recurrent flu symptoms, colds, and infections (Maslach, Jackson, & Lieter, 1996). Furthermore, burnout could cause the individual educator to lose out on trainings, feel inadequate and ineffective as an educator, and experience decreased motivation and job satisfaction (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010). The high turnover and burnout rate of special education teachers costs the education system a plethora of resources put into specialized training, because the influx of non-certified teachers necessitates continual training (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010). In addition, absenteeism associated with role problems and special educator burnout may negatively impact the services provided to students with disabilities (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010).

Importance of Qualified Teachers to Students with Disabilities

Quality teachers have a direct impact on improving student achievement (Billingsley, 2004a; Darling-Hammond, 2004). Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997) found that teachers have much more influence on student academic gains than other factors such as class size and composition. Darling-Hammond and Youngs (2002) found that the following teacher qualifications positively affect student achievement: (a) academic and verbal ability, (b) subject matter knowledge, (c) knowledge about teaching and learning obtained through teacher preparation coursework and experiences, (d) teaching

experience, and (e) a combination of qualifications measured by teacher certification. Although several teacher attributes contribute to student gains, studies conducted in California schools indicated that teacher certification status played the biggest role in student achievement in math and reading (Darling-Hammond, 2004). This is a clear indicator that qualified teachers play a major role in helping children become academically successful.

The shortage of certified special education teachers impedes students with disabilities from receiving a high quality education. High rates of special education teacher attrition allow many students with disabilities to receive inappropriate instruction from novice, uncertified special education teachers in unstable learning environments (Miller et al., 1999). Many schools that serve a high proportion of low-income, at risk, and special education students lack the resources to obtain qualified special education teachers. To compensate for the special education teacher shortage, schools and districts have been known to reduce services to students with disabilities and raise the special education teacher to student ratio (Billingsley, 1993; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996). To further compensate for the shortage in certified special education teachers, schools and districts hire uncertified teachers to work with students with disabilities. This is especially costly for students with disabilities, because "those students who need the most assistance lose critical learning opportunities as these new teachers struggle to figure out what to do" (Billingsley, 2004b, p. 370).

A special education teacher shortage can also leave students with disabilities undiagnosed, because general education teachers often consult with experienced special educators prior to referring a child for a suspicion of having a disability (DeMik, 2008).

When students with special needs are not identified for special education and related services, it can lead to damaging learning experiences (Billingsley, 2004a; Darling-Hammond, 2004). Students with disabilities are the ones who suffer from consequences related to the special education teacher shortage. According to Billingsley (2004a) and Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1996), for students with disabilities these consequences include inadequate educational experiences, reduced achievement levels, and low competence upon entering the workforce.

Helping Special Educators Cope with Role Problems

In order to contextualize findings from this study, I will briefly review solutions that may help retain special educators. Mentoring (DeMik, 2008; Eson-Brizo, 2010; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Kennedy & Burstein, 2004; Whitaker, 2000; White & Mason, 2006) through enlightened professional development (Odom, 2009) has been show to help reduce special education teacher attrition rates. Multiple strategies to help reduce the paperwork burden with the intent to alleviate role overload among special educators include changing staffing patterns, early-release time (Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002), pre-made templates, technology, and more funding (Shek, 2007; Shimabukuro et al., 1999). Finally, increased administrative support to help reduce role problems and help special educators cope with stress (Kaff, 2004; Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005) will be discussed.

Mentoring through enlightened professional development. DeMik (2008) stated that, "First-year teachers of special education need time, experience, and support from experienced educators to develop their own sense of security" (p. 23). Pairing a beginning teacher with an experienced teacher, more commonly referred to as mentoring,

may help to reduce job stress, increase collegial support, and decrease attrition rates (Kennedy & Burstein, 2004; White & Mason, 2006). Although several studies show a strong correlation between mentoring and outcomes such as job effectiveness and intent to remain in special education (Eson-Brizo, 2010; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Whitaker, 2000), Andrews and Quinn (2005) found that the quality and quantity of mentor support varied widely. Implementing a consistent mentoring program with fidelity may help retain novice special education teachers.

If the goal is for novice special educators to implement and maintain the use of effective practices, effectively manage their job demands, and be retained in the field than it is logical to provide them with consistent enlightened professional development, a type of mentoring and ongoing support that has some empirical support (Odom, 2009). Enlightened professional development provides educators with the following types of ongoing support: (a) team building and collaboration with colleagues, (b) communities of practice where they can share and relate to colleagues, (c) on-line instruction or professional development through the Internet, (d) ongoing coaching and consultation from a veteran teacher or mentor that has expertise, (e) web-based video that can help teachers self-reflect and (f) web-based interactive systems such as *Elluminate* or blogs that can conveniently enhance professional development (Odom, 2009; Pianta, 2006). Having expert special education teachers provide enlightened professional development to novice special education teachers may help the novice special educator deal more effectively with the different aspects of their job demands.

Reducing the paperwork burden. Three goals of the 2004 amendments of IDEA were to better align IDEA with NCLB, conserve time, and alleviate special education

paperwork by making significant changes in the IEP documentation process (Gartin &

Murdick 2005). One of the changes made was to add the requirement for students to

participate in alternative assessments when the severity of their disability precluded their

participation in the typical statewide proficiency test, even with accommodations.

Flowers, Ahlgrim-Delzell, Browder, and Spooner (2005) indicated that a high percentage

of teachers who include their students in these alternate assessments saw no improvement

in the child's quality of education and noted that "the process created a paperwork

burden" (p. 88). In regards to reducing paperwork and conserving time, other major

changes made to the documentation process of the IEP include written documentation

requirements to excuse team members and amend the IEP meeting without an additional

meeting (Gartin & Murdick, 2005). However, these changes inadvertently created excess

documentation for special educators. The intent of the legislation to bring the IEP in sync

with NCLB and reduce paperwork was admirable, but "the actual implementation may

result in an increase in paperwork" (Gartin & Murdick, 2005, p. 331).

In an attempt to seek ways to reduce paperwork, Project Forum and NASDE held

a policy forum in 2002. The report prepared by Tschantz and Markowitz (2002)

explained that on average, special education teachers spent an average of 2 to 4 hours at

each IEP meeting and 6 to 10 hours developing each of those IEPs. Perhaps the strategies

these teachers used to develop their IEPs were too time-consuming. According to

Tschantz and Markowitz, these teachers handwrote the IEPs instead of using computers.

Shek (2007) and Tschantz and Markowitz reported that Congress and other advocates

have targeted technology as an effective way to reduce paperwork and maximize

teachers' instructional time. Shek also reported that when special educators are provided

with laptop computers, they are able to take notes and develop IEPs during IEP meetings. This saves teachers the trouble of doing paperwork later. Despite the promise of technology to reduce the paperwork burden, a special education teacher of twenty-five years explained how she still spends an average of 7 hours a week doing paperwork even with her top of the line computer and accessibility to special education forms and templates on the web (Shek, 2007). If the teachers created the forms used, they could possibly make the process less time-consuming, because they are the ones who have to use it (Shimabukuro et al., 1999).

Other strategies suggested to help make the paperwork in special education more manageable include checklists, early release time, substitute teachers, a list of generic IEP goals and objectives to pull from, and trainings that address the continually changing forms (Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002; Shimabukuro et al., 1999). More funding could result in a centralized technology system that allows teachers to access the records of students at different schools (Shek, 2007). This could save teachers time from waiting for student files to be sent to the receiving school. Teachers also suggested that the development of a national exemplar IEP would help to alleviate inconsistencies and the time-consuming tasks involved in developing IEP (Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002). To alleviate the time special education teachers spend rescheduling reevaluation, eligibility, and IEP meetings, schools across the United States are encouraging the use of video and phone conferences (Shek, 2007). This strategy allows the meeting to take place even if attendees are in different places. Shek reported that some people are against virtual meetings, because it replaces human contact and can take away from interactively discussing issues.

Billingsley (2004b) stated that, "role problems significantly interfere with special educators' job satisfaction and their ability to be effective with their students" (p. 47). Special education teachers suggested that their schools review their job descriptions in order to come up with effective staffing patterns that will assist them in handling the non-instructional aspects of IEP procedures (Carlson et al., 2003; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002). This may increase the time teachers spend with students. Teachers interviewed in the SPeNSE paperwork study reported that they spent less time doing paperwork related to special education when they had clerical assistance from a paraprofessional, volunteer, or secretary (Carlson et al., 2003).

Increased administrative support. Increased administrative support to help special educators cope with stress can potentially reduce role problems. Viable solutions such as administrators providing special educators sufficient planning time and resources to effectively teach students (Kaff, 2004; Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005), having educators attend stress management groups (Cecil & Forman, 1990; Cheek, Bradley, Parr, & Lan, 2003), involving special educators in decisions related to special education programs and discipline, improving administrator-teacher relationships (Prather-Jones, 2011; Gersten et al., 1995; Westling & Whitten, 1996), reducing caseloads (Fore, Martin, & Bender, 2002), and providing high role clarity for special educators (Bliese & Castro, 2000) will be discussed.

Administrators can provide a venue for special educators to attend stress management groups that rely on cognitive behavior techniques and coping strategies to help combat stress (Cecil & Forman, 1990; Cheek, Bradley, Parr, & Lan, 2003). Although these studies did not specifically target special educators, administrators may

want to consider multiple treatment components used with teachers such as counseling, hypnosis, rational emotive therapy, relaxation, nutrition, exercise, electronic networking, and staff development workshops that have been shown to positively correlate with decreased symptoms of burnout, increased feelings of personal accomplishment, and reduced attrition rates (Bamford, Grange, & Jones, 1990; Cecil & Forman, 1990; Cheek et al., 2003; Westling, Herzog, Cooper-Duffy, Prohn, & Ray, 2006).

Special educators often feel that they lack involvement in making decisions about the special education programs in their schools (Gersten et al., 1995; Westling & Whitten, 1996). Many special educators believe that their ill feelings associated with role problems can be greatly reduced if administrators involve them more in the decision making process regarding special education programs. One special education teacher commented, "But I know that my word as no clout whatsoever. That I can be easily overridden by people in administrative positions, people who have *never* even met the child" (Gersten et al., 1995, p. 5). If administrators took teacher suggestions into consideration, they could not only potentially reduce role problems, but also possibly improve administrator-teacher relationships. One means to achieving good administrator-teacher relationships is through questionnaires. Administrators can provide special education teachers with quarterly questionnaires to help identify environmental, organizational, and support factors that need attention (Westling & Whitten, 1996). Special educators who had good relationships with their administrators and felt supported by them reported that they had "…school principals who enacted appropriate discipline, included teachers in the decision making behind disciplinary actions, and demonstrated respect and appreciation for the teachers and their work" (Prather-Jones, 2011).

Administrators might also help to reduce the role problems of special education teachers by allowing them more planning and collaboration time with colleagues, reducing caseload and class size, ensuring that they have enough resources in the classroom to effectively teach students with disabilities, and recognizing their efforts (Kaff, 2004; Schlichte et al., 2005). With inclusion on the rise and NCLB raising the expectations for students with disabilities, it is crucial that special education teachers have time to partner with general education teachers. Planning and collaboration time can also allow for teachers to analyze their resources and supplies. Fore, Martin, and Bender (2002) suggested that administrators reduce the caseloads and class size of special education teachers in order to reduce stress levels and provide the individualized instruction needed for student success in special education classrooms.

According to Bliese and Castro (2000), adequate support from leaders paired with high role clarity can help workers manage their job demands more effectively. If administrators took an active role in creating clear and deliberate role designs for special educators than there is more potential for special educators to accurately and appropriately carry out the duties of their jobs (Billingsley, 2004b).

Conclusion

In summary, the novice to expert continuum, which moves through the five stages of novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and finally expert (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980), helps to contextualize what it takes to be an expert special educator who is able to juggle the many tasks of the job effectively. Experience, reflection and the ability to adapt are common themes in the teacher expertise literature (Allen & Casbergue, 2000; Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Findell, 2006; Schempp & Johnson, 2006,

Stough et al., 2001); these traits align with Dreyfus and Dreyfus' idea of an expert. The novice to expert theory will be used to frame and analyze the results of this study. Through interviews, observations, teacher-kept time journals, and document analyses special attention will be paid to how a special educator might move through the novice to expert continuum and the characteristics and traits associated with experts that are reported to successfully facilitate negotiating the job demands of a special education teacher.

The job demands of special education teachers require that they wear many hats and juggle a multitude of tasks (Cowne, 2005), which can potentially lead to role problems. Special education role overload can stem from paperwork and excessive meetings. Such role overload exacerbates the multifaceted and often times arduous job demands of a special educator (Cowne, 2005; Sultana, 1996). Not only does the paperwork and meetings involved in special education add to the job stress of special educators, it also takes away from instructional time with students (Cowne, 2005; Shimabukuro et al., 1999; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002) and can create role dissonance and conflict.

Additionally, special educators experience role dissonance when they are expected to deliver instruction under challenging circumstances. Often, special educators are expected to implement a variety of curricula and IEPs with insufficient resources to a high caseload of students with varying disabilities (Gersten et al., 1995; Kaufhold et al., 2006; Sultana, 1996), and spend a lot of time implementing effective classroom management strategies (Casey et al., 2011). Special educators often get overloaded and feel the pressure of complying with federal mandates such as NCLB, which emphasizes

that students with disabilities meet proficiency on high-stakes assessments (Vogler & Virtue, 2007).

Much of a special educator's time may be spent on collaborating with parents and their general education counterparts to plan, deliver, and make modifications to the curriculum (Gersten et al., 1995; Kaff, 2004). As advocates for students with disabilities, special educators frequently encounter opposition when attempting to mainstream students with disabilities into inclusive settings (Fuchs, 2010; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Sultana, 1996). On top of collaborating and sometimes even educating general educators, special education teachers also help to guide and supervise educational assistants, paraprofessionals, and skills trainers as they work with students that have disabilities (Cowne, 2005). Moreover, special education teachers are often the first point of contact for parents of students with disabilities (Kaff, 2004). Serving in multiple capacities are examples of role dissonance and ambiguity.

Research has shown that role problems, which frequently lead to stress and burnout, contribute to special education teacher attrition (DeMik, 2008; Plash & Piotrowski, 2006; Shek, 2007; Westling & Whitten, 1996). Paperwork, a contributor to role overload, is also a culprit of the special education teacher shortage in the United States (Billingsley, 2004a; Billingsley et al., 1993; Thornton et al., 2007; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002; Shimabukuro et al., 1999; Sultana, 1996; Westling & Whitten, 1996). Stress, burnout, and role problems can result in health issues, decreased job satisfaction, specialized trainings, and feelings of ineffectiveness for special educators (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010). It can also be costly to the education system

as they drain resources to train special educators and experience an increase in absenteeism (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010).

Several scholars stressed the importance that quality special educators have to students with disabilities. For example, Darling-Hammond and Youngs (2002), Darling-Hammond (2004), Billingsley (2004a), and Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997) have emphasized the importance that quality teachers have on student achievement. Furthermore, researchers have emphasized the damage that an unprepared and unqualified special education teacher can cause to the educational opportunities and outcomes of students with disabilities (Billingsley, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Miller et al., 1999). Role problems can lead to special education teacher attrition; therefore researching ways to reduce role problems may help retain quality special educators who can help improve the academic and functional outcomes of students with disabilities.

Strategies that help special educators cope with role problems and have the potential to decrease attrition rates include mentoring (Eson-Brizo, 2010; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Kennedy & Burstein, 2004; Whitaker, 2000; White & Mason, 2006); enlightened professional development (Odom, 2008; Pianta, 2006); increased administrative support to provide stress management groups that offer cognitive behavior techniques available (Cecil & Forman, 1990; Cheek et al., 2003), reduce caseloads and class size (Fore et al., 2005), involve special educators in decision making processes, ensure that ample resources are available for special educators to carry out their job demands (Kaff, 2004; Schlichte et al., 2005), and set clear expectations for special educators (Billingsley, 2004b; Bliese & Castro, 2000). In addition, Carlson et al. (2003),

Shek (2007), Shimabukuro et al. (1999), and Tschantz and Markowitz (2002) offered strategies to help make the paperwork in special education more manageable. Some of these include checklists, early release time, substitute teachers, a list of generic IEP goals and objectives to pull from, technology, and trainings that address the continually changing forms.

It is evident that role problems have contributed strongly to attrition in the field of special education. A substantial amount of research clearly indicates that the multifaceted and often strenuous job demands involved in special education contribute to attrition (Billingsley, 2004a; Billingsley et al., 1993; DeMik, 2008; Plash & Piotrowski, 2006; Shek, 2007; Shimabukuro et al., 1999; Thornton et al., 2007; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002; Westling & Whitten, 1996). Few special education teacher attrition studies focus on solutions that address role problems (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010). To be part of the solution of helping to reduce the special education teacher shortage in the United States, I will investigate how expert special education teachers construct their perceived roles and effectively manage their job related duties. This study provides insight to special education teachers about how to make the demands of their jobs more manageable.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

In this qualitative case study I explored how three expert special education teachers on Oahu successfully negotiate their job demands. Each of the three cases were bound by one secondary school in the Leeward District on Oahu and the makeup of the individual classrooms of each of the three expert special education teachers. Data collected throughout the study (i.e., teacher-kept time journals, semi-structured interviews, observations, and various documents that support the preceding data forms) relied on the beliefs and perceptions of participating expert special education teachers and the researcher. Data were analyzed by summarizing findings from individual cases and then using cross-case analysis to uncover underlying themes.

Research Questions

The literature base that guided the research question identified a connection between the shortage of special education teachers and role overload (Billingsley, 2004; Miller et al., 1999; Plash & Piotrowski, 2006; Shek, 2007; Sultana, 1996; Westling & Whitten, 1996). Solutions to role overload may emerge by exploring how three expert special education teachers on the Leeward coast of Oahu successfully manage their job demands. The following research questions were explored:

1. How do three expert special education teachers on the Leeward coast of Oahu construct their perceived role?

2. How do three expert special education teachers on the Leeward coast of Oahu successfully negotiate their job demands?

a. What supports, resources, behaviors and/or experiences have helped three expert special educators on the Leeward coast of Oahu effectively juggle their job demands?

b. What skills do three expert special educators on the Leeward coast of Oahu possess that helps them to successfully manage all aspects of their job requirements?

Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to select one secondary school on the Leeward coast of Oahu that employed three expert special educators who were asked to participate in the study. According to the Hawaii Department of Education, the greatest demand for teachers is in the more rural areas of Oahu, away from the major population center of Honolulu. The schools on the Leeward coast of Oahu are further away from Honolulu than schools on the Windward coast and schools located in Central Oahu. With high school dropout rates reaching six million nationally and the reality of more than 25% of high school students reading significantly below grade level, secondary schools are in dire need of expert teachers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). In order to focus on schools in Oahu that need to retain special educators most, one secondary Leeward school was purposefully selected.

Purposeful sampling is a form of sampling in qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2007; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006) in which the intent is "sampling for information-rich cases that hold the greatest potential for generating insight about the phenomenon of interest" (Jones et al., 2006, p.66). Purposefully selecting a secondary school with a high need for special educators will provide insight into how experts have managed to

generally manage their job demands effectively in a work environment that may be particularly challenging. Each of the three cases were bound by the secondary Leeward school and by the confinements of the teachers' individual classrooms.

Reputational-case sampling, a type of purposeful sampling in qualitative methods where participants are recommended by knowledgeable experts as the best examples for the phenomena under study (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997), was used to select five expert special education teachers at the Leeward secondary school. In order to control for participant attrition, two of the nominated expert special educators served as alternate participants. Secondary special educators are expected to teach students with disabilities a wider variety of skills than their elementary counterparts (Rice & Zigmond, 2000; Schloss et al., 2001; Wasburn-Moses, 2005); therefore purposefully selecting secondary expert special educators provided more insight into how they effectively negotiate their job requirements in what may be considered a more demanding setting. Case studies generally focus on "several instrumental cases in order to draw some conclusions or theorize about a general condition or phenomena" (Jones et al., 2006, p. 55). Giving experts in the field of special education such as principals and special education department heads the ability to nominate expert special educators based on Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1981) expert theoretical construct is a form of reputational-case sampling, because both the principal and special education department head are knowledgeable about expert special educators based on their interactions with and observations of teachers at the school.

For the purposes of this study, I defined expert special education teachers as: (a) having a license to teach special education in the state of Hawaii, (b) teaching special

education in Hawaii for a minimum of six years, and (c) nominated by their principals and special education department chair as an expert special education teacher generally who effectively negotiates the demands of their job. The criteria for defining an expert special educator as someone who has taught for a minimum of six years derived from research reporting that teacher expertise is linked to years of experience (Berliner, 1986; Berliner, 2001; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2001). Some research indicated that it takes three to five years of professional experience to demonstrate competence in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Eraut, 1994). Additionally, beginning special educators are most likely to leave the field within their first five years of teaching (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; McLeskey et al., 2004). That is, this research indicates that once special educators get over the five year hump they are more likely to remain in the field and potentially become experts who can generally juggle all the demands of their job effectively.

Certified teachers are part of the expert criteria in this study, because research indicated that a combination of qualifications measured by teacher certification are one of the components found to positively affect student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). The nomination form that the principal and special education department chair used to select five expert special educators stems from the expert category in the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition adapted by the Professional Standards for Conservation (PSC), an Institute that provides information about professionals from all disciplines in the United Kingdom (as cited in Lester, 2005) (see Appendix A). I created the nomination form for expert special educators by taking Dreyfus' (1981) detailed characteristics of experts (deep tacit understanding, ease with job performance,

independence, holistic grasp, and vision of what is possible) and categorizing them into the five general domains of expertise defined by the PSC idea of an expert: knowledge, work standards, autonomy, coping with complexity, and perception of context (as cited in Lester, 2005). After morphing Dreyfus' expert characteristics with PSC's five expert domains, I individualized the nomination form to fit the specific job demands of a special educator (see Appendix A). Out of the five nominated expert special educators, the three at the top of the list were selected to participate. The other two served as alternate participants in case anyone decided to withdraw from participating in the study. I collected and reported detailed demographic and background information including years of teaching, ethnicity, student caseload, gender, and age for each participant through observations and interviews.

For ethical purposes, this investigation was approved by the University of Hawaii's Internal Review Board (IRB) prior to implementation. All participants were asked to read and sign an informed consent form before agreeing to participate in this study (see Appendix B). This consent form informed the participants about the details of the study and any risks that they may encounter during the course of the study. It also emphasized that participation in the study is voluntary. Participants participated in this study if they thoroughly read, reviewed, and signed the consent form.

Setting

The interview, observation, and collection of documents took place in the teachers' natural teaching and working environment. The teachers were asked to document their work related duties in a teacher-kept time journal while in their natural working environment. The number of students in the classroom, grades, ages, and

disability categories of students, content area(s) taught, and the physical makeup of the classroom were described after I made site visits to each of the three teachers' classrooms. In addition, I described the school as a whole by providing demographic information including but not limited to the number of students attending the school and on free and reduced lunch, percentage of special education population broken down by disability categories, school's Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) status, faculty size, and the number of special education teachers employed at the school.

Measures

I used teacher-kept time journals, transcribed semi-structured interviews that have been audio-taped, detailed observation field notes, and other documents (e.g., meeting minutes, lesson plans) that helped to triangulate the data to describe the resources, experiences, supports, behaviors, and skills that these expert special education teachers used to manage all aspects of their jobs. I first had participants fill out their teacher-kept time journals. Second, I conducted the semi-structured interviews. Third, I observed the participants in their natural work environment. Finally, I collected any additional documents that helped to corroborate the preceding data forms. I had participants complete their teacher-kept time journals and conducted the semi-structured interviews in order to get a glimpse of what their typical workdays were like prior to conducting observations. Collecting corroborating documents last helped me to request for documents that were mentioned or used in the teacher-kept time journals, semi-structured interviews, and observations.

Teacher-kept time journals. I asked participating teachers to keep time journals that documented their work-related duties for an entire work week that was different from the

days that I shadowed them. I asked participants to select a work week to complete their time journals that was typical of their job-related duties. That is, a work week that did not occur during participants' down times, which could have been right before Christmas break or during the time period that students took the Hawaii State Assessment. I provided the teachers with a one week supply of daily calendars that separated the day into 60 minute intervals (see Appendix C). The teachers were asked to document their work-related duties from Monday through Friday and were instructed to document the sequence of events that occurred every 60 minutes during their work day in bullet or agenda form. At the end of each work-day, participants were asked to reflect on their work day in paragraph form. Asking them to provide a bulleted outline every 60 minutes during their workday, and reflecting on the events that occurred during their workday daily helped preserve their memory of daily activities. The teacher-kept time journals gave a more vivid picture of how the teachers spent their time completing job related duties and provided a rich description of the teachers' typical work week.

Interview questions. I created the interview questions to directly address the research questions (see Appendix D). I attempted to get the participants to describe their perceived roles and share resources, supports, experiences, behaviors, and skills that helped them effectively manage their job demands. I developed the interview questions in an open-ended manner that aimed to avoid "yes" and "no" answers and encouraged participants to respond in narrative form. Given the depth of the questions, I provided participants with the interview questions a couple of days prior to the actual interview to allow them time to think about their answers. Furthermore, I chose to use a semi-structured approach to the interviews in order to illuminate the best of both structured and

unstructured interview approaches. Structured interviews help researchers deal with specific data that needs to be cross-referenced, and unstructured interviews give researchers the ability to ask unscripted questions in response to the interviewees' answers to better hone in on the phenomena (Maxwell, 2005). I piloted my interview questions with two special education teachers to assess for potential problems with the design of my questions prior to conducting interviews with the participants chosen for this study.

The location and time of the interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants. All interviews were audio-taped using a digital recorder. I scheduled one interview with each participant, and estimated that each interview would last for 45 minutes. I conducted interviews in an informal "talk story" manner in order to establish a comfortable rapport with the participants.

Observations. Classroom observations were conducted for each participant for two entire work days. These observations involved me shadowing the participants for two entire workdays, and provided information to help triangulate participants' responses to the interview questions. During these observations, I documented expert special education teachers' behaviors related to how they manage their job demands in their natural work environment. During the observations, I was an extra body that sat in an empty desk at the back of the classroom. I used duration recording to document the amount of time participants were engaged in different behaviors. Based on my review of the literature regarding what constitutes a special educator's job demands, I coded predetermined categories of teacher behaviors such as non-instructional time spent on paperwork and meetings (Chandler, 1983; Gartin & Murdick, 2005; Shimabukuro et al.,

1999; Sultana, 1996; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002), instructional time spent with students (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010; Kaff, 2004; Vogler & Virtue, 2007), and collaboration with colleagues (DeMik, 2008; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010; Kaff, 2004; Sultana, 1996). In addition to coding time participants spend on activities, I took anecdotal notes on what teachers were doing, including noting time engaged in various tasks, and asked for clarification regarding activities and strategies during natural breaks during the day.

Additional corroborating documents. In addition to the time journals, I asked participants to provide all documents mentioned in their interviews and time journals. Documents included IEP templates, weekly calendars, and to-do-lists . For confidentiality purposes, the participants were asked to omit any identifiable information listed on the documents.

Validity Checks

The previously described measures necessitate triangulation, intensive involvement, respondent validation commonly known as member checks, and numerically expressing how many times certain terms and/or concepts are mentioned by participants, which Maxwell (2005) described as forms of validity test types for qualitative research. Use of multiple sources of data attempts to establish triangulation, the process of verifying information from multiple sources (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2005). I used additional corroborating documents to triangulate participants' (a) responses to interview questions, (b) observed behaviors, and (c) teacher-kept journals.

Intensive involvement occurred as I spent two entire work days with each participant. I obtained rich data through intense observations that increased the potential

for providing more complete data about specific events than any other method (Maxwell, 2005). I also obtained rich data through transcribing the interviews verbatim. The rich data captured through intensive involvement of shadowing participants and transcriptions of interviews were analyzed and compiled in numerical expressions (Maxwell, 2005). For example, all three participants may utilize paraprofessionals during non-instructional time and instructional time spent with students as a strategy to help them manage their job demands. All three participants may document that they utilize paraprofessionals in their journal five times per day for one entire five day work week. With all three participants combined, this would mean that I could numerically express that the participants mentioned the narrative expression of "utilizing a paraprofessional" 75 times.

Once all of the raw data were collected, analyzed, and coded for themes (see Data Analysis), I conducted a focus group meeting where all three participants met with me for approximately 60-90 minutes to review my preliminary analyses regarding the themes that have emerged. I was interested in their views on the preliminary analyses as well as what perspectives might be missing. In qualitative research conducting a focus group meeting for this purpose is also known as respondent validation or member checking; a venue for the researcher to minimize the likelihood of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants have said or done (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). In qualitative research, this technique is critical for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and involves "taking data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account" (Creswell, 2007, p. 208).

In addition, all of the data collected for this study was given to a faculty member in special education at the University of Hawaii who is experienced in the area of qualitative research. The faculty member was used as a consultant to externally audit the quality of research involved in this study. This external auditor had no personal connection to the study, and helped to check the integrity of the findings, interpretations, and conclusions (Creswell, 2007).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I was the direct source of data collection and interpretation. I possess a social constructivist view of the world, which suits the design of my study. Social constructivism is often considered an interpretive type of worldview approach (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Maxwell, 2005) in which the researcher uses the people most closely involved in the given situation to extract understanding of that particular situation. As the researcher, I tried to see the situation through the eyes of the participants so that I could gain the most intimate understanding possible of how the participants successfully negotiated their job demands as special educators. I served as an outsider sitting in on the class (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2005) to make sense of the meanings that participants had about the situation, which Creswell (2007) emphasized as the goal of social constructivist type research. Serving as an outsider during the course of this study required me to report the views of the participants rather than reporting my own personal views on the phenomena (Creswell, 2007).

My experience in the field of special education most likely created biases during the course of this study. I taught students in Hawaii with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities in the field of special education for six years. When I first got into the field, I

believed that my main job would be to teach students with disabilities and help them improve both academically and functionally. I quickly learned during my first couple of years that a big part of my job was to attend and run IEP meetings, collaborate with parents, and complete (more than what I thought was necessary) paperwork to document the special education programming and placement of students with disabilities. I also felt like excess paperwork and meetings took away from my instructional responsibility to my students. I was sure that going into this job, I would have the necessary resources and supplies to carry out my teaching duties, and was proved wrong when given three different general education (math, science, and art) curricula to teach with little supplies to carry out this duty. I remember spending my own money on supplies and never really knowing who to turn to for help. I felt like I had multiple bosses, because I had a special education department head, an assigned mentor who never taught special education, multiple general education department heads for the different content areas I taught, a principal, and a vice-principal all giving me their different perspectives on how to be an effective special educator. It was confusing and often times frustrating to have so many different views on what it takes to successfully execute my job duties, especially when I was never given a clear definition of what my role was.

After being a classroom teacher, I became a Resource Teacher for special education teachers in Hawaii for the past five years. Some of the responsibilities of a special education Resource Teacher include but are not limited to training special educators on compliance issues and teaching strategies, monitoring special education data, working with the Attorney General's office to help with due process cases, and helping administrators implement federal and state initiatives. Similar to my experience

as a classroom special educator, I was never given guidelines or a description of what my job entailed as a special education Resource Teacher. Not having a clearly defined role while serving in the capacity of a special education Resource Teacher allowed me the flexibility to create my own guidelines of what I perceived to be my job responsibilities. My main perceived job responsibility as a special education Resource Teacher was to help other special educators carry out their job demands through consultations and trainings. In my role I also served as a clerk to the Attorney General's office, and a compliance police officer who hounded schools and special educators about overdue paperwork. At times, I felt like my job as a special education Resource Teacher amounted to nothing but the middleman between state and individual schools, because I was often expected to do the state's dirty work of delivering bad news to schools. Not having a clearly defined role often made me unclear about whether or not I was receiving the proper support from my boss and colleagues.

These roles in special education may cause me to have preconceived notions about the job duties of special education teachers. Biases have transpired from these experiences (e.g. lack of administrative support, other IEP team members putting all responsibilities regarding the student on the special educator, more emphasis placed on test scores than meeting the needs of students with disabilities). My interactions with multiple special education teachers in the role of a special education Resource Teacher have allowed me to see a broader context related to the job demands involved in special education. I have helped a variety of special education teachers with the duties of their job, and a fair amount of variability exists when it comes to the job demands of different types of special education teachers.

Data Analysis

Once the data were collected, I organized into four categories: (a) transcribed interviews, (b) observation field notes, (c) documents, and (e) teacher-kept time journals. First, the audio-taped interviews were transcribed. Second, the teacher-kept time journals and transcribed interviews were analyzed along with the documents and observation field notes. Third, I analyzed each case individually. Fourth, I engaged in cross-case analysis to uncover patterns and any emerging themes (Creswell, 2007). This type of cross-case analysis required me to carefully examine the words and actions used by the participants to convey their experiences of the phenomena. After careful examination of the data, open-coding occurred as I categorized participants words, phrases, sentences, and behaviors into concepts or emerging themes (Jones et al., 2006) using the constant comparative approach--attempting to saturate categories or continue looking for themes until no further information could be found to provide insight into the category (Creswell, 2007). Then, I took the data and summarized the job demands of special education teachers on Oahu. Finally, themes that emerged from the data included effective supports, experiences, resources, behaviors, and skills that were used by expert special educators on Oahu to negotiate their job demands. Preliminary themes that emerged were analyzed by participants during focus group sessions to ensure that their experiences were accurately represented in the concluding themes.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this qualitative case study I explored how three expert secondary special education teachers on the Leeward coast of the island of Oahu in Hawaii constructed their perceived roles and successfully negotiated their job demands. I used purposeful sampling to select one secondary school on the Leeward coast of Oahu. Purposefully selecting a secondary school with a high need for special educators has provided insight into how experts have managed to generally manage their job demands effectively in a work environment that may be particularly challenging. I selected participants in this study using reputational case-selection, a method where the researcher gets help from community experts to identify suitable people for the study (Schensul, Schensul, & Lecompte, 1999). The selected school's principal and special education department head used their knowledge and expertise to select special education teachers from their school who were the best examples of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) expert theoretical construct.

Participant Demographics

In order to provide a framework for the findings of this study, I will provide demographic information about the selected secondary school and participants. First, I will describe the school as a whole by providing information about the number of students attending the school and on free and reduced lunch, ethnicity of students, percentage of special education population broken down by disability categories, school's Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) status, faculty size, approximate student to teacher ratio, and the number of special education teachers employed at the school. Second, I will report detailed demographic and background information including years of teaching,

ethnicity, content area taught, student caseload, gender, and age for each of the three participants. Third, I will describe the number of students in the participants' classrooms, grades, ages, and disability categories of students, content area(s) taught, and the physical makeup of the classroom.

The Secondary School

The secondary school that was purposefully selected for this study is located on the Leeward coast of Oahu. There were about 2,200 students attending the school during the time that I conducted this study. A large majority of the student population were of Filipino and Hawaiian ancestry. Approximately 600 students met the criteria to receive a free and reduced lunch and 232 students were eligible for special education services. The majority of the school's special education population had a learning disability or other health disability. One hundred twenty six students qualified for special education and related services under the category of specific learning disability and 46 qualified under other health disability (e.g., attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and attention deficit disorder). Seventeen students met the criteria for autism, 16 under the category of intellectual disability, 13 students received services under the category of emotional disability, four met the criteria for hard of hearing, 8 under the category of multiple disabilities, one met the criteria for speech or language disability, one received services under the traumatic brain injury category, and another student received services under the category of visual disability.

The school employed nearly 115 teachers during the time of this study with an estimated teacher to student ratio of about 1 to 19. Out of the 115 teachers, 23 of them

were considered special education teachers. Sixteen of the 23 special educators were Highly Qualified (HQ) to teach special education.

According to the Accountability Resource Center Hawaii (n.d.) this secondary school did not meet AYP as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) during the year that this study was conducted. In order to meet AYP the school must have 95% of students participate in taking the state assessment, 72% of students proficient in reading, 64% of students proficient in math, and 82% of students graduate on time (Accountability Resource Center Hawaii, n.d.). The Accountability Resource Center Hawaii reported that the school did not meet AYP due to the disadvantaged population and students receiving special education services. Only 64% of students deemed disadvantaged met proficiency in reading (Accountability Resource Center Hawaii, n.d.); 33% of students receiving special education services at the school met proficiency in reading and only 13% met proficiency in math. Furthermore, only 60% of the school's special education population met the graduation rate (Accountability Resource Center Hawaii, n.d.).

Expert Special Education Teacher Participants

A total of three expert special education teachers participated in this study; pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality of the participants. During the time of the study, the first participant, Ms. Snow, was a female in her early 30s who was of Asian descent. During the time of the study, Ms. Snow was co-teaching with a general education teacher in a 9th grade physical science line. She had been teaching special education for six years and had a caseload of about 11 students. The second participant, Ms. Harmony, was also female. She was in her early 40s and was Filipino. Ms. Harmony co-taught 9th grade Math and had been a special education teacher for 20 years. She had a

caseload of about 15 students. The last participant, Ms. Raffy, was also a female in her early 40s. She was Caucasian and had been officially teaching special education for six years. At the time of the study, she was co-teaching 9th grade English and had approximately 15 students on her caseload. It is important to note that when referring to the participants' caseloads, the numbers are not inclusive of the total number of students in their classrooms. Their caseloads only represent the number of students for whom they have the responsibility of coordinating the procedures and paperwork related to the evaluation, eligibility, and IEP processes.

Classroom Makeup

All three participants co-taught for two instructional periods, had one planning period, and ran a study skills class for their caseload of students for two periods. Their co-teaching periods ranged from 30 to 60 students and included a mix of students who received special education services and students who were not identified as having a disability. During their study skills periods their class makeup only included students on their caseloads who received special education services. There were six to eight students in each of their study skills periods. Study skills periods were reserved for each participant to help their caseload of students work on all content areas (e.g., catch up on work in other classes, hone in on areas of need). Each participant also had an educational assistant (EA). In addition, all of them worked with more than one co-teacher. When the inclusion classes had more students (e.g., 60), participants co-taught with two other general education co-teachers.

The participants taught a population of students who received special education services and were categorized as having mild to moderate disabilities. Their disabilities

included other health disability (e.g., attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and attention deficit disorder), specific learning disability (SLD), high functioning autism (e.g., Asperger's Syndrome), and emotional disability. All of their students who received special education services and those without disabilities were in the 9th grade and were 14 to 15 years old. There were an even mix of males and females in the inclusion classes, but there was a higher concentration of males in their study skills classes. It is important to note that only students eligible to receive special education were in study skills classes whereas inclusion classes consisted of both students receiving special education services and students not receiving special education services.

The physical environments of the participants' classrooms were similar in nature. All three participants taught in two to three different classrooms that were located in the same building that housed the 9th grade students on campus. The two-story building was set up to be conducive to co-teaching and team planning. The architecture was open in nature. Upon walking into the building there was a small corridor with an office for the building's administrator and a hall on either side of the office. One side of the hall housed three science classrooms with labs and the other side had four classrooms for study skills classes, storage, and electives (graphic design and computers). At the end of the hall there were double doors that led to a big open area of three classrooms; there were no walls to separate these classrooms. These classrooms were for the core content areas (English, social studies, and math), and were large enough to have break out areas for differentiated instruction during class time. There was also a small classroom where special education resource classes or study skills classes were held. In the center of these open classrooms was a family pod that housed the teachers' desks (about 10 desks). The second floor of

the building is similar to the first floor with the exception of the counselor's office rather

than the administrator's office and a college and career center instead of a computer

classroom (see Figure 1: Classroom/Building Makeup).

Figure 1.

Classroom/Building Setup

Small Classroom used for Study Skills or Resource

Math Classroom w/breakout rooms

English Classroom w/breakout rooms

Social Studies Classroom w/breakout rooms

Family Pod w/teacher desks

Science Classroom w/Lab

Double	Doors

Double	Doors

Small Classroom used for Study Skills or Resource

Science Classroom w/Lab

Restrooms

Restrooms

Storage/ Extra Room

College & Career Center upstairs

Computer lab downstairs

Hallway

Science Classroom w/Lab

Administrator/ Counselor Office

Elective Classroom

Corridor

Stairwell

Entrance

Entrance

Stairwell

Research Question 1. **How Do Three Expert Special Educators On the Leeward**

Coast of Oahu Construct Their Perceived Role?

Participants perceived themselves as more than just their students' teachers. They

perceived themselves as wearing many hats and according to Ms. Snow, "being the

students' everything." The participants saw themselves as the students' caretaker or

second mom. They described being friends with the students, and even serving in the

capacity of a social worker and counselor. Ms. Snow said that the "last thing on the list is

actually teaching." Harmony even compared her role to an "unpaid lawyer" who works

with the juvenile justice system and advocates for students with disabilities. Although

paperwork (e.g., IEPs) was mentioned as part of their roles as expert special educators,

the participants put these duties second to time spent teaching and building relationships

with their students. They emphasized that whatever role they played had to be conducive

to meeting the students' needs. All participants were able change hats and play the role

(e.g., counselor, caretaker, teacher) best suited to meeting the child's needs at the time.

"My current role is not just teacher it is friend, social worker, mommy, and student's

schedule runner," said Ms. Snow. Being there for their students was their primary focus.

Harmony said, "Teaching sped is about meeting *all* of the kids' needs not just the

academic needs. It involves families and things like knowing if the financial status of the

family impacts the student."

As an expert special educator, it was not just about meeting the students'

academic needs. The participants had to take into account outside factors (e.g., family

dynamics, financial status, living situation) that could possibly impact their students'

ability to learn without being judgmental. They saw themselves as the primary link

between school and home. They were often the first point of contact for parents and guardians, and spent a lot of time communicating with parents. Ms. Harmony mentioned that communicating with parents helped her "…make meaningful connections to their real lives."

Making meaningful connections to the students' real lives was a priority. As expert special educators, it was their responsibility to differentiate instruction, and implement whatever accommodations and modifications that it would take for their students to learn. Their roles constantly called for re-teaching concepts to students. All three participants co-taught with general education teachers and saw themselves as the primary re-teacher who had the necessary skills to modify the work or provide supplemental lessons to help students grasp concepts. These skills are what the participants' described as helping them to ensure that they empower students to be college and career ready. For example, Ms. Snow showed her students a video to supplement a science lesson. "It helped them understand the lesson that the co-teacher presented better" said Ms. Snow.

The participants re-defined their roles as special educators when they began co-teaching. As co-teachers, they have extended their family of students to include the non-disabled students. They feel that as co-teachers in the inclusion setting, it is part of their responsibility to ensure that all students' (both non-disabled students and students with disabilities) needs are being met. When describing her role Ms. Raffy said, "I actually view myself more as an English teacher than a sped teacher, now I just happen to concentrate on the struggling learners which encompasses sped." As co-teachers, the participants talked about their responsibility to help their general education counterparts

develop the curriculum and primarily work with students in the general education setting. For example, Ms. Raffy talked about helping her co-teachers build modifications into the curriculum to catch struggling learners. "During class time, we are true to the co-teaching model where we always have all the teachers on the floor. We take that very seriously, and in a big classroom it ensures that the students' needs are being met!" said Ms. Harmony.

Another common role shared among all three participants was that they all volunteered to take on the duty of being class advisors. As high school educators, they emphasized the importance of high school years. When they serve in the capacity of class advisors they help their designated class (i.e., freshmen, sophomore, juniors, or seniors) plan milestone events such as prom, winter ball, senior luau, and graduation. They serve in the class advisor role for four years until their class graduates. Ms. Harmony said that although it is a lot of extra work she finds "much joy in being a part of the students' social lives and to also know them outside the classroom."

Multitasking

Constantly bouncing from one task to the next was a common theme as the participants described their roles; therefore the ability to multitask was a big part of constructing their roles as expert special educators. The participants described their increased workload as high school secondary teachers when compared to the elementary level. They explained that the need to multitask is greater at the secondary level due to the higher caseloads, multiple periods, need for class advisors, and need to collaborate with several other content area teachers for progress reports. As Ms. Snow described her job demands as a secondary special educator, she commented "I think at the secondary

level it is really hard to do, it's not like the elementary." The participants were also expected to collaborate with the other content area teachers in order to successfully teach their two study skills periods where they were responsible for helping their caseload of students work on all their classes; therefore they considered themselves as teachers for all core content areas including electives. With a rotating bell schedule and the multiple periods, holidays often put one of their periods a day behind. This contributed to the participants having to juggle different calendars and lesson pacing guides for their classes.

I observed the participants multitasking at different times during their work day. During study skills, I observed Ms. Snow helping one student with geometry and helping another find articles for a project. In the same timeframe she assisted another student with the novel, *Animal Farm*, helped another student do a pre-write for an essay, scheduled tutoring times, checked on students' missing assignments, and ran a grade check on all her caseload students. During recess, I observed Ms. Raffy simultaneously filling out forms and working on a PowerPoint presentation while a student came in for assistance with printing out an assignment.

Ms. Raffy described her typical workday as "putting out lots of fires" and Harmony described it as "a whirlwind," because there is always something to do and someone who needs their problems solved. Emails, phone calls, students, colleagues, parents, class advisor business, professional development portfolios, and IEP paperwork contributed to a typically non-stop moving workday. Ms. Raffy mentioned days that were dominated by school wide initiatives and prom business; she expressed how much she missed time spent with students on those types of days. Two of the participants (Ms.

Harmony and Ms. Snow) expressed how at times they did not feel like they could do everything expected of them, because there were just too many things to do. However, prioritizing and multitasking helped them manage their feelings of being overloaded with the many facets of being a special educator. Ms. Harmony wrote that:

> People underestimate all the things that teachers have to do aside from teaching. We do a lot of professional development, implementation of school wide initiatives, and reflection to improve our effectiveness as teachers. Absolutely, we should be committed to improvement but it does take time-time, what a hot commodity, not enough of it!

Challenges

Several challenges arose as the participants defined their roles as special educators. Grading, the fear of lawsuits, coordinating cases where students are placed at private schools, unmotivated students, frustrations with parents, implementing state and school-wide initiatives, and simply saying no all came up as obstacles that got in the way of the participants' abilities to fulfill their job demands.

Ms. Raffy described grading papers as "monotonous" and "overwhelming". The participants spent much of their time grading up to 60 student papers for each class they co-taught in. On top of grading for the purpose of course marks on regular report cards, the participants were also responsible for creating progress reports for their students who had IEPs. Ms. Snow mentioned the challenge of having to ensure that they had raw data (e.g., student work samples, test scores, projects) to justify their grading on so many different IEP goals and objectives. Not having the proper documentation has made some of the participants fear lawsuits. Ms. Raffy even experienced the threat of a lawsuit.

The participants also discussed their frustrations with some students and parents who were not on board with what needed to be accomplished for graduation. Ms. Harmony talked about dealing with parents who did not consistently implement strategies to help their children at home, which made her job more challenging. Ms. Harmony admitted to losing her temper with unmotivated students who try to sabotage their own learning.

State and school-wide initiatives were also challenging for the participants. They discussed how the state was constantly changing the IEP process, which hampered their abilities to accurately complete the legal paperwork required for students who receive special education and related services. Ms. Raffy discussed how the teachers were expected to implement too many state and school-wide initiatives on top of the special education mandates that were constantly changing. She felt like all of her hard work to implement these initiatives would often go unnoticed. "Sometimes I feel like the initiatives don't really matter and that nobody really reads it," said Ms. Raffy.

With a high need for volunteers to pick up additional job duties at their school, some of the participants mentioned how difficult it was for them to say no. Saying no would mean that someone's needs would go unaddressed, yet their plates were already overflowing. This was a major struggle for some of the participants.

Progression Theory: From Novice to Expert

According to Lester's (2005) adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) novice to expert theory, when acquiring or developing a skill, one passes through five levels of proficiency: (a) novice (b) advanced beginner (c) competent (d) proficient (e) and expert. Table 4.1 shows how participants' behaviors and perspectives in different

areas of teaching special education correspond with the key characteristics associated

with each stage in Lester's (2005) adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill

acquisition model.

Table 4.1.

Novice to Expert Participant Progression Theory

Level	Stage	Characteristics	Participant #1-Ms. Snow	Participant #2-Ms. Harmony	Participant #3-Ms. Raffy
1	Novice	-Rigid adherence to taught rules or plans -Little situational perception -No discretionary judgment	*As a beginning teacher…* -Teaching came secondary to paperwork, which negatively impacted student learning		*As a beginning teacher…* -Perception that students will learn easily with a modified curriculum; delivering a modified curriculum put before taking care of students' emotional needs -Little flexibility -Rigid
2	Advanced Beginner	-Guidelines for action based on attributes or aspects (aspects are global characteristics of situations recognizable only after some prior experience) -Situational perception still limited -All attributes and aspects are treated separately and given equal importance			

Table 4.1. (Continued) Novice to Expert Participant Progression Theory

3	Competent	-Coping with crowdedness (put job demands into context) -Now sees actions at least partially in terms of longer-term goals -Conscious, deliberate planning -Standardized and routine procedures		*As a special educator that taught for a few years…* -She learned to manage her time by creating tools (e.g., to do lists, calendars)	
4	Proficient	- Sees situations holistically rather than in terms of aspects -Sees what is most important in a situation -Perceives deviations from the normal pattern -Decision-making less labored -Uses maxims for guidance, whose meanings vary according to the situation	*As a current special educator…* -Able to see the whole picture and put things into perspective -Switches roles often (e.g., teacher, mother, friend, class advisor) -Successful completion of a reevaluation in one day -Chooses battles (i.e., will ignore swearing if it is sporadic and not a distraction)	*As a current special educator…* -Refuses to make paperwork her priority; being in the classroom with the students is priority. -Makes meaningful connections to the students' lives -Realizes that she is more than just their teacher. She is also their therapist, counselor, paralegal.	*As a current special educator…* -Co-teaching in an inclusive setting has helped her to see the bigger picture

Table 4.1. (Continued) Novice to Expert Participant Progression Theory

| 5 | Expert | -No longer relies on rules, guidelines or maxims
-Intuitive grasp of situations based on deep tacit understanding
-Analytic approaches used only in novel situations or when problems occur
-Vision of what is possible | *As a current special educator…*
-Looks at several components and realizes how what she does today will impact students' futures
-Perceives role as more than just students' teacher (mother, friend, class advisor) | *As a current special educator…*
-Uses formative assessments to differentiate lessons
-Realizes that the best indicator for expertise is student success
-Perceives self as more than just students' teacher (therapist, counselor, paralegal)
-Perception that being a co-teacher is priority
-perception that her role is to understand what is going on with students' family life and connect it to the academics
-vision that taking care of | *As a current special educator…*
-Takes all the textbooks and puts them aside to make judgments about what students need to go forward
-Perception that her role as co-teacher makes her responsible for all students, not just students receiving special education services |

Table 4.1. (Continued) Novice to Expert Participant Progression Theory

				emotional needs first increases students' academic success	

Novice. Two of the participants (Ms. Snow and Ms. Raffy) mentioned that when they first started teaching special education they possessed some of the novice characteristics associated with Lester's (2005) adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model. Having little situational perception, no discretionary judgment, and rigidly adhering to rules are all novice characteristics associated with Lester's adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' skill acquisition model.

Ms. Snow mentioned that as a beginning special educator she let the paperwork come before teaching. Although she was strictly adhering to the special education paperwork laws of IDEA (2004), she had little situational perception regarding the negative impact her decisions of when and how to complete paperwork was having on her students. Ms. Raffy also showed little situational perception when she first started teaching as she explained how she thought that she could easily teach the students by offering them a modified curriculum. She soon realized that she had to be the students' caretaker before their teacher, and that the learning would not come easy unless she first took care of them emotionally. Many new teachers can come in and modify a curriculum or complete paperwork, but it took experience to bring these participants out of the novice stage and make them realize that they had to put things into perspective to determine how to best teach their students in different situations. Both Ms. Raffy and Ms. Harmony discussed how special education teachers have to be flexible and cannot just come in to the field with the theories taught in college and expect it to work. Ms. Raffy commented, "You can't be rigid and be special education teacher, there's just no way you're going to be successful."

Advanced beginner and competent. None of the participants described exhibiting characteristics associated with the advanced beginner stage in Lester's (2005) adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) novice to expert theory. However, one of the participants (Ms. Harmony) described experiencing characteristics similar to the competent stage. Ms. Harmony talked about how there was a point in her career where she learned how to manage her time by creating tools like calendars and to do lists. This is similar to the characteristic of conscious and deliberate planning in the competent stage of Lester's adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' skill acquisition model. Ms. Harmony showed me different versions of calendars and to do lists that evolved over time. It was evident that she used these tools to consciously plan ahead of time.

Proficient. All three of the participants exhibited characteristics associated with the proficient stage of Lester's (2005) adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model. The proficient stage consists of seeing situations holistically, recognizing what is most important in a situation, perceiving deviations from the normal pattern, less labored decision-making, and using maxims for guidance. Ms. Snow and Ms. Raffy talked about being able to see the bigger picture. Ms. Raffy discussed how co-teaching in an inclusive setting helped her to see the bigger picture of what her students receiving special education and related services were capable of learning alongside their non-disabled peers. Ms. Snow said that she was now able "to put things into perspective" and recognize what takes precedence in different situations.

One of the participants, Ms. Snow, mentioned that she realized that she was more than just the students' teacher, and discovered the importance of being a student's counselor, therapist, and teacher. Ms. Snow and Ms. Harmony discussed less labored

decision making when it came to switching roles. Depending on the students at any given time, they would put on the appropriate hat whether it was mother, counselor, therapist, friend, class advisor, or teacher. They were able to determine which hat would be the most conducive to their individual student's needs. Ms. Harmony shared how she refused to make paperwork her priority. Instead she was able to put things into perspective and figure out what was the most conducive to the bigger picture of student learning; therefore she taught students in a way that made meaningful connections to their real lives her main priority. This participant also showed how she was able to use the Hawaii Content Performance Standards (HCPS) and benchmarks as a guide to make teaching relevant. Rather than following HCPS rigidly she was flexible and modified parts that were not relevant to her students' lives.

Two participants also showed how they were proficient by using maxims as guidelines rather than a set of rigid rules. One participant displayed how she was able to choose her battles. Rather than following the "no swearing" rule absolutely, she used it as a guide to make decisions. She would only reprimand a student for swearing if he or she was distracting the class. For example, I observed her allowing a student to swear when he got excited for finding the correct solution to a problem. On the other hand, I also observed her reprimanding a student for profusely swearing while rapping a song in a manner that was distracting to other students. The other participant used the IDEA (2004) reevaluation law as a guide to consolidate the evaluation, eligibility, and IEP components into one meeting in order to meet a students' reevaluation deadline. Although she inherited the student's case whose reevaluation was due the same day, she successfully

completed the reevaluation in one day by gathering the necessary functional data that helped the team determine that there was no need for formal testing.

Expert. The three participants showed how they reached the expert stage by no longer relying on rules, displaying that they had an intuitive grasp of situations based on deep tacit understanding, using analytic approaches when problems occurred, and possessing a vision of what is possible. Ms. Snow and Ms. Harmony perceived themselves to be more than the students' special education teacher, which corresponds with the analytic and intuitive approach outlined in the expert category of Lester's (2005) adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model. When problems occurred, they switched roles (i.e., counselor, teacher, therapist, class advisor, mother, paralegal) based on the current need of the student. For example, if a student looked sad and withdrawn they would switch from the teacher instructing math or science to the student's counselor.

Ms. Harmony also perceived herself as a strategist and displayed her ability to use daily formative assessments to help differentiate instruction on the spot. She no longer relied on sticking to the lesson as originally planned. Her formative assessments throughout the class period would help her determine the next steps of instruction in her class. It was okay to review past benchmarks for scaffolding purposes even if the lesson called for sticking to a certain benchmark. If levels of understanding varied she would divide the class into different homogenous break out groups (low, medium, and high understanding) and with the help of her two co-teachers she would provide on the spot accommodations and modifications to meet different learning needs. Her motto was that

she knew she was an expert if all students succeeded, and she would make on the spot decisions during lessons that were conducive to student success.

Both Ms. Harmony and Ms. Raffy perceived themselves as co-teachers before special education teachers. Ms. Harmony described her perceptions of being a special educator, "I co-teach with two other teachers and so to me that takes precedence." Rather than rely on the maxim of being solely a "special educator" who is responsible only for students receiving special education and related services, they saw themselves as "co-teachers" responsible for *all* students. "I consider myself the caretaker and teacher of all students," said Ms. Raffy.

All participants had a vision of what was possible in regards to their students' capabilities. Ms. Snow expressed how she would look at several components of her student's strengths and needs to set them up for the future. She realized that what she helped them with now would impact their future. Ms. Raffy, decided to go with her deep tactic understanding of student needs and stated that "At a certain point I think I put all those textbooks and all that they were supposed to be doing aside and then just started making judgments about what they needed to know to go forward." Ms. Harmony viewed herself as someone who had to understand the students' family lives and address their emotional needs. She explained that teaching could not occur unless students' emotional needs were met first. She shared her vision of what was possible as she discussed how students could accomplish more academically once their emotional needs were addressed.

Research Question 2. How Do Three Expert Special Education Teachers on the Leeward Coast of Oahu Successfully Negotiate Their Job Demands?

In order to thoroughly explore how three expert special education teachers successfully negotiate their job demands, it was imperative to find out what supports, resources, behaviors, and experiences have helped these experts effectively juggling their job demands. In addition, exploring what personality traits and skills the three expert special educators possessed provided insight into how they successfully managed all aspects of their job requirements.

Supports, Resources, Behaviors, and Experiences

The supports and resources that helped the expert special educators in this study successfully negotiate their job demands include collegial support, a planning period, substitute teachers, co-teachers, EAs, rubrics, assistive technology, and student tutoring. The behaviors that the expert special educators exhibited to effectively juggle their job demands are working beyond required work hours, collaboration, using multiple communication methods, multi-tasking during study skills, creating weekly calendars and to do lists, spending out of pocket monies, communicating and forming trusting relationships with parents, creating IEP templates, and working smarter not harder. Experiences that helped expert special educators manage their job demands effectively include completing legal paperwork, helping students become college and career ready, educating colleagues about students with disabilities, and being a parent of a child with a disability. See Table 4.2 for a summary of resources, supports, behaviors, and experiences helped the three special educators effectively juggle their job demands.

Table 4.2.

Resources, Supports, Behaviors, and Experiences that Helped Expert Special Educators Effectively Manage Their Job Demands

Participants	Resources & Supports	Behaviors	Experiences
Participant #1-Ms. Snow	-Planning Period -Co-teachers -Collegial Support	-Working Beyond Required Work Hours -Collaboration -Communication -Developing Trusting Relationships with Parents -Study Skills	-Completing Legal Paperwork
Participant #2-Ms. Harmony	-Planning Period -Co-teachers -EA -Substitute Teacher -Student Tutoring	-Working Beyond Required -Collaboration -Communication -Developing Trusting Relationships with Parents -Study Skills -Weekly Calendar/To Do List -Organization -Flexibility -Co-teaching teamwork -Spending Out of Pocket Monies	
Participant #3-Ms. Raffy	-Planning Period -Co-teachers -EA -Rubrics -Assistive Technology	-Working Beyond Required Work Hours -Collaboration -Communication -Developing Trusting Relationships with Parents	-Helping Students Become College and Career Ready -Educating Colleagues on Students with Disabilities -Being a Parent of a Child with a

Table 4.2. (Continued) Resources, Supports, Behaviors, and Experiences that Helped Expert Special Educators Effectively Manage Their Job Demands

		-Study Skills -IEP Templates -Work Smarter Not Harder	Disability

Resources and supports. The participants mentioned a variety of resources and supports that assisted them in effectively negotiating their job demands. These resources and supports were having a planning period, co-teachers, substitute teachers, collegial support, EAs, rubrics, assistive technology, and student tutoring.

Planning periods. All three participants utilized their planning periods as a resource to efficiently manage their job demands. Each participant had one planning period three times per week. They all used their planning periods to do things that did not always involve prepping for their classes. All three of them held IEP meetings, completed paperwork, communicated with parents, collaborated with colleagues, ran class advisor errands (e.g., getting signatures, prom favors), and got caught up on emails. During my observation, Ms. Harmony used her planning period to complete a portion of the school's accreditation report, put up General Learner Outcome (GLO) posters in her classroom, and collect work for two of her students who were going to be out due to surgery. Another participant, Ms. Raffy, used her planning period to assist her colleagues with helping students in study skills, complete a Race To The Top survey, and make copies.

Co-teachers. Utilizing their co-teachers as a resource and support was another common theme among all participants. The three participants seemed to take advantage of their co-teaching relationships in a way that allowed them to attend IEP meetings, conduct class advisor business, and communicate with parents during class time while their co-teachers ran class. For example, I observed Ms. Snow tell her co-teacher fifteen minutes into class that she will be leaving to attend a meeting with district. She spent the rest of the class period meeting with district personnel to discuss an IEP. During another observation, I attended an IEP meeting with Ms. Raffy while her co-teacher took over the

class. Ms. Harmony indicated in her journal that she spent some class time running errands for class advisor business while her co-teachers ran class. I also observed Ms. Harmony stepping out of class to call parents while her co-teachers presented a math lesson.

All three participants saw their co-teachers as a valuable resource when it came to curriculum planning. Ms. Raffy explained how her co-teachers helped her to efficiently handle teaching by exposing her to different ways of doing things. She talked about how her co-teachers have helped her be more open-minded and introduced her to more efficient ways of doing things related to her job.

Educational assistants. Two of the participants talked about and exhibited how they used their EAs to help them complete their job demands. Ms. Harmony had her EA tutor students after school on days that she had meetings to attend to ensure that the students could still have the supplemental help after school regardless of her need to attend meetings. Her EA helped her to work one on one with students who needed additional help in class, and she even positioned him near an unruly group of students in class to minimize behavioral problems and distractions while she taught class. He was also utilized to make copies and chase after a student who cut class. Ms. Raffy had her EA help run errands for class advisor business, redirect students in class, and cover her study skills class while she attended an IEP meeting.

Substitute teachers and collegial support. Ms. Harmony was the only participant who reported that she got a substitute teacher so that she could complete a variety of job related tasks. Although she had a substitute teacher for the day, she remained at work from 7:30am to 5:00pm. During this time she worked on school wide initiatives, student

evidence binders, sophomore banquet ticket sales, laminating posters for her classroom, writing IEPs, and developing differentiated lesson plans. Another participant gave credit to her colleagues and the immense amount of support offered to her when needing data for IEP meetings.

   Rubrics and assistive technology. Rubrics and assistive technology were used by one participant to manage her job demands more efficiently and effectively. Ms. Raffy agreed to be a part of the assistive technology pilot project that the University of Hawaii at Manoa Center for Disability Studies was running at the school. As a part of the project, she received a couple of laptops that had a text to speech program downloaded on it. She explained how although the program ran slowly at times, it seemed to be beneficial to some of her students who struggled with reading. She talked about how convenient it was to have the books they were reading in class downloaded onto the program and how the students could use the laptops to conduct research. This participant also used rubrics to grade and commented that "I never used to grade with rubrics, but now I find that I can't do without them, because they speed things up so much." She explained how rubrics help her to grade more efficiently, given the large numbers of papers she has to grade.

   Behaviors. The participants exhibited multiple behaviors to effectively juggle their job demands. They included working beyond required work hours, collaboration, using multiple communication methods, multi-tasking during study skills, creating weekly calendars and to do lists, spending out of pocket monies, communicating and forming trusting relationships with parents, creating IEP templates, and working smarter not harder.

Working beyond required work hours. The most frequently cited theme that helped all participants manage their job demands effectively was working beyond required work hours. Arriving at work before their designated start time, using their designated break times (lunch and recess) to complete work-related duties, staying past required work hours, and taking work home was crucial to allowing the participants to manage all aspects of their job demands.

Two of the participants regularly arrived 30 to 55 minutes prior to their designated start time to work on their job-related tasks. They would use this time to create to do lists, read and respond to emails, work on school accreditation documents, communicate with parents, and plan lessons. Ms. Harmony wrote, "First thing in the morning, it is important to invest time in PLANNING."

Lunch time and recess was often used by participants to catch up on emails, schedule IEP meetings, develop lessons, communicate with parents, collaborate with colleagues, work with students, and conduct class advisor business. "Unfortunately, recess is too short and is usually spent for last minute things! Students can flock to ask a million clarifying questions!" said Ms. Harmony. Lunch time was rarely used to eat lunch. If participants ate, it was referred to as a working lunch.

All three of the participants indicated that they stayed past required work hours every day (Monday through Friday) in order to get their work done. Two of the participants said that the only reason why they are able to complete all of their job requirements is because they stay past required work hours. The other participant said that she stayed past required work hours because that is the standard that she set for herself. They stayed between one and a half and three hours past their required work

time. There was even an occasion where Ms. Harmony worked from 3:00pm to 12:00am, nine hours past her required work time, to chaperone and clean up for the sophomore banquet. She wrote, "Whoever said that a teacher's work ended at 3pm? Imagine if we got paid overtime. Man I'd be making the bank!"

Staying past required work hours allowed participants to tutor students in order to get them caught up with their school work or provide them with supplemental help with areas where they struggled. Staying past required work hours also helped the participants complete legal paperwork requirements related to re-evaluations and IEPs. One participant, Ms. Raffy, preferred to do paperwork at home, because it helped her to complete it free from distractions at the work place. Ms. Snow said that majority of her students' parents called her while she was cooking dinner for her family. She explained how she communicated with parents free from work-related distractions during dinner preparation.

Communication and collaboration. Communication and collaboration to effectively manage their job demands was another big theme that emerged among all three participants. I observed the three participants collaborating with other teachers during, before, and after class. In addition, they used their planning periods and time before and after school to communicate with other teachers (mainly co-teachers), parents, administrators, and support staff (i.e., counselors, district resource teachers, EAs and skills trainers). Journals, interviews, and observations indicated that collaboration was used to discuss student performance, grades, tutoring, instructional strategies, root causes for inappropriate student behaviors, class advisor business, and to plan for meetings (i.e., accreditation, Professional Learning Communities, IEPs).

It is important to note that the participants used multiple communication methods to collaborate with colleagues, administrators, parents, and support staff. Different modes of communication that they used included email, text messaging, phone, and face to face meetings. One participant, Ms. Harmony, used a communication book and a daily assignment and study skills check template that she created to communicate with her students' parents and other teachers.

All three participants gave parents their personal cell phone numbers to keep open lines of communication. Ms. Snow commented, "I don't find it to be a mistake but for the most part I give all my parents my cell number so they call me 24-7." Two participants talked about how parents called them to talk about issues that occur in the home; listening to parents helped them make connections to what is going on at school and build rapport. "I try very hard to maintain a congenial relationship with the parents, because it is imperative we work together to ensure their child's success," said Ms. Harmony. Building trusting relationships with parents seemed to be important to all participants. Although Ms. Raffy mentioned that parents do not agree with her all the time, she said that they respect that she comes from a caring place. Ms. Raffy talked about how she maintained contact with some of her former students' parents and still gets Christmas cards from them.

Multi-tasking during study skills. The participants also utilized their study skills periods to manage their job demands. During their study skills classes they instructed all students (ranging from 6-8) on their IEP caseload. All three participants used the study skills period to assist students with work in all their classes. Ms. Snow was observed using a portion of her study skills period to send out emails, gather items for her teaching

portfolio, and have a parent-teacher conference. She attended two IEP meetings in one study skills period while her EA covered the class. Ms. Harmony used a portion of her study skills period to complete class advisor tasks that included ordering tiaras and contacting a photographer for the upcoming prom. In addition, she created graphic organizers for her class, answered emails, and visited her colleagues study skills period to see if other students needed assistance with math.

Less frequent behaviors. Other less common behaviors that helped the participants manage their job demands included weekly calendars, to do lists, flexibility, organization, co-teaching teamwork, spending out of pocket monies, IEP templates, and using the motto "work smarter not harder."

One participant, Ms. Harmony, developed weekly calendars, to do lists, emphasized flexibility, displayed organization, engaged in teamwork with her co-teachers, and spent out of pocket monies to purchase supplies for her students. She created a weekly to do list calendar that she reviewed at the beginning of the week, and added things to do and deleted completed tasks as the week progressed. She said that to effectively manage her job demands flexibility was key even if she had a to-do-list, because if a student's needs were more pressing she would adjust her list. She emphasized that students were priority, and that she had to be flexible to meet their needs. Ms. Harmony gave an example of times where she had to put paperwork on the backburner to ensure her student's needs were met. She also mentioned that whenever she planned with her co-teachers she had to be open and flexible. Flexibility came into play often when she tweaked lessons with her co-teachers to ensure that students had enough opportunities to gain understanding of concepts.

Ms. Harmony's organizational behaviors also helped her to effectively manage her job demands. In addition to her weekly calendar and checklist of tasks to do to ensure that she completed all her job duties, Ms. Harmony also created a document called "Important Dates" to organize annual IEP and Reevaluation dates for her caseload of students. Other documents that Ms. Harmony provided me with to show how she organized her job duties included a weekly tutoring log, daily assignment check, and student status review. Ms. Harmony even took the hardcopy of the journal template I gave her for this study and converted it into an organized electronic chart. Furthermore, I observed that in every class period Ms. Harmony has an agenda on the board for the day's lesson. I even saw Ms. Harmony helping a student organize his binder with dividers and labels.

In addition to being flexible and organized, Ms. Harmony emphasized that being a part of "an awesome co-teaching team" helped her to effectively carry out her job demands. She explained that as a team, they honored one another's strengths. Their co-teaching team has a system where each co-teacher instructs the whole class for approximately 10 to 15 minutes, and when one is instructing the other two circulate while the EA manages any unruly students. During independent work, all three teachers circulate around the room. They appear to have a common understanding; during class time they used non-verbal cues (head nods and head shakes), which seemed like the okay to continue with a lesson or not. Ms. Harmony noted her inability to successfully carry out her job demands when she experienced working on an unsuccessful co-teaching team.

Ms. Harmony also spends out of pocket money to help her complete her primary job duty of helping students learn. I observed Ms. Harmony telling a student that she just

bought some erasers and pencil lead; she gave pencil lead and erasers to several students in multiple class periods. On another occasion I observed Ms. Harmony giving dividers to a student as she instructed and modeled for him how to organize his binder. She told me, "I just buy 'em, because they [students] always run out." Ms. Harmony mentioned that without the necessary supplies, students cannot complete the work making it harder for her to do her job.

Another participant, Ms. Raffy, utilized IEP templates. She provided me with her Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEP), supplementary aids and services, and goals and objectives templates that she always relied on when developing and revising IEPs. She explained how these templates helped her to complete paperwork faster, which made her more effective at managing her job demands. "Why reinvent the wheel constantly? No matter what the disability is the strategies we use overlap so much," said the participant. Ms. Raffy emphasized that these templates were not used as "cookie cutters," but a resource. Her motto is to "work smarter and not harder." For example, this participant shared how she collected data for IEPs and also used that same data for multiple school initiatives. She also credited her co-teachers who work with her as a team to make sure that their lesson plans meet multiple objectives.

Experiences. Two of the participants, Ms. Snow and Ms. Raffy, described experiences that have helped them be more efficient at managing their job demands. These experiences included meeting the deadlines of legal paperwork requirements, helping students become college and career ready, educating colleagues about students with disabilities, and being a parent of a child who has a disability.

Meeting the deadlines of legal paperwork requirements. Ms. Snow talked about how she is able to meet all deadlines pertaining to the legal paperwork requirements involved in special education. When asked to describe a time that she was effective in managing her job demands, the participant shared a story about inheriting a student from another school. The same day that she inherited the case was the same day that the student's re-evaluation was due. She was able to gather the necessary team members and required data to consolidate the re-evaluation process into one meeting; the team felt that there was enough data for the student to continue to be eligible for special education services and update the IEP without conducting formal assessments. Ms. Snow talked about the willingness of previous teachers and current team members to provide relevant data and meet on such short notice made it easy for her to ensure that the student's re-evaluation deadline was met. She also discussed how the team members made it easy for her to get the paperwork done. The willingness of her colleagues to attend the meeting on such short notice, and the cooperation of the student's former teacher from his or her previous school (providing necessary data to make the child eligible and develop the IEP) helped Ms. Snow be more efficient and completing her multiple paperwork duties on time.

Helping students become college and career ready. Ms. Raffy shared several experiences that helped her to effectively manage her job demands. First, she talked about a particular student that had autism spectrum disorder who she helped to graduate with a high school diploma. He currently attends college. She attributed his success to "fading away his skills trainer" for increased independence, educating him in the least restrictive environment appropriate (general education setting), capitalizing on his artistic

strengths, and a sound post-high transition plan. Ms. Raffy described how she worked closely with the disability coordinator from the local community college to begin transitioning the student to the community college during his last semester in high school. While he attended a few classes at the community college, with the help of a skills trainer, his general education teachers made several accommodations so that he could maintain the work required to get his high school diploma. "A lot of people were willing to bend," said Ms. Raffy. The receptiveness of the student's IEP team and local community college to share the responsibility of post-high transition with Ms. Raffy helped her to become more efficient at juggling her job duties. This experience created a sense of shared responsibility, which lightened Ms. Raffy's workload and allowed her more time to complete other job duties.

Educating colleagues about students with disabilities. The second experience that Ms. Raffy shared was her constant willingness to educate her colleagues (general educators) about students with disabilities. For example, to ensure the success of one particular student Ms. Raffy had to constantly educate her fellow educators on how to adapt to the student's needs. She showed them ways they could adapt to the way the student presented in class without having to sacrifice the integrity of their curriculum. She discussed how she challenged her colleagues to be critical thinkers and tweak their lessons to meet different learning styles. When her colleagues realized that students with disabilities could master grade level benchmarks with accommodations they were a lot more open and did not feel as if they had to "dumb down" their curriculum. However, Ms. Raffy expressed that she had to meet with some teachers multiple times in order for them to realize that students with disabilities are capable of performing at grade level.

Rather than Ms. Raffy, the special educator, taking on the full responsibility of adapting the general education curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities she built capacity to make it a shared sense of responsibility with her general education counterparts. Building capacity frees up time for Ms. Raffy to work on other job responsibilities; therefore it creates a more efficient environment for Ms. Raffy to juggle her multiple job duties.

Being a parent of children with disabilities. The last experience that Ms. Raffy shared that helped her to be effective at managing her job demands was that she is a parent of two children with disabilities who receive special education and related services. Ms. Raffy perceived herself to have unofficially taught special education and related services for 13 years; her oldest child, who during the time of the study was 17, was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder when he was four years old. Ever since his diagnosis, she felt like she was constantly teaching her son's teachers how to work with a child who has autism. She came to the realization that she may as well get paid to work with students with disabilities; she decided to become an official special educator when her oldest child was approximately 12 years old. Ms. Raffy shared that:

> I think that has always been my greatest source of expertise from the time I started until now, to be able to put myself in the parents shoes 'cause I'm still going through IEPs with my two kids that receive services so I understand the process so much better as a teacher now.

She explained how she can see both perspectives, from parent and teacher when working with students with disabilities. She admitted that she intimidated her own child's teachers; she was straightforward with her children's teachers and told them that the best

thing they could do was be honest with her so they could function as a team. Ms. Raffy said that her own children's success stemmed from a team that had good working relationships. Ms. Raffy expressed that being a parent of children with disabilities helped her be more efficient when developing IEPs and coordinating multiple cases, because she was already familiar with the process as a parent who sat through many IEP meetings for multiple children.

Personality Traits and Skills

Certain personality traits appeared to help participants successfully manage their job requirements. One participant exuded a positive outlook and appeared to have a lot of empathy for her students. All three participants had skills in classroom management, the ability to multitask, and good time-management skills. Two participants were skillful at making the content they were teaching relevant to students. Other skills were technologically-inclined, rapport with students, organization, flexibility, co-teaching teamwork, and utilizing exercise as a stress coping strategy. See Table 4.3 for the personality traits and skills that participants possessed that helped them to successfully negotiate their job requirements.

Table 4.3.

Personality Traits and Skills that Helped Expert Special Educators Successfully Manage Their Job Demands

Participants	Personality Traits	Skills
Participant #1-Ms. Snow	-Empathy and Rapport	-Classroom Management -Ability to Multitask/Time Management -Makes Content Relevant to Students -Using Technology

Participant #2-Ms. Harmony	-Positive Outlook -Empathy and Rapport	-Classroom Management -Ability to Multitask/Time Management
Participant #3-Ms.Raffy		-Classroom Management - Ability to Multitask/Time Management -Makes Content Relevant to Students -Stress Coping Strategy: Exercise

Personality Traits. Two of the participants, Ms. Harmony and Ms. Snow, possessed personality traits that helped them to effectively negotiate her job demands. Both Ms. Snow and Ms. Harmony often displayed empathy and rapport towards their students. In addition, the personality trait that Harmony talked most about was having a positive outlook.

Empathy and rapport with students. I observed Ms. Harmony and Ms. Snow having a rapport with their students where the students were completely comfortable telling them just about anything. Ms. Harmony and Ms. Snow often showed that they were able to identify with and understand their students' feelings and the difficulties or positives they experienced. I observed this empathy and rapport in Ms. Snow 11 times during the two day observation whereas Ms. Harmony's empathy and rapport was observed seven times during the two day observation; which amounted to almost once per class period (excluding her preparation period) for Ms. Harmony and two to three times per class period (excluding her preparation period) for Ms. Snow.

First I observed Ms. Harmony pulling one student who looked sad and lethargic to the side of the classroom near her desk. She asked him if he was alright and she took the

time to listen to what he was going through. They also spent some time talking about honesty. On the second occasion, Ms. Harmony pulled a student out of class, explained to him that she was concerned and walked him to the counselor's office. Ms. Harmony and the counselor had a heart to heart talk with the student; they talked about communication and being there for him even if he feels his parents are not. During a third occurrence, I heard her having another heart to heart talk with the entire class. She took some time at the beginning of the class period to talk to them about how much she cared about their success and the belief she had in all of them to succeed. During another class period, I observed her talking to a student who walked in tardy with a disgruntled look on his face. It seemed like she genuinely cared about his well-being and sensed that something was not right with the way the student was feeling, so she took time to speak with him before having him do work.

Furthermore, Ms. Harmony provided me with her "Student Questionnaire" that she gave to all her students at the beginning of the school year. The questionnaire prompts students to write about their likes and dislikes in school, hobbies, advice for teachers, and how they learn best. She explained how this questionnaire helps her to identify with and understand the students better, which helps her to better meet the needs of her students. Ms. Harmony felt that the she was more efficient at completing her job duties when she was able to meet the needs of the students.

Ms. Harmony's empathy and rapport extended to her former students as well. I observed her meeting with a former student to help get her a job at the school. Ms. Harmony told me how proud she was of this student who gave her many gray hairs while she was in school. She went on to tell me that the student passed her test and took all the

college classes to become a paraprofessional tutor. After talking to the student about what she was going through with getting a job, she introduced the student to the office personnel and special education department head. The student later told me as she left that Ms. Harmony was the most caring teacher she had ever had.

Both Ms. Harmony and Ms. Snow were empathetic about the hungry students in their classes. Ms. Snow gave one of her students a snack during science class and Ms. Harmony fed a few of her students in one of her study skills period. Ms. Harmony fed the students crackers and said that it helped them to concentrate when they were not hungry. I overheard Ms. Snow telling her student that he would feel better if he ate something.

A female student talked with Ms. Snow candidly about her boyfriend and then when Ms. Snow left the room briefly the student turned to me and said "She is a good teacher." I observed another student speak with Ms. Snow about his sexual preference and about how he is comfortable talking with her about how he is gay. Ms. Snow helped this particular student look through his bag full of crumpled papers to find missing assignments. During another conversation that Ms. Snow had with another student it appeared that she knew his family and had the boy's sibling as a prior student. They chatted about his sister and how she was having her first baby shower. Ms. Snow seemed aware of the issues going on in the student's home.

During another class period Ms. Snow talked with her students about the upcoming prom. They all seemed excited to tell her about what they were wearing and who they were taking as their dates. Some of them even told her what they were planning to do after prom. In this same class period, one student shared her desire of joining the air soft team. While helping her students in her study skills period, Ms. Snow appeared

jovial with the students. She laughed and joked with them; they all seemed to have a good time while they were doing their various assignments. One student in this particular study skills period talked with Ms. Snow about sleeping over at his girlfriend's house, and Ms. Snow told him that the girl may be too young for him. She went on about making appropriate choices and even shared some of her trials and tribulations from her own dating experiences when she was in high school. On another occasion, the same student spoke with her about frustrations he was having living with his aunty. She did not judge him, just took the time to hear him out. Lastly, another student confided in Ms. Snow about moving to another school district and how it was making her feel depressed. Ms. Snow encouraged her to focus on the good things in her life.

With their empathetic nature and ability to establish rapport with students, Ms. Harmony and Ms. Snow seemed to have no problems creating a safe environment for their students to learn in. Students seemed motivated to learn from Ms. Harmony and Ms. Snow, teachers who they knew genuinely cared about them. The safe and caring environment they created seemed to make students more receptive to their teaching, which sometimes appeared to save them from having to re-teach concepts. Ms. Harmony and Ms. Snow had more time to focus on other job duties when they did not have to re-teach concepts, which appeared conducive to being more efficient at completing her job demands.

Positive outlook. Ms. Harmony found inspiration in being a special educator and portrayed a positive outlook about her job. When asked how she was successful at managing her job duties, Ms. Harmony talked about how she woke up every morning with a cup of coffee, praised herself, and listened to inspirational music. "You gotta have

something that feeds your soul," said Ms. Harmony. She explained how inspiration was important to her and her co-teachers who spent a portion of their planning time to look for inspirational quotes that reminded them of why they got into teaching in the first place. An excerpt from her journal read, "There is a lot of truth that a teacher's job can be a thankless one, but when you really love your job, you find great pride and joy when a student succeeds and attributes it to your teaching!" Ms. Harmony's positive outlook was also seen in the interactions she had with her students.

I observed Ms. Harmony praising one of her students for getting an A. She walked by another student intently doing his work, smiled at him and said "Feels good yeah when you know how to do 'em." In another class period, she complimented the entire class about how well they understood the lesson, cooperated with one another, and focused. Her tone was melodic in nature; positive and encouraging. Several students smiled and nodded at her as she complimented the class.

Ms. Harmony appeared to be quite dynamic when instructing the class; her animated style seemed to command the students' attention. She even had a sense of humor while teaching. For example, she told the students that they were going to learn about the good "F" word "factor." She would motivate the class with positive phrases like "You guys are rocking and rolling in here." Her high energy levels enhanced the positive vibe she gave off. She wrote in her journal that "At the end of the day, I always feel productive and celebrate small steps! There's always tomorrow, promise of more things to complete!" Her positive outlook and ability to "celebrate the small steps" seemed to help her perceive her multiple job duties as achievable. Ms. Harmony chunked

her job duties into reasonable and celebrated small steps that she could meet, which seemed to motivate her to continue to achieve whatever job duties came her way.

Skills. The most frequently cited skills that helped participants effectively manage their job demands included classroom management skills, the ability to multitask and manage time, and making the content they were teaching relevant to their students. Other skills that helped them manage their job demands included using technology, and using exercise as a stress coping strategy.

Classroom management. All three participants appeared to be skilled at managing classroom behavior. Ms. Snow, who appeared to be the primary disciplinarian in her co-teaching relationship was observed effectively managing classroom behaviors 16 times and Ms. Harmony and Ms. Raffy eight times each during the two day observation. Their effective classroom management skills seemed to make one of their primary job duties, teaching students, more achievable.

All three participants often used the tone of their voice, gestures, and proximity to re-direct students to get back on task. For example, during one instance Ms. Snow positioned herself near an unruly group of students where they could see her, tilted her head, and darted her eyes at them. Without saying a word, the students immediately scattered and went back to their seats. Without saying a word, Ms. Harmony-- similar to Ms. Snow-- stood in front of a class that was unsettled and glared at them quietly; the class took notice and settled down shortly after. Ms. Raffy was observed re-focusing the class by standing in front of the room raising her hand telling students "I am here." These classroom-management tactics got the students focused on the task at hand, which

seemed to allow the participants to be more effective in delivering the lesson to the students.

During another unruly occurrence, Ms. Snow interrupted a noisy class and her co-teacher with a calm tone that was loud enough for all to here and told the class what they should be focused on; the classroom became silent and the co-teacher continued. When students got overly excited about a lab demonstration, Ms. Snow calmly told them to take two steps back and they complied. Students seem to respond to her calm and firm tone. Getting the students focused and settled seemed to help Ms. Snow and her co-teacher get through the lab demonstration more efficiently.

Ms. Snow seemed to choose her battles. For example, she would ignore sporadic swearing (e.g., a student says "F***" out of excitement getting an answer right) yet students who swore and disrupted others (e.g., a student loudly rapping a song with swear words distracting other students) were reprimanded. She was consistent about asking students to spit out their gum, just as Ms. Harmony was. Ms. Snow was so keen on catching students chewing gum that a student voluntarily walked up to her and told her that he would spit out his gum before class. Both Ms. Harmony and Ms. Snow had food for students who could not concentrate to minimize off-task behavior. Minimizing off-task behavior and distractions appeared to allow Ms. Snow and Ms. Harmony to deliver instruction to the students quicker.

All three participants used grouping and preferential seating strategies to manage classroom behaviors. For example, Ms. Harmony grouped her small study skills class by gender (2 girls in one group and 4 boys in another). She explained to me that this arrangement helped prevent distractions with the opposite sex; it prevented them from

flirting with one another during class time. Furthermore, Ms. Harmony and her co-teachers utilized class breakout sessions when students acted out as a result of not understanding the content that was being taught. Ms. Snow separated two students who were distracting each other. To maintain the peace between group members, Ms. Raffy regrouped students as she saw fit. In addition, Ms. Raffy and her co-teachers split one of their class periods in half due to major behavior issues that she thought stemmed from low reading levels apparent with many of the students in that particular class. She explained how this helped her and her co-teachers better monitor student behavior and afforded them time to work more one-on-one with students to boost their reading levels.

Another effective classroom management skill that all three participants displayed was to circulate around the classroom. Ms. Snow constantly circled the room, even when she was giving instruction. Ms. Raffy and Ms. Harmony took turns circling the room with their co-teachers. Ms. Raffy caught two students sparring near the back of the room while roaming the classroom. Circulating around the classroom seemed to help minimize disruptions while the participants delivered instruction to their students.

Ms. Raffy often engaged her class in whole-group discussions. The students seemed to be heavily involved in the discussions; a large majority of the class appeared eager to participate and share their own personal stories. The way that Ms. Raffy engaged the students in this discussion seemed to contribute to on-task behavior; therefore it seemed that Ms. Raffy was more effective at teaching when her students were engaged in the lesson.

Ms. Snow often had individual conversations with students who were unfocused on the task at hand. She pulled a student who kept talking with a neighbor to the side and

spoke with him about his choice of seating himself next to people who distract him. After the talk with Ms. Snow, the student chose to move himself to another seat and appeared to be on task the rest of the class period. During another instance, she pulled another student to the side of the classroom to talk with him about his behavior and the consequences of having to stay after school for her to re-teach him the concept he was missing. She approached another student who appeared to be quiet and removed him from the rest of the class; Ms. Snow sat next to him, talked with him about how his day was going and helped him with a problem. I also observed Ms. Snow talking individually with a new student about the classroom rules and expectations.

The structure of Ms. Harmony's class seemed to be a key component to her effective classroom management. Students seemed to know the following routine: (1) work independently on problems from the previous day's lesson, (2) teachers model new problems (3) students work with one another to try the problems out for themselves, (4) teachers do temperature check and re-teach concepts as needed, and (5) assign homework and allow students to begin if time permits. Students seemed comfortable with this set up and seamlessly move through the routine. In her study skills classes, Ms. Harmony has enforced a routine where students fill out a document called "Study Skills Student Accountability" where students fill out the work they completed for the day.

Possessing good classroom-management skills appeared to help the participants be more effective at delivering classroom instruction, a primary job duty. Effective teaching seemed contingent upon having good classroom management skills. Furthermore, being an effective teacher seemed to contribute to the participants' abilities to efficiently juggle other job demands. For example, Ms. Harmony was able to check

emails while students worked independently. Students were able to work independently, because it appeared that they understood the concept that Ms. Harmony taught (effective teaching).

Mutli-tasking and time-management. The second most common skill to help participants effectively manage their job demands was time management or the ability to multi-task. All three participants were observed multi-tasking during their study skills periods, which required them to help students work on different assignments from different content areas. They all appeared to multi-task with ease.

Ms. Snow helped one student with a poster board while going back and forth to help other students on various other projects (i.e. questioned students about answers on worksheets, prompted another student to look at bold phrases and pictures in text, showed one student how to print her paper from the laptop, helped another student with her essay, and assisted a student in spelling "daughter" and "necessary"). While helping all of her students, Ms. Snow found some time in between these tasks to check emails on her computer. Ms. Snow capitalized on student strengths, which seemed to help her multi-task. For example, she had a student who finished his assignment early help another student with the same assignment. During another study skills period, Ms. Snow was observed multi-tasking again in a similar manner. She helped one student with science, modeled a problem for another student, worked on a grading matrix for upcoming student grade checks, re-directed students singing loudly, helped one student spell "describes," assisted a student who popped in from another class get the correct textbook, and took a phone call from a colleague to handle chaperone business for prom.

Ms. Harmony and Ms. Raffy were also observed multi-tasking during their study skills periods. Ms. Harmony found pockets of time to speak with a colleague and check her phone messages and emails in while she helped students in her study skills class. She helped her students with tobacco projects, science, math, video editing, and answered multiple student questions. Ms. Raffy explained to one student how solar panels worked for his science project while she helped another student conduct social studies research on a laptop. Ms. Raffy also reviewed a nuclear energy handout to one student while she prompted and redirected other students.

All three participants attributed their abilities to effectively managing their job demands to having time-management skills and prioritizing duties. Ms. Snow said that she is resourceful and is able to switch roles (teacher, mother, friend, class advisor). Ms. Snow explained how she can determine which role takes priority over another at specific times.

When presented with a plethora of job duties during class time, Ms. Harmony demonstrated how she was able to balance them well. She was able to transition from instructing whole class to circulating around the classroom monitoring students while her co-teacher taught to working one-on-one with students. During class time, Ms. Harmony redirected students when needed, found time to check her emails, answered student questions, provided students with supplies as needed, collaborated with her co-teacher and EA about weekly grade checks and curriculum maps, made announcements to the class, completed a grade check for a colleague who popped in from another class, and even found time to pull a student who looked sad aside to talk to him about how he was feeling. She completed these duties seamlessly.

Ms. Raffy said, "I have to prioritize." She explained that she decides day by day which job duty she is going to focus on most (e.g., IEPs, class advisor business, teaching). In addition, Ms. Raffy said that she had to combine prioritizing her job duties with taking things as they come. "I try to prioritize, but then I can't fit unknowns into my list of priorities," said Ms. Raffy. For Ms. Raffy students are her top priority and keeping her desk clean is her last priority.

Relevant-teaching. Two of the participants, Ms. Snow and Ms. Raffy, exhibited the skill of making content relevant to students as a means of effectively managing their job demands. Helping students learn, a primary job duty, seemed contingent upon relevant teaching; therefore having relevant teaching skills helped Ms. Raffy and Ms. Snow be more efficient at helping students understand the concepts they taught. When Ms. Snow and Ms. Raffy provided real-life examples that the students could relate to, the students would make gestures and comments that showed they comprehended the subject matter. For example, during a lesson on force and motion Ms. Snow posed the following scenario and question to follow: Same car different driver, one driver is a small Japanese lady and the other is a big Samoan man. Which car will go faster/have an easier time accelerating? With a big smile on her face, the student said "Da small Japanese lady of course Miss." When Ms. Snow asked her why, she answered correctly that the Samoan man is bigger and has more mass. The student was able to take this concept and create her own bumper car example, which she modeled for the class. The student seemed pleased with herself and Ms. Snow did not have to re-teach the concept.

I observed Ms. Raffy making the content she was teaching relevant to her students seven different times over the course of two days. She read a short story called "Growing

up Local" in Pidgin to a small group in her class who were all local. They all listened to the story intently. They were all able to accurately answer questions about the story during a discussion. In another period, they read the same story and she shared her own personal story with them about her moving to Hawaii and having to become acclimated to the Hawaiian culture. She went on to joke about pronouncing the street names correctly. They laughed and seemed to relate to her and the character in the story.

During another class period, she discussed a story called "American Eyes" with the class. Ms. Raffy posed questions such as "How do you think the girl felt when she was told that she stinks like a Korean?" Ms. Raffy got students deeply involved in the discussion by having them think of a time when they were made to feel bad; they were able to use their own experiences to put themselves in the character's shoes. She repeated this same lesson in another class period. In another class, Ms. Raffy discussed another short story and helped students relate to the characters in the story by bringing up similar real life events such as prom and wearing things that stand out. She even brought her own example into the discussion and told them about her son not wanting to wear shorts above the knee; the students seemed to relate to the whole identity concept through her example.

On the last occasion, I observed Ms. Raffy describing solar panels to a couple of students in her study skills period. She described uneven sources of energy and related it back to real life by saying "On cloudy days I have to take fast showers." The students get excited about understanding the concept after her comment and all try to chime in at once. One student said "Oh yeah, because the heat runs out!" Ms. Raffy did not have to re-teach the concept.

Other skills. Participants mentioned two other skills that helped them effectively manage their job demands. Ms. Snow used technology to be more efficient at her job duties, and Ms. Raffy used exercise as a coping skill.

Using technology. One participant, Ms. Snow, utilized technology to make her job demands more manageable. She created PowerPoint presentations to use for lessons and lectures. Her co-teacher also used the PowerPoint presentations she created. Ms. Snow explained how it took her a while to get her co-teacher to present via PowerPoint. She said that he used to write on the whiteboard with hard to read colors in messy handwriting making it difficult for students to understand. Getting him to present via PowerPoint with her made it easier for her and the students. I observed Ms. Snow quickly and easily changing the PowerPoint graphics while her co-teacher was lecturing to model different concepts for the students. Ms. Snow also shared that her co-teacher used to give tests verbally for students to answer in written form, which was not conducive for her learners who had difficulty with auditory processing. This prompted her to use word processing to type out the test. In addition, Ms. Snow had her students create Prezi presentations to demonstrate their competency on benchmarks. She explained that Prezi is a technology similar to PowerPoint but with more features.

Exercise as a stress-coping strategy. Ms. Raffy was the only participant that talked about using exercise as strategy to cope with the stressors of the job. She told me that she does not tutor students before school, because "It's my time." She pointed to her knee brace and explained how she gets up at 4:30am every morning and works out a lot before coming to work.

Time Spent on Job Demands

In order to provide insight on how participants were effectively managing their job demands, I used duration recording to document the amount of time they spent engaged in different behaviors during my two-day observations of each participant. The behaviors were pre-coded to align with the job demands of a special educator outlined in the literature. The literature suggested the following three major categories: (a) non-instructional time spent on paperwork and meetings (Chandler, 1983; Gartin & Murdick, 2005; Shimabukuro et al., 1999; Sultana, 1996; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002), (b) instructional time spent with students (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010; Kaff, 2004; Vogler & Virtue, 2007), and (c) collaboration with colleagues (DeMik, 2008; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010; Kaff, 2004; Sultana, 1996). In addition, I added a fourth category to catch any miscellaneous behaviors that could not be classified in the first three categories.

Two of the participants spent the majority of their time instructing students. One participant spent most of her time in the non-instructional category attending meetings and doing paperwork. All three participants spent the least amount of time collaborating with colleagues and only one participant engaged in behaviors classified as other-assisting a counselor with counseling a student and helping a former student get a job at the school. Overall, the most amount of time was spent on instructing students and the least amount of time was spent on collaborating with colleagues. More time was spent on things such as paperwork and meetings when compared with collaborating with colleagues. See Table 4.4 for the duration of time that participants spent on pre-coded job demands.

Table 4.4.

Duration of Time Spent Participants Spent on Pre-Coded Job Demands

Participants	Category 1- Instructional Time Spent w/Students	Category 2- Non-Instructional Time (e.g., paperwork, meetings)	Category 3- Collaboration w/Colleagues	Category 4- Other
Participant #1- Ms. Snow	5 hours, 51 minutes	6 hours, 21 minutes	1 hour, 29 minutes	N/A
Participant #2- Ms. Harmony	4 hours, 26 minutes	1 hour, 31 minutes	1 hour, 28 minutes	1 hour, 34 minutes spent on helping counselor counsel student and assisting former student w/job placement
Participant #3- Ms. Raffy	6 hours, 58 minutes	4 hours, 35 minutes	3 hours, 7 minutes	N/A
Total	**17 hours, 15 minutes**	**12 hours, 27 minutes**	**6 hours, 4 minutes**	**1 hour, 34 minutes**

Chapter V

Discussion and Implications

In this qualitative case study, I explored how three expert special educators from a secondary school on the Leeward Coast of Oahu constructed their perceived roles and managed to stay in the field and successfully cope with their job demands. This study was conducted to find ways to help curb the special education teacher attrition phenomenon connected to role problems (Billingsley, 2004a; DeMik, 2008; Plash & Piotrowski, 2006; Shek, 2007; Sultana, 1996; Westling & Whitten, 1996) by extracting role perceptions and effective resources, supports, behaviors, experiences, and skills when it comes to effectively managing the job demands involved in special education. The theoretical framework used in this study is known as the novice to expert continuum, which moves through the five stages of novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and finally expert (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980). The novice to expert continuum helps to contextualize what it takes to be an expert special educator who is able to juggle the many tasks of the job effectively. The following research questions were explored in this study:

1. How do three expert special education teachers on the Leeward coast of Oahu construct their perceived role?

2. How do three expert special education teachers on the Leeward coast of Oahu successfully negotiate their job demands?

   a. What supports, resources, behaviors and/or experiences have helped three expert special educators on the Leeward coast of Oahu effectively juggle their job demands?

b. What skills do three expert special educators on the Leeward coast of Oahu possess that helps them to successfully manage all aspects of their job requirements?

Summary of Findings

To contextualize the explanation of the findings in this study, I will briefly summarize the results. The results revolve around the following themes: (a) role perception and challenges; (b) Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) novice to expert theory; (c) supports, resources, behaviors, and experiences; (d) personality traits and skills that helped participants effectively manage the demands of their job; and (d) participants overall spending the most time on instructing students.

Role Perception and Challenges

The participants emphasized that whatever role they played (e.g., counselor, caretaker, teacher) had to be conducive to meeting the students' needs; therefore making meaningful connections to the students' real lives was a priority. The ability to multitask was a big part of constructing their roles as expert special educators. All three participants saw themselves as the primary re-teacher in their co-teaching relationships who had the necessary skills to modify the work or provide supplemental lessons to help students grasp concepts. In addition, their roles included serving as class advisors who helped plan milestone events that include but are not limited to prom and graduation. Several challenges arose as the participants defined their roles as special educators: grading, the fear of lawsuits, unmotivated students, frustrations with parents, implementing state and school-wide initiatives, and simply saying no to complete additional job duties.

Novice to Expert Theory

Participants' behaviors and perspectives in different areas of teaching special education corresponded with the key characteristics associated with each stage in Lester's (2005) adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model. Two of the participants (Ms. Snow and Ms. Raffy) mentioned that when they first started teaching special education they possessed some of the novice characteristics associated with Lester's adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' skill acquisition model. These novice characteristics included having little situational perception, no discretionary judgment, and rigidly adhering to rules. None of the participants described exhibiting characteristics associated with the advanced beginner stage. However, one of the participants (Ms. Harmony) described that after a few years of teaching she experienced characteristics similar to the competent stage, which included conscious and deliberate planning.

All three of the participants exhibited characteristics associated with the proficient and expert stage of Lester's (2005) adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model. Characteristics that the participants displayed that correspond with the proficient stage included seeing situations holistically, recognizing what is most important in a situation, perceiving deviations from the normal pattern, less labored decision-making, and using maxims for guidance. The three participants showed how they reached the expert stage by no longer relying on rules, displaying that they had an intuitive grasp of situations based on deep tacit understanding, using analytic approaches when problems occurred, and possessing a vision of what is possible.

Supports, Resources, Behaviors, and Experiences

The supports and resources that helped the expert special educators in this study successfully negotiate their job demands included collegial support, a planning period, substitute teachers, EAs, rubrics, and assistive technology. The behaviors that the expert special educators exhibited to effectively juggle their job demands were working beyond required work hours, collaboration, using multiple communication methods, multi-tasking during study skills, creating weekly calendars and to do lists, spending out of pocket monies, communicating and forming trusting relationships with parents, creating IEP templates, and working smarter not harder. Experiences that helped expert special educators manage their job demands effectively included completing legal paperwork, helping students become college and career ready, educating colleagues about students with disabilities, and being a parent of a child with a disability.

Personality Traits and Skills

Certain personality traits appeared to help participants successfully manage their job requirements. One participant exuded a positive outlook and appeared to have a lot of empathy for her students. All three participants had skills in classroom management, the ability to multitask, and good time-management skills. Two participants were skillful at making the content they were teaching relevant to students. Other skills were being technologically-inclined, building rapport with students, being organized yet, flexible, being collaborative in co-teaching teamwork, and utilizing exercise as a stress coping strategy.

Majority of Time Spent on Instructing Students

In addition, I used duration recording to document the amount of time they spent engaged in different behaviors during my two-day observations of each participant. Overall, the most amount of time was spent on instructing students and the least amount of time was spent on collaborating with colleagues. More time was spent on things such as paperwork and meetings when compared with collaborating with colleagues.

Explanation of Findings

In the following paragraphs, I will explain the results of my study as they relate to the existing research literature. I will explore potential findings that were consistent and inconsistent with the literature and Lester's (2005) adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) novice to expert skill acquisition theory. The explanation of findings will be discussed within the context of the research questions, characteristics of the participants, and events that occurred during the study.

Role Perception

As special educators, the participants perceived themselves as taking on five major roles: (a) the primary teacher to modify lessons and re-teach concepts in their co-teaching relationships, (b) teachers to both students with disabilities and without, (c) class advisors, (d) multitasking, and (e) changing roles (e.g., counselor, caretaker, teacher) conducive to meeting student needs. Making meaningful connections to students' real lives was a theme embedded in the five roles mentioned above. The participants' perceived roles are consistent with Cowne (2005) and Wasburn-Moses' (2005) claims that special educators serve in a wide variety of roles in today's classrooms that go beyond instructional time with the students. For example, serving as class advisors to

help students with extracurricular activities outside of the classroom such as prom and graduation, and having to switch roles from counselor or caretaker to teacher goes beyond just academically instructing students.

Co-teachers responsible to re-teach and modify lessons for all students. The participants supported students in general education classrooms and co-taught with general education counterparts, a common job responsibility of special educators cited by Kloo and Zigmond (2008). All three participants saw themselves as co-teachers. Teaching in the general education inclusive setting contributed to the participants extending their family of students to include non-disabled students.

The participants saw themselves as the primary person to modify, supplement, individualize, and re-teach lessons to all students in their co-taught classes; a role that Gersten et al. (1995), Kaff (2004), Wasburn-Moses (2005), and Sultana (1996) noted as being one of the major job responsibilities of a special educator. It is worthy to note that the participants seemed to make connections to students' real lives when having to supplement or individualize lessons. The participants' focus on re-teaching and modifying lessons align closely with Mastropieri et al.'s (2005) major co-teaching goals, which are to increase instructional options for all students and enhance the participation and academic success of students with disabilities.

The participants indicated that they were involved in helping their co-teachers plan the curriculum. Ms. Harmony described herself as the "strategist" of her co-teaching team and during observations it appeared that both her and Ms. Raffy had equal if not more teaching time than their co-teachers when delivering classroom instruction. Ms. Snow was observed as the more dominant disciplinarian in her co-teaching relationships

and was the creator of the PowerPoint presentations that one of her co-teachers delivered to the students. The equality that appeared to exist in the participants' co-teaching relationships seemed to defy Mastropieri et al's (2005) report that there is a lack of equality among co-teachers at the secondary level, and that special educators often feel dominated by their general education counterparts. Perhaps this discrepancy is due to participants being expert special educators.

 Class advisor. All three participants took on the additional role of serving as a class advisor who committed themselves to following an incoming freshman class for four years until that class graduated. This role seemed to have a connection to the role of making meaningful connections to their students' real lives. By serving as a class advisor, participants described how they were able to get to know the students on a more personal level and help them with meaningful events outside of the classroom such as prom, homecoming, senior sneak away, class fundraisers, and their graduation ceremony. One participant, Ms. Harmony, described it as helping students "Make the most of their high school years." This role may have also helped participants keep up with the social expectations of same age peers without disabilities; therefore they know what skills are on par for their students with disabilities and what skills are deficient in terms of what is needed before graduation.

 The class advisor role is an additional role unique to a high school teacher, and is consistent with literature that suggested that secondary special educators are responsible for a wider variety of responsibilities than their elementary counterparts. However, the literature I reviewed (Rice & Zigmond, 2000; Schloss et al., 2001; Wasburn-Moses, 2005) did not specifically mention the class advisor role or extracurricular faculty advisor

(e.g., after school clubs, sports) as being one of the extra responsibilities of a secondary special educator. Extra responsibilities mentioned in the literature included overseeing vocational programs, developing and implementing post-high transition plans, and teaching more sophisticated content-areas in addition to teaching basic academic skills (Rice & Zigmond, 2000; Schloss et al., 2001; Wasburn-Moses, 2005).

Multitasking and multi-roles. As special educators, the participants often found themselves bouncing from one task to the next. Multitasking was a crucial part of being a secondary special educator who had to deal with emails, phone calls, students, colleagues, parents, class advisor business, professional development portfolios, multiple initiatives, and IEP paperwork. These job demands contributed to a typically non-stop moving workday for the participants. The participants verified literature (Rice & Zigmond, 2000; Schloss et al., 2001; Wasburn-Moses, 2005) that suggests secondary special educators have an increased workload when compared to their elementary counterparts. Participants explained that the need to multitask is greater at the secondary level due to the higher caseloads, multiple periods, need for class advisors, and need to collaborate with several other content area teachers for progress reports. There may have been a greater demand for participants to multitask given the increased workload as secondary special educators.

It is important to note that the extra responsibility of developing and implementing post-high transition plans was described by one of the participants (Ms. Raffy) through her experience of successfully developing and implementing a post-high transition plan to help a student with autism become college and career ready. In addition, the participants' mention of being the primary re-teachers in their co-teaching

relationships exemplified Rice and Zigmond (2000), Schloss et al. (2001), and Wasburn-Moses' (2005) indication that secondary special educators have to teach basic reading, writing, and math skills in addition to teaching sophisticated content-areas. All three participants co-taught in a content-area that corresponded to content specific 9th grade benchmarks and standards, yet were responsible for modifying and re-teaching concepts so that the students would grasp the basic knowledge needed to advance to the more abstract grade level benchmarks.

The school-wide concept of study skills periods for students with special needs seemed to create an environment conducive to multitasking. Each participant taught two study skills periods where they were responsible for helping students on their caseload juggle work on assignments for multiple classes (e.g., electives, math, science, English, social studies). Teaching study skills made participants responsible for teaching multiple core subject areas including electives. The participants seemed to be masters at multi-tasking when I observed them helping students in their study skills classes work on assignments for multiple content areas. The participants even found time to do various non-instructional tasks such as check emails and run grade checks. Multitasking was only one of the factors that helped the participants work on other non-instructional tasks during study skills periods; other factors included relevant teaching skills that eliminated re-teaching time, and the use of EAs.

The rotating bell-schedule and multiple periods reinforced multitasking among the participants. The rotating bell schedule and multiple holidays often put one of their class periods behind, which seemed to be the root cause of participants having to juggle

multiple class calendars and agendas; a setup that may have contributed to the participants' need to multitask.

The participants described part of their role as having to work on multiple initiatives and IEP paperwork. A fair amount of literature documented that the expectation of special educators to complete paperwork associated with reform measures outlined in IDEA (2004) and NCLB (2001) takes away instructional time spent with students (Cowne, 2005; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010; Shimabukoro et al., 1999; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002; Vogler & Virtute, 2007), and contributes to role overload (Billingsley 2004a; DeMik, 2008; Thornton et al., 2007). Paperwork may have contributed to the participants' feelings of missing time spent with students and having too much work to do. One of the participants, Ms. Raffy, talked about how she missed time spent with students when her work was dominated with initiatives and IEP paperwork. Two of the participants (Ms. Harmony and Ms. Snow) expressed how at times they did not feel like they could do everything expected of them, because there were just too many things to do. Although Ms. Harmony and Ms. Snow felt like they could not fulfill all the job demands expected of them, multitasking and prioritizing seemed to help them cope with the role overload they experienced as special educators. Multitasking seemed to be a major contributing factor to the participants' ability to effectively juggle their multiple job demands.

Another role that the participants perceived to take on was working with colleagues and being the link between home and school. These roles were evident in their ability to multitask. I observed two participants calling parents while running study skills class. In addition, there were multiple times that I observed participants collaborating

with colleagues during and in between classes while working on paperwork, checking emails, and assisting students. Fuchs (2010) indicated that planning time is key to helping students succeed in an inclusive setting, and it appeared that some planning occurred during the frequently created opportunities the participants used to collaborate with their colleagues. Collaboration took place in an on the fly kind of manner during times in the day that I least expected (e.g., during class, in between class periods, during recess, while multitasking). Perhaps this was a way for the participants to cope with Keefe and Moore (2004) and Mastropieri's (2005) claim that secondary special educators found it difficult or nearly impossible to find sufficient planning time with their general education co-teachers, especially those who had to teach with more than one general education counterpart for different periods during the school day.

Watching participants communicate with parents and listening to them talk about their role as the first person that parents come to at the school level when they have questions or concerns supported claims in the literature that indicated that special educators spend a lot of time communicating student progress to parents (Cowne, 2005; Kaff, 2004). All participants gave parents their personal cell phone number and felt that it was important for parents to have that kind of access to them. This helped them to understand what was going on in the students' homes and in turn helped them make meaningful connections to their lives and know what hat (e.g., counselor, second mother, teacher) to wear to ensure they were serving in a role conducive to meeting the students' needs at certain points in their lives.

The participants seemed to communicate with parents at a deeper level when compared to Cowne (2005) and Kaff's (2004) reports of communication that grazes the

surface; meaning it only involves one-way communication from teacher to parent regarding student progress or a lack thereof. The participants in the study seemed to talk to some of the parents like they knew them for years; the families seemed to share personal family issues with the participants. These conversations appeared to offer the participants possible reasons for student progress or a lack thereof and helped them to put on the correct hat (e.g., teacher, second mother, therapist) depending on the students' needs. Their abilities to switch to the role that best suited the students' needs at any given time seemed to help the participants easily adapt to meeting the students' emotional, behavioral, and academic needs, which is inconsistent with the 40% of special education participants in Casey et al.'s (2001) study who indicated that they had difficulties meeting their students' social and emotional needs. The participants in this study may have had an easier time meeting the social and emotional needs of students than the participants in Casey et al.'s study due to their ability to know when to switch roles (e.g., counselor, teacher, caretaker) and the close and constant communication they had with their students' parents to gain knowledge about outside factors such as family life.

The participants often mentioned in their journals and occasionally during interviews that while multitasking they worked on a professional development portfolio. Findell (2006) discussed how expert teachers are life-long learners. Working on professional development portfolios to improve their practices as teachers was an indication of their willingness to improve their practices even as veteran teachers who their principal and department head nominated as expert special educators. Their willingness to continually improve their craft may have contributed to their principal and department head's decision to nominate them as expert special educators for this study.

Role Challenges

The five challenges that arose as the participants defined their roles as special educators could be related to role problems; a fair amount of literature attributed some of special educators' struggles with juggling their job demands to role problems (Billingsley, 2004b; Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Gersten et al., 2001; Morvant et al., 1995). The five challenges that participants described in their roles included paperwork (grading, implementing state and school-wide initiatives, IEPs), the fear of lawsuits, unmotivated students, frustrations with parents, and simply saying no to additional job duties. Billingsley's (2004b) four classified role problems (role ambiguity, role dissonance, role overload, and role conflict) seem to have similarities to the role challenges that participants discussed.

The participants' explanations showed that they seemed to have a clear understanding of what their roles were as current special educators; therefore role ambiguity seemed to be a non-issue in their current roles as nominated expert special educators. However, it seemed that some role ambiguity existed when they described what they thought their roles were when they were novice special educators. Role dissonance, or the teachers' own role expectations being different from the expectation of others, also seemed to be evident when the participants were beginning or novice special educators. Two of the participants (Ms. Raffy and Ms. Snow) described that when they first started teaching they expected their primary role to be instructing students with disabilities. As a beginning special educator, Ms. Raffy did not realize that she would play a huge part in implementing tedious state and school-wide initiatives. Ms. Raffy and Ms. Snow also did not realize that they would have to deal with behavior and emotional

issues prior to actually teaching, issues that Casey et al. (2011) and Stephens and Fish (2010) cited as complexities that special educators experience on the job.

Role overload may be associated with the challenges that some participants had with grading and the paperwork that came with implementing reform measures outlined in IDEA (2004) and NCLB (2001). A fair amount of literature documents that the amount of non-instructional work (e.g., paperwork) involved in the field of special education has a direct impact on role overload and special education teacher attrition (Billingsley, 2004a; DeMik, 2008; Shimabukuro et al., 1999; Sulanta, 1996). The participants may have had feelings associated with role overload due to the paperwork involved with being a special educator. However, the participants are still teaching in the field even with the paperwork challenges and possible feelings of role overload.

Role overload may have been a factor in some of the grading challenges experienced by participants. Ms. Raffy talked about the challenges she experienced with grading 60 papers while in a co-teaching relationship. Ms. Raffy explained that when she was not in a co-teaching relationship the number of papers she had to grade was fewer. According to Billingsley (2004b) many special educators struggle with changing roles while co-teaching and the lack of support from their colleagues for their new and often multiplied responsibilities. Role overload may have also contributed to one of the participants' (Ms. Harmony) inability to say no to taking on additional job duties.

The challenges of dealing with frustrated parents and the fear of lawsuits could also be potential signs of role conflict. Parents may expect different things from teachers, which is consistent with role conflict. Although communicating with parents can be beneficial for students with disabilities, it can be frustrating and time-consuming (Cowne,

2005; Kaff, 2004). Lawsuits have been on the rise and are often a result of parental disagreements with the IEP (Yeager et al., 2000), so it could be possible that the participants' fears of lawsuits were derived from dealing with frustrated parents. Special educators are expected to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities (IDEA, 2004). Parents on the other hand may take the term "appropriate" to an overzealous level, expecting unrealistic demands (e.g., getting the student with a disability to perform at the same level as his or her general education peers) of special educators.

Novice to Expert Continuum

Two of the participants (Ms. Snow and Ms. Raffy) mentioned that when they first started teaching special education they possessed some of the novice characteristics (i.e., having little situational perception, no discretionary judgment, and rigidly adhering to rules) associated with Lester's adapted version of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model. Perhaps these two participants had an easier time recalling their beginning years of teaching because they only had to recall six years back; whereas the other participant (Ms. Harmony) who did not describe any novice characteristics would have had to think back 20 years ago to when she first started teaching.

However, Ms. Harmony did recall that after a few years of teaching she experienced characteristics similar to the competent stage, which included conscious and deliberate planning. The conscious and deliberate planning characteristics that Ms. Harmony described seemed typical of her personality. She described herself as "anal," and had many different organizational tools that she developed to make her job duties more manageable.

The way my interview questions were worded could have contributed to the fact that none of the participants described exhibiting characteristics associated with the advanced beginner stage in Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model. For example, one of the questions I asked during the interview was "What was your perceived role as a special educator when you first started this job?" The phrase "first started this job" may have been perceived by the participants as just their first year of teaching, which could have factored into why they did not describe any characteristics associated with the advanced beginner stage. Another interview question I asked was "What helped you advance from a novice special educator to an expert special educator?" This question may have just prompted answers associated with the two extremes of novice or expert, rather than the in between stages such as advanced beginner and competent.

All three participants discussed and displayed characteristics associated with Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) stages of proficient (seeing situations holistically, recognizing what is most important in a situation, perceiving deviations from the normal pattern, less labored decision-making, and using maxims for guidance) and expert (no longer relying on rules, displaying that they had an intuitive grasp of situations based on deep tacit understanding, using analytic approaches when problems occurred, and possessing a vision of what is possible). The participants' flexible nature and abilities to make quick and unlabored decisions in the best interest of their students showed that they had an in depth understanding of their student's needs and were able to put their job responsibilities into perspective (e.g., switch roles from student's teacher to counselor,

prioritizing job demands). These are all characteristics associated with the proficient and expert stage of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model.

It is interesting to note that the participant with the most years of experience teaching special education (Ms. Harmony-20 years) displayed and discussed the most (six) characteristics associated with the expert stage in Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition model when compared with the other two participants. Ms. Raffy and Ms. Snow both had six years of experience teaching special education and both displayed two characteristics associated with the expert stage in Dreyfus and Dreyfus' skill acquisition model. According to Brown and McIntyre (1995) and Berliner (2001), teacher expertise develops over time and is an accumulation of concrete experiences; a factor that is not a part of the Dreyfus and Dreyfus skill acquisition theory. Although experience is a necessary condition for developing teacher expertise, it is insufficient (Berliner, 1986). However, some research indicated that it takes three to five years of professional experience to demonstrate competence in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Eraut, 1994).

Supports and Resources

The supports and resources that helped the expert special educators in this study successfully negotiate their job demands include collegial support, a planning period, substitute teachers, EAs, rubrics, and assistive technology. The collegial support given to all three participants by their co-teachers contrasts with Billingsley's (2004b) notion that many special educators struggle with their job demands due to a lack of support from their colleagues. The participants were able to attend IEP meetings, conduct class advisor business, and communicate with parents during class time while their co-teachers

ran class. When the participants had other job demands to complete that were related to special education or class advisor business, their co-teachers willingly supported them by covering all aspects of classroom instruction. All participants saw their co-teachers as a valuable resource when it came to curriculum planning, which seemed to help them deliver instruction more efficiently. Having co-teachers serve as valuable resources may have contributed to developing the expertise of the participants. It is also possible that the participants' expertise could have contributed to having supportive co-teachers.

All participants utilized their planning periods to efficiently manage their job demands. Teachers reported that planning time was crucial to helping students succeed in inclusive settings (Fuchs, 2010), yet given their multiple job demands and feelings that they were not always able to complete everything expected of them the participants were unable to focus solely on collaborating with their colleagues during planning periods. In addition to collaborating with colleagues, the participants used their planning periods to hold IEP meetings, complete paperwork, communicate with parents, catch up on emails, gather work for sick students, and conduct class advisor business. Although they only had planning periods three times per week, the participants seemed to get a lot of work done during this time. However, the participants had to sacrifice planning time with colleagues to complete other job demands during their planning periods.

According to Tschantz and Markowitz (2002) and Shimabukuro et al. (1999) substitute teachers were listed as strategies to help make the paperwork involved in special education more manageable. One participant (Ms. Harmony) used a substitute teacher to complete more than just paperwork. While the substitute teacher took care of instruction, Ms. Harmony was able to work on school wide initiatives, student evidence

binders, sophomore banquet ticket sales, posters for her classroom, writing IEPs, and differentiating lesson plans. The substitute teacher seemed to allow Ms. Harmony time to work on paperwork related to special education and other tasks, which could have made her job demands more manageable.

Teachers interviewed by Tschantz and Markowitz (2002) reported that they spent less time doing paperwork related to special education when they had clerical assistance from a paraprofessional. Two of the participants (Ms. Harmony and Ms. Raffy) used their paraprofessionals or EAs to work on more than just clerical tasks and paperwork. Their EAs were utilized to work one on one with students, to minimize behavioral problems during class, tutor students after school, lead their study skills classes, make copies, and run errands for class advisor business. The way these participants used their EAs freed up time for them to attend IEP meetings and seemed to lessen their workload when it came to classroom management, class advisor business, and copying documents for meetings and students. The two participants seemed to be able to focus more on instructing students when their EAs helped with behavior management during class.

Rubrics and assistive technology (AT) were also resources that one participant (Ms. Raffy) chose to use to help her manage her job demands. Rubrics helped speed up grading, and being a part of the local University's AT pilot project afforded her laptops that had a text to speech program that helped students who struggled with reading. Some researchers (Gersten et al., 1995; Kaufhold et al., 2006; Sultana, 1996) stated that special educators are often expected to implement a variety of curricula and IEPs with insufficient resources; being a part of this AT pilot project seemed to provide Ms. Raffy with an additional resource to help her implement some of her IEPs. The text to speech

program provided extra assistance for students who struggled with reading, and she created her own rubric as a resource to speed up grading.

Behaviors

Behaviors that the expert special educators exhibited to effectively juggle their job demands are working beyond required work hours, using multiple communication methods, creating and utilizing organizational tools (e.g., IEP templates, technology, weekly calendars, and to do lists) to work smarter and not harder, flexibility, and spending out of pocket monies. Working beyond required work hours was the most frequently cited behavior that allowed participants' to effectively manage their job demands. In fact, the majority of the other behaviors (planning, communication, multi-tasking, creating to-do-lists) that the participants exhibited to help them effectively manage their job demands were done through the means of working beyond required work hours.

Working beyond required work hours to complete job demands. Participants worked beyond required work hours to tutor students, check emails, create to-do-lists, work on school accreditation documents, communicate with parents, plan lessons, collaborate with colleagues, and conduct class advisor business, which correlated with the literature that described the wide variety of roles special educators take on. These roles included implementing federally mandated reform measures, developing and implementing student IEPs, tracking progress (Vogler & Virtue, 2007), planning team meetings, collaborating with general education counterparts, and communicating with parents (Casey et al., 2011). Ms. Raffy mentioned that she took her IEP paperwork home to complete, because she could complete it free from distractions. A fair amount of

literature indicated that the legal paperwork involved in special education contributed to special education teacher attrition, particularly because it took away from instructional time spent with students (Billingsley, 2004a; DeMik, 2008; Sultana, 1996). In Ms. Raffy's situation she took the legal paperwork home, therefore it did not take away from instructional time spent with students.

Two of the participants (Ms. Raffy and Ms. Snow) expressed that the only reason that they were able to get all their job demands completed was because they worked beyond their required work hours. Ms. Harmony stated that she worked beyond required work hours because it was a standard that she set for herself; to go above and beyond what was required of her for the sake of the students. Role overload seemed evident in the participants' reasoning as to why they work beyond required work hours. The responses and behaviors of the participants begged the question of whether they would be able to complete everything expected of them without working beyond required work hours; or perhaps if the participants completed all of their job demands during their required work hours the work would be of lesser quality. It is possible that the requirements of a special educator are not realistic to complete in the designated required work time allotted.

According to Cowne (2005) and Kaff (2004) special educators spend much of their time collaborating and communicating with parents and colleagues, and communication and collaboration seemed like an important means for participants to effectively manage their job demands. Teachers reported in a study conducted by Fuchs (2010) that planning time is important to help students in an inclusive setting succeed,

which may explain why participants used time before, during, and after school to collaborate with parents and colleagues.

Organizational tools to work smarter not harder. All of the participants used tools such as IEP templates, an IEP goals and objectives bank, technology, weekly calendars, and to do lists to effectively juggle their job demands; something Ms. Raffy considered as "working smarter not harder." The organizational tools that these participants used are similar to some of the strategies that the literature offered to help make the paperwork in special education more manageable. For example, Carlson et al. (2003), Shimabukoro et al. (1999), and Tschantz and Markowitz (2002) discussed checklists and a list of generic IEP goals and objectives to pull from as a means to help teachers manage the paperwork involved in special education more efficiently. Ms. Raffy attested to the strategy of using IEP templates and accessing a bank of generic IEP goals and objectives to help develop her students' IEPs helped her to complete paperwork faster and more efficiently. In addition, Ms. Harmony organized her job duties via checklists and calendars to help prioritize and complete her job duties more efficiently. Ms. Snow who used PowerPoint and Prezi for lessons and lectures to make her job demand of delivering instruction more efficient supported literature that indicated that technology is an effective way to reduce paperwork and maximize teachers' instructional time (Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002; Shek, 2007).

A flexible expert. Ms. Harmony personified her ability to easily switch roles as she explained the flexibility that she had while using the weekly calendars and to-do-lists that she created. For example, when student needs were more pressing she altered her calendar and her to-do-lists to ensure that their needs were met before doing the

paperwork on her list. Her flexibility also came into play when she altered lessons with her co-teachers to ensure that her students had sufficient knowledge to grasp the concepts being taught; flexibility was cited as one of the critical elements to effective co-teaching (Magiera, Lawrence-Brown, Bloomquist, Foster, Figueroa, Glatz, Heppeler, & Rodriguez, 2006). Ms. Raffy showed her ability to adapt when she would take the generic goals and objectives from the IEP bank and individualize them to fit the unique needs of each of her students. According to Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) an expert, much like Ms. Harmony and Ms. Raffy, carries out their plans with the ability to adapt and make adjustments as necessary. Other than flexibility being crucial to effective co-teaching (Magiera et al., 2006), I did not find any other recent literature that cited flexibility as being important to special educators.

     Adequate resources to execute job demands. One participant (Ms. Harmony) spent out of pocket money to buy erasers and pencil lead for her students and explained that it makes it easier for her to get the students to learn. Gersten et al. (1995), Kaufhold et al. (2006), and Tschantz and Markowitz (2002) indicated that special educators are more likely to leave the field when not provided with sufficient resources and supplies to fulfill the job requirements of the job, and one of the participants (Ms. Harmony) displayed that she had insufficient supplies to carry out their job demands through spending out of pocket monies to buy pencil lead and erasers. Although she indicated that she had insufficient supplies, Ms. Harmony has remained in the field for 20 years.

Experiences

     The experiences described in this section differ from the behavior section above. The behavior section above is related to behaviors that were observed during the course

of this study, and the experiences represent what participants described as helping them to effectively manage their job demands. Teamwork was evident in the following experiences described by participants: effectively include completing legal paperwork, helping students become college and career ready, educating colleagues about students with disabilities, and being a parent of a child with a disability.

Completing paperwork and helping student become college and career ready. Although Billingsley (2004b) stated that many special educators struggle with their job demands due to a lack of support from colleagues, teamwork seemed to be the means used by two participants (Ms. Raffy and Ms. Snow) to efficiently complete the legal paperwork requirements involved in special education and help students become college and career ready. These experiences were described as positive success stories that helped them complete their job duties. Ms. Snow's success story was based on the willingness and support of her colleagues to help gather the necessary data that resulted in efficiently completing the legal paperwork requirements involved in special education. Ms. Raffy described several experiences where she also had willing team players (e.g., co-teachers, college disability coordinator, skills trainer) that worked with her to support the cause of helping students with disabilities become college and career ready.

Educating colleagues about students with disabilities. Ms. Raffy mentioned her experience in educating colleagues about students with disabilities, which also appeared to be embedded in the teamwork concept. Much of her experiences in educating her general education colleagues about students with disabilities served the purpose of helping students with disabilities become college and career ready. Ms. Raffy's experiences with educating her colleagues align with the special educators in Demik's

(2008) study who indicated that they spent time educating their general education counterparts about students with disabilities. Rather than listening to general education teachers vent about having students with disabilities in their classes (Demik, 2008), Ms. Raffy had colleagues who embraced her support to work together for the success of students with disabilities.

Ms. Raffy seemed to be building capacity within her co-teaching team and other colleagues to help her execute her job demands more effectively. However, it is interesting to note that I did not come across any literature that talked about the concept of building capacity among colleagues as a means to help make the job demands of a special educator more manageable. In addition, Ms. Raffy attributed her own children's (two with disabilities) successes to a team that had good working relationships.

Parenting children with disabilities. Ms. Raffy explained that she was more efficient when it came to developing IEPs and coordinating multiple cases in her capacity as a special educator due to the multitude of experiences she had with writing IEPs for her own two children. She attributed her expertise of being a special educator to her ability to be able to put herself in the parents' shoes. Although this may be the case for Ms. Raffy, I did not come across any literature that discussed how the experience of parenting children with disabilities can help special educators be more efficient at completing their job demands.

Personality Traits and Skills

Personality traits that appeared to also help some participants (Ms. Harmony and Ms. Snow) successfully manage her job demands included exuding a positive outlook

and empathy. In addition, participants exhibited skills in classroom management and making content relevant to students.

Empathy and positivity helps build rapport and makes job demands more manageable. Ms. Snow and Harmony seemed to establish rapport with their students with their empathetic nature. Klis and Kossewska (1996) indicated that empathy could protect teachers against feelings of loneliness and burnout syndrome; this could provide insight into why two of the participants have been retained in the field of special education as experts for six to 20 years. Students seemed to be more receptive to Ms. Snow and Ms. Harmony's teaching due to the rapport and empathy they shared with students, which prevented them from having to re-teach concepts as much. The participants had more time to focus on other job duties when they did not have to re-teach concepts, which appeared to help them be more efficient at completing their job demands. In addition, Ms. Harmony's positive outlook seemed to help her view her multiple job duties as achievable, and appeared to motivate her to continue chipping away at them. However, I have yet to find literature that supports empathy, positivity, and rapport as contributing factors to help a special educator manage their job demands more efficiently.

Good classroom-management skills and making the content relevant create opportunities to complete other job duties. Wasburn-Moses (2005) and Casey et al. (2011) said that managing student behaviors was one of the major daily responsibilities of special educators, and according to my observations all three participants made managing student behavior a daily focus. They each had a repertoire of effective classroom-management skills (e.g., structure, routine, proximity, re-direction, tone of

voice, EAs) that helped them create an environment that seemed to ease other important responsibilities, such as making accommodations and modifications to learning activities (Wasburn-Moses, 2005). All of the participants exhibited classroom management skills in the way that Doyle (1986) defined it; the strategies and actions that teachers used to establish and maintain order in the classroom. It is a possibility that the rapport that some of the participants had with their students contributed to effective classroom management techniques with the students. Casey et al. (2011) indicated that novice special educators struggle with classroom management, which is a good indication that the participants, who generally had good classroom management skills, are not novice special educators.

All three participants seemed assertive in nature and were skilled at making the content relevant to their students, which seemed to help them teach their students effectively and efficiently. Relevant teaching and their assertive nature seemed to help them execute their primary job duty of helping students understand concepts quicker. The concept of being assertive and relevant teaching making a special educator's job demands more manageable is not backed up by any of the literature I reviewed.

Exercise as a stress-reliever. Some studies that targeted people working in a variety of professions indicated that treatments such as relaxation, nutrition, and exercise have been shown to positively correlate with decreased symptoms of professional burnout (Bamford et al., 1990; Cheek et al., 2003; Westling et al., 2006). This literature aligns with Ms. Raffy using exercise as a stress reliever to help her decompress and cope with her job demands.

Instructing Students, A Top Priority

During my two day observations with each participant, I used duration recording to document the amount of time they spent on non-instructional time (i.e., paperwork and meetings), instructional time spent with students, and collaboration with colleagues. Overall, the most amount of time was spent on instructing students. Participants spent the next most amount of time on the non-instructional tasks of paperwork and meetings, and the least amount of time collaborating with colleagues. My observations of two participants (Ms. Harmony and Ms. Raffy) contrasted with literature that special educators' time spent on completing paperwork surpassed instructional time spent with students (Cowne, 2005; Shimabukuro et al., 1999; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002). However, Ms. Snow spent the most time on non-instructional duties such as paperwork and attending meetings. She could have been spending more time on paperwork and in meetings when compared to the other two participants due to her transition to a new role as department head. At the time of the observations, Ms. Snow was being prepped to take on cases and duties as the department head for the next school year.

Additionally, special educators indicated that they spent less time on paperwork related to special education when they had clerical assistance from a volunteer, paraprofessional, or secretary (Carlson et al., 2003; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002). Perhaps the participants' access to their own EAs, who can serve as a paraprofessional and clerical assistant, contributed to their ability to spend more time instructing students and less time completing paperwork.

Limitations

A number of limitations may influence the interpretations of the findings of this study. First, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to represent the population of special educators around the world, in the U.S., state of Hawaii, or even the island of Oahu. This study targeted a limited number of expert special educators (n=3) from one school who were nominated by their principal and special education department head to participate. The criteria that I used to qualify the participants as experts in their field are somewhat subjective. A certified and licensed special educator in Hawaii who has taught for a minimum of six years and meets the criteria outlined in the expert special educator nomination form derived from Dreyfus and Dreyfus'(1980) skill acquisition model may not be deemed an expert by some. Based on the data, some of the participants seem to be approaching expert and exhibited a lot of the characteristics in the proficient stage of the novice to expert theory (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980). There may be other factors that qualify a special educator as an expert in their field. In addition, the Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) skill acquisition model was not originally intended for special educators; it was proposed with the intent to train aircraft pilots. It is possible that the progressive stages from novice to expert are different for special educators.

The participants in this case study were all certified and licensed to teach special education in Hawaii, one of the criterion in this study that had to be met to be deemed an expert special educator. The requirements to obtain special education certification and licensure vary from state to state, making the criteria to be deemed an expert in this study subject to criticism. Additionally, all three participants were special education teachers teaching in the inclusion setting at the same high school on the island of Oahu. The job

demands of special educators may vary from state to state, country to country, and school to school on the island of Oahu. The job demands may also differ when teaching in other settings (e.g., alternative schools, resource classrooms, fully self-contained settings); therefore the results of this study cannot be generalized to special educators who are teaching in other settings. It is very possible that other teachers in the same school who did not have support of co-teachers or a cooperative team, have more difficulty fulfilling their job demands.

Finally, the interpretation of findings in this study may reflect the biases of the participants and the researcher. The perceptions of the participants in this study are subjective and individualized. The results may include some gender bias, because all three participants were female. The participants had a wide range of teaching experience, from six to 20 years. The participants' perceptions about their job demands may vary according to the number of years they have taught. The constructed role perceptions, behaviors, resources, supports, experiences, and skills that were found to be effective in juggling the job demands of a special educator depended heavily on the participants' personal feelings, experiences, and biases.

Implications of Findings for Practice and Policy

In this section, I will state implications that the findings of this study may have on practitioners and policymakers. I will also use the findings of this study to draw some provisional recommendations for practitioners and policymakers.

The participants in this study saw themselves as responsible for all students in the inclusion setting. Some of the participants even explained how their responsibilities expanded when they moved from being a special educator in a resource classroom to a

special educator in an inclusion classroom. They felt that it was their responsibility to not only accommodate and modify lessons for the students receiving special education services, but to also do the same for their pupils without disabilities. The increased job demands when moving from teaching in a resource setting to an inclusive setting may be a deterrent for practitioners currently teaching in separate classes to move or apply for a position in the inclusive setting. The participants also seemed to take pride in being responsible for all students, so teaching to a wider variety of students may be appealing to some.

Given the potential for increased job demands, administrators may want to consider giving more planning and preparation time to special educators teaching in the inclusion setting. For example, the participants were allotted planning periods three times per week. They used these planning periods to efficiently manage job demands, yet they still had to work beyond required work hours on a daily basis. Allotting them a daily planning period may alleviate some of the time they spend completing job duties beyond their required work hours. The participants were observed collaborating and planning with their co-teachers and other colleagues before, during, and after the school day. Allowing them more planning time during the school day may also help to prevent them from using instructional time to collaborate with colleagues.

Policymakers may want to consider reassessing the job demands of special educators who teach students at different age levels. It is recommended that policymakers consider clarifying the differences of the job demands of a secondary special educator versus an elementary school special educator, because participants have described the extra duties of preparing students to become college and career ready and increased

caseloads when compared to their elementary counterparts. Posting clear job descriptions may help practitioners to make more informed decisions on what age level they would like to teach when applying for positions. In addition, clarifying the roles of special educators may be something that administrators want to consider, because participants seemed to experience some role dissonance and ambiguity during their first few years as beginning special educators. Clarifying the roles of special educators may help them to execute their job demands more effectively.

Administrators may want to look at how a rotating bell schedule has the potential to negatively impact the workloads of secondary special educators as it did with some of the participants in the study. For one of the participants, one of their class periods was consistently one lesson behind due to the rotating bell schedule that triggered them to have to juggle multiple class calendars and agendas.

The expert special educators who participated in this study spent time working beyond their required work hours on a daily basis to complete the job demands expected of them, which may be an indication that the job demands of a special educator are not possible to complete in the allotted time that they are paid to complete their job duties. Extending the required work hours to 8 hours per day may allow special educators to complete the job demands required of them during required work hours and decrease the need to multitask. All of the participants were consistently observed multitasking to complete their job duties. Allowing them more time could possibly allow special educators to put more of a concentrated effort on specific tasks. For example, special educators could concentrate solely on instructing students rather than checking emails or collaborating with colleagues and parents during instruction time. Providing special

educators with substitute teachers to complete job demands has the potential to decrease role overload. Policymakers may also want to consider increasing the pay of special educators to motivate them to effectively complete their job demands, and prevent them from having the perception that they are working for free.

It is important to note that the support of the participants' colleagues (e.g., general education teachers, related service providers) contributed to their ability to successfully execute their job demands. The colleagues of special educators should be aware of the positive implications that their support can have on the ability of special educators to effectively juggle their job demands. The support given by general education teachers and other support staff can potentially transfer to providing quality services to students with disabilities. When the support is mutual it can be more beneficial; therefore general educators and support staff may also want to be open to support and training from their special education counterparts in order to help students with disabilities succeed.

Special educators and administrators may want to consider the use of assistive technology that includes text to speech program features as a resource to assist students who struggle with reading. Ms. Raffy was a part of a pilot project at the local university and was afforded with assistive technology, which she described as helping her manage one of her primary job duties (teaching) more effectively and efficiently. According to Dolan, Hall, Banerjee, Chun, and Strangman (2005) students with disabilities scored significantly better on tests when assessed using computer-based text to speech programs. Text to speech programs can also be used as an instructional tool get a more accurate and fair picture of what students with disabilities know (Dolan et al., 2005). Similar to the participants in the study, special educators may also want to consider using rubrics,

technology, IEP templates, and organizational tools to help them grade papers, communicate, complete IEPs, and prioritize job duties more quickly and efficiently. To cope with role overload, special educators can consider exercising like one of the participants in the study.

For novice special educators striving to be an expert, it may be worthy to note that flexibility was crucial for the participants in the study to ensure that students' needs were met (e.g., ability to adjust a lesson plan on the spot for students not comprehending the originally planned lesson). In addition, the expert special educators in this study had the ability to change roles (e.g., counselor, teacher, surrogate mother) according to what the student needed at the time. Teacher education programs may want to discuss the flexibility of candidates prior to them entering the field. Setting up partnerships for candidates to work with supportive co-teachers in the inclusion setting may help them practice the craft of being flexible.

When interviewing potential special educators, administrators may want to consider skills and personality traits found in the expert special educators of this study. Interviewees who display good classroom management skills, are technologically inclined, have previous experience working with students with disabilities (preferably six to 20 years), are empathetic, and have a positive outlook may be promising special educators. In addition, administrators may want to look at providing professional development in the areas listed above to help their special education teachers improve their craft.

Implications for Research

Now that I have provided some tentative recommendations for practitioners and policymakers, I will discuss what the findings implicate in terms of theory and the research literature. Lastly, I will make some recommendations on topics that should be researched in subsequent studies to further explore the phenomenon of how special educators can effectively manage their job demands and remain in the field for the sake of providing quality services to students with disabilities.

The findings of this study supported several components of the Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition theory. In the novice component, two of the participants described similar characteristics when they first started teaching. The novice components consistent with theory included rigidity and little flexibility. Participants did not display any of the components in the advanced beginner stage of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' skill acquisition theory. One of the participants displayed the characteristic of conscious and deliberate planning when in the competent stage after a few years of teaching. All three participants exhibited similar characteristics as special educators during the time this study was conducted in the proficient and expert stage of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' skill acquisition theory. In the proficient stage the participants supported all components, which included seeing things holistically rather than in terms of aspects, seeing what is most important in a situation, having a less labored decision making process, and using maxims for guidance whose meanings vary according to the situation. Similar to the proficient component, the participants replicated all components of the expert category in Dreyfus and Dreyfus' skill acquisition theory, which included relying less on rules or maxims, an intuitive grasp of situations based on deep tactic understanding, analytic

approaches used in novel situations, and possessing a vision of what is possible. Overall, the participants aligned closely with the proficient and expert components of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' skill acquisition model. It is likely that the evidence of the participants exhibiting a more close alignment with the proficient and expert stages when compared with other (lesser stages) stages is due to the focus of the study being on expert special educators.

Although the participants exhibited much of the characteristics associated with the proficient and expert stages of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' (1980) skill acquisition theory, there may be room for more components during the proficient and/or expert stages in the continuum, especially as the theory applies to special education teaching. According to the results of this study, the deemed experts also displayed the following: (a) good classroom management skills, (b) technologically-inclined, (c) empathetic, (d) positive attitude, (e) good rapport with students, (f) making content relevant to students, and (g) having six or more years of teaching experience in special education.

It is also important to note that role ambiguity and dissonance did not exist in the participants' current roles as expert special educators. When they described themselves as beginning special educators, they discussed that role ambiguity and dissonance existed. Future research on the correlation between role clarity and the ability to be an expert special educator would also be beneficial to practitioners and administrators.

Researchers may also want to explore the ability to effectively juggle one's job demands in the field of special education and the contribution the skill has on being an expert special educator. Further research on the job demands of teachers in Resource classrooms versus Inclusion classrooms may also be warranted. It may also be worthy to

further research the process that one goes through from being a novice special educator to an expert special educator; this will help to provide information to practitioners and administrators on what they need to do to get themselves or their employees to become an expert in their craft. It would be interesting to see the impact that expert special educators have on the academic and functional success of students with disabilities. Furthermore, further research should be done on the correlation between expertise and retention rates in the field of special education.

Lastly, it may be beneficial to further explore whether the allotted time given to special educators is enough to complete all of their job demands. Researchers should look into whether the resources, supports, behaviors, skills, and traits found in this study to help the participants effectively juggle their job demands can be replicated in other states, and settings (elementary versus secondary, fully self-contained versus resource and inclusion). The results of these types of future studies could help provide role clarity to the job demands of special educators teaching in different settings.

Conclusion

The participants' perceived roles were consistent with Cowne (2005) and Wasburn-Moses' (2005) claims that special educators serve in a wide variety of roles in today's classrooms that go beyond instructional time with the students. Most of their roles were consistent with the literature that described the job demands of special educators, which included being the primary teacher to modify lessons and re-teach concepts in their co-teaching relationships (Gersten et al., 1995; Kaff, 2004; Sultana, 1996; Wasburn-Moses, 2005), teaching both students with and without disabilities (Kloo

& Zigmond, 2008), changing roles (e.g., counselor, caretaker, teacher) conducive to meeting student needs, and serving as a class advisor.

The class advisor role is an additional role unique to a high school teacher, which adds credibility to literature (Rice & Zigmond, 2000; Schloss et al., 2001; Wasburn-Moses, 2005) that suggested that secondary special educators are responsible for a wider variety of responsibilities than their elementary counterparts. Participants explained that the need to multitask is greater at the secondary level due to the higher caseloads, multiple periods, need for class advisors, and need to collaborate with several other content area teachers for progress reports. Multitasking seemed to be a major contributing factor to the participants' ability to effectively juggle their multiple job demands.

Participants had to work on multiple initiatives and IEP paperwork. Paperwork may have contributed to the participants' feelings of missing time spent with students and having too much work to do. However, the participants spent the most amount of time on instructing students, and the least amount of time collaborating with colleagues, which differed from the literature that suggested that special educators time spent on completing paperwork surpassed instructional time spent with students (Cowne, 2005; Shimabukuro et al., 1999; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002). Participants may have spent the least amount of time collaborating with colleagues, because their desks were all located in a pod similar to a fishbowl. Having all of their desks in the same location may have contributed to more incidental collaboration, which potentially reduced the amount of reserved time that they may have needed for collaborating with colleagues.

The equality that appeared to exist in the participants' co-teaching relationships contrasted with Mastropieri et al.'s (2005) report that there is a lack of equality among

co-teachers at the secondary level, and that special educators often feel dominated by their general education counterparts. Fuchs (2010) indicated that planning time is key to helping students succeed in an inclusive setting, and collaboration took place in an on the fly kind of manner during times in the day that I least expected (e.g., during class, in between class periods, during recess, while multitasking). Perhaps this was a way for the participants to cope with Keefe and Moore (2004) and Mastropieri et al.'s (2005) claim that secondary special educators found it difficult or nearly impossible to find sufficient planning time with their general education co-teachers, especially those (similar to the teaching situations of the participants) who had to teach with more than one general education counterpart for different periods during the school day.

A lot of the participants' time was spent communicating and forming trusting relationships with the students' parents and family members, which was consistent with the findings of Cowne (2005) and Kaff (2004) and helped them to execute their job demands more effectively. The participants seemed to communicate with parents at a deeper level than the one-way communication that Cowne (2005) and Kaff (2004) described. There appeared to be a deep two-way communication as the participants in the study seemed to talk to some of the parents like they knew them for years and the families shared personal family issues with the participants.

The participants' explanations showed that they seemed to have a clear understanding of what their roles were as current special educators; therefore role ambiguity seemed to be a non-issue in their current roles as nominated expert special educators. However, it seemed that some role ambiguity and role dissonance existed when they described what they thought their roles were as novice special educators.

Having role clarity may contribute to a special educator's ability to be an expert in the field.

Working beyond required work hours was the most frequently cited behavior that allowed participants' to effectively manage their job demands, and emphasized role overload. In fact, the majority of other behaviors (collaboration, planning, communication, multi-tasking, creating to do lists) that the participants exhibited to help them effectively manage their job demands were used when working beyond required work hours.

The multiple means of communication (e.g., text messaging, emails) also seemed to help the participants manage the job demand of collaborating and communicating with parents and colleagues more efficiently. In addition, one participant seemed to have inadequate supplies (i.e., erasers, pencil lead) to help her carry out her job demands effectively. Having inadequate resources did not drive this participant to leave the field, which is inconsistent with literature that indicated that special educators are more likely to leave the field without adequate resources to carry out their job demands (Gersten et al., 1995; Kaufhold et al., 2006; Tschantz & Markowitz, 2002).

According to Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) an expert, much like some of the participants, carries out their plans with the ability to adapt and make adjustments as necessary. The behaviors of some of the participants indicated that expert special educators are flexible, a critical element to effective co-teaching (Magiera et al., 2006).

Personality traits such as empathy and positivity helped some of the participants build rapport with their students, making their job demands more manageable. Klis and Kossewska (1996) indicated that empathy could protect teachers against feelings of

loneliness and burnout syndrome, which could provide insight into why two of the participants have been retained in the field of special education as experts for six to 20 years.

Good classroom management skills and making the content taught relevant to the students seemed to create more opportunities for the participants to complete other job duties. All of the participants exhibited strategies and actions that teachers used to establish and maintain order in the classroom (Doyle, 1986; Wasburn-Moses, 2005), which seemed to make the participants major job duty of teaching students easier. It seemed that students were better able to grasp the concepts taught in an orderly environment where the content was relevant to them. These skills prevented the participants from having to re-teach concepts and waste valuable instructional time managing unruly behavior. Casey et al. (2011) indicated that novice special educators struggle with classroom management, which is a good indication that the participants, who generally had good classroom management skills, were not novice special educators.

Appendix A

Nomination Form for Expert Special Educators

Instructions: Nominate five special educators who have primary instructional responsibilities at your school that: (a) is licensed to teach students with disabilities in the state of Hawaii, (b) has been teaching students with disabilities for a minimum of 6 years and (c) meets *all* criteria outlined in the "Characteristics of Expert Special Educators" table below in regards to effectively managing the job demands involved in special education.

Characteristics of Expert Special Educators

	Knowledge	**Standard of Work**	**Autonomy**	**Coping with Complexity**	**Perception of Context**
Expert Special Educators	Authoritative knowledge of discipline and deep tacit understanding across all aspects in the field of special education	Excellence achieved with relative ease when performing the job duties required of a special educator	Is self-sufficient and can independently take responsibility for going beyond existing standards in the field of special education, creates own interpretations and applies them to job requirements	Holistic grasp of complex situations that arise in the field of special education, moves between intuitive and analytical approaches with ease	Sees overall 'picture' and alternative approaches; vision of what may be possible in regards to the job duties required of a special educator

Adapted from the professional standards for conservation, Institute of Conservation (London) 2003 based on the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition (as cited in Lester, 2005).

 Expert Special Educator Nominees:

 1._____

 2._____

 3._____

 4._____

 5._____

Appendix B

Agreement to Participate in
Expert Special Educators and Job Demands Study

Shawna Aveiro-Ortogero
Investigator
(808) 781-7551

This research project is being conducted as a component of a dissertation for my doctoral degree. The purpose of this project is to learn how expert special educators generally negotiate their job demands successfully. You are being asked to participate, because you are (a) a certified and licensed special education teacher in Hawaii, (b) have been teaching students with disabilities for a minimum of six years and (c) have been nominated by your principal and special education department chair as an expert special education teacher who is generally able to effectively negotiate your job demands.

Participation in this project will consist of: (a) a self-written time journal that documents your work related duties for one work week, (b) one audio-taped and transcribed interview with the investigator, (c) classroom observations for two entire workdays conducted by the investigator, and (d) attending a focus group meeting with the investigator and two other participants. Interview questions will focus on how you effectively juggle your job demands as a special educator. The interview will last no longer than 45 minutes and will be audio-taped and transcribed for data analysis purposes. The classroom observations will last for two entire workdays and will involve the investigator shadowing you as you go about conducting your work-related duties for that week. The classroom observations will be done strictly to document how you manage your work-related duties for two workdays. The focus group meeting will take no longer than 90 minutes and will involve you helping to validate the investigators interpretations of the data. No personal identifying information will be included with the research results. You will be one out of three participants in this study. In addition, to the three active participants, there will be two alternate participants. All participation tasks will need to be completed by December 1, 2011.

The investigator will compensate you for your participation in this study. After each stage of the process (i.e., teacher-kept time journals, audio-taped interview, classroom observations, and focus group meeting) is completed you will be given $10 gift cards.

The investigator believes that there is little or no risk to participating in this research project. However, there may be a small risk that you will experience stress and/or psychological pain when closely examining your ways of living up to the demands of your job. It is believed the results of this study will give special educators in Hawaii effective strategies to help deal with the demands of their job.

Research data will be confidential to the extent allowed by law. Agencies with research oversight, such as the UH Committee on Human Studies, have the authority to review

research data. The research results may be submitted for publication to an educational journal and/or other source upon completion of the research project. All research records will be stored in a locked file in the investigator's office until successfully published. All research records will be destroyed when the investigator successfully publishes the results. The projected date of completion is May 1, 2013.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time during the duration of the project with no penalty.

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact the researcher, Shawna Aveiro, at (808) 781-7551. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the UH Committee on Human Studies at (808) 956-5007.

Expert Special Educator Participant:
I have read and understand the above information, and agree to participate in this research project.

_____
Name (Printed)

_____   _____
Signature   Date

Audio-Taped and Transcribed Interview:
I agree to have my interview with the investigator recorded and transcribed.

_____
Name (Printed)

_____   _____
Signature   Date

Appendix C

Time Journal Template
Example
(Actual template will be provided for two entire typical work days broken up into 60 minute intervals)

Instructions: Please use this time journal to document how you spend your workdays on the dates and times provided. Your journaling should be in *bullet or agenda* form and take place *daily* in 60 minute intervals. At the end of each workday please reflect on the events that took place in *narrative* form.

Date: Monday September 12, 2011

Excerpt #1:
7:30a.m.-8:30a.m.

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Excerpt #2:
8:30a.m.-9:30a.m.

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Date: Monday September 12, 2011

Daily Reflection:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix D

Interview Questions

1) What is your job title?

2) How long have you been working at this job?

3) What was your perceived role as a special educator when you first started this job?

4) What do you currently think the role of a special education teacher is?

5) Please explain your work schedule.

6) Please describe your job.

7) Please describe what you do during a typical work day.

8) How many times a week do you stay past required work hours? If so why?

9) Do you feel like you are able to do everything expected of you as a special educator? Why or why not?

10) What helped you advance from a novice special educator to an expert special educator?

11) How have you been effective in managing your job demands?

12) Tell me about a time when you were effective in successfully carrying out your job demands.

13) How have you been ineffective in managing your job demands?

14) Tell me about a time when you were ineffective in successfully carrying out your job demands.

References

Accountability Resource Center Hawaii. (n.d.) Retrieved from

    http://arch.k12.hi.us/PDFs/nclb/2012/PrelimAYPallSch37Pub20120711.pdf

Allen, R. M., & Casbergue, R. M. (2000, April). *Impact of teachers' recall on their*

    effectiveness in mentoring novice teachers: The unexpected prowess of the

    transitional stage in the continuum from novice to expert. Paper presented at the

    Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New

    Orleans, LA.

Alliance for Excellent Education. (August, 2005). *Teacher attrition: A costly loss to the*

    nation and to the states. Retrieved from

    http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/TeacherAttrition.pdf

Andrews, B. D., & Quinn, R. J. (2005). The effects of mentoring on first-year teachers'

    perceptions of support received. *Clearing House, 78,* 110-116.

Bamford, J., Grange, J., & Jones, P. (1990). An experiential stress management course

    for teachers. *Association of Educational Psychologists Journal, 6*, 90-95.

Benner, P. (1982). From novice to expert. *The American Journal of Nursing, 82*, 402-

    407.

Berliner, D.C. (2001). Learning about and learning from expert teachers. *International*

    Journal of Educational Research, 35, 463-482.

Berliner, D. C. (1986). In pursuit of the expert pedagogue. *Educational Researcher, 15,*

    5-13.

Billingsley, B. S. (1993). Teacher retention and attrition in special and general education:

    A critical review of the literature. *The Journal of Special Education, 27,* 137-174.

Billingsley, B. S. (2004a). Special education and teacher retention and attrition: A critical analysis of the research literature. *The Journal of Special Education, 38,* 39-55.

Billingsley, B.S. (2004b). Promoting teacher quality and retention in special education. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 37,* 370-376.

Billingsley, B.S., Bodkins, D., & Hendricks, M.B. (1993). Why special educators leave teaching: Implications for administrators. *Case In Point, 7,* 23-38.

Billingsley, B. & Cross, L. (1992). Predictors of commitment, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching: A comparison of general and special educators. *The Journal of Special Education, 25,* 453-471.

Bliese, P.D., & Castro, C.A. (2000). Role clarity, work overload and organizational support: Multilevel evidence of the importance of support. *Work & Stress, 14,* 65-73.

Brown S. & McIntyre D. (1995). *Making Sense of Teaching.* Open University Press, Buckingham, UK.

Carlson, E., Chen, L., Schroll, K., & Klein, S. (2003). *SPeNSE: Study of personnel needs in special education final report of the paperwork substudy* (#ED00CO0010). Westat.

Casey, P., Dunlap, K., Brister, H., & Davidson, M. (2011). I only wish I'd known: Voices of novice alternatively certified special education teachers. *International Journal of Special Education, 26,* 182-190.

Cecil, M., & Forman, S. (1990). Effects of stress inoculation training and coworker support groups on teachers' stress. *Journal of School Psychology. 28*, 105-118.

Chandler, H. N. (1983). The loneliness of the special education teacher. *Journal of*

Learning Disabilities, 16, 126-127.

Cheek, J., Bradley, L., Parr, G., & Lan, W. (2003). Using music therapy to treat teacher

    burnout. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling, 25*, 204-217.

Cowne, E. (2005). What do special educational needs coordinators think they do?

    Support for Learning, 20, 61-68.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods*

    approaches (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five*

    approaches (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2007). A marshall plan for teaching. *Education Week ,26,* 28-48.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2004). Inequality and the right to learn: Access to qualified

    teachers in California's public schools. *Teachers College Record, 106,* 1936-

    1966.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Sclan, E.M. (1996). Who teaches and why? Dilemas of

    building a profession for twenty-first century schools. In J. Sikula, T.J. Buttery, E.

    Guyton (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (2nd ed., pp. 67-101).

    New York: Simon & Schuster.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Youngs, P. (2002). Defining "highly qualified" teachers: What

    does "scientifically-based research" actually tell us? *Educational Researcher,31,*

    13-25.

Data Accountability Center, (2010, Fall). *Number of children and students served under*

    IDEA,part B, in the U.S. and outlying areas, by age and disability category.

    Retrieved from Data Accountability Center:

https://www.ideadata.org/TABLES34TH/AR_1-7.xls

Data Accountability Center. (2009a, Fall). *Children and students served under IDEA,*

Part B, by age group and state. Retrieved from Data Accountability Center:

https://www.ideadata.org/TABLES33RD/AR_1-1.xls

Data Accountability Center. (2009b, Fall). *Teachers employed (FTE) to provide special*

education and related services to students ages 3 through 5 under IDEA, Part B,

by qualification status and state. Retrieved from Data Accountability Center:

https://www.ideadata.org/TABLES34TH/AR_3-1.pdf

Data Accountability Center. (2009c, Fall). *Teachers employed (FTE) to provide special*

education and related services to students ages 6 through 21 under IDEA, Part B,

by qualification status and state. Retrieved from Data Accountability Center:

https://www.ideadata.org/TABLES34TH/AR_3-2.pdf

Data Accountability Center. (2008a, Fall). *Teachers employed (FTE) to provide special*

education and related services to students ages 3 through 5 under IDEA, Part B,

by qualification status and state. Retrieved from Data Accountability Center:

https://www.ideadata.org/TABLES33RD/AR_3-1.xls

Data Accountability Center. (2008b, Fall). *Teachers employed (FTE) to provide special*

education and related services to students ages 6 through 21 under IDEA, Part B,

by qualification status and state. Retrieved from Data Accountability Center:

https://www.ideadata.org/TABLES33RD/AR_3-2.xls

DeMik, S. A. (2008). Experiencing attrition of special education teachers through

narrative inquiry. *The High School Journal, 92,* 22-32.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). *The sage handbook of qualitative research (3rd*

ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dolan, R. P., Hall, T. E., Banerjee, M., Chun, E., & Strangman, N. (2005). Applying

principles of universal design to test delivery: The effect of computer-based

read-aloud on test performance of high school students with learning

disabilities. *Journal Of Technology, Learning, And Assessment*, *3*, 1-33.

Doyle, W. (1986) Classroom organization and management, in: W. C. Wittrock (Ed.)

Handbook of research in teaching (3rd edn) (New York, Macmillan), 392-431.

Dreyfus, S. E. (1981). *Four models vs. human situational understanding: Inherent*

limitations on the modeling of business. Columbia, NY: Teachers' College Press.

Dreyfus, S. E., & Dreyfus, H. L. (1980). *A five-stage model of the mental activities*

involved in directed skill acquisition (Report No. ORC-80-2). Retrieved from

Operations Research Center

http://www.dtic.mil/cgibin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA084551&Location=U2&doc=G

etTRDoc.pdf

Emery, D., & Vandenberg, B. (2010). Special education teacher burnout and act.

International Journal of Special Education, 25, 119-131.

Erant, M. (2005). Initial teacher training and the NVQ model. In Burke, J. (Ed.),

Competence Based Education Training (pp. 152-161). Briston, PA: Falmer Press.

Eraut, M. (1994). *Developing professional knowledge and competence.* Philadelphia, PA:

Falmer Press.

Ericsson, K. A., & Charness, N. (1994). Expert performance: Its structure and

acquisition. *American Psychologist, 49,* 725-747.

Eson-Brizo, J. (2010). *Analysis of a mentoring program to change attitudes related to*

turnover of special needs teachers (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ERIC (ED508645)

Findell, C. R. (2006). Learning to see: Developing the perception of an expert teacher, perceptions of alternate assessments. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, 77,* 29-33.

Flowers, C., Ahlgrim-Delzell, L., Browder, D., & Spooner, F. (2005). Teachers' perceptions of alternate assessments. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 30,* 81-92.

Fore, C., Martin, C., & Bender, W. N. (2002). Teacher burnout in special education: The causes and the recommended solutions. *High School Journal, 86,* 36-45.

Fuchs, W. W. (2010). Examining teachers' perceived barriers associated with inclusion. *SRATE Journal*, *19*, 30-35.

Gartin, B. C., & Murdick, N. L. (2005). IDEA 2004: The IEP. *Remedial and Special Education, 26,* 327-331.

George, N., George M., Gersten, R., & Grosenick, J. (1995). To leave or to stay? An exploratory study of teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Remedial and Special Education, 16,* 227-236.

Gersten, R., Gillman, J., Morvant, M., & Billingsely, B. (1995, May). *Working conditions: Job design.* Paper presented at the National Forum on Issues Relating to Special Education Teacher Satisfaction, Retention and Attrition, Washington DC.

Gersten, R., Keating, T., Yovanoff, P., & Harris, M. K. (2001). Working in special education: Factors that enhance special educators' intent to stay. *Exceptional*

Children, 67, 549-567.

Hammond, H., & Ingalls, L. (2003). Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion: Survey results from elementary school teachers in three south-western rural school districts. *Rural and Special Education Quarterly, 22*, 24-30.

Hawaii Department of Education. (n.d.) *Teaching in Hawaii.* Retrieved from http://doe.k12.hi.us/personnel/TeachingInHawaii/

Ingersoll, T., & Smith, R. (2004). What are the effects of induction and mentoring on beginning teacher turnover? *American Education Research Journal, 41,* 681-714.

Jones, S. R., Torres, V., & Arminio, J. (2006). *Negotiating the complexities of qualitative research in higher education: Fundamental elements and issues.* New York: Routledge.

Kaff, M. (2004). Multitasking is multitaxing: Why special educators are leaving the Field. *Preventing School Failure, 48,* 10-17.

Kaufhold, J., Alverez, V., & Arnold, M. (2006). Lack of school supplies, materials and Resources as an elementary cause of frustration and burnout in South Texas special education teachers. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 33,* 159-161.

Keefe, B., & Moore, V. (2004). The challenge of co-teaching in inclusive classrooms at the high school level and what the teachers told us. *American Secondary Education, 32,77-78.*

Kennedy, V., & Burstein, N. (2004). An induction program for special education teachers. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 27,* 444-447.

Kinchin, I. N., & Cabot, L. B. (2010). Reconsidering the dimensions of expertise: From linear stages toward dual processing. *London Review of Education, 8,* 153-166.

Klein, J. (2007). The Contribution of a Simple Decision Process (SDP) to Reducing
    Biases in Educational Decisions. *Journal Of Experiential Education*, *30*, 153-
    170.

Kloo, A. & Zigmond, N. (2008). Coteaching revisited: Redrawing the
    blueprint. *Preventing School Failure, 52*, 12-20.

Klis, M., & Kossewska, J. (1996). *Empathy in the Structure of Personality of Special
    Educators.* Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

Lester, S. (2005). *Novice to expert: The Dreyfus model of skill acquisition.* Retrieved
    from http://www.sld.demon.co.uk/dreyfus.pdf

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lingo, A.S., Barton-Arwood, S.M., & Jolivette, K. (2011). Teachers working together:
    Improving learning outcomes in the inclusive classroom--Practical strategies and
    examples. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 43,* 6-13.

Magiera, K., Lawrence-Brown, D., Bloomquist, K., Foster, C., Figueroa, A., Glatz, K.,

    Heppeler, D., & Rodriguez, P. (2006). On the road to more collaborative
    teaching: One school's experience. *Teaching Exceptional Children Plus*, *2*, 1-
    14.

Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measure of experienced burnout. *Journal of
    Occupational Behaviour, 2,* 99-113.

Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E., & Lieter, M. P. (1996). *Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual*
    (3rd ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Mastropieri, M. A. (2001). Is the glass half full or half empty? Challenges encountered by
    first year special education teachers. *Journal of Special Education, 35,* 66-74.

Mastropieri, M., Scruggs, T., Graetz, J., Gardizi, W., Norland, J., Gardizi, W., and

> McDuffie, K. (2005). Case study in co-teaching in the content areas: Successes,

> failures, and challenges. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 40,* 260-270.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.).

> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

McLeskey, J., Tyler, N. C., & Flippin, S. S. (2004). The supply of and demand for special

> education teachers: A review of research regarding the chronic shortage of special

> education teachers. *The Journal of Special Education, 38*, 5-21.

McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. S. (1997). *Research in Education: A Conceptual*

> *Introduction.* New York: Longman.

Miller, D., Brownell, M., & Smith, S. (1999). Factors that predict teachers staying in,

> leaving, or transferring from the special education classroom. *Exceptional*

> *Children, 65,* 201-218.

Morvant, M., Gersten, R., Gillman, J., Keating, T., & Blake, G. (1995).

> *Attrition/Retention of urban special education teachers: Multi-faceted research*

> *and strategic action planning. Final performance report, Volume 1. [Chapter*

> *three and Chapter four]* Retrieved from www.csa.com

Odom, S.L. (2009). The tie that binds. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 20,*

> 1-9.

Office of Human Resources Hawaii Department of Education. (2006, January 17).

> *Teaching in Hawaii*. Retrieved from

> http://doe.k12.hi.us/personnel/teachinginhawaii.htm

Otto, S., & Arnold, M. (2005). A study of experienced special education teachers'

perceptions of administrative support. *College Student Journal, 39,* 253-260.

Owens, L. (2006). Teacher radar: The view from the front of the class. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 77,* 29-33.

Pearson, Q.M. (2008). Role overload, job satisfaction, leisure satisfaction, and psychological health among employed women. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 86,* 57-63.

Piaget, J. (1973). *To understand is to invent: The future of education.* New York: Grossman.

Pianta, R. C. (2006). Standardized observation and professional development: A focus on individualized implementation and practices. In M. Zaslow & I. Martinez-Beck (Eds.), *Critical issues in early childhood professional development* (pp. 231–254), Baltimore: Brookes.

Plash, S., & Piotrowski, C. (2006). Retention issues: A study of Alabama special education teachers. *Education, 127,* 125-128.

Prather-Jones, B. (2011). How school administrators influence the retention of teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Clearing House: A Journal Of Educational Strategies, Issues And Ideas*, *84*, 1-8.

Rice, D., & Zigmond, N. (2000). Co-Teaching in secondary schools: Teacher reports of developments in Australian and American classrooms. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 15*, 190-197.

Schempp, P.G., & Johnson, S.W. (2006). Learning to see: Developing the perception of an expert teacher. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, 77,* 1-58.

Schensul, S. L., Schensul, J. J., & LeCompte, M.D. (1999). *Essential ethnographic methods: Observations, interviews, and questionnaires.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Schlichte, J., Yssel, N., & Merbler, J. (2005). Pathways to burnout: Case studies in Teacher isolation and alienation. *Preventing School Failure, 50,* 35-40.

Schloss, P., Smith, M. A., & Schloss, C. N. (2001). *Instructional methods for secondary students with learning and behavior problem*s (3rd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Shechtman, J. & Leichtentritt, J. (2004). Affective teaching: A method to enhance classroom management. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 27,* 323-333.

Shek, K. (2007). Technology reduces paperwork burden, facilitates meetings. Retrieved from

http://www.specialedconnection.com/LrpSecStorytool/servlet/GetStory?docid=15 13773

Shiffrin, R., & Schneider, W. (1977). Controlled and automatic human information processing. *Psychological Review, 84,* 161.

Shimabukuro S., Edelen-Smith, P., & Jenkins A. (1999). Working conditions of special Educators in Hawaii. *Educational Perspectives, 32,* 11-16.

Stephens, T. L., & Fish, W. W. (2010). Motivational factors toward pursuing a career in special education. *Education*, 130(4), 581-594. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

Stough, L. M, Palmer, D. J., & Sharp, A. N. (2001, February). *Teachers' reflections on*

special education students' cognitions: An expert-novice comparison. Paper

presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwest Educational Research

Association, New Orleans, LA.

Stough, L. M, & Palmer, D. J. (2001, April). *Teacher reflection: How expert special*

educators differ from novices. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the

Council for Exceptional Children, Kansas City, MO.

Sultana, Q. (1996, November). *Special education teachers' attrition in Kentucky and its*

reasons. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Mid-South Educational

Research Association, Tuscaloosa, AL.

Thornton, B., Peltier, G., & Medina, R. (2007). Reducing the special education teacher

shortage. *The Clearing House, 80,* 233-238.

Tschantz, J., & Markowitz, J. (2002). *Policy forum special education paperwork.*

National Association of State Directories of Special Education, Incorporated.

U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. (n.d.). *Building*

the legacy: IDEA 2004. Retrieved from

http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CTopicalBrief%2C10

%2C

Vogler, K. E., & Virtue, D. (2007). "Just the facts, ma'am": Teaching social studies in

the era of standards and high-stakes testing. *The Social Studies. 98,* 54-58.

Wadsworth, B. J. (1996). *Piaget's theory of cognitive and affective development:*

Foundations of constructivism. 5th ed, White Plains, N.Y.: Longman Publishers

USA.

Wasburn-Moses, L. (2005). Roles and responsibilities of secondary special education

teachers in an age of reform. *Remedial and Special Education, 26,* 151-158.

Weatherley, R., & Lipsky, M. (1977). Street-level bureaucrats and institutional

    innovation: Implementing Special Education reform. *Harvard Educational*

    Review, 47, 171-197.

Westling, D., Herzog, M., Cooper-Duffy, K., Prohn, K., & Ray, M. (2006). The Teacher

    Support Program: A proposed resource for the special education profession and

    an initial validation. *Remedial and Special Education, 27,* 136-147.

Westling, D. L. & Whitten, T. M. (1996). Rural special education teachers' plans to

    continue or leave their teaching positions. *Exceptional Children, 62*, 319-350.

Whitaker, S. D. (2000). Mentoring beginning special education teachers and the

    relationship to attrition. *Exceptional Children, 66,* 546-566.

White, M., & Mason, C. Y. (2006). Components of a successful mentoring program for

    beginning special education teachers: Perspectives from new teachers and

    mentors. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 29,* 191-201.

Wright, S.P., Horn, S.P., & Sanders, W.L. (1997). Teacher and classroom context effects

    on student achievement: Implications for teacher evaluation. *Journal of Personnel*

    Evaluation in Education, 1, 57-67.

Yeager, D., Vela, R., Giese, S., Collavo, L., & Texas A and M Univ., C. r. (2000). *A*

    Study of Issues and Costs to Districts Related to Special Education Complaints,

    Mediation, and Due Process Hearings in the State of Texas. Retrieved from

    EBSCO*host*.

Yell, M. L., Shriner, J. G., & Katsiyannis, A. (2006, September). Individuals with

    disabilities education improvement act of 2004 and IDEA regulations of 2006:

Implications for educators, administrators, and teacher trainers. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 39, 1-24.*

Zane, T. (2009). Performance assessment design principles gleaned from constructivist learning theory (Part 1). *TechTrends, 53*, 81-88.