

ELEMENTARY INTERNS' KNOWLEDGE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

By

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Mom, without your constant love, support, dedication, patience, help, and encouragement none of this would be possible. This is for you.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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Students with a range of abilities and disabilities are being included in general education classrooms in increasing numbers, and teachers need an extensive repertoire of strategies and accommodations in order to meet the needs of all learners in a single classroom. Unified general and special education teacher education programs have emerged as one way to help preservice teachers learn how to meet the needs of diverse learners. The purpose of this study was to investigate how four interns prepared in such a program conceptualize and implement accommodations for diverse learners. Three guiding questions framed this study:

1. How do elementary education interns prepared in a unified teacher education program
 - a. conceptualize "diverse learners"?
 - b. conceptualize what it means to accommodate for diverse learners?
2. How do the interns accommodate for diverse learners during their internship placements?

3. What factors influence the extent to which the interns are able to put their personal conceptualizations into action?

Phenomenological research methodology was used to study 4 preservice teachers during a 12-week internship placement. The participants were selected based on recommendations that they were capable interns, placed with cooperating teachers that allowed interns freedom to try new strategies in the classroom. Data sources for each participant consisted of 7 classroom observations and reflective interviews, 2 semi-structured interviews, a member check interview, and lesson plan artifacts. From these data, 4 case studies were prepared to describe how each participant thought about accommodations and then put that conception into action. A cross-case analysis was done to identify dilemmas the interns faced as they implemented accommodations.

Each intern was able to articulate her knowledge and beliefs about diverse learners and accommodations and had different approaches for putting these conceptions into action. The approaches ranged from viewing accommodations largely in terms of remediation for students who were not achieving to grade-level standards, to viewing accommodation as a way to redesign curriculum so that students could interact with content in ways that better met their needs. The interns identified dilemmas related to definitions of fairness, grading and assessment, and implementation constraints that affected the ways they approached accommodation.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

With the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997, more and more students with disabilities are being served in general education schools and classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). However, placement, alone, does not guarantee participation and progression for these students (Pugach & Warger, 2001). The new IDEA provisions suggest a focus on curriculum changes rather than mere placement to allow access to the general education curriculum. Now, the Individual Education Program (IEP) must specifically address how a student will gain access to the general education curriculum. Intentional supports must be in place to help students progress and make sense of the general education curriculum (Pugach & Warger, 2001). This requirement calls for skilled general and special educators who can collaborate to find ways to help students with diverse needs be successful in inclusive classrooms.

Current research indicates that general education teachers may not be well prepared to make the accommodations necessary to meet the needs of diverse learners (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995; Whinnery, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1991) nor do they seem to do so in practice (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; Brown, Gable, Hendrickson, & Algozzine, 1991; Zigmond & Baker, 1996). This is problematic because as more and more students with diverse needs are being included in general education classes, teachers will need the skills and the dispositions to meet the needs of all students.

Unified teacher preparation programs have evolved as one way to alleviate this gap in knowledge and to improve practice. Winn and Blanton (1997) call for preparation of general and special educators who can collaborate to meet the needs of diverse learners. They suggest that this collaboration requires these educators to “share beliefs about students, teaching, and learning; to have a rich knowledge base about curriculum and instruction; and to know how to collaborate” (p. 11). Unified or collaborative programs may be structured differently, but usually share the common goal that all teachers are prepared together to meet the needs of all students (Villa, Thousand, & Chapple, 2000). This goal requires a programmatic focus on disability and other forms of diversity and on how to design instruction and set up classrooms to make all students successful. Sometimes this is accomplished by cross-departmental planning of courses with infused content, or by providing courses not traditionally taught in general education preservice teacher preparation.

However, just as placement in inclusive classrooms cannot ensure that students’ needs are being met, preparation in a unified program does not ensure that preservice teachers will be more capable of accommodating the diverse needs of students. Research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of these restructured programs (Griffin & Pugach, 1997) and more specifically the learning and understandings of program participants. Are students prepared in these programs ready, willing, and able to meet the needs of all students?

Purpose of the Study

For teacher education programs to adequately prepare preservice teachers to work in the schools of tomorrow, we must take a hard look at what we are doing today to effect

that change. This means not only summative assessment of restructured programs (focused on graduates), but also formative assessment (focused on current students).

Teacher education has been described as a time for preservice teachers to clarify and explicate their beliefs and assumptions so that these understandings can shape their teaching as they learn from their experiences (Loughran & Russell, 1996). Unified programs are based on the ultimate goal of preparing teachers for inclusion, which is likely to be a new concept for preservice teachers educated in non-inclusive schools in the 80's and 90's. Therefore, teacher education students are expected to think about teaching in ways that may be radically different from the ways they were taught, which may be a difficult, if not an impossible, obstacle to overcome (Kennedy, 1997; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996).

Preservice teachers are also challenged by the structures of the student teaching experience itself. They may be placed in a classroom that is noninclusive, and with a teacher whose conception of effective teaching differs from that espoused in the teacher education program. This raises questions about the resulting understandings and actions interns are able to develop in teaching contexts that conflict with the goals of a unified teacher education program.

This study is designed to take an in-depth look at the understandings and actions of interns prepared in a unified teacher education program. The following questions will be explored:

1. How do elementary education interns prepared in a unified teacher education program
 - a. conceptualize "diverse learners"?
 - b. conceptualize what it means to accommodate for diverse learners?

2. How do the interns accommodate for diverse learners during their internship placements?
3. What factors influence the extent to which the interns are able to put their personal conceptualizations into action?

Understanding more about how students in a unified program are being prepared to deal with the diverse needs of students they will inevitably serve will help teacher educators as they continue to design and refine these programs. In addition, it will provide information about factors that affect the implementation of accommodation to inform school-based support personnel as they help novice teachers meet the needs of all learners.

Delimitations

This study will be conducted with participants enrolled in the Unified Elementary and Special Education PROTEACH Program at the University of Florida in Gainesville. Participants volunteered from a purposefully selected pool of applicants according to specific selection criteria outlined in the methodology chapter. Data collection took place from August to December 2002.

The findings of this study are obviously context specific. I will describe the context of the study in detail in the methodology chapter and will provide extensive quotes from participants and anecdotes based on classroom observations to support the findings. This will allow readers to draw their own conclusions about transferability to different contexts based on shared characteristics (Creswell, 1998; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, it is helpful to have a shared understanding of several terms that will be used. These definitions are presented for clarity, and should not

be viewed as definitive or authoritative, consistent with a Vygotskian view of constructivism (Richardson, 1997).

An *intern* is a student in the master's year of a five-year teacher education program who is engaging in a full-time field placement. The interns spent twelve weeks in the classroom, from August 19 through November 8, 2002, and were expected to assume full responsibility for teaching during their placements. This was their first and only full-time placement, preceded by a 15-hour a week pre-internship and several other less time-intensive placements. These interns were all working toward elementary education certification in grades 1-6, and chose various specialization areas. They had one more semester in the unified program after the internship, during which time they took coursework related to their chosen area of specialization.

Unified program will be used to indicate a program in which elementary and special education preservice teachers take common coursework that has been designed through collaboration of all five departments in the college of education at the University of Florida. In the literature, the terms collaborative program and dual certification program are also used to describe this type of program, though differences exist in how colleges of education structure these programs.

Since one of the purposes of this study is to understand how interns define accommodations, I will refrain from presenting a definition here. However, I will differentiate between accommodations and modifications by stating that *accommodations* will refer to any change in how material is presented or approached, and *modifications* will refer to a change in the content of that material. *Adaptations* will be used synonymously with accommodations. The purpose of this study is not to differentiate

between these terms, but to find out in a more general way how the needs of students are being met. For that purpose, the word accommodation is used in this dissertation in a very broad, general manner.

Similarly, I will also refrain from offering a detailed description of diverse learners. However, I will point out that the teacher education program in which these students were enrolled has adopted a definition of *diversity* that includes ethnicity and race, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, and gender. The idea of diversity is imbedded in many of the courses offered throughout the five-year program, and is strengthened by the collaboration of college faculty across departments in the design and implementation of courses.

Since the purpose of this study is to examine preservice teacher thinking and action, it is important to define some of the language used to refer to teacher thinking. In the research questions, I use *conceptualize* to indicate the complex understandings participants have regarding the topics of interest. These personal, idiosyncratic understandings may be formed by beliefs and attitudes, experiences, and/or professional knowledge. I use conceptualization in a manner similar to the use of *knowledge* by Alexander, Schaller, and Hare (1991): “Knowledge encompasses all that a person knows or believes to be true, whether or not it is verified as true in some objective or external way” (p. 317).

However, the main purpose of this study is not to describe conceptualizations or knowledge that individuals hold but to attempt to understand the *personal practical knowledge* (Clandinin & Connelly, 1987) of interns regarding accommodations for diverse learners. This type of knowledge is personal and contextual and emerges during

action (Yinger, 1979). Therefore, all three research questions will give insight into the personal practical knowledge interns have of diverse learners and how to accommodate for their instructional and behavioral needs.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to examine how general education elementary interns prepared in a unified elementary and special education teacher education program conceptualize and implement instructional accommodations for diverse learners. In particular, both the actions and the decision making processes were explored as interns made accommodations for learners whose instructional needs differed. To understand more about what is needed and what is possible regarding accommodations in inclusive classrooms, a review of the literature was conducted.

There is a large body of research describing accommodations and modifications for diverse learners, usually from the standpoint of a researcher or an expert who describes the ideal way to meet the needs of all learners. Related to that is a body of research that describes what actually happens in classrooms, both general and special education, to meet the needs of all students. To parallel what is occurring in classrooms, I then looked to the research on teacher preparation for inclusive education. When these three bodies of literature are brought together, the result is an idealized picture of how to prepare general education teachers to meet the needs of all students. However, to understand if this ideal picture is in fact possible, I examined the literature on the development and learning of novice teachers.

The Nature of Accommodations

Information on accommodations and adaptations is plentiful. It is an essential chapter in books on inclusion (e.g., Kochhar, West, & Taymans, 2000; Landers &

Weaver, 1997; Lombardi, 1999; Villa & Thousand, 1995) as well as recent books on instructional strategies (e.g., Bos & Vaughn, 2002; Eggen & Kauchak, 2001). It is only recently that scholars have called for a focus on curriculum rather than placement (Pugach & Warger, 2001). In previous years, the emphasis was on philosophical, social, and/or administrative issues, with less attention to matters of instruction and curriculum (Joint Committee on Teacher Planning for Students with Disabilities, 1995).

Pugach and Warger (2001) stated that focusing on curriculum is critical because inclusive placements put students back in the very environments where they were once unsuccessful and subsequently labeled. Warger and Pugach (1996) called for a proactive stance on this issue, which would allow troubleshooting of student difficulties and preventive curriculum planning at the school and district levels.

While it may not have been the primary focus of early discussions on including students in the mainstream, specific mention of accommodations and adaptations does date back to 1982. Baumgart et al. (1982) discussed Principles of Partial Participation to help students with severe disabilities be successful in general education settings. Since then, and particularly within the last five or six years, accommodation has been a topic of much research and publication (e.g., Janney & Snell, 2000; Stainback & Stainback, 1992; Udvari-Solner, 1996; Warger & Pugach, 1996). Two areas in the literature on accommodations address what they are and how to do them.

Sorting Out the Definition

There are different definitions of accommodations and modifications (e.g., Wang, 1989; Zigmond & Baker, 1996). Fisher and Frey (2001) offered the following:

An accommodation is a change made to the teaching or testing procedures in order to provide a student with access to information and to create an equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills. Accommodations do not change the

instructional level, content, or performance criteria for meeting the standards. Examples of accommodations include enlarging the print, providing oral versions of tests, and using calculators.

A modification is a change in what a student is expected to learn and/or demonstrate. A student may be working on modified course content, but the subject area remains the same as for the rest of the class. If the decision is made to modify the curriculum, it is done in a variety of ways, for a variety of reasons, with a variety of outcomes. Again, modifications vary according to the situation, lesson, or activity. (p. 157)

The Florida Department of Education (1999) differentiated between the two by advising that students who receive substantial modifications receive special diplomas, whereas students who are provided with accommodations usually take the same tests, the same courses, and receive a standard diploma.

Wang (1989) discussed the two in a more blended manner, in terms of two components that she believed were critical for adaptive instruction. The first was modification of the learning environment to accommodate the needs and learning styles of individual learners. The second was providing direct, focused instruction to help students progress with academic and/or social goals. Zigmond and Baker (1996) referred to these as compensation and remediation, respectively.

Underlying assumptions. Despite differences in the definition of accommodations, the underlying assumption is that meeting the needs of diverse learners requires changes in traditional general education classrooms. Morsink (1984) identified three areas that should be addressed when considering adaptations: environment, instruction, and management. Hoover (1987) expanded this into four areas: content, instructional strategies, instructional setting, and student behavior. More specifically, accommodations may address difficulties students have in processing or understanding coursework, attending to or engaging in instruction, relating to peers or adults,

participating in activities, or gaining access to content in alternative formats. However, as Warger and Pugach (1996) pointed out, the bottom line should be a curriculum centered focus that proactively questions how the student will interact with and gain access to the general education curriculum.

Traditional vs. reconceptualized views of accommodation. Pugach and Warger (1996) suggested that it is not enough to tinker with existing curriculum, making accommodations and modifications to compensate for student deficits. They called for a complete overhaul of the way we conceptualize teaching and learning, “rethinking the curriculum itself – not only for students with disabilities, but for all students” (p. 3). With this in mind, these authors described accommodations not as remediation or compensation, but instead as a necessary component in a redesigned curriculum-centered approach to education. The difference between this method and other traditional methods of accommodation is that the focus is now on areas of difficulty related to the curriculum and how students deal with content, rather than on pre-identified student deficits that require compensation.

Stainback and Stainback (1996) also called for a new perspective on curriculum that is not based on the idea that curriculum is formalized knowledge that each student must master to be successful. Different students should have different goals, thereby placing students at the center of learning and making accommodation a necessary, integrated, empowering aspect of learning, rather than a focus on deficit and weakness.

The traditional focus on deficit and accommodation as compensation was apparent in a chapter in the *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (Corno & Snow, 1986): “The

implication is that teachers can circumvent learner inability by using techniques that remove or take over some of the processing burden from less able learners” (p. 621).

A reconceptualized approach to accommodation could be inferred in a study by Kliewer and Landis (1999). They interviewed and observed fourteen early childhood teachers to understand their interpretation of curricular individualization for students with moderate to severe disabilities and found differences related to teachers’ conceptions of individuality and disability. Some teachers thought of individualization in an institutionalized manner: decontextualized, with universal assumptions about the students with disabilities and their capabilities. Other teachers approached individualization in a localized manner: context- and student-specific, with less emphasis on pigeonholing students based on disability. Teachers in inclusive classrooms all had localized approaches, more in line with a reconceptualized approach to accommodation, whereas teachers in segregated classrooms often had institutionalized approaches. The authors suggested that this approach was likely due to the structure and purpose of those settings, to segregate students by need. This view is more consistent with a traditional approach to accommodation.

Differences in the definition of accommodations, then, seem to stem from differences in views of curriculum as well as views of diversity and ability. However, there seems to be agreement that accommodation or individualization is necessary, with the understanding that the teacher’s underlying assumptions will affect the approach taken toward making those accommodations.

How to Make Accommodations

In addition to sorting out differences in definitions of accommodations and modifications, there has been much written about the process of making accommodations (Arlen, Gable, & Hendrickson, 1996; Janney & Snell, 2000; Udvari-Solner, 1996).

Federal law enacted in 1975 known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act made it necessary to have an Individual Education Program (IEP) for each student with a disability, to ensure that individual goals and objectives would be identified for each student. However, as Smith and Simpson (1989) suggested, the IEP has become a routinized document that holds little meaning and practical use. In an in-depth study of three students with significant cognitive disabilities successfully included in a general education setting, Fisher and Frey (2001) reported little connection between the accommodations made and the goals on the IEP. Over the three-year study, they found that IEP goals changed very little and were not part of the discussion of the teachers as they planned for these students. Therefore, simply stating that accommodations will be made as indicated on the IEP will likely not be enough to ensure that students' needs are met.

Every researcher and scholar seems to have his or her own approach or model for making accommodations. However, some unifying themes exist and are described below.

Goal identification. Many approaches to accommodations begin with a focus on identifying goals and objectives for students (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2000; Stainback, Stainback, Stefanich, & Alper, 1996; Udvari-Solner, 1996). These objectives should be flexible (Stainback et al., 1996) and specific to the curriculum (Warger & Pugach, 1996). Students with severe disabilities may have goals and objectives that are not related to

traditional curriculum content (Stainback & Stainback, 1996), sometimes referred to as functional goals, and therefore the goals should also be specific to the student.

Identifying potential difficulty. Areas of potential student difficulty in reaching the goals and objectives should also be identified (Warger & Pugach, 1996), and expectations for student performance clarified (Udvari-Solner, 1996). Tomlinson (1999) suggests that teachers visualize what an activity will look like ideally to get an idea of possible difficulties for which to plan.

Selection of accommodations. Another area to consider is how to ensure participation of all students in the planned activity (Stainback et al., 1996). At this point, adaptation could be “routine” (i.e., set in place to facilitate some ongoing type of adaptation) or “specialized” (i.e., related to a specific student difficulty in light of routines already in place) (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bishop, 1992). Arlen et al. (1996) put this step first, and suggested that educators create an array of accommodations and selection criteria before making pupil-specific decisions in order to develop a more comprehensive list. At some point, specific strategies or accommodations must be chosen and implemented. When the approach to choosing accommodations is based on an identified disability category, as Mastropieri and Scruggs (2000) described, it can be assumed that the definition of accommodation is consistent with a more traditional approach as previously described.

Reynolds (1992) addressed selection of accommodations through a more general framework defined by teaching tasks. She described teaching as a series of decisions that are preactive, interactive, and postactive. Preactive tasks have to do with planning in relation to what teachers know and understand about their students, while interactive

tasks have to do with implementation and delivery of instruction. Postactive tasks are related to reflection and interaction with colleagues. Viewing accommodations through a framework such as this draws attention to the task of teaching effectively, which is consistent with a reconceptualized view of accommodation.

Evaluation. A final step in using accommodations should include evaluation of the effectiveness of that accommodation (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2000; Tomlinson, 1999; Udvari-Solner, 1996; Warger & Pugach, 1996), and then revision, maintenance, or removal of the strategy based on results (Arlen et al., 1996). Tomlinson (1999) suggested fine-tuning accommodations by conceptualizing a stereo equalizer with settings for nine variables, each with a continuum of implementation levels. This equalizer can be set for each child and allows for maximum individualization based on variables such as concrete vs. abstract representation of ideas, complexity of problems and skills, amount of lesson structure, level of independence, and pace of study. Tomlinson's approach could be categorized as a reconceptualized view of accommodation.

Individual or collaborative? Udvari-Solner (1996) describes the process of accommodation as part of a reflexive and reflective decision-making process that can be approached through the teacher's internal, personal dialogue as he or she reflects on practice. She suggested this based on research indicating that teachers find collaboration difficult because of lack of a shared language and lack of time.

In contrast to Udvari-Solner's approach, collaboration is often cited as critical in the process of making accommodations (Arlen et al., 1996; Warger & Pugach, 1996). Warger and Pugach acknowledged that this collaboration will require redefinition of the roles of special and general educators.

Despite differences in the approaches to making accommodations, the agreement on the need for them is resounding. For students to be included in general education classes, accommodations need to be made.

What is Happening in Practice?

Despite federal laws and a vast amount of literature touting the need for accommodations to help students with disabilities be successful in general education classrooms, very little accommodation is occurring in practice (Brown et al., 1991; Fuchs et al., 1992; Vaughn, Moody, & Schumm, 1998; Zigmond & Baker, 1996).

In a study of inclusive classrooms, Zigmond and Baker (1996) observed very few accommodations and little remedial instruction to enable students with learning disabilities to make sense of the general education curriculum. In a related study, Baker and Zigmond (1990) found that instruction during reading and math lessons was undifferentiated and that the school had uniform expectations for all students. Vaughn et al. (1998) found that even in pullout or resource rooms, whole group instruction was often the norm, and teachers used undifferentiated resources and materials that were not at students' individual ability levels.

In a study of general education teachers serving students identified with a learning disability, Fuchs et al. (1992) found that 46 of 105 teachers reported using routine adaptations for these students, and 13 of those 46 teachers reported making specialized adaptations when those routines were not effective. However, an obvious limitation of this study was that the actual classroom performance linked to these self-reported adaptations was not documented. Despite the limitations of this study, the number of teachers reporting no adaptations at all (69 out of 105) is staggering.

A Critical Look at Current Practice

The research summarized thus far suggests that accommodations are rarely made in general education classrooms. Is this because the researchers were judging use of accommodation with a view (traditional or reconceptualized) that was inconsistent with that of the teachers? Do both views result in the use of accommodations that are equally effective? Or more importantly, can having a rigid view of accommodations prevent researchers from noticing potentially effective instruction because preconceptions and expectations cloud judgment? This may have been the case in the Baker and Zigmond (1990) study in which findings suggested that teachers did not differentiate materials and taught mainly whole-group lessons. However, it is interesting to reinterpret these findings with the knowledge that in a later study (Zigmond et al., 1995) these authors were part of a team of researchers who concluded that general education settings produce undesirable and unacceptable achievement outcomes for students with learning disabilities. In contrast, Waldron and McLeskey (1998) found that students in inclusive placements do make significant progress, and the authors raised questions about the design of the 1995 Zigmond et al. study.

In the 1990 study, Baker and Zigmond produced a quantitative summary of the breakdown of instructional behaviors to conclude that whole group instruction was the norm. However, little description of the actual instruction was presented, apart from conclusions that stated teachers generally used the textbook and taught to a large group using established routines. In contradiction of these findings, the researchers reported that students were largely on-task. Could it be that the whole group instruction, while not individualized for specific disability categories (as in the traditional approach to

accommodations), was designed to meet the needs of students without additional accommodation, and therefore kept them on-task?

In light of this critique, I am not suggesting that the findings be ignored. There is enough evidence to suggest that teachers do not generally accommodate and many students with exceptional needs are not succeeding in general education classes. And clearly, we know enough about accommodations and student achievement to make judgments about how well instruction meets the needs of learners with special needs. However, tallying time spent in instructional grouping without a clear and rich description of the nature of instruction presents a partial picture of instruction, further confounded when interpreted and reported by researchers who have tacit assumptions about the approach to accommodation.

Teachers' Explanations for Current Practices

Despite findings that suggest accommodations are rarely made in classrooms, research indicates that teachers are willing to accept mainstreamed students (see Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996 for research synthesis) and willing to make accommodations (Schumm & Vaughn, 1992). Why, then, do they not do so?

Accommodations stigmatize students. One factor that affects implementation of accommodations is teacher beliefs about unintended and undesirable consequences of providing accommodations. In the study cited above, Baker and Zigmond (1990) found that schoolwide, “the mindset was conformity, not accommodation” (p. 525). This idea of conformity, played out as whole group instruction, was often preferred by classroom teachers because it did not separate or stigmatize students (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager, & Lee, 1993; Vaughn et al., 1998). That is,

teachers perceived that providing specialized accommodations for students alienated them from peers and caused more harm than good.

Accommodations are just not feasible. Teachers also find some accommodations unrealistic or impossible to implement. Schumm and Vaughn (1991) surveyed teachers about possible accommodations and found differences in teacher perception of the feasibility of accommodations. Teachers thought almost all the listed accommodations were desirable, yet not all were feasible. Those most feasible were accommodations related to social/motivational well-being of students (e.g., establishing routines, or providing reinforcement) and those which required little adjustment of curriculum (e.g., involving the student in whole class activities, using small group or paired arrangements, or monitoring progress).

In a synthesis of findings from four major research projects, the Joint Committee on Teacher Planning for Student with Disabilities (1995) found that teachers were willing to make accommodations that fit within existing classroom routines and could be used for all students because these types of accommodations did not add to the prevailing pressure and accountability demands they faced. In other words, the accommodations they found most feasible were whole group accommodations that fit within the existing classroom structure.

Collaboration is viewed as overwhelming. A third factor is related to the collaboration between special and general educators. Based on data from a three-year study of the strategies general education and special education teachers used for included students, Udvari-Solner (1996) found that the teachers involved had difficulties collaborating to accommodate for their students because of lack of shared language, time

constraints, and ineffective modification. This was also supported by findings from the Joint Committee on Teacher Planning for Students with Disabilities (1995), who reported that teachers were expected to work alone, rarely had time to discuss instructional issues with other teachers, and received little support from administration to do so.

Teachers are not prepared to make accommodations. A fourth factor is related to teachers' perceptions of their preparation to make accommodations. The willingness of teachers to make accommodations has been linked to the extent to which they feel competent to do so (Whinnery et al., 1991). Several studies have indicated that teachers did not feel prepared to meet the needs of diverse students (Coates, 1989; Lyon, Vaassen, & Toomey, 1989; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991) nor were some education programs providing adequate preparation (Kearney & Durand, 1992; Osborne & Dimattia, 1994).

This apparent gap in teacher preparation has begun to be addressed with the development of teacher education programs that are unified or collaborative and focus on meeting the needs of all students. How have colleges of education stepped forward to alleviate this gap? A look at the literature on current practices in inclusive teacher education will provide answers.

What is Happening in Teacher Education?

Until recently, special education and general education preservice teachers have generally been educated separately, within separate departments, with separate curriculum, modeling the separation of special education and general education students and personnel in K-12 schools (Villa, Thousand, & Chapple, 1996). In fact, it may be the universities themselves that cause this separation of personnel, indoctrinating students by forcing them to choose one department over the other, rendering them conceptually and

legally unable to help the students from the other side (Sarason, 1982). With the move toward inclusive schools, it is time to consider Fullan's (1993) recommendation that universities should not advocate reform for public schools of which they are not capable themselves. It is problematic that scholars lead the way in studying and promoting innovation and reform, yet teacher education programs usually lag behind in modeling those reforms (Pugach & Lilly, 1984). A simultaneous and parallel reform in teacher education must occur that mirrors inclusive school reform (Sindelar, Pugach, Griffin, & Seidl, 1995).

This parallel reform is happening around the country, and program descriptions are being published (Blanton, Griffin, Winn, & Pugach, 1997; Heller, Spooner, Spooner, & Algozzine, 1992; Lesar, Benner, Habel, & Coleman, 1997; Villa, Thousand, & Chapple, 1996, 2000). There have also been recommendations published for the kinds of topics that should be addressed in inclusive teacher education programs (Voltz & Elliott, 1997; Wigle & Wilcox, 1996).

However, little research exists to evaluate the impact of these redesigned programs. Are graduates of these programs prepared for inclusive schools? Without this information it is difficult to argue for the continuation of programs that go against the grain of traditional programs to recreate "the basic culture of schools, colleges, and departments of education within which teacher education takes place" (Pugach, 1992, p. 258).

The research that has been done has largely focused on perceptions of preparation, rather than actual performance outcomes. One such study, conducted by Heller et al. (1992), examined an alternative program aimed at helping general educators learn to accommodate students with disabilities. It was designed as an intense summer program

with an associated field experience. At the end of the summer, students felt more confident and more willing to help students with special needs and exhibited a greater awareness of the individual needs of students. While this study indicated students may have benefited from coursework and related field experience, we know little about how their self-reports translate into classroom practice.

Another study looked at perceptions of students who graduated from two versions of a traditional early childhood program (one general education and one special education) and graduates of a redesigned unified program (Goodwin, Boone, & Wittmer, 1994). There were no significant differences in how the three types of graduates rated the quality and relevance of their overall preparation and coursework. Additional questions were asked of graduates in the redesigned program, with responses indicating that they felt well prepared for their current positions. Current employers of the unified program graduates also rated their knowledge and abilities between good and excellent (above a four on a five-point scale). While these results indicated that this unified program may be helping teachers feel prepared, we still have little understanding of their performance in the classroom.

Lombardi and Hunka (2001) also evaluated their restructured teacher education program but focused on current students rather than graduates. Using surveys and follow-up telephone interviews, the researchers found that as students entered their fifth year of preparation in a unified program, they felt more confident and capable to teach students with disabilities than did students earlier in the program. However, 25% of the students entering the fifth year still felt neither competent nor confident to work with students with disabilities, and many expressed concern about limited exposure to special education

content. Explanations for their tentative feelings could be that they still had a year of preparation and a full-time internship ahead of them, or that the program lacked adequate attention to working with students with special needs. This study also did not address the actual practice of preservice teachers.

These three studies suggest the benefit of unified or collaborative programs. However, more research is needed that goes beyond perceptions of preservice teachers and graduates to look at teacher quality and interaction with students. Corbett, Kilgore, and Sindelar (1998) and Corbett (1996) reported on findings based on a grant-funded project which became the model for the Unified Elementary and Special Education PROTEACH Program at the University of Florida. They found that interns prepared in this program not only talked about the need for accommodating for diverse learners but actually designed materials and made accommodations for those students. Since these findings were based on a grant-funded project that had yet to be institutionalized, questions arise about whether similar results would be possible when taken to scale in a large teacher education program.

Summing up the Situation

Whether or not the inclusion of students with disabilities becomes a reality in a majority of schools, it is hard to dispute the idea that schools are becoming more and more diverse. This will require teachers who are able to teach students with a wide range of abilities and needs, and who are able to accommodate when those needs are not met. However, not only does research suggest that those accommodations are not made in practice, but general education teachers give a myriad of reasons for not doing so. One compelling reason is that they simply do not know how. They have been taught in non-inclusive K-12 schools, and they have received degrees from teacher education programs

that told them someone else was responsible for the education of students with special needs. The outlook for diverse learners cannot improve until teacher education changes to mirror the changes in systems of education. Although the development of unified or collaborative programs has the potential to help, without analysis of the learning and practice of preservice teachers in these programs, we cannot be sure of their value.

But are the goals of unified teacher preparation too lofty? Are these expectations unrealistic in light of what we know about teacher development and the influences on practice?

Learning to Teach

Learning how to serve students with disabilities while learning how to become a teacher, with all the complexities inherent in each, is a monumental task. As Ford, Pugach, and Otis-Wilborn (2001) asked, what is reasonable to expect at the preservice level? This question leads to a look into the research on learning how to teach and the literature on novice and expert teachers.

There is some disagreement in the literature about whether interns are developmentally capable of considering individual student needs (and therefore, accommodating for them). Early work in this area viewed teacher development in stages that indicate novice teachers were mired in thoughts of self and survival, with little attention to student need and student progress (Fuller, 1969). Concerns about teaching and instruction emerged later, followed by concerns about pupils and the ability to focus on student learning and achievement. Fuller and Bown (1975) expanded the stages as follows:

1. Stage one: Identification with pupils in reality, and with teachers in fantasy. Here, preservice teachers saw themselves as pupils and had yet to feel and act like teachers.

2. Stage two: Concerns related to survival (management and content). In this stage, novice teachers struggled with maintaining control and keeping ahead of the content they were teaching.
3. Stage three: Concerns about teaching performance, limitations, and frustrations. At this stage, teachers were more able to analyze their practice.
4. Stage four: Concerns about the learning, social, and emotional needs of students, and of their own ability to relate to students as individuals. Here, teachers were able to focus on student learning at the individual level.

Based on stage theories of teacher development, it may be unrealistic to think that interns, who are just beginning their development as teachers, could focus on accommodations for diverse learners. In fact, Katz (1972) suggested that this stage is not possible until about the second year of teaching. Berliner (1988) stated that teachers are unable to comprehend the relevance and appropriateness of student actions until they are in their own classrooms.

This idea is disputed in the literature, however. Sitter and Lanier (as cited in Burden, 1990) stated that the array of previously identified developmental concerns are present in student teachers and do not necessarily occur as distinct, sequential stages. They suggested that student teaching, or internship, is the place where it all comes together for developing teachers – they must address and integrate all concerns related to teaching and students.

Feiman-Nemser (2001) concurred with this perspective. Based on work with an exemplary mentor teacher, she asserted that it is possible and necessary to infuse information about student learning and concern for academic needs of students during internship experiences, even if interns appear to be more focused on concerns about self and teaching. Copeland and D'Emidio-Caston (1998) did research on preservice teachers going through a five-year program and found that towards the end of the program, the

preservice teachers were able to focus on students as learners, and not just on behavior and student participation.

The literature also offers some insight into how interns cope with the concerns they face in their internship experiences. Hollingsworth (1989) found that interns needed to establish managerial routines and have a handle on classroom management before they could focus on content specific pedagogy. Furthermore, interns had to integrate classroom management and subject knowledge and establish subject specific pedagogical routines before they could focus on student learning. Five of the 14 interns in her study were able to focus on individual student learning, as a function of both content and context. Of the nine who did not achieve this understanding of student learning, six were placed in settings that were either limited in diversity or had a cooperating teacher unwilling to turn the entire range of students over to the interns.

The divide in the literature suggests that we do not know enough about what preservice teachers understand and how they use that knowledge in their student teaching or internship experiences. Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1998) suggested that part of the problem lies in the fact that teacher educators have assumptions and expectations for field experiences that do not match those of preservice teachers. Teacher educators see internship as a time to practice techniques learned in university coursework, whereas preservice teachers view it as a time to explore and gain experience in school settings. Research results are then affected by whose voices and whose expectations are being heard (Wideen et al., 1998). In this study, I focused on the interns' conceptions of what it means to accommodate for diverse learners, rather than judging their ideas and practices based on my knowledge and expectations.

Summary

When taken together, these bodies of literature present a picture of promise: Unified programs emerge as one way to reduce the knowledge gap for preservice teachers and help them learn to make accommodations for the diverse needs of students. From the literature presented, we have many definitions and interpretations of accommodation and many suggestions on how to make them. We know that teachers have many reasons for not accommodating in practice, one of which is inadequate preparation. And we have some indication that preservice teachers should be developmentally able to focus on student learning and therefore plan and accommodate accordingly. The next step is to examine and evaluate how they actually approach this in practice.

This study will add to our knowledge of how students prepared in a unified teacher education program define accommodations for diverse learners, and then how they actually serve those diverse learners in practice. It will also provide insight into the factors that affect their implementation of accommodations.

CHAPTER 3 FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

To gain in-depth understanding of how preservice teachers conceptualize accommodations, both in thought and in action, phenomenological methodology was used. In this chapter I describe the conceptual lens and the methods I employed in conducting this study.

Conceptual Lens

This study was framed using phenomenology and elements of constructivist principles. These two theories guided study design and data analysis as well as the presentation of findings as four distinct cases. Each theory will be explained below as it relates to this study.

Phenomenology

The purpose of phenomenology is to thoroughly describe the essence of a phenomenon through intense and careful study (Moustakas, 1994). In this case the phenomenon is how interns accommodate for diverse learners, which is in itself a complex and multifaceted set of actions and decisions with many mitigating factors and constraints that affect the extent to which interns can make the accommodations they talk about. Phenomenology is an “attempt to accomplish the impossible: to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the lifeworld, yet to remain aware that life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 18). Qualitative methods will be used to allow a detailed, in-depth description of the phenomenon.

Phenomenology is a broad term with many facets. It is based on the work of Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938) and is used in psychology, nursing, and social sciences. For the purposes of this study, the term phenomenology will be defined using roots of existentialism and hermeneutics. Combining elements of existentialist and hermeneutic phenomenology will produce a rich and thorough picture of how interns think about and act in their interactions with students with diverse needs.

Existential phenomenology seeks not only to understand the lives and experiences of others, but also how people react in those situations (Valle & King, 1978). Accordingly, I conducted interviews to capture how the interns talked about and defined accommodations for diverse learners, and I also observed them to see how they actually put that knowledge into practice in the classroom. Some traditional phenomenologists might stop at interviews to present a conceptualization of accommodations using the words of participants. However, as Schutz (1972) has argued, a person's conduct is an instance or example of their motives, goals, and attitudes, and can be represented as such for practical purposes.

In addition, phenomenology is sometimes seen as pure description of the experience, as opposed to hermeneutics, which is the interpretation of lived experiences. However, as Moustakas (1994) has argued, there can really be no description that is uninterpreted. Admitting up front that research is presented as interpretation and that the researcher is an instrument of data collection is a hallmark of qualitative research. Interpretation is not only recognized, but necessary (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000).

With the acknowledgment of interpretation comes the inevitable criticism of subjectivity. For my interpretations to be as believable as possible, it is necessary to make

an active effort to contain personal feelings and beliefs and approach the phenomenon with a fresh perspective. Husserl referred to this as “epoche” – abstaining from judgment to achieve a fresh look at data. Moustakas (1994) wrote that this was possible and even beneficial because even though biases can be bracketed and set aside, a researcher’s own rooted ways of knowing and thinking do still seep in, requiring those preconceptions to be explicitly examined.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the term phenomenology will be used to mean the study of someone else’s reality as seen through a researcher’s eyes. In this case, I will present a thorough description of how interns conceptualize accommodations for diverse learners and then act on their personal knowledge with the understanding that findings are mediated by my interpretations.

Constructivism

Even more so than the definition of phenomenology, the definition of constructivism lacks consistency and shared understanding. There is little agreement beyond the idea that constructivism involves the individual creation of meaning based on the interaction of prior experiences and current understandings (Richardson, 1997). Richardson simplifies the disagreement into differences based on the works of two learning theorists, Piaget and Vygotsky.

Piagetian psychological constructivism. The goal of this type of constructivism is to lead students toward higher levels of understanding as they create meaning by reconstructing and restructuring current understanding. An underlying assumption in this approach is that there exists formal knowledge, and the teacher guides or facilitates discovery of this knowledge.

Vygotskian constructivism. This approach is also called social constructivism because of the role of the social environment as well as the individual in the construction of knowledge. In this view, learning and action cannot be separated, and there is no privileged view of knowledge (Richardson, 1997). Rather, formal knowledge is a tool to be used in social interaction in the construction of meaning.

This study was conceptualized using concepts from Vygotskian constructivism. I was not interested in measuring the interns' use of accommodations on a preconceived scale derived from formal knowledge about accommodations. Instead, I wanted to validate each intern's knowledge and actions related to meeting the needs of diverse learners in a general education classroom. I believe that personal practical knowledge develops as a result of learner interaction with curriculum, experiences, instructors, and peers in a construction of meaning filtered through previous and current experiences. Related to teacher education, this might explain differences in understanding or learning as being related to the situations in which that learning occurs and is later enacted. It also may suggest the influence of classroom context on the understandings and actions of interns. Therefore, using constructivist principles as part of the conceptual lens necessitates exploration of preservice teachers' knowledge about and previous experience with diverse learners, accommodations, and inclusion because those factors impact how interns actually accommodate when they are faced with specific teaching contexts.

Design of the Study

Pilot Work

In spring, 2002, a pilot study was conducted. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained for the pilot study and the dissertation, with the understanding that any changes made to the study be approved by the IRB prior to dissertation data

collection in Fall, 2002. Two participants, Anne and Marla, were selected for an abbreviated version of the study, with observations and interviews, and a third participant, Marian, was added for the sole purpose of interview protocol development. All participants were selected based on recommendations from previous instructors and current placement coordinators that these were “exceptional interns” (selection criteria explained in a later section on participants). Informed consent was obtained for all participants (see Appendix A for sample copy), and pseudonyms were assigned. Time spent with each participant is reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Time spent with pilot participants

Participant	Logged Observation Time	Logged Interview Time
Anne	10.5 hours	130 minutes
Marla	7.5 hours	155 minutes
Marian	n/a	60 minutes

Pilot work helped to refine three areas of the study: research questions and focus, participant selection criteria, and interview protocol. The particular impact in each of these three areas will be discussed specifically in the relevant methodology sections.

During pilot work, I also met with Dr. Marleen Pugach, who has done extensive work in the area of unified teacher education and accommodations for diverse learners. Dr. Pugach agreed to be my mentor through the AERA/Spencer Pre-dissertation Fellowship program, an award I received for the 2001-2002 school year. We communicated via email and met in person twice to discuss study conceptualization and design issues.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how interns conceptualize accommodations for diverse learners and how they put their personal knowledge into

action in the classroom. The development of the research questions changed with examination of the literature and insights gained from pilot work.

In their review of literature on learning to teach, Wideen et al. (1998) concluded that “what we learn from studying the process of learning to teach depends on whose voices are being heard” (p. 156). They suggest that conflicting expectations of those involved contribute to this problem. For example, in looking at a field experience as a vehicle for learning to teach, teacher educators approach it as a chance for interns to practice and apply what they assume has already been learned in their programs, an assumption that is not often challenged. Interns, however, seem to approach field experiences as a chance to gain experience and practice teaching, with survival a top priority, balanced with desire to get a good grade and minimize risk taking. With this in mind, I was determined to find out how interns conceptualize “accommodation” in order to understand how they actually attempt accommodations in practice.

Prior to pilot work, my focus was on how the interns accommodated learners with special needs, but I quickly realized that I had come into the situation with a preconceived notion (from the literature and from our teacher education program) about accommodations, and I judged their teaching based on my definition. I realized that I had failed to take into account how they thought about accommodations. From a constructivist viewpoint, an individual constructs meaning based on knowledge and experiences, which in this case includes the knowledge gained through the unified teacher education program, as well as every other life experience of these interns. Talking with my pilot participants and watching two of them teach helped me realize that even though they were educated in the same teacher education program, the knowledge they

held was different, and very interesting. On top of that, their placements and their supervising teachers had direct influence on the extent to which they were able to put their knowledge into action. I realized that I had to examine interns' conceptualizations before I could begin to understand how they accommodated for diverse learners.

The following questions guided my interaction with the participants:

1. How do elementary education interns prepared in a unified teacher education program
 - a. conceptualize "diverse learners"?
 - b. conceptualize what it means to accommodate for diverse learners?
2. How do the interns accommodate for diverse learners during their internship placements?
3. What factors influence the extent to which the interns are able to put their personal conceptualizations into action?

Context of the Study

The Unified Elementary and Special Education PROTEACH Program (hereafter referred to as PROTEACH) began in Fall 1999 at the University of Florida, located in Gainesville, Florida. The purpose of the program is to prepare teachers who can create and maintain supportive and productive classrooms for diverse student populations and work collaboratively to educate all children, including those who have traditionally been labeled hard-to-teach, hard-to-manage, and linguistically diverse (Ross, McCallum, & Lane, forthcoming).

Graduates of this five-year program are recommended for elementary certification in Grades 1-6 with an endorsement for teaching students who are English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). In the final year of the program, students select a specialization area, including content areas, literacy, children's literature, special education, or educational technology. Those choosing special education are eligible for

dual certification in elementary education and Varying Exceptionalities (VE), a cross-categorical, mild disabilities certification that is common in the state of Florida.

Courses are collaboratively designed and planned by faculty from the five departments in the college of education. Students are grouped into cohorts and take a block of courses each semester. The program of courses is approved by the state and aligned with the Florida Accomplished Practices, which are performance outcomes linked to effective teaching practices.

Students enter PROTEACH as juniors and complete a course of study (Appendix B) that has imbedded themes of democratic values and knowledge of content and inclusive pedagogy (Ross, McCallum, & Lane, forthcoming). This land-grant, Research I institution prepares approximately 200 students per year, with about 118 of those continuing on in the fifth year elementary option, and 40 selecting the special education option. The remaining students leave the institution after the fourth year, often for teaching positions, and are not recommended for certification by the University of Florida without satisfying additional requirements.

Participants

Four participants were selected. They were all Masters-level interns in the fifth-year of the PROTEACH program who elected one of the elementary education specialization areas and were completing the internship in a local school district.

Participants were selected using a combination of criterion sampling (Creswell, 1998) and extreme case sampling (Patton, 1990). As is the case with most qualitative research, sampling was purposeful rather than random in order to obtain information-rich cases. In phenomenological studies, it is necessary to ensure that participants experience the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, only participants meeting selection criteria

were chosen. In addition, extreme case sampling was used to focus on cases that were unusual and interesting and not necessarily typical. As Patton has suggested, the use of extreme cases may add more information about the conditions necessary to sustain excellence. In this study, I believed more would be learned through taking an intensive look at interns identified as exemplary who had been placed in internship sites also identified as exemplary. Pilot work completed prior to this study suggested that even interns identified as stellar (extreme case sampling) who were placed in restrictive settings could not enact the conceptualizations of accommodations they articulated. To more fully understand how interns think about and then act on their knowledge of accommodations, it was necessary to select participants and sites where that phenomenon was most likely to occur (criterion sampling).

Intern supervisors, instructors, and/or placement coordinators were contacted to gain insight into both participant nomination and site selection. Two criteria were used to select participants:

1. Participants were identified as stellar students, meaning that they put forth superb effort in coursework and previous field placements and excelled in both areas. These students were those most likely to have benefited from their teacher education programs.
2. Only interns placed in sites identified as exceptional were invited to participate. Exceptional sites were those where school culture and cooperating teacher philosophy allow for maximum intern freedom and flexibility. Since part of the research question inquired into how interns enact the definition they articulate, interns needed the freedom to make accommodations and modifications they deemed necessary. This decision was supported by Goodman (1988) who suggested that placement with cooperating teachers who support an experimental approach to student teaching and who welcome an open exchange of ideas may encourage the development of reflective, active preservice teachers.

Intern placement coordinators, instructors, and supervisors were contacted at the end of the Spring 2002 semester, and a list was generated of eleven exceptional students.

Once placements were finalized, sites were matched up with the eleven interns. The list of schools and cooperating teachers was evaluated by two placement coordinators, three intern supervisors, two colleagues with extensive experience in the school district, and the program administrative staff member to whom students often turn to discuss placement dilemmas. Two field placements were eliminated as potentially not adhering to the second selection criterion. Nine interns were contacted in July 2002, through an email solicitation letter and invited to participate. Permission to conduct research was requested through the school board for each school to which the nine interns were assigned. Cooperating teachers were contacted via telephone for the five interns who (a) expressed an interest in participating, and (b) had principals that were willing to allow me to conduct research at their schools. Four participants were chosen based on perceived willingness of the cooperating teachers to have this research conducted in their classrooms. The participants and schools were assigned pseudonyms: Erica (Ellis Elementary), Kelly (Kinsey Elementary), Ashley (Amblin Elementary), and Debra (Denton Elementary). An overview of participants and classroom placements is provided below.

Description of Participants

All four participants were Caucasian females of traditional college age, three of whom I knew in some capacity prior to the study: Ashley and Debra were students in a course I co-taught in Spring, 2001. Kelly was the co-teaching partner of a student taking part in a longitudinal research study in which I am involved, but I had no direct contact with her prior to this study. Incidentally, Ashley and Debra were also roommates at the time of data collection.

Each participant’s classroom placement is described below. Pseudonyms were assigned for all participants, schools, cooperating teachers, and students. Overall school and county demographics are provided in Table 2. These data were collected from reports to the school advisory council for school year 2000-2001, the most recent data available.

Table 2. School and county demographics

	% Free/ Reduced	Size	% White	% Black	% Other	% Disabilities
Ellis	55.9	465	61.9	31.8	6.3	17.8
Amblin	23.4	881	67.9	17.6	14.5	15.2
Kinsey	41.3	545	45.1	25.3	29.6	11.2
Denton	75.2	355	40.6	47.3	12.1	21.7
COUNTY	56.2	13326	50	39.8	10.1	16.6

Erica. Erica was placed in a third-grade classroom at Ellis Elementary, a rural elementary school. Of the 23 students in Erica’s classroom, one was labeled as Emotionally Handicapped (EH), one was formally labeled as ADHD with a 504 Education Plan, and two were labeled as gifted. Incidentally, an additional student was labeled as EH after Erica completed her internship. Six students were African American and the rest were Caucasian. All students received the majority of their instruction in the general education classroom with the following exceptions: (a) gifted students were pulled out during science and social studies for supplemental instruction, (b) several students with low reading scores on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) were pulled for a “double dose” of reading instruction during science and social studies, and (c) the student labeled as EH was pulled out for approximately 30 minutes several times a week for social skills instruction and counseling.

Kelly. Kelly was placed in a second-grade classroom at Kinsey Elementary where a majority of the children were not native English speakers. Kelly’s classroom had 23 students, 14 of whom were placed in the English for Speakers of Other Languages

(ESOL) program for reading, writing, and language arts instruction. Five students were labeled as gifted and received reading instruction outside the classroom. Mid-semester, one student identified with CHARGE syndrome (a low-incidence disability characterized by a variety of physical and cognitive manifestations) joined the class but received math, reading, and language arts instruction in a resource room setting. There were seven Caucasian students, four African American students, four Asian students, and eight Hispanic students in this classroom.

Ashley. Ashley was placed in a first-grade classroom at Amblin Elementary, one of the higher SES schools in the county. Amblin Elementary also had an ESOL program, but in Ashley's classroom there were only two students who had recently graduated from the program and received all instruction in the general education classroom. Of the remaining students, five were labeled as gifted and one was labeled with learning disabilities (LD) with identified goals in reading. The gifted students were pulled out of the classroom for 45 minutes a day during science and social studies, and the student with LD was pulled for 30 minutes a day at the start of math instruction for a "double dose" of reading instruction. Of the 22 students in Ashley's class, three were Asian American and the remaining students were Caucasian.

Debra. Debra was placed in a second-grade classroom at Denton Elementary, the lowest SES school of the four represented in this study. Denton is the least inclusive school of those represented, with school-wide ability grouping for reading instruction, and math and reading instruction delivered in resource rooms for students with identified disabilities. Debra's class of 21 students consisted of two gifted students, three students with learning disabilities in math and reading, one with Attention Deficit Disorder

(ADD), one ESOL student who arrived speaking no English, and two students on behavior contracts with the Behavior Resource Teacher but not formally labeled. There were nine African American students, one Hispanic student, and 11 Caucasian students in this classroom.

Data Collection

Data were collected largely during fall semester, 2002, with the exception of member check interviews with participants, which occurred early in the following semester. I conducted all observations and interviews and collected formal observation data from intern supervisors as data source triangulation. In addition, artifacts related to the interns' planning and implementation of a unit of instruction were collected at the end of the semester. All data were recorded on a data management log to keep track of the multiple sources of data and time spent with each participant (see Appendix C). Data sources will be explained further below.

Observations. Participants were observed on seven occasions during their Master's level internships, beginning in the third week of the placement. Observations were scheduled ahead of time and lasted approximately one hour each. Observations were scheduled at the participants' convenience, across all subject areas and times of day. Field notes were collected during observation. Researcher reflection or analysis was coded immediately in the margins as RR (Researcher Reflections) or noted on the document summary sheet to differentiate observation data from interpretation and analysis.

Initially, my role was observer as participant rather than participant observer (Merriam, 1998). It was my intent to have a more peripheral role to allow me to observe how the interns interacted with students. Adler and Adler (1994) have suggested that this

role allows researchers to “observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider’s identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership” (p. 380). I discussed this role with participants prior to the first observation, and also told them that I would not be giving them feedback on their instruction related to accommodations. However, as the semester progressed, and my relationship with each participant grew, some of them asked for feedback about specific elements of their instruction. I provided this feedback when their questions did not require judgment on my part related to their use of accommodations for diverse learners. In addition, I found it difficult to remain in the back of the classroom, removed from students and from instruction, especially while the interns were circulating to offer assistance. During these times, I circulated with the interns, often interacting with students but not offering them supplemental instruction. I found this informative and useful, especially when talking to interns in the post-observation interviews.

Interviews with participants. Three types of interviews were conducted with each participant: context-building, post-observation, and follow-up member check. A context-building interview, lasting approximately one hour, was conducted with each intern at the beginning of the semester to describe the classroom context, probing specifically for rich descriptions of the different types of learners and instruction provided in the classroom. In addition, information was gathered related to preliminary conceptions of diverse learners and accommodations.

Post-observation interviews, lasting 45-60 minutes each, were conducted as soon as possible after each observation. On three occasions, it was not possible to hold a post-observation interview directly after a lesson, due to scheduling or time conflicts. For two

of those instances, questions were asked via email, and on another occasion, additional questions were asked during a subsequent post-observation interview.

Follow-up interviews were conducted with each participant after the internship ended. Initially, one interview of approximately one-hour was planned for the following purposes: (a) to revisit conceptions of diverse learners and accommodations, (b) to gather data related to the overall experience, and (c) to bring back preliminary findings to the participants as a member check to ensure that the perceptions of the participants were faithfully represented. This interview was broken into two sessions because the interviews were both longer than expected, and I wanted more time to produce longer summaries as a member check. The second half of the follow-up interview was conducted in January, 2003. Each participant was given a five- to seven-page summary of her thoughts and actions over the course of the study. During this portion of the interview, participants were given the summary to read and asked to comment any time they wished and to stop at designated points to clarify my remaining questions. The interview was an extended discussion using questions eight and nine from the original protocol from interview two.

All interviews were semi-structured, meaning that I began with a series of questions and probes, with the understanding that additional unplanned questions or probes would be asked as needed during an interview. All interviews were audiotape recorded and transcribed to ensure that participants' words were represented verbatim.

Interview questions were developed and then piloted (Glesne, 1999) with three interns during the pilot study in the semester prior to data collection. Participants were invited to collaborate in creating and revising questions. Interview protocols were

developed with a non-judgmental approach to discussing accommodations. Instead of asking, “I noticed that you made _____ accommodation for (student) . . . ” the question was revised to ask, “What accommodations did you make during this lesson?” This question was more in line with a phenomenological perspective in that I was seeking to understand what they did and why, not telling them what I did or did not see. Therefore, participants were able to reveal their conceptions of accommodations rather than respond to my definition.

Interview protocols for the three types of semi-structured interviews were finalized and approved by IRB. Interview protocols are presented in Appendix D.

Interviews with cooperating teachers. I also conducted interviews with each intern’s cooperating teacher since research suggests that one of the most powerful influences on intern’s practice is the cooperating teacher (Goodman, 1988). The purpose of this interview was to provide additional insight into why the intern may have made some of the classroom decisions that she did. Topics covered in this interview included context and background information as well as insights into the teachers’ views of diverse learners and accommodations. Permission to conduct the interview was requested from both the cooperating teacher and each intern participant. To minimize perceived threat to the participants, the interviews were conducted after the interns’ grades and evaluations were completed. Interviews were semi-structured and piloted with a practicing teacher who was not associated with the study. IRB approved protocol is included in Appendix E.

Secondary observation data. Field supervisors formally observed each intern four times a semester. With permission from the interns, the data collected by the supervisor

were obtained as data triangulation. Unobtrusive measures such as these can provide additional perspectives and depth on the phenomenon of interest (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). These data, collected as soon as possible after each scheduled observation, consisted of a series of forms based on the PATHWISE observation system: pre-observation form, instructional plan, class profile, post-observation reflections, and summary form. These forms helped provide additional insight into how the interns thought about students with diverse needs, how they planned to accommodate for those students, and how they reflected on what happened during the lesson.

Unit plan. For a course they were taking related to the internship placement, each intern was required to create and implement a unit plan for approximately two weeks of instruction on a thematic topic of their choosing. With their permission, I collected a copy of this unit from each one, along with their narrative reflections and their written analyses of student achievement. Confidentiality of students was protected as per the IRB guidelines and my agreement with the participants.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed in three stages. First, a document summary sheet (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was completed and attached to the front of each set of field notes and each interview transcription (see Appendix F). This allowed for quick summarization of the data as well as preliminary researcher reflections.

Second, data were analyzed according to a process described by Creswell (1998) as adapted from Moustakas (1994). Notes were taken in the margins of each data source and initial codes developed. Then a list of significant statements was compiled for each participant that showed evidence of how they defined diverse learners and accommodations. The listing of statements was refined until it was non-repetitive and

non-overlapping. Next, the statements were grouped into “meaning units” (Creswell, 1998, p. 150) or themes, and a summative description of the phenomenon was compiled for each participant to represent the essence of the experience. This essence, or summary, was provided to each participant during the member check interview in January, 2003.

Themes were then analyzed across all four participants to identify similarities and differences. Original data were recoded to find confirming and disconfirming evidence of these identified themes.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Several techniques were employed in this study to enhance trustworthiness or credibility of the findings: clarifying researcher position; prolonged engagement/persistent observation; triangulation of data sources; peer debriefing; member checks; negative case analysis; and rich, thick description. These strategies are a combination of those suggested by Creswell (1998) and Guba and Lincoln (1982). Each will be described below as it relates to this study.

Clarifying researcher position. Because interpretation is essential in qualitative research, it is crucial to clarify researcher position or bias. I am a strong advocate for unified programs. I believe that elementary and special education teachers should be educated together through a program designed to help them learn to teach all students. Ideally, teachers prepared in this type of program would be ready, willing, and able to meet the needs of all students. These teachers would assess student needs in their classroom and plan curriculum modifications and accommodations before, during, and after instruction. Optimally, their lessons would require few accommodations because of being designed to effectively reach and challenge the widest range of learners possible.

I am also a strong advocate for inclusion. I taught elementary and middle school for five years in general education classrooms where special education students were included. I value collaboration with special educators and always taught, planned, and evaluated students with a co-teacher.

At the time of this research, I was a doctoral student at the University of Florida, in a unified doctoral program with courses in both special education and instruction and curriculum. For the previous two years I taught a course called Core Teaching Strategies in the second semester of the PROTEACH program. I was also a member of the PROTEACH Coordination Committee for two years, and we met to discuss unified program design issues. I participated in three qualitative studies of different elements of the PROTEACH program, one of which is an on-going longitudinal study. These experiences gave me insider information about the program that provided insight into how my participants were prepared. However, they also gave me information and preconceptions that had to be bracketed so that researcher biases did not drive data analysis and findings.

These biases are not fatal flaws in a qualitative study, but they must be confronted directly and explicitly. Bracketing is a term used to describe the process where researchers lay out their preconceived ideas and values so that those biases can be transcended during research (Hutchinson, 1988). During data collection and analysis, I kept a researcher's journal to articulate my personal thoughts and feelings in an attempt to confront my own biases. This was especially important in this study because I did not want to use my knowledge of accommodations to lead the participants in revealing their knowledge and use of accommodations. However, my knowledge about accommodations

was beneficial as I observed and then probed the interns for what was and was not happening in the classroom.

Prolonged engagement/persistent observation. These two techniques provide scope and depth, respectively. Scope and depth in a study add to the credibility by providing a range of examples over time that helps clarify the relevance or irrelevance of observed events (Erlandson, 1993). I conducted this study over the course of one semester, meeting with participants weekly and collecting an extensive amount of data to ensure that findings were supported by numerous sources of evidence.

Triangulation. Observation data and artifacts were collected from intern supervisors as previously discussed to provide additional support or disconfirming evidence from an alternative source. In addition, the use of a combination of observations and interviews allowed for overlapping, supported constructions of themes that illuminated different vantage points (Erlandson, 1993) of the personal practical knowledge of the interns.

Peer debriefing. During data collection, analysis, and presentation of results, I met biweekly with a team of three peers to discuss preliminary findings and to problem solve any difficulties encountered. This technique, called peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) or peer examination (Merriam, 1998), provided an external outlet to further protect against researcher bias. This team assisted me by asking probing questions and suggesting rival theories. The confidentiality of study participants was protected at all times.

Member checks. As mentioned previously, member check interviews were conducted with participants to ensure their words and meanings were being faithfully

represented (See third interview protocol, Appendix D). Each participant was provided with the result from phase one of analysis, a written presentation of the essence of each participant's conceptualization of diverse learners and accommodations. This five- to seven-page summary was presented to each of them for verification. In each case, minor modifications were made in order to expand or clarify a participant's views or to add information. In one case, the intern and I negotiated a more positive way to depict a comment she made about her cooperating teacher. All four participants expressed satisfaction that I had adequately conveyed their understandings and actions regarding accommodations.

Negative case analysis. During data analysis, a search for disconfirming evidence was conducted to ensure that researcher bias and preconceptions were not leading analysis (Adler & Adler, 1994; Hutchinson, 1988). In addition, peer debriefers were asked to play the role of devil's advocate on several occasions to help illuminate alternative hypotheses.

Rich, thick description. For readers to determine for themselves the transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of my study, often referred to as generalizability in quantitative studies, I have thoroughly described the context and provided numerous quotes and anecdotes. This will allow readers to determine which findings can be transferred to other contexts due to shared characteristics (Creswell, 1998; Erlandson, 1993).

Presentation of Findings

Cook (1984) has called for a combination of interpretation, praxis, and prediction in social science research to give a more complete understanding of the world around us. In this study, I used the intersection of interpretation (as I describe interns' definitions of accommodations) and praxis (how they enact accommodations), to make implications

that lean toward prediction (Do unified programs prepare interns that are willing and able to make accommodations during their internship placements?)

Extensive descriptions of the interns and their placements are presented, with as much information as possible about the classrooms and school contexts. In Chapters Four and Five I present the four distinct cases, using data to explain each intern's conceptions and practices regarding accommodations for diverse learners. The four cases are divided between two chapters to highlight similarities and differences in the ways the interns approached accommodation. In Chapter Six I present a cross-case analysis of various dilemmas the interns faced related to their implementation of accommodations. Implications for researchers and practitioners, as well as a discussion relating the findings to current literature is presented in Chapter Seven.

Data are presented from a variety of sources, with specific data sources referenced with the following codes: Formal Interviews (I); Observations (O); Post-observation Reflective Interviews (RI); Member Check Interview (MC); Cooperating Teacher Interview (CT); Supervisor's PATHWISE lesson plan forms (PW); and Unit Plan (U). After each source code, a number will indicate which piece of datum was used. Information about students with identified disabilities is included in parentheses after their names, when applicable, to provide information about the type of students receiving accommodations.

Conventions of Language

In each case I will present an intern's conceptualizations of accommodations and how she put those thoughts into action in the classroom. In doing so, I will be mixing the presentation of abiding beliefs and supporting actions, which creates confusing verb tense

usage. For that reason, the conventions of language used in the findings chapters are presented below:

1. Abiding beliefs and knowledge that can be assumed to prevail beyond data collection will be written in present tense. Examples:
 - a. Erica **believes** that good teaching consists of captivating instruction that takes both whole group and individual needs into consideration.
 - b. For Erica, accommodations **are** just part of a teacher's job.
2. Interview and observation data will be written in past tense, because they were captured in a moment in time. Examples:
 - a. When **asked** who is entitled to accommodations, Erica **responded**, "Everyone".
 - b. Erica **contacted** the occupational therapist to inquire about assistive devices.
3. Participants' verb usage generally reflects similar conventions (abiding beliefs in present tense, actions in past tense), but will be presented verbatim regardless of verb usage.

CHAPTER 4 ACCOMMODATIONS: A RECONCEPTUALIZED APPROACH

Chapters Four and Five are organized into cases to present data related to the first two research questions:

1. How do elementary education interns prepared in a unified teacher education program
 - a. conceptualize "diverse learners"?
 - b. conceptualize what it means to accommodate for diverse learners?
2. How do the interns accommodate for diverse learners during their internship placements?

The four interns had different understandings about what accommodations were and how to implement them. However, their conceptions about accommodation were all influenced by overriding conceptions about effective instruction. In other words, the interns all designed and implemented accommodations based on their overarching beliefs about how to teach effectively.

Within this overarching framework of effective instruction, two of the interns had approaches to accommodation that were in line with a reconceptualized approach. As explained in Chapter Two, a reconceptualized approach is curriculum-centered, and accommodations become contextualized as teachers examine ways in which the curriculum can be adjusted to meet students' needs. Erica and Kelly approached instruction and curriculum as the foci of their efforts to accommodate, and they proactively designed instruction to ensure that more students were able to interact with content. Alternatively, Ashley and Debra had approaches to accommodation that were

more traditional in nature. They had fairly standardized views of what students should learn, and they viewed accommodation largely as remediation to give struggling students opportunities to catch up with their peers. None of the cases is a pure example of one approach or the other, and each case has elements of both approaches. However, there was enough evidence in each case to suggest a trend toward one approach or the other.

The cases are organized in a similar format. Overarching conceptions about effective instruction are presented first, followed by conceptions about accommodation and then conceptions about diverse learners. The case descriptions of Erica and Kelly are presented in this chapter, and Ashley and Debra are presented in Chapter Five.

Erica: “It’s Just Part of Teaching”

Erica was placed in a third grade classroom at Ellis Elementary School. For Erica, accommodations are a vital and essential part of a teacher’s job. They are not an afterthought or an added extra, but rather, just part of effective teaching. She explained:

That’s the teacher’s job – to teach kids. Not to teach them your way, but to teach them their way. You know, the way that they learn best. So yeah, I think you have to accommodate. I don’t see how you could NOT, unless you just decided to [ignore] the way kids learn. . . . It’s just part of teaching. They go hand in hand. There’s not a separation. (MC: 177-181)

Erica’s conception of accommodation was guided by her student-centered beliefs about effective instruction. These beliefs served as a foundation for how she talked about both accommodations and diverse learners.

Conception of Effective Instruction

Erica’s conception of accommodations is strongly tied to her beliefs about instruction and what causes students to struggle. For Erica, effective instruction is captivating and engaging because these qualities keep students on task. She believes that when students are not engaged, they miss foundational knowledge and begin a downward

spiral that manifests itself as behavior problems and/or low academic achievement. When asked why some learners struggle more than others, she responded:

Well, one area they have a problem with is staying on task. Because if they aren't on task, when it comes to the assignments that they have, and they haven't had the instruction because they weren't on task in that area, then it's a chain link because they don't understand what they are doing, and they are raising their hands, asking their neighbor, or they find something else to occupy their attention, and then they are getting in trouble for behavior. So every area suffers from not being attentive. (I1: 304-309)

For Erica, preventing this downward spiral begins with well-planned instruction that (a) keeps the whole class engaged, (b) involves reluctant learners, and (c) is adapted to meet the needs of individuals. Each of these components is described below.

Group alerting keeps the whole class tuned in

Erica said that it is important not only to design instruction around students' interests, but to have techniques to capture their attention during a lesson. She explained:

When you trigger their interests, like when I sang for them, everybody was quiet, everybody was listening. There are little things you can do – you still have your rituals for instruction – but there are things you can do to mix it up in a way that keeps the students' attention. (I1: 314-317)

Erica had many such techniques she used on the spot to get students' attention. During many transitions she would tell students to be finished with a task by the time she was finished singing a familiar song. Students would sing with her and be ready when she asked (O 1, 3, 4, 6). She also varied the tone of her voice to maintain their attention and make them focus on what she was saying. During a vocabulary lesson, when student interest was waning by word three, she cued students to listen carefully, then mouthed the word and then whispered it twice, successively louder until the majority of the students were raising their hands to define the word (O 5). She told me that sometimes she has them repeat vocabulary words after her as if they were “echoing in a canyon” (RI 6).

Vocabulary practice was important to Erica, and she searched for ways to maintain student attention beyond group alerting. She designed lessons that gave students new ways to respond to standard listing of definitions. In a vocabulary lesson I observed, she had a bag taped to each grouping of desks in which students could store their vocabulary index cards, inside an envelope marked with each student's name (O 6). She also developed actions to represent each word to get students excited about studying the words. Students were highly engaged in this lesson in part because of the creative way she captured their attention.

These techniques were integrated into Erica's instruction purposefully as more than just cute attention grabbers because Erica believes that keeping students engaged is the key to helping them grasp the content. Even though the techniques described above were used for the whole class, Erica considered them a form of proactive accommodation because in designing instruction this way, "a lot of the problems will be eliminated" (I1: 329).

Interactive instruction involves even reluctant learners

Erica said it is important to always be "moving [students] around, getting them out of their seats. Kids want to talk, they don't want to just sit there and have you instruct them. You should let them interact with one another, move around, use manipulatives" (I1: 317-319). She used a variety of techniques to involve students on the seven occasions I observed her: students wrote on the board for her, tallied responses on the board, acted out vocabulary words, mimicked cutting with scissors when they did a math shortcut, and completed a vocabulary sentence about inherited traits in round-robin fashion. Erica wants instruction to be interactive and enticing, but she also wants to ensure student participation through the use of strategies to get every student involved. "I use strategies

to get them to answer questions, like [putting their names on] popsicle sticks, or tapping them on the head, or whispering to a neighbor” (I1: 129-130). In each of the seven lessons I observed, she had specific techniques such as these for systematically involving all students. In one lesson she planned ahead by sticking post-it notes below students’ desks on which they could write a concept they had learned as a formative assessment at a mid-point in the lesson (O 2). She told me that when she realized some students had misconceptions, she had the eight students with the best responses come up and read their answers. Then she called on the students with incorrect responses, and they self-corrected. “It was nice to have the students explain to their peers and teach them, too” (RI 2). This technique required each student to interact with the content and also gave Erica some idea about students having difficulty so that she could tailor her instruction for specific individuals, the next component in Erica’s conception of effective teaching.

Instruction should be adapted to the needs of the individual

Erica planned activities to involve all students and used specific techniques geared to certain students based on their needs. Erica indicated to me that many of her students seemed to have problems paying attention and she talked about her plan for keeping them focused:

Well, for the students that have attention problems, like Tony [EH], I try to get them involved. But other students pick up on that, when I always use Tony or Tawanda as helpers, or using John [ADHD] a lot to write on the overhead. Sometimes I try to do it subtly, like just having them pull a [popsicle] stick for me, because for them it’s a big deal and then they are with me [in the lesson]. . . . Or sometimes I’ll try to call on a certain student before I ask the question, like with Rusty and Carrie when I called them up to the board first, then asked the question, so that they know ahead of time and they can prepare to really pay attention to what I’m asking them to do. And then for my higher learners, like Chris and Sandy [both gifted], I try to keep them challenged and find out their process of thinking. . . . It lets them celebrate something they’ve learned. I sometimes ask them to explain how they got an answer to show the ones who can’t do it what an expert does to solve the problem. (RI 3)

She also contacted the school occupational therapist to get some assistive devices for students when these techniques were not sufficient. She got a seat cushion wedge for Tony (EH) to encourage him to stay seated and a squishy ball for Rusty to manipulate to keep his hands occupied during lessons. She reported that these were highly effective, and my observations support her conclusions (O 5, 6, 7).

She also modified materials for students when they were unable to respond in the given format. For one student she customized a worksheet by enlarging and altering it to give him more space to respond because of his poor fine motor skills (O 5). For another student working on fine motor skills, she copied half of each vocabulary sentence off the board for him and let him complete the sentence (RI 4). Another student was allowed to dictate short answers on an assignment rather than write each response (RI 6, 7). She did not consider changing this material to be unusual, but instead, something that all teachers should do to ensure that students with exceptional needs can learn.

Erica's view of effective instruction in action

The first lesson I observed in early September demonstrated how Erica put each of these three components into action simultaneously (O 1). Her lesson was based on a scripted math lesson using the Saxon curriculum. During the beginning portion of the lesson, she reviewed previously taught skills, including some problem solving skills. Although the script simply required calling on various students to answer math problems, Erica departed from the script and used the following techniques to maintain student attention and ensure that all students achieved the lesson objectives:

- She had a cup with a popsicle stick for each student. During the lesson, she called on each student once by randomly pulling out popsicle sticks. However, she also called on students with and without their hands raised. Sometimes students knew ahead of time that they were going to have to answer, and sometimes they did not.

- She wrote a math problem on the board and chose three students to figure out the answer and whisper it in her ear.
- Prior to the lesson, she taped a folded piece of paper to the board that had the answer to one math problem written on it. She called this the “secret answer.”
- She varied the methods for responding to review problems. She asked some students to stand, some to write the answer on the whiteboard, some to whisper the answer to a neighbor, and some to come up front and stand in a line. She also asked for choral response on occasion.
- She chose Tony (EH) as her helper to use the pointer during the calendar section of the lesson. He led the class in finding the solution to this problem and participated in the majority of the lesson.
- During one portion of the lesson students were given the opportunity to create a number sentence with the answer “nine.” This open-ended problem resulted in responses of $8+1$, $(-2) + 11$, $6+3$, and $1000-991$ from the four students called on to respond. By structuring the task this way, Erica enabled students to respond at their individual ability levels.

Most of these techniques allowed more than one student at a time to actively respond to each problem. The whole class was engaged during the entire lesson and Erica was satisfied that they achieved the lesson objectives when I interviewed her after the lesson (RI 1). Erica used similar techniques in another math lesson I observed two weeks after this one (O 3), and the cooperating teacher (CT) agreed that this type of instruction was typical for Erica (CT-E).

Conception of Accommodation

Erica’s ideas about accommodations are clearly related to her beliefs about effective practice. She believes that accommodations are (a) any type of assistance given to students that continue to struggle despite lessons designed to meet their needs, (b) part of an on-going process, and (c) designed to help students reach lesson objectives.

Narrowing the focus from whole class to individual

Erica's ideas about accommodations began with effective instruction but developed into more intensive assistance for students who continued to struggle. In this way, she gradually narrowed her focus from whole class to individuals.

She began with a focus on the whole class, based on the three components of effective instruction described above. She planned instruction with built-in accommodation in the form of techniques to organize content and maximize memory and attention. She then planned student-specific accommodations for those students likely to have the most difficulty. Sometimes as Erica thought about specific accommodations she could do for certain students, she realized that all students could benefit from them. She referred to this kind of accommodation as a "blanket" accommodation (RI 4), such as providing a checklist to help students stay organized. She also used teacher think-alouds (O 1), mnemonic techniques (O 5, 6), graphic organizers (O4), and reconstructive elaboration (O 4, 5) because she felt that these aided memory and were "helpful to students at all levels" (RI 1).

Other times, she realized that struggling learners needed something a little more intensive. This type of accommodation was student specific and included such techniques as dictating responses (O 6), altered materials (O 4, 5), assistive devices (O 5, 6, 7), and alternative assignments (O 6). Although these techniques were sometimes obvious because they were provided only for certain students, Erica also told me that she uses some strategies that are not as obvious, such as involving Tony as her helper as a proactive measure to keep him involved. She told me that sometimes accommodations are so subtle and individual-specific that they are not visible to outsiders unfamiliar with students' needs. She explained:

It might be that you have four students who are usually antsy, so you are going to have to move them around more and that is accommodating for them. But an outsider looking in would never know that you planned your lesson the way you did because of those students. (I1: 437-440)

Because Erica viewed accommodations in this way, it was important to get her to explain her reasoning behind the seemingly typical things she did, such as calling on certain students at certain points in the lesson. She even mentioned that she was glad to have someone to talk to about these planned accommodations, someone who “realizes I planned that, or that I’m working hard to do that” (I2: 462).

Part of an on-going reflection cycle

According to Erica, keeping students on task also means reflecting and taking responsibility when things are not working. She explained, “If you think they aren’t learning or they aren’t paying attention, take it as personal motivation to do something different so that they are learning and they are doing it” (I2: 430-432). Reflection is in fact an essential component in Erica’s conceptions of accommodation. At the end of the study, Erica reported that she felt ready and able to make accommodations, but noted that teachers can never truly know all they need to know because it is a never-ending process:

I think I’m still learning. I feel like it’s just an on-going process. You have to figure out what works for a particular child—trial and error. Sometimes I think something is going to help them and it really doesn’t end up helping them. Then, once you find something that is helping them, you can’t do it forever, so it’s just an on-going process. . . . I’m constantly thinking about my students, every student that has special needs, and it’s my job to help them. (I2: 44-51)

Two essential pieces of this process include making changes when the accommodation is no longer successful, and gently removing support so that students do not get overly dependent.

Adapting the accommodation. Erica put a great deal of thought into what she could do to make students more successful in the lessons she taught. In one lesson she

gave a student a modified worksheet to give him more space to write. Watching him use the form incorrectly, she realized he was trying to use a new line for each definition, rather than taking more room as she intended. She let him continue, not wanting to confuse him further, but told me what she would do differently in the next lesson:

Next time I may just give him a copy of it all done, and he can highlight them when we go over it so that he's following along. Because it's not major that he HAS to write it down to know it. I mean, it's not that he only understands if he writes it down. I like it when they write it, but for him, I think it's hindering more than it's helping. (RI 6)

Erica accepted responsibility for the failure of this accommodation and had a plan for the next lesson that more specifically addressed the difficulties this student faced.

Removing scaffolding. Erica believes it is necessary to wean students off accommodations so that they do not become dependent on the support. When I asked her if accommodations could make some students lazy, she replied that it would not “if you are constantly modifying the accommodation, working them towards independence or a less intense accommodation. [In other words] you are scaffolding” (I1: 394-396).

She described to me a process of scaffolding accommodations that seemed to combine her understanding of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development with her understanding of special education and least restrictive environment:

If you underestimate what a child can do and you are expecting less of them, then I do think it's wrong. I can't say, “Oh, Tony can't write so I'll just give him all the notes all the time,” and then I just hand them to him. But you could make him be more active by making him highlight certain key words that you go over, or you leave blanks in parts of it and have him fill in key words. So you want to have the least restrictive environment. You want to give them help, but not just completely giving it to them because they have to do it on their own eventually. In society they have to be functional. They are not always going to have people that are constantly giving them the extra help. (I2: 273-282)

For Erica, it was important to reach children where they were currently functioning and then guide them toward more independent learning. She related this to the idea of

least restrictive environment because she felt that you must be careful not to give the students too much support, but instead, to find just the right balance of support and independence. She believed that too much support could be restrictive, confining and disempowering, just as she believed some resource room placements to be (I2).

These two components – adapting and scaffolding accommodations – were essential in the ongoing process of providing accommodations. This process, she told me, takes time. Even though she talked about accommodations she would put into place during our first interview in August, I observed few specific individual accommodations (as she defined them) until the fourth observation in early October (RI 4). In addition, she did not describe specific instances of weaning students off specific accommodations for a few weeks after that (RI 7). In October when I asked her about the disparity between what she said was important and what I observed, she said:

I think right now I'm just trying to figure out what students need and introduce it to them. . . . I'm just feeling out what exactly the kids' needs are and trying to make sure I'm accommodating those needs. Right now I am just implementing it, rather than thinking about how to take them away. (RI 4)

Alignment with goals and objectives

For Erica, the bottom line in providing accommodations for students is to help them achieve lesson objectives. In fact, Erica said that it is unfair to students to merely eliminate parts of an assignment so they can get finished early because this altered the goals or objectives for them in a way that cheated them out of learning what was needed:

If you go beyond simplifying or changing the lesson to a certain degree it is unfair to the student because they aren't able to learn what they should be learning. You shouldn't go in with [lowered expectations]. . . . You should still have them do things, but do them in a way that make them more achievable for them. They should be learning the same things that other students are learning. They are just doing them in a different way (I1: 512-517).

She said it was important to her not to eliminate concepts or standards, but instead to change her approach to how they were learning the concept or standard. An example she gave me early on demonstrates what she means by a different approach to learning a concept. During the first interview, Erica told me she noticed some of her students were not completing the morning Daily Oral Language assignment where they copy down and then correct sentences written incorrectly on the board. She said, “They are just being left behind. . . . It could be so much more effective. . . . That is not helping them at all. . . . They aren’t learning any grammar, and that’s the purpose of this assignment” (I1: 355-358). She brought up several alternatives to her CT: working with the students in small groups; modifying the assignment as a standardized sheet to bubble in corrections; giving them a sheet with the incorrect sentences printed out for them to edit with editing marks; or shortening the assignment. Erica said her CT rejected those options because she said she wanted to keep the standards high. Erica disagreed, but deferred. She said:

So I think not all students need that, but I think to achieve [the lesson] objective, which is to have them learn to have sentences written correctly, some students can do it in a different way, and it’s just frustrating for them right now. Maybe once they were getting it down, you could back off where they get one written for them and have to only copy one sentence. After a while, you get them to do it independently. (I1: 369-374)

As the semester progressed, Erica was able to make accommodations such as the ones she suggested in August. While the exact reasons the CT rejected these ideas is not known, it could stem from a difference in perceptions of how much support to provide. In the interview with Erica’s CT, I learned that she believes it is important for students to all work toward the same goal and learn the same concepts, but with more teacher assistance and encouragement for struggling students (CT-E). It could be that she regarded the types of assistance Erica suggested as altering the objective too drastically. As mentioned

previously, however, as Erica took over responsibility in the classroom, her CT allowed her the freedom to make accommodations she deemed necessary, regardless of any differences in opinion they may have had.

Even though Erica was able to talk about the ideal of letting students have different ways to meet objectives, she was still learning how this translated in practice. In her Communities unit, she planned for students to write a thank you letter using a frame she provided. During the lesson, she found that some students were not able to do this, despite being able to express their ideas to her verbally. She made a grading accommodation for them by giving them credit for completion and effort, rather than a letter grade using the rubric she created. She did not plan in advance for alternatives for these students or others with deficits in writing, but she was able to make changes in how she assessed their products. With this lesson, as with another in her unit, Erica noted in her reflective report, “The problem with the assessment I chose [for the objective] was that it required specific writing criteria. Thus the students who struggle with writing are penalized” (U-E). She said that next time she would plan ahead with alternatives for those with limited writing skills. Even though she was still learning how to help students reach lesson objectives in different ways, the fact that she recognized it as a weakness in her unit and reflected on ways to improve suggests that this is an important aspect of her conception of accommodation.

Conception of Diverse Learners

Erica primarily thought about diverse learners in terms of differences in the way students learn and attend to instruction. These differences influence student achievement because they affect what students get out of instruction. She did not consider only struggling learners or students with identified disabilities to be diverse, but all students.

She realized that certain children need more help than others but did not limit her assistance to students with disabilities. In the following section, Erica's conceptions about diverse learners and her actions in the classroom related to those conceptions are described.

Who are diverse learners?

Everybody is a diverse learner because everybody is different, has different prior knowledge, different experiences, best ways that they learn, materials. Everyone has different needs and comes from different backgrounds. So I think everyone is a diverse learner, even the students on grade level who don't show visible signs of needing assistance . . . because they learn something best one way, or have some things that are helpful to them in learning. (I1)

Erica's conceptions of diverse learners remained stable over the course of the study and were consistent with her ideas about accommodations. It was important to her to target all students by attending to different learning styles, multiple intelligences, and different ways to demonstrate acquisition of knowledge (U-E). She believed that all her students were able to do well in school – “Every single one of them is capable and they come to school to learn” (I2) – and that it was her responsibility to meet their needs (U-E).

Erica did describe her class originally according to racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic factors (I1), but she did not discuss these factors as part of her discussion of diverse learners. Her focus was instead on cognitive factors that affect learning, stripped of sociocultural influences. She focused on ways she could help them learn through different approaches to content and varied strategies. She focused on individual differences in her students, rather than group differences that could be attributed to SES, culture, gender, or linguistic background.

Who actually receives accommodations?

Erica provided accommodations to students regardless of whether they had been formally identified with specific needs. She did not put accommodations in place just because students were labeled with a specific disability. Instead, she identified a learning difficulty in a student then she adapted instruction or used strategies to address the specific learning need.

Erica often made accommodations to help John (ADHD) and Tony (EH) stay focused (O 1, 3, 5, 6, 7), but I also observed similar accommodations she made for Chris, Steve, Rusty, and Tawanda (O 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7). These were four general education students that both Erica and her CT identified as students with difficulty focusing (I1; RI 2; CT-E). In fact, both Erica and her CT discussed the unusually large number of students in this classroom who had difficulty focusing. The CT attributed this to undiagnosed emotional handicaps and said besides Tony (EH) and Tawanda, whom was labeled EH after the study ended, there were five other children who she considered emotionally handicapped (CT-E). Neither the CT nor Erica differentiated between students that had and had not been officially diagnosed when they discussed accommodations they made. In other words, any student they perceived as having difficulty focusing was given assistance, not only those for whom an Individual Education Program (IEP) or a 504 plan dictated they do so.

Besides identifying students with attention or behavior problems, Erica also discussed and accommodated students with different achievement levels. The student population of this particular classroom did not include any students with identified learning disabilities or cognitive difficulties, but they did represent a range of achievement levels. The CT supported this and talked about students as being below, on,

and above grade level (CT-E) whereas Erica described students at different levels by referring to their reading levels. Erica accommodated for students at different reading levels through the use of flexible reading groups for a portion of her reading skills instruction. After being dissatisfied with a whole-group approach to reading, Erica designed reading groups for skill practice based on reading levels, and tailored instruction at centers for groups at each reading level. She had higher groups create fill-in-the-blank vocabulary sentences for each other on index cards to practice word use, and she had lower groups complete vocabulary worksheets provided by the reading series that were written in the same style as the comprehension test so that they could practice in a format similar to the test the school required her to use (O 6, RI 6). She also discussed high achievers in her Communities unit and said she challenged them by identifying higher order thinking skills as lesson objectives (U-E).

As previously described, Erica said that she accommodates for students with different math achievement levels by providing opportunities for them to respond to open-ended problems (O 1, 3) or giving a student part of a number sentence and having him or her complete it (O 3). Any students having difficulty, not only those identified with disabilities, were able to receive similar accommodations. Erica did discuss gifted students specifically as she reflected on math lessons (RI 1, 3), but also discussed other high achievers and did similar accommodations for them (O 1, 3).

To summarize Erica's conceptions of diverse learners, she focuses on cognitive and attention difficulties or strengths, and considers every student diverse because of difference in learning styles and preferences. Every student is entitled to accommodations.

Kelly: “Looking at the Kid as an Individual”

Kelly was placed in a second grade classroom at Kinsey Elementary School. Kelly thought the most effective instruction was focused on the “whole child” (I1). To her, this meant that children were valued as individuals with different cultures, learning styles, personalities, likes, dislikes, strengths, and needs. To effectively teach students to value their differences, Kelly said, “I always want to be looking at the kid as an individual and seeing what they need. . . . I just do it. I don’t always think of it as special or different, just what the student needs” (I2: 250 . . . 557-558).

Consequently, Kelly planned instruction that was responsive to student interests, gave students a lot of choices, and helped them interact with the content through experiential learning. This respect for individual differences translated into an approach to accommodations that took more than just ability into account. She acknowledged the abilities of students when they arrived in her classroom and did not compare students to one another to assess growth according to a set standard. Instead, she wanted each student to make a year’s growth according to his or her entry-level knowledge and ability. She developed child-centered instruction as a result of these beliefs.

It is important to understand Kelly’s ideas about accommodation and effective instruction in relation to the students in her classroom. Out of the twenty-three children in her class, fourteen were in the ESOL program, and three of those students spoke little to no English when they arrived in August. Kelly often referred to the class composition as an influence on her decision-making about accommodations and effective instruction.

Conception of Effective Instruction

Kelly’s conception of effective instruction included an emphasis on community building, student choice, and experiential learning combined with individualized help.

Emphasis on developing community

To Kelly, a safe and warm environment in which each child is valued is key to learning: “If you aren’t comfortable with your surroundings, if you are feeling all tense, then you aren’t going to be learning” (RI 6). When asked about her goals for students, Kelly said:

I want them to respect each other and all that goes with that person – you know, the culture, what they believe – everything about that person, as well as respect for themselves, of course, that’s first. But to build a nice, respectful community. (RI 5)

To do this, Kelly planned to incorporate students’ cultures into the classroom, build classroom community through Morning Meeting for example, and have them practice speaking and sharing about themselves in order to learn about each other (I1).

Kelly taught students to help each other, work together, and be kind to one another. During several observations, I found children asking each other if they needed help (O 1, 2), or translating for those less proficient in the English language (O 2, 4, 5, 6). She frequently commented to me that she noticed students were helping each other, and that she enjoyed this (RI 2, 4; I2). In one lesson Denissa changed seats three times during seatwork, and Kelly said that was because she loves to help and was moving back and forth between Ricky and Maria (ESOL). She said children do this “almost automatically now. They are very willing to help people. . . . [Denissa] loves to help and to add to the conversation. I love that” (RI 2).

A lot of the community building was done during Morning Meeting, where the purpose was to

give them a chance to express themselves by sharing and participating, talking, conversations, and to just follow directions. It’s an easy going way to realize how to treat others, listening to people, speaking when it’s your turn, stuff like that. (RI2)

Community building was also done at the start of each day when the class said the Pledge of Allegiance and then the Classroom Pledge: “I pledge to show my respect by listening to others, using my hands for helping, caring about others’ feelings, and being responsible for what I say and do” (O 3). The Classroom Pledge was taped to the corner of each child’s desk and referred to occasionally during lessons (O 3, 6; CT-K).

The feeling of community was represented both visually and through the words and actions of everyone in the room. On the bulletin boards were displays celebrating each child with personal pictures from home or self-portraits, and displays of students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Every time I observed, Kelly was soft-spoken, gentle, and animated. She listened to children when they talked, and she responded to them personally. This was reflected in student interaction as well. The children were friendly and kind to one another and offered each other emotional support. When one girl, Vanessa, had head lice for the second time and returned from lunch with her father with her long red hair totally shaved, the entire class wore hats with Vanessa for several weeks until her hair began to grow back (RI 4).

Morning Meeting was an important part of each day. At least 30 minutes per day were spent on Morning Meeting, and math, the first academic subject of the day, did not usually begin until 9:00 a.m., 75 minutes after the tardy bell. When I observed, there was never a rush to get to academics, but Kelly told me in our last interview that she was sometimes concerned that the day ended and she had not done much in the way of traditional academic schoolwork. However, she felt that the students were progressing adequately and would make a year’s growth by the end of the school year. Kelly was not sure what level reading book her students were working in, but she was impressed that

they had completed two units by the end of September. She was satisfied with the pace of their progress through the county math curriculum as well. She also noted that even though the format of assessment in her classroom was different from traditional standardized testing, she felt the students would perform well on the end-of-year standardized assessment (I2).

The goal of community building was clearly a goal for the cooperating teacher as well, who told me she wanted her students to love school and to be kind to others (CT-K). Both Mrs. Klaussen and Kelly talked about how similarly they approached teaching (CT-K; RI 5). However, it was also apparent that Kelly came into her internship with these ideas and was not merely replicating her CT's practices. Kelly requested a classroom that had a mix of ethnicities and that focused on classroom community (RI 5), and her CT told me that Kelly entered the classroom with her child-centered beliefs (CT-K). Kelly said that being with Mrs. Klaussen helped her learn how to put her own ideas into action (RI 7).

Responsive to students' interests and skills

Kelly had a lot of confidence in students' abilities to direct their own learning and offered a lot of student choice during instruction. In fact, she viewed student choice as an accommodation, taking student interest and preference to a level beyond motivation. Kelly told me that she let them suggest options because "I like to hear what they are thinking - their reasoning. If there's no reason behind it, and they are just trying to be silly, well, then no. But if it makes sense, all right" (RI 3). Sometimes options are planned, such as offering students a choice of whether to illustrate or create sentences for spelling words (O3, 6). Other times, a student may suggest an alternative, such as creating an acrostic poem rather than writing a story (RI 7). Kelly told me that some

children frequently complete both options when she gives a choice, but it was neither mandatory nor expected for them to do so (RI 3, 7). If a student was making choices that were not challenging enough and did not help him or her reach potential, Kelly said she would talk to the student and parents and put it out in the open, as she had to do with one student in her internship (I2).

In addition to allowing students to choose between assignments, she also planned open-ended response assignments to enable them to respond at their own levels. For instance, in a fill-in-the-blank sentence starter worksheet (O 1), children filled in the blanks with whatever they could: one ESOL student just filled it with “she” and another student put a whole phrase with descriptive words. Kelly did not push children to do more – she accepted whatever they produced. However, during the reflective interview she told me she was concerned that the open-ended worksheet, like most of the morning seat work, was too difficult for some of the ESOL children who could neither speak nor write English, and she talked to the ESOL teacher to obtain more appropriate materials geared toward their levels of English proficiency. As a result, Juan, Maria, Marcus, and Ally often completed vocabulary or sight word practice instead, and Anna had worksheets with items labeled in Korean and English to practice her language skills and to teach Kelly Korean words (I2).

In addition to offering open-ended assignments, Kelly also felt it was important to recognize the different ways that students interpret content. In a math lesson, she called on various students to explain the strategies they each used for solving math word problems (O 7). She also validated their individual understandings on a class constructed concept map by listing their responses verbatim on the board (O 4). These strategies

allowed her to recognize their thoughts as valid and worthy, which was very important to Kelly (RI 5).

Students were also allowed to control the direction and pace of lessons. During one reading lesson, I observed that several times students diverted the discussion, and Kelly let them explore the topic for a while before linking it back to what they were originally discussing (O3). For example, when she asked them to define “theme,” students talked about theme parks they had been to, but then she brought them back by asking for the theme of each park. Then, after reading the story called “The Enormous Turnip,” Denissa left the group and went to look at the plants growing on the windowsill. Kelly asked her to bring one over, and they measured it to make comparisons to the size of the turnip in the story. Then they discussed the things plants needed to grow from a recent science lesson on plants, and finally Kelly brought the discussion back to the turnip story by linking it to the current day’s math lesson on ordering: who pulled the turnip first, second, third, and last. Much of this discussion appeared to be impromptu, guided by what the students found interesting in the story and how it related to recent lessons, but Kelly told me that she saw the connections when planning, and wanted to make sure students saw them as well (RI 3).

Sometimes student choice went as far as allowing students to choose whether or not to participate in class activities. One child, Juan, often refused to participate in any classroom activity when I observed (O1, 2, 6, 7), but both the CT and Kelly said that he did do work in class and they were not overly concerned yet. Kelly said that one way she would encourage him to participate would be to plan more cooperative activities, putting him with people he felt comfortable with, and then giving him a role to ensure that his

participation was necessary for group success (RI 6). After taking more coursework in ESOL, Kelly told me that she felt better about his frequent periods of non-participation because she learned that English Language Learners (ELLs) often go through a silent period when they just take in information and do not speak, and she felt that Juan was in that stage during her internship (MC). In any case, students like Juan had a lot of control over their daily work, sometimes choosing not to participate at all, and that was acceptable to both the CT and Kelly (RI 2, 4; CT-K).

Another way that Kelly was responsive to her students was that she created lessons that appealed to them. She was not bound by the county-mandated curriculum, but instead used it as a springboard to go more deeply into topics that she or the students found interesting (MC). Her CT also noted that she took the teacher manuals and adapted the lessons for this particular group of students (CT-K). In addition, the lessons she chose to have a supervisor observe support this element of her conception of effective instruction: She read a David Wiesner book and had students write creative stories in the same style (PW 2), held a Morning Meeting based on giving compliments to each other (PW 1), and created an introductory science lesson on bones and muscles to assess prior knowledge before teaching the unit (PW 4).

Letting students have control of their own learning in the ways outlined in this section was one way that Kelly responded to students' knowledge, interests, and skills. She valued what each child added to the class, academically as well as socially. In the next section, her ideas about the structure for teaching lessons in this manner are discussed.

Examples and experiences, then one-on-one

Kelly generally taught lessons in a modified direct instruction approach (O 2, 4, 5, 6). She provided an introduction that made the lesson relevant to the students and introduced the topic. Then she modeled and guided students through several examples. She skipped a more formal guided practice stage, and instead moved directly into independent seatwork. However, the structure of this seatwork was more like individual guided practice for students because she and several student translators immediately went to the students with the most difficulty in English and worked with them until they understood the concept. Kelly's CT reinforced that this was a typical lesson format that Kelly used, and she thought it was a great way to meet the needs of struggling students (CT-K).

Kelly explained that in this way, she begins with the whole class, then targets a group having difficulty and works with them more, then progresses to one-on-one help with students still having trouble (RI 4, 5). Kelly told me it was important to design lessons this way because many students were not having difficulty with the concepts, only the English translation, and she needed to work with some of them on understanding the language without slowing the rest of the class when they were ready to move on to independent work (RI 6). She circulated continuously, beginning with the newer ESOL students and then getting to any other students needing assistance. Some students asked neighbors for help if they needed it, but most of them did seem ready to move on to independent work. As a result, Kelly and the CT were very pleased with the class's academic performance as a whole. They did not have academic concerns about any students (RI 7; CT-K).

Kelly's lessons were usually centered on letting students experience content first hand because she felt that helped students understand concepts (I2). During an introductory lesson on the digestive system she gave students cookies and asked them to observe and write about what happened to the cookie as they slowly ate it (O6). She also incorporated a role-play element to several lessons, where she asked students to stand up to act out ideas, such as abstract concepts in math (O2, 7) or ways to show feelings (O5). Although Kelly believed that these techniques worked well for all students, she recognized that they were especially important when teaching students with limited English proficiency (RI 5).

Kelly's view of effective instruction in action

In mid-September I observed a Morning Meeting and a math lesson on the concepts of odd and even (O2). Morning Meeting lasted 30 minutes and consisted of student volunteers, alternating boy-girl, sharing stories or objects they brought from home. Lin (ESOL) brought in a Chinese fan that her father bought when she was one, and other students shared toys or stories. Both Kelly and the students responded to the speakers with questions, and Kelly gently reminded them of the rules when talk became too enthusiastic and loud.

In math, Kelly began using the manual to introduce the concept of odd and even, but she also added an interactive component for students to visualize the concept of numbers that did not group evenly. She considered this an accommodation because she felt that some learners, and especially those with difficulty in English, would benefit from a more active picture of the concepts (RI 2). She reviewed the concept of patterns, did several examples on the board, had students stand up and group themselves in different sets (to review a concept many had difficulty with previously), and then had students

grouped to show odd and even combinations. During the grouping activity, Juan (ESOL) refused to participate. Kelly tried to coax him into participating, saying that the class really needed him, but eventually, she let him sit and watch.

Kelly assigned three workbooks pages and told students that they should finish as much as they could and not worry if they did not finish. Then she circulated to provide assistance, beginning with students with limited English skills. To help Maria (ESOL), Kelly read the math problem aloud, had her draw the math problem in the workspace, reminded her of the hundreds chart on the wall, and prompted her to remember the active grouping activity. In addition, Hector (ESOL) came over and explained something to Maria in Spanish. Maria and two other ESOL students did not complete all three worksheets in the time allotted, but Kelly told me that from what those students had done, she could tell they were getting the concepts (RI 2).

During the seatwork, one student, Paulo (ESOL), was working ahead in his math workbook and came back to ask me a question about the page he was doing, quite a bit beyond the pages the class was working on. He told me he was moving back to Brazil and his teachers said he could finish the book before he left. I noticed that he had been participating in the discussion and activities but was working ahead during the seatwork portion of the lesson, without any assistance.

As this lesson illustrates, Kelly believes it is important to build community through the use of Morning Meeting and sharing; to respond to student interest, ability, and self-direction of learning; and to provide activities to let students experience content.

Conception of Accommodation

Kelly viewed accommodation as a restructured approach to curriculum, rather than a list of strategies to implement. She said:

I just feel like you can't just have certain modifications set up. It's going to be a whole different approach basically. It would be like writing a whole different lesson plan in a way. . . . You don't just have a whole list of little things you can just plug in when students need them. It's more of a big change in the way you approach content or present it. (I1: 292-302)

Kelly's basic definition of accommodation was "support or extra help, or even a different way of going about something like a topic or a skill when a student is struggling and needs extra help" (I2: 171-172). She also felt strongly that accommodations had to take into account "different outcomes for every student" (I2: 175). To Kelly, this meant that it was important to measure student progress individually, rather than through the use of grade-level expectations. Therefore, her conception of accommodation had these three components: individual support, multiple representations and routes, and individual progress. Each of these components of accommodations is expanded in the next section.

Individual support and encouragement

Kelly viewed accommodations as a form of scaffolding to move students toward independence: "It's like scaffolding: You are helping them, but you are letting them build their own ability along the way, so you are kind of like building them up so they can do a task on their own eventually" (I2: 148-150).

The support she provided had academic and social aspects. It was part academic assistance and part encouragement and praise, but she considered both to be accommodations. For example, she told me that Nathan had such terrible fine motor skills that he could not even read his own writing aloud sometimes. She took a story he wrote and typed it in a large font in a format that looked like a book so that he could share it with the class:

I said, "Look, you wrote a book!" and he was so proud. He practiced with me before he got up to read it in front of the class, then we put it in the class library. And now the kids sit there and read it. . . . It's great. (I2: 365-369)

Students were given many opportunities to speak and share, and Kelly viewed the assistance and encouragement she provided to be an accommodation. To get students with less proficient skills in English ready to speak in front of the class, Kelly practiced with them before school or during morning seatwork (O 1, 4), and she always stood by each child and encouraged them while they were presenting to the class. She incorporated one daily classroom activity to give all students the chance to practice oral speaking skills. She sent the class pet (a stuffed animal) home every night with a different child, who returned the pet the next day with a completed worksheet saying what the pet did, who he met, and his new nickname. The child then read the responses aloud to the class. On one occasion I observed Juan (ESOL) telling the class about his evening with the class pet. Juan was a child who frequently did not participate in class activities. He was a native Spanish speaker with very limited English proficiency. To help Juan be successful, Kelly had the ESOL teacher help her write a letter in Spanish to Juan's mother, who assisted him with the worksheet at home. In class, I observed Juan reading his responses aloud, not quite confidently, but with more enthusiasm than I had ever seen him display toward classwork before. As Juan approached a difficult word, Kelly whispered it in his ear and had him echo it aloud. He teased Kelly that she could not correctly pronounce the nickname he created for the pet – Emmanuel – and she joked with him and encouraged him to add more details about the pet. He was reluctant to step down from the sharing stool at the front of the room, seemingly enjoying the spotlight (O 4), quite a change for a child who had refused to participate in two previous lessons I observed (O 1, 2). In fact, during the lesson that followed his sharing of the class pet, Juan participated in a discussion of goal setting at a level equal to the native English speakers in his class.

Participation was, in fact, one area of some concern for Kelly, but less so for her cooperating teacher (CT-K). Kelly mentioned wanting to encourage the uninvolved students by asking them what was wrong and what they wanted to do instead. After one lesson, Kelly said she was concerned that some of the ESOL children were not participating as much as she would like. She said she would plan some strategies to get them to share, but that some students might need to be alerted ahead of time that they would be sharing so that they could practice speaking with her beforehand (RI 2). Her approaches were positive rather than punitive, relying on encouragement and support rather than discipline. She called this type of support an accommodation, but it was more social than academic in nature.

Kelly also extended this encouragement and support to a child with more severe disabilities. Halfway through the semester a new student, Ally, arrived, diagnosed with CHARGE syndrome, a low-incidence disability characterized by a variety of both physical and cognitive manifestations. Ally had a cleft palate, visual and hearing impairments, mild mental retardation, and was also a Spanish speaker in the ESOL program. Both Kelly and the CT spoke to me about how most students immediately accepted her into the classroom community, with a few exceptions that they had to address immediately (I2, MC, CT-K). Ally received special services for English, reading, and math, but stayed in the classroom for Morning Meeting and for science and social studies, and participated in the same activities and sharing experiences as other students during those subjects. Kelly told me:

I treat her as I would any student that is learning English. She is often on task and seems to be understanding what is going on. I have called on her several times to come in front of the class and share. We don't understand her, but she is confident

in what she is saying and doing, so we applaud when she is finished, and I encourage her to share when appropriate. (RI 4)

She also considered seating assignment to be an accommodation. She put students with the weakest English skills in the front of the room or near a student translator to provide them quick help during whole-group activities (RI 1). Students were allowed and even expected to help each other, and they did it naturally, even by the third week of school, the first time I observed in the classroom. The support for these students was often academic and social in nature, either provided by Kelly or by their peers.

Multiple representations and routes

Another important component of Kelly's conception of accommodation was related to providing different ways for students to understand and gain access to content. In other words, she often provided multiple representations or routes to a singular objective (I1: 271). Kelly said that this type of accommodation takes time to put in place because you have to really get to know how your students learn and what they need. Kelly said that one way to learn these things about students is by:

offering lots of alternatives, or different centers about the content, as a way to figure out, ok, this child is leaning toward this kind of center so maybe that's what kind of learner they are and that's what they need. (I1: 311-313)

If that did not work, she said she would talk to the student about it and elicit his or her help in determining what would be a better way to learn.

One way that Kelly provided different approaches to content was to ensure that students were seeing, hearing, and experiencing content. Kelly said this was important because teaching in only one way might fail to reach some students:

If it was all one type of learning, like lecture, and you have a hands-on student, that student is going to really fall behind. They are not getting what they need or reaching their potential because you're not reaching them. (I1: 199-202)

She read or had students read word problems aloud, drew representations on the board, and had children come up to draw or draw on their own paper (O 1, 3). When giving directions, Kelly told the page number, wrote it on the board, held up a book opened to the correct page, and praised students for getting there quickly (O 2). Many directions and concepts were reinforced orally, in writing, and modeled (O 1, 2, 3, 6).

Kelly also used a lot of interactive discussions in her lessons. The majority of students who participated in these discussions were English speakers, but Kelly also made it a point to call on the more proficient ELL students to gauge their understandings as well. In addition to planning interactive discussions, she also told me that she frequently plans some examples for the students to act out because she wanted them to have a physical experience to think back on during seatwork (RI 2, 3). In a lesson on the digestive system, she introduced the lesson by letting them eat a cookie and describe what happened to the cookie, showed them pictures of a real stomach, had two ESOL students share facts from a book they brought in, and related the size of the intestines in terms of how many Abduls (ESOL) that would make lying down end to end (O 6). Students were interested, engaged, and participating, possibly due to the multiple ways in which Kelly presented the subject matter and made it relevant to her students.

She told me she considers repetition and integration of subjects a type of accommodation (RI 3) because it reinforces content in numerous ways and in different contexts for the students that do not always understand a concept the first time it is presented. She identified two non-ESOL students, Brian and Nathan, as students who benefit from this type of accommodation (RI 3), in addition to recognizing that all students learning English can benefit from this support as well (RI 1, 2). Kelly's CT said

that Kelly was one of the best interns she had had in twenty-two years, and one of her strengths was meeting the needs of individuals by presenting and reinforcing content in a variety of ways:

She could easily explain whatever the concept was, in such a way that they could understand it. And if they didn't, she didn't give up. She'd just quickly find another way to show them and explain it, and then bring in the concept in other subjects to reinforce it. . . . I think she's a natural. (CT-K)

Another way that Kelly provided different ways to access content was through her use of centers, though she admitted that she did not use them as much or as well as she wanted to. She set up a math store to reinforce her unit on money, and often had listening centers with books related to science concepts or to help students learn each other's languages (RI 4). However, when I observed, the centers were supplemental in nature, not an integral part of the curriculum, mainly used by students completing work early. Therefore, the students benefiting from this accommodation, as she referred to it, were not necessarily those students having difficulty with concepts.

Kelly mentioned that in addition to using centers more explicitly in instruction, she would have also liked to incorporate more cooperative learning activities. However, she felt constrained by a small room and a warped floor, which made it difficult to organize the room any other way except into three long rows of connected desks. She frequently expressed her displeasure in seating the students this way (I 1, 2; RI 3, 6; MC) but felt that a change was not possible for safety reasons.

The activities she designed for her unit plan supported her emphasis on creative and varied ways to present content: Students made a class book of feelings, wrote poetry or short stories, created Venn diagrams with a partner showing how they were alike and different as people, did group presentations of posters they created, created a personal

goal and took notes of their progress in achieving their goal, and they completed two teacher-made worksheets. The activities indicated that Kelly values students as individuals and wants to give them different ways to interact with and respond to the content.

A flexible process based on individual progress

Kelly's conception of accommodation also contained a component that focused on the capabilities and potential of each student because she felt it was important to gauge each student's progress without comparing him or her to other students. She said, "Obviously you have a set objective for the lesson, but you kind of have to give and take for each student because you know what they are able to do" (I2: 176-177).

Determining individual progress was therefore part of the on-going process of making accommodations. Kelly believes that it is important to remember

where you are beginning with each student. If a student is really behind another student, and they perform at a certain level, or even if one student performed at a higher level, I wouldn't compare the two. I would keep their individual goals separate. (I2: 180-182)

Kelly admitted that this is difficult to do: "I try to look at each student as an individual. I try to remember where they started with me and what progress they've made, and it's hard" (I2: 191-193).

Reflecting on student progress and how she contributed to that progress was an important part of this process. Kelly identified a few students that were not doing as well as she thought they should, and often took much of the blame for not providing them the type of accommodation they needed. For example, Kelly determined that because of her limited English proficiency, Anna (ESOL) needed more one-on-one assistance to understand how to monitor her goal during the personal health unit, and Kelly said she

would not penalize Anna's grade because of that (RI 7; U-K). In addition, once Kelly began her last ESOL course after the internship ended, she expressed regret that she did not have all the knowledge she needed during her internship: "I should have had this knowledge beforehand. I was responsible for these children and should have had the full training" (MC).

Learning about children was part of the on-going process of assessing student progress. Kelly believed that teachers are constantly learning how to make accommodations because it is not possible to experience every potential difference in children that could occur in a classroom. She said, "it takes a while to get to know your students individually, and what's normal for them, what's not normal, so you can decide what each one needs help with" (I2: 25-27). Kelly said that having different experiences with many students with different disabilities and different learning styles helps, and she felt confident in her ability to learn about her students in order to meet their needs. However, she recognized that meeting students' needs is a never-ending process: "It's important to be always learning new things and expanding. It will be constant, and I'm prepared for that. I don't think you can ever know everything, or have a strategy that'll work 100% of the time" (MC).

Another component of this flexible process related to the idea that accommodations and students' response to them should be monitored. She believes the process of providing accommodation is on-going and continuous because students will always need different strategies for different subjects and topics. She said this is because "[the students] are developing, too, and they are changing, so I think the things they need in order to succeed will change, too" (I1: 342-343).

Sometimes accommodations should be removed when a student no longer requires that level of support. For example, Nathan was struggling in spelling so he received extra study time with a volunteer tutor on Friday mornings. He was then allowed to take the spelling test, individually, with the CT, immediately upon returning to class (RI 3). Kelly told me that after about six weeks of this accommodation, Nathan did not seem to need it anymore, so she discontinued letting him take the spelling tests early. He continued getting A's on his spelling tests.

To Kelly, another part of the on-going process was allowing a child to work on something and correct it until he or she mastered the objective. She believed that artificially imposing a date, marked by a test or assignment, for students to demonstrate mastery of a skill did not accommodate students who worked at a different pace. She told me, "I'm not one to say, you got a bad grade on this, oh well. Put it away. Move on. I'd rather they learn it and meet the objectives" (RI 5). Although I did not observe any students redoing work or continuing with a previously taught skill while others moved on, Kelly told me that either she or the CT worked with students having difficulties in the morning, before school. She said that currently only Juan was a little behind in math, and most of their assistance was purely rephrasing because of Juan's limited English proficiency (RI 7). She also told me that they let students redo tests or portions of tests after receiving more instruction (RI 7).

Conception of Diverse Learners

Kelly wanted to focus on individual children as she developed instruction and created her classroom environment. She did not want to compare children, but instead, to respect the individual differences of each child. Therefore, she viewed all children as diverse learners. Despite this very broad definition of diverse learners, she really focused

on diversity as cultural difference, probably in part because her internship placement had a majority of students who came from other countries. As she talked about ways to accommodate her students, she almost always began with ways to help the students who were not native English speakers. Her ideas about diverse learners and her patterns of offering accommodations are discussed below.

Who are diverse learners?

Kelly's first response to ideas related to diversity was always rooted in cultural differences and ethnicity. She described her internship classroom as extremely diverse because, of the 23 children in the class, 14 came from other countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Korea, Japan, China, and Saudi Arabia. When she talked about these students, she maintained their cultural heritage without lumping them into the larger categories of Asian or Hispanic. Her definition of diversity did not include African American children who were born in America and were native English speakers.

When probed specifically for information about other ways to define diversity and diverse learners, Kelly added an element related to ability level. She said that six students were labeled as gifted and were pulled out for reading, writing, and language arts every day, a policy with which she disagreed because of the effect on classroom community (I 1, 2). She maintained throughout the semester that the remaining students who were neither ESOL nor gifted were all performing at similar ability levels. Rarely did Kelly mention Ally (CHARGE) as an example of a student with diverse needs, though she was arguably the student with the most severe physical and mental disabilities in any of the four classrooms involved in this study.

She also defined diverse learners as students who learn in a specific style: "visual learners, hands-on learners, learners who relate best to mathematics, just different ways

that they learn best” (I1: 191-193). She added that diverse learners may have different interests, personalities, and different families and ways of communicating in those families.

Kelly considered her internship classroom very diverse, but she described her pre-internship classroom as lacking any diversity at all (RI 6), when in fact, it was a racially diverse school, with students representing a range of SES levels, and a policy of including students with disabilities. Therefore, despite the fact that she described a range of ways to define diversity, it was apparent that her first thought was related to ethnic and linguistic diversity, which was not present in her pre-internship classroom of American-born English-speakers. She reinforced this by saying that she loved her internship school, Kinsey Elementary, because “you can just see all the diversity” (I1: 20).

Who actually receives accommodations?

Kelly planned instruction that she felt met the needs of all her students because she was responsive to their interests, knowledge levels, and skills. Kelly believed that the changes she made in her approach to curriculum and instruction would benefit all students, leaving very few that would need additional assistance, which she (or student peers) readily provided during seatwork. Therefore, since the majority of accommodations, as she defined them, were changes made for the whole group, she believed that all students received accommodations (I2).

Kelly did not have any students with disabilities in her class for instruction in the core content areas, and she even had ESOL students pulled out for language and reading instruction. Because these students did not receive math or reading content instruction from Kelly, it was unclear whether she felt the need to make more intense

accommodations for students with identified disabilities that moved beyond what she considered to be a redesigned approach to curriculum.

When asked early in the semester how she planned to accommodate for the students in her room, Kelly said language was the main hurdle she would have to plan for, as well as being sure to remain sensitive to differences in cultures and home life. At that point, she did not articulate other ways in which students could be different and have different needs. However, looking at her approach to accommodations for the students in her class, it appears that she was thinking about student differences, especially in terms of how students with different levels of English proficiency need to be taught. For example, she altered morning work for students based on their levels of English proficiency, and graded ESOL students based on her perception of what they were able to achieve independently.

However, very few of the non-ESOL students received individualized accommodations that were geared to specific deficits. Kelly perceived that all the non-ESOL students were performing at similar levels of achievement, so she saw little need to make specialized accommodations for them (RI 3, 7). Even though Kelly typically did not target specific students for individualized accommodations, she never denied assistance or accommodation if students needed help. For example, Nathan was targeted for a specific accommodation when his spelling test scores began dropping. He received extra spelling assistance with a volunteer and took spelling tests privately with the teacher.

Kelly's ideas about providing accommodations seemed to differ with respect to her ESOL and non-ESOL students. Kelly repeatedly insisted that her non-ESOL students

were nearly equal in ability, despite the fact that she included five gifted children when she said this. However, Kelly said that teachers should not assume that ESOL students were of equal ability. She said that teachers should not lump all ESOL students together in a category and provide them similar instruction because they may have different abilities masked by a common struggle with the English language (I2). However, she was in effect putting all non-ESOL students together in a category by assuming they were performing at similar levels.

To summarize, Kelly believed that it was important to design curriculum so that each student could achieve to his or her potential. She believed that each child should be considered diverse, but in practice she mainly targeted students with different levels of English proficiency for accommodations.

Summary of the Cases: Reconceptualized Approaches to Accommodation

Erica and Kelly almost always approached accommodations proactively in terms of designing curriculum to meet the needs of students. Erica thought about ways the content might prove difficult for students and used techniques to enable all students to be successful. Although she did provide specialized accommodations to students with exceptional needs, she always did so to allow them to interact with curriculum more effectively. She considered instruction and curriculum problematic rather than individual students.

Kelly also designed instruction that she felt would reach all students. She added hands-on activities and role-play because she believed that those strategies were more effective for the students in her classroom. Like Erica, Kelly thought about the strengths and weaknesses of her students when she made accommodations, and she looked to curriculum and instruction as ways to meet the needs of her students. These interns'

approach to redesigning curriculum and instruction to make it accessible to students was distinctly different from the traditional approach to accommodation illustrated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5 ACCOMMODATIONS: A TRADITIONAL APPROACH

The two cases in this chapter illustrate approaches to accommodation that were largely traditional in nature. As defined in Chapter Two, a traditional approach is marked by a commitment to providing accommodations to compensate for student deficit. Ashley and Debra both established criteria for success for their students, and they worked hard to ensure that all students reached those standards. When students did not, they used remediation techniques to catch students up.

Ashley: “Bring All Students Up”

Ashley was placed in a first grade classroom at Amblin Elementary, the school with the lowest percentage of students on free and reduced lunch of the four schools in this study. Ashley’s conception of effective instruction was guided by her overriding belief that there are standards that all students should achieve, and it is necessary to keep those standards high. She said:

In my classroom I always want to be thinking about how I can bring all students up. I don’t want to be thinking about bringing students down to other students’ levels. I don’t want those children to fall behind, but I think that the school does so much singling out of kids that aren’t keeping up for some reason or another, and they aren’t celebrating excellence enough. (I1: 481-485)

Consequently, she planned fast-paced instruction and expected a lot of her students. This overarching conception of effective instruction as high standards for all students was the foundation for her ideas about accommodating for diverse learners.

Conception of Effective Instruction

Ashley wanted to provide her students with an education like the one she received. She was in gifted classes as a student and believed that all students could benefit from the same type of “gifted education” she received. Effective instruction, to her, is challenging, student-centered, and focused on mastery.

Everyone deserves a challenging curriculum

Ashley explained that a challenging, theme-based curriculum, with projects, technology, and field trips made her education as a gifted student “fun and interesting, and opened up the whole world for me” (I1: 475). She explained:

We were learning, working together, solving local problems, learning all these skills that would be important as adults. And these aren't things that happen in the regular classroom very often, and I think I want to. . . . I think engaging the whole class in those kinds of accommodations, those kinds of enrichment activities is beneficial. (I1: 479-481, 487-488)

Ashley used the word accommodations above to refer to changes in curriculum or instruction that challenged all learners, resulting in what she referred to as a “gifted education.” She believes that all students will benefit from this type of education, as she communicates in the following comments about her goals for students: “I want them to know that they are capable people who learn what they need to learn and feel good about themselves. I want them to be lifelong learners, to become capable, competent people, and to enjoy school” (I2: 177-179). She believes that students will derive satisfaction from becoming successful learners, as she said, learning what they are supposed to learn, and she wanted to help them achieve this goal. “I want them to face a challenge that is interesting, maybe a little hard, but nothing they can't handle. Then they do it, and they feel great about themselves. I just need to scaffold them to get there” (I2: 191-193).

These ideas, translated into practice, looked like fast-paced instruction with many activities. While the level of these activities seemed to be on grade level for the most part, the sheer pace and volume did not seem to be typical for first graders. Ashley used a lot of specific praise and encouragement during the lessons, and had embedded transition times that were placed almost like release valves: When academic pressure had the potential to cause anxiety in slower-achieving students, Ashley planned calming transitions such as stretching, singing, or listening to a story to allow some students to continue working or to receive extra help while other students were engaged in a new activity (O 1, 2, 3, 4, U-A).

She also used free-play time to pull students back to finish or correct work, rather than slow down the whole class waiting for some students to finish. For example, in several lessons I observed, she introduced a skill, had students practice it, and then moved on before all students were finished (O 1, 2, 3, 4, 7). Then, during free-play time while other students had their choice of free-time activities, students who had not completed work were called up to Ashley's desk for individual assistance or simply more time to complete the assignment. She explained her reasoning for this: "I wait for most to finish [class work], but not all, because I don't want other kids to get bored. . . . It also helps some of them move quicker because they don't want to be pulled during center time because they miss out on play time" (RI 2). Therefore, it was important to Ashley to provide students with the content and skills they needed to achieve the goals she set for them, and she did this through a strong academic atmosphere in her classroom. She told me her students were used to a large amount of work each day, and they knew they would be rewarded each day with some free-play time in return (RI 1).

Student-centered instruction engages more students

Ashley believed that in addition to being challenging, effective instruction should address multiple modalities, learning styles, and senses to target each student at some point in the lesson. “I think the more senses we can engage, the more excited and willing to explore they’ll be, especially in first grade. We’re drawing, tasting, seeing, exploring, talking, touching, speaking. Trying to work all of that in” (RI 6). In a math lesson, she had students act out math problems in front of the class: “I thought it was getting a little stale. I wanted them to have that chance to do more active stuff, and maybe sometime I’ll have them do flashcard games or something else [to] incorporate other learning styles or preferences” (RI 2).

Ashley’s conviction to address different learning styles was rooted in her belief that there was a paradigm of schooling that left some students behind. She told me that the ways in which schools operate suited some students’ learning styles better than others. As a result, some learners were at a disadvantage because traditional schools were not designed to help them in the ways they learned best. She said, “There’s a paradigm of schooling, and some people fit easily within that and others don’t. And sometimes we act like everyone should always learn the same way . . . but why?” (I1: 352-354). She described this paradigm of schooling as authoritarian and teacher directed: “[The teacher] is right. Sit at your desk unnaturally still. And drink and go to the bathroom when I say. And watch the teacher. And only listen, not do” (I1: 355-357). To her, this type of environment did not promote authentic learning.

She said that some teachers still teach within the traditional paradigm: “It’s an old style, but I think you shouldn’t teach that way. Or really, I shouldn’t, and couldn’t, without feeling like I was cheating the students. I think that some people do” (I2: 99-

100). To break out of this traditional paradigm, it was important to design curriculum and adjust pre-packaged and mandated curriculum to take students' interests, abilities, and prior knowledge into consideration (U-A).

Therefore, combining these first two components of effective instruction, Ashley wanted to provide challenging instruction that integrated a variety of learning styles. She stated that with her assistance and careful planning for diverse learning styles, all students could achieve the goals she set for them. This approach supported her belief in the effectiveness of teaching for mastery, the next component.

Teaching for mastery helps students truly understand

Ashley's instructional style was largely direct instruction, with much teacher modeling and student involvement. She also kept close tabs on student progress toward the lesson objective because she wanted all students to master the objective. "I think the purpose of teaching is not to cover material but for kids to truly understand. So I'd like to be able to teach the math, then be able to pull kids back to work on it until they understand" (RI 6). Ashley wanted every student to thoroughly understand the content and skills she taught, and she believed that all the students in her internship classroom were capable of doing so. She said that it is a mistake to have low expectations for some students: "Some teachers make decisions every day about things that students can and cannot do, and sometimes those assumptions may or may not be true. They are in effect, prejudices" (I2: 101-103).

Throughout her internship, Ashley planned lessons packed with activities, and deftly moved students through the completion of those activities with a little bit of help to catch them up, or bring them up to the standard. She and her CT kept close tabs on each student's progress on in-class activities through the use of a work folder that was checked

several times a day. When mistakes were found, the student was called back immediately, usually during the embedded transition times or free-play time, for reteaching or redirecting (PW 2). In this way, each assignment was taught to mastery because students were given individual attention until they corrected mistakes.

When students did not achieve what she believed they should, Ashley said that it was because they were either lazy, in a hurry, or just chose not to take advantage of the multiple chances she afforded them (O 4; RI 5; U-A; I2). To Ashley, there were implications for not helping students experience success: “I feel like if they aren’t capable of doing things, influencing the world when they grow up, they grow up to be careless and selfish. I don’t think they feel powerful” (I2: 196-198).

Teaching for mastery is a concept that Ashley learned from her seminar instructor halfway through the internship semester, and she quickly incorporated the term into her ideas about effective instruction. It was a technique she had already been using with students but now had a name for what she was doing. She designed her Rainforest unit with mastery assessments and said it was important to have students work until they achieved the established requirements (U-A).

Ashley’s view of effective instruction in action

A classroom example that captured Ashley’s ideas about instruction occurred during observation three, in early October (O 3). This observation took place during the 90-minute language arts block. During that time, Ashley led students in completing ten different activities including a comprehension test, a concept map, reading decodable books, a listening activity, daily oral language, a spelling activity, silent reading, and writing a story. During the lesson, she had students working at their desks, moving to the

floor for instruction, returning to their desks, and then selecting locations for silent reading of leveled books (Accelerated Reader books for the advanced students).

This lesson was based on several activities from the county-adopted reading series, but Ashley presented them in a way that she believed was able to sustain student interest and engagement. The atmosphere in the classroom during this 90-minute block was warm and encouraging, as well as productive and academic. Ashley told me that she modeled much of her style after her CT, who addressed students as “friends” and was welcoming and warm in every interaction with students. The CT told me that she had previously taught in a school for at-risk and highly mobile students, and used a lot of techniques to build community and establish routines to increase student participation and attention (CT-A). Ashley was able to step right in with these routines, many of which were present in this literacy block observation: the release-valve-like transitions to allow students time to finish work and yet keep faster students busy and engaged; lessons broken up into small five- or ten-minute chunks to better match the attention span of first-graders; a community of care and concern evidenced by extensive specific praise and encouragement; a fast-paced and intense work load to keep students too busy to get bored and disruptive; and same-day feedback and reteaching to ensure that students mastered lesson objectives.

Even though these were structures that the CT put into place because she believed in their effectiveness, Ashley was able to see the merit of each of these techniques and agreed that this was the best way to structure instruction. Therefore, even though the CT had a great amount of influence on the way in which Ashley taught this literacy block, Ashley’s own ideas about instruction guided both how she talked about and how she

implemented accommodations for diverse learners, both during her lessons and in our numerous interviews.

Conception of Accommodation

Because Ashley believed that instruction should be designed to bring all students up to high standards, her ideas about accommodation centered on the following ideas: (a) adapting for diverse learning styles; (b) adapting for different ability levels through techniques for the whole class as well as low and high achievers; and (c) documenting accommodations for low achievers.

Adapting for diverse learning styles

As mentioned previously, Ashley talked about how some students were left behind because of the traditional paradigm of schooling. To help these kinds of learners that do not fit in well, she said, “The first thing you have to do is know your students” (I1: 362). She believed it was important to vary her instructional style to engage more students:

I try to mix it up, not breaking a routine that is comfortable, but doing stuff with the white boards, so they can use those and be actively participating, or do it on the overhead, sometimes I do things orally, sometimes we sit on the floor, sometimes we stand up. So trying to change things up that way and trying to bring in different modalities of learning to try to at least hook some of them that way. (I1: 373-377)

In six different reflective interviews, she described accommodations she made as adding movement, visuals such as venn diagrams or story maps, teacher-made models, or song to a lesson in order to engage students with different learning styles (RI 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). She also said that using technology (RI 7) and exposing them to several different visual and print forms of content (RI 5, 6, U-A) were motivating and gave students more experience with and exposure to the ideas she was presenting.

Along with mentioning things she did for the whole class to engage students, Ashley did identify specific students as needing accommodations to address learning

style. Alan (LD) had a hard time staying on task, so Ashley said she called on him more frequently and involved him verbally (RI 1, 2, 3). Jay (gifted) did not like to draw, so she said that she often just pushed him to add details in his writing, or let him write the names of objects in a picture, instead of drawing them (RI 3, 5).

She also believed in allowing students to express themselves through writing and art (RI 3). During a writing lesson, she allowed Max, a student whose grandmother recently passed away, to write about her instead of writing about the assigned subject (O 3). During this same lesson, Ashley also pulled Soojung (recent ESOL graduate) to work at the back table with her to provide her a more quiet and supportive setting to encourage her to write more quickly (RI 3).

In addition to considering student interests and learning styles as a type of accommodation, Ashley also allowed students to have water bottles at their desk and used techniques from brain research as accommodations that were part of what she called the new paradigm of schooling. She incorporated Brain Gym (mental and physical stretching), memory-building activities, and reminders to students to drink water to stay hydrated (O 1, 2, 3) and told me these were things she did to help all children learn better. She referred to them as “pro-active accommodations” (I2).

Although Ashley was satisfied with her ability to meet the needs of students with diverse learning styles, she wished she could have done more. Her CT was supportive, and Ashley told me the barriers were only within herself. As an intern she was still searching for an appropriate balance between trying to move students through large amounts of work and figuring out management issues associated with things such as

creative role play and manipulatives (RI 3) that help students with different learning styles.

Adapting for different achievement levels

“I just don’t believe there’s this first-grade box that you fit all kids into” (I2: 317). She told me that she worries about the children that do not fit into the rigid paradigm of traditional schooling, as described previously. She believes that some students give up because “no one has adjusted the curriculum so that they can have some success . . . and this constant failure results in learned helplessness” (I1: 444-445). Although she told me that she still struggles with what these adjustments actually look like in the classroom (I1), she did attend to the needs of both high and low achievers in her classroom, and made some accommodations for students at both ends of the achievement spectrum. She made accommodations for the whole class, and for low and high achievers, alike.

Whole class techniques. There were some techniques that Ashley put into place on a whole-class scale that allowed her to tailor instruction to different achievement levels. One way she did this was by grouping students for reading instruction. Students were selected for each group based on reading levels, and those in the highest group included the five students labeled as gifted, as well as two that were not labeled. Although this structure was put into place by the CT (CT-A), Ashley agreed with designing reading instruction this way because it allowed students to work at their own levels while still providing students equal access to the main content. Ashley said these groups allowed her to do things with the lower group that the higher group did not necessarily need, like reviewing key vocabulary words and repeated reading of the story (RI 1). In addition, it allowed her to extend the learning of students in the higher group. These students were required to quickly read over the story, and then asked to read more difficult books on

similar topics (RI 1) or prompted to act as instructor, guiding the group through comprehension questions of their own design (RI 2).

She also grouped students for projects with achievement level in mind. In one cooperative group lesson, she told me she put high and middle achievers together, and middle and low together so that there was not a big difference in achievement, which she said could be intimidating to students (RI 6).

In addition to small group instruction aimed at specific achievement level, she also put a lot of thought into seating and grouping her students during whole class activities (RI 1, U-A) because she wanted to “[balance] the kids around the room with the needs they have” (RI 1). She placed: a buddy near Alan (LD) to explain an expert’s thought process (RI 5); recently graduated ESOL students or other struggling students in the front row so she could assist them (I1, RI 5); a shy girl with language difficulties close to strong girl role models (RI 6, U-A); students with personality conflicts in different groups or areas (RI 1, 4, 6); and independent students with little academic difficulty in the back because they needed little assistance (RI 1). She considered this attention to placement as a form of accommodation because she was addressing individual student need.

She also tailored her lesson to individual achievement levels during whole class instruction by calling on certain students to answer questions or read passages at their own levels (O 1, 2, 3). She said, “I guess it is technically an accommodation because I’m doing something to keep that kid on task and to make sure he’s getting it” (I2: 83-84). She did this for high and low achievers alike, calling on Jay (gifted) for difficult material because she knew he would appreciate the challenge (RI 1, 2), and calling on Alan (LD) and Art to read or respond to simpler material, more in line with their levels (RI 1, 3).

In writing instruction, this translated to having different expectations for students based on their strengths and weaknesses (O 3, RI 2). “For some students, we’re happy if they get one sentence down, and others are expected to write five. Some of them we want . . . to extend their writing with a picture with lots of details, and others take the whole time to write three sentences, and that’s fine” (RI 2). During another observation I noticed that she sent Mark back to add details to a drawing, but told Jay (gifted) to add details to his story (O 3). She told me that Mark’s goal for the day was to have spaces between words, which he had accomplished when she checked his work, so she allowed him to work on his picture. Jay, on the other hand, was reading at a third grade level and was capable of writing with more detail (RI 3).

Part of the process of meeting the needs of students at all levels involved keeping track of student progress throughout each day and each lesson. As previously mentioned, students kept all daily work in work folders that were checked several times a day, and students were called up to correct or complete each assignment as needed (O 1, RI 2, U-A). Although this was a structure put in place by the CT (CT-A), Ashley agreed with it in principle because “we’re trying to find out if they have mastery of the skill, not mastery of following directions or reading the instructions” (RI 1). Another technique she used often was having students write answers on dry erase boards because “it’s a good way to see what individual children are thinking, and helps me figure out where they are” (RI 1).

Ashley knew that trying to keep track of students at all levels was difficult to do, and she worried about how to juggle the needs of all students at one time (I1, RI 4). The accommodation she used and discussed most frequently was increasing the amount of one-on-one assistance students received. “I think that when possible, that everyone can

benefit from one-on-one instruction, and I do that as much as I can” (I1: 372-373). She did this by continuing to involve her CT in classroom instruction and routines throughout her internship, despite her desire to take over completely (I1). She talked about the internal struggle this created, but she chose to involve her CT because “we owe it to the class to have as much individualized attention and instruction as possible” (RI 3). In this way, she views co-teaching as an accommodation that all students, high and low, deserve. Using her CT and parent volunteers (O 3) helped her meet the needs of students working at different levels.

Techniques for low-achievers. Ashley was aware that her instructional style left some students behind initially. She helped the ones who struggled by giving them extra help, reteaching them, or allowing them to fix mistakes. Alan was a student that frequently fell behind during a lesson (O 1, 3). She recognized this and told me she spent more time with him during independent practice (RI 1, 3, U-A) or pulled him back during center time or free time to finish work (RI 6). Since she taught most lessons by teaching for mastery, she considered allowing some students multiple chances to complete or correct their work to be an accommodation for them (RI 4, U-A).

There were very few instances where Ashley provided more specific accommodations for low achievers. In one lesson, she folded Alan’s and Daehwan’s papers back so they could concentrate on a smaller portion of the assignment at a time (RI 5), but for the most part, the only accommodation for lower achievers was that they were given more one-on-one assistance or more opportunities to correct or complete work to attain the lesson objective (U-A).

In one lesson, Alan (LD) was having difficulty writing sentences about how to save the rainforest, despite her explanation and modeling of how to do so. She came by his desk several times to help him get started and spell words (O 7), but she wanted him to write each word on his own, just like the other students (RI 7). He ended up with only two words written on his paper, and she said she would pull him back later to work on it more. Alan was not the only student having difficulty with this assignment. Ashley was surprised, and she said that next time she would structure her discussion with them better and model her expectations more specifically. She believed that all students could write three sentences about what to do to save the rainforest and was unwilling to change the requirement for students who were slower or had difficulty writing.

Techniques for high achievers. As mentioned previously, one of the ways she challenged students whom she believed moved through the content easily was that she called on them to answer more difficult questions. She also altered their assignments slightly to give them more freedom and flexibility in reading groups and let them act more like experts as they controlled their own learning. She said that she gives them more difficult reading material, “Just taking the curriculum a step further for them” (I1: 503).

This step further was encouraged but not expected, and did not affect grading or assessments:

Pushing enrichment students is in the form of cross-curricular extensions. If you can get this extra work done, great, but if you can't get it done, that's ok, too. . . . I won't be holding them to a higher standard, for example holding a third grade student to a fifth grade standard just because he's reading on a fifth grade level. (RI6)

To make time for them to extend their learning beyond the lesson objectives, she said she eliminated some of the basic skills practice if they showed mastery of the skill. For example, halfway through the semester she eliminated the use of decodable books for the

high reading group because she found they were too easy for those students (RI 5).

However, she was careful not to drop too much for the high group because of her belief that there are some skills these students need even when they appear to excel:

However, I am very cautious because I think that all the kids need the word work and the phonemic analysis because a lot of these kids are just sight word reading and are just memorizing words really quick, and I want them to have the decoding skills, too. So I don't want to take them out of that. (I1: 496-499)

Many times the accommodations that she planned for the higher achieving students were really offered to all students. For example, she presented all students with a word bank dictionary and told them "Some of you have been wanting to spell words correctly. You can use this to help you do that" (O 1). She told me she was targeting the higher reading group, but thought it was a good accommodation for everyone. A few weeks later I observed Jay (gifted) getting frustrated because he couldn't find the word 'microwave' listed in this dictionary. When I asked Ashley about this, she told me:

Jay's problem with writing is that he doesn't want to spell words wrong so his stories are generally not very detailed. I should watch him more closely. You know, a lot of kids, especially really bright ones, hate making mistakes. [I know] I was. I should have another conversation with him about that. (RI 3)

She was aware of the things that Jay struggled with, even though he was a strong student, and made a concerted effort to provide things like the dictionary as a pro-active accommodation to meet his needs as well as the needs of other high achieving students.

Documenting alteration of standards

Ashley was willing to make the types of accommodations described above, and she believed they were minimally disruptive and therefore, could be implemented on an as needed basis by classroom teachers (I2). However, she also believed there was a type of accommodation that was more intense and more disruptive to the student and the class, and this type of accommodation should be discussed and approved prior to

implementation because of its severity and its ramifications for the child (I2). This type of accommodation includes practices such as reducing the amount or altering the level of class work, making any type of testing accommodation, or allowing students more than one chance to correct mistakes on assignments. Part of this belief had to do with Ashley's ideas about fairness: she believes that "it's not fair for one kid to do less work" (RI 6). She believes that all students should work toward the same objective, and work at it until they get it, but she also realizes that some students with identified disabilities will never get there (RI 6). She told me she struggles with this idea and has decided, for now, that the best solution is to provide those students with what she calls the more "disruptive" accommodations, as long as an IEP team or the parents know what is being done and everything is well documented (RI 6).

Ashley did not have an opportunity to try out these ideas about documenting more disruptive accommodations because she felt that the students in her internship classroom were all performing close to second-grade level. She believed that even Alan, who had an identified learning disability, was capable of completing second grade work without the more disruptive accommodations. Since she was unable to try out these ideas in practice, Ashley told me this may not end up to be the best solution, and she still struggles with how she will meet the needs of students with more severe disabilities that are likely to be included in her classroom some day.

Her thoughts about inclusion lend support to her beliefs about accommodations: Children can be included as long as they are capable of keeping up with the others and achieving the same standards (I2). In other words, students in a classroom should all have the same goal, and any student capable of achieving that goal is welcome to stay in her

classroom. She is willing to help them achieve this goal, but believes that any help she gives them should be documented. If students are not capable of achieving these goals, even with her help, they should be pulled out because then specialists would be available to meet their more specific needs. The IEP or school-based Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) was also an important source of documentation for providing accommodations to included ESE students:

Certainly I will shorten assignments if there are children that have an IEP that say I need to . . . then at least I can say that I'm giving him more time because a group of people got together and decided that this was what this child needed. (RI 6)

However, Ashley told me that in her pre-internship placement, her CT teacher shortened the spelling list for a student with learning disabilities, and Ashley had strong reservations about the impact of this decision, both for the student and his peers (RI 6). She felt that the shortened list was still above the student's ability level, and the teacher offered the accommodation grudgingly, both of which seemed to frustrate the student and make him feel ostracized. In addition, Ashley felt that giving him a shortened list was not fair to the students who continued to work on twenty words a week without accommodations. She told me a better solution would be to give him a whole new list on his level, and then to note on the report card that he was working below grade level in spelling (MC 164). She liked this idea "because then the information is there, and [the parents] know, and it qualifies his grade. . . . If there are no qualifiers in any of these grades, there's no standard. I think that's a better way to standardize it" (MC 168-171).

Ashley was very concerned about ensuring that accommodations involving the alteration of standards were documented. She said that as a parent, she would want to know if her child's A was different from another child's A, and whether it took one or many attempts at an assignment to get it right (I2). She thought this documentation

helped explain to parents exactly what a child was and was not capable of doing, and she liked the idea of including documentation on report cards and portfolio entries:

It's good for portfolios, too, because you'd be able to write 'final grade on third attempt' at the top, and that would be a better measurement so when I talk to the parent, I can say, 'Well, you know, it takes him a couple of times before he gets it. I have to work with him extra and that's why he got this grade on the report card'. (MC 216-219)

Ashley's concerns about documentation were directed at students who were performing below what she considered a grade-level standard, partially because those accommodations did not fit within her definition of fairness and equality. When I asked her if it was necessary to document accommodations made for high achievers when she pushed them beyond the standard, she recognized the inconsistency of her argument but remained committed to the idea that only those accommodations for low achievers need to be documented because it affected their grades (RI 6).

Ashley was very concerned with having evidence and documentation to back up her assessment of low-achieving students and her use of any accommodation that challenged her ideas of fairness for students. She took these intense accommodations very seriously and told me, "It's not something you play around with" (RI 6).

Conception of Diverse Learners

Ashley thinks about diverse learners primarily in terms of individual approaches to learning. She believes that all learners can achieve high standards except those students with identified cognitive disabilities. She designs instruction to appeal to different learning styles, and then provides accommodations to anyone who cannot keep up with regular classroom instruction.

Who are diverse learners?

Ashley believes that all learners are diverse because of the different ways that people approach learning. She told me:

Everyone learns differently. I think we are all diverse learners. I certainly believe in Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences and different modalities that we learn best through . . . and we all have different experiences and different ways to hook up to those experiences. (I1: 340-343)

At the end of the semester, she expanded this a bit more: "Everyone accesses information differently, memorizes it differently. We all have different prior knowledge and innate learning styles. That makes us all different" (I2: 71-73).

In addition, she believes there are some learners with additional challenges. Ashley said some students may have "chemical imbalances, or have something else going on in their brain that makes it difficult for them to learn the same way other kids do" (I1: 346-347). When she talked about students with difficulties, she mentioned the nature of the problem, rather than focusing on a label. In fact, she told me, "All that labeling stuff is really out of control. It's like they think if you label it, you've fixed it. I don't think so! [Tell me] what do I do now?" (I1: 425-426).

Though she seems open to the idea of having students with mild disabilities included in her classroom one day, she does not feel prepared to teach students with more severe disabilities. She did not have experience with them during her teacher education program, and said "I don't know what I'd do if I got a student with Down Syndrome or who was two standard deviations below the norm" (I1: 414). She told me she overheard a fellow student talking about a student with autism who was included in her placement. She agreed with her peer's statement, "What is he doing there if he can't do anything?" (I2: 415). As stated previously, she believes that diverse learners can be included in a

general education classroom only if they are able to attain the same objectives and standards as the other children.

Who actually receives accommodations?

Ashley believes that every child is entitled to accommodations, but that laws are in place to ensure that students with disabilities receive them (I1: 584-587). Even though very few students in her classroom had identified disabilities, Ashley did identify students with different ability levels and different learning styles, and she made accommodations for all the students she identified as needing special assistance. She targeted both high and low achievers, and students with special talents and special challenges.

She provided the less disruptive accommodations, as she defined them, to students both with and without formal special education goals, and she thought about the students mainly in terms of ability level when she targeted them for assistance or for enrichment. There were at least six students without ESE goals to whom she mentioned giving some form of assistance, two of whom had recently graduated from the ESOL program. She also provided additional projects and assignments to higher achievers in order to keep them challenged, and she considered this an accommodation for them. She did not limit her enrichment accommodations to those students in the gifted program. In fact, she frequently mentioned that she did not want to bore Dimple and Britt, two high-achieving girls, and often targeted them as buddies or helpers (I1).

However, the more disruptive accommodations, as she defined them, were not used as frequently because of her belief that these had serious consequences for the student receiving them, as mentioned previously. Both Ashley and her CT reported that this

particular group of students was exceptionally high, and very few struggled with grade-level material (A-I2; CT-A).

The student that Ashley helped most frequently was Alan (LD), the only child identified with a learning disability. Ashley told me that she always kept close tabs on his progress, even in subjects for which he did not have IEP goals. She felt that Alan was capable of grade-level work as long as she gave him more time, assistance, or the opportunity to correct mistakes. Therefore, she did not need to alter standards for him. However, a new policy in the school required that teachers indicate whether students were performing above, on, or below grade-level. After discussion, Ashley and her CT decided to mark that Alan was working below grade-level to ensure that his next teacher would continue to accommodate for him. In other words, even though Alan only received what Ashley described as less disruptive accommodations, she felt documenting the assistance he received on the report card protected Alan in the future.

Alan's parents were aware that he was receiving a lot of extra help in every subject (MC), and Ashley realized that this extra help was affecting Alan. Ashley recognized that her style of instruction frequently left Alan behind, and she expressed concern that he was always being pulled from free-play to redo or finish work:

I felt bad for the little guy. [Being pulled] made him work more slowly, too, because he was watching the other kids play. That was a bad situation, but he needed to do his work, you know. He just needed to do it. (I2: 147-149)

She wanted him to achieve, and her care for him seemed genuine. She did not consider pulling him from playtime as punishment. She said, "It's all about these kids learning" (RI 6). Her academic focus and her dedication to "bring all students up" were the foundation for her beliefs that somehow she would find a way for diverse learners to be successful and learn what they had to learn.

Debra: “More Support . . . Same Work”

Debra was placed in a second grade classroom. Of the four schools in the study, Denton Elementary had the highest percentage of students on free and reduced lunch. Debra viewed accommodation as doing whatever was possible to help students achieve. In practice this translated into more attention and assistance from the teacher, whose job it was to continuously evaluate progress in order to move students toward grade-level standards of achievement. She explained:

They all get the same work. . . . The only accommodations that are really made are that some kids get more support than others, and we watch for certain kids more than others, but they do the same work, get graded the same, same everything. (I2: 455-457)

However, within this emphasis on ensuring same-ness, Debra was able to focus on and accommodate for differences within her students. She planned lessons that were teacher-directed, and she incorporated formative assessments to monitor the progress of students in order to provide individual help to them immediately and prepare them for summative assessments.

Understanding how Debra conceptualized accommodations and how that was related to her ideas about effective instruction was difficult for several reasons. In general it was sometimes difficult to help these novices clarify the reasons behind their decision-making, especially when those reasons were tied to beliefs that had not yet been well-rooted in practice. However, what made it particularly difficult in Debra’s case was that she was placed in a setting she perceived as restrictive, and she found herself complying with real or imagined constraints imposed by her cooperating teacher, her school, her university supervisor and instructors, and possibly her participation in my study as well.

Consequently, it was difficult to separate Debra's conceptions from those of the people by whom she felt influenced.

With the other three cases, I was able to begin with a framework presenting conceptions about effective instruction because those conceptions were helpful in explaining ideas about accommodation. This framework is still pertinent for Debra. However, it is first necessary to explain Debra's concern with compliance because that aspect of her perceived role as teacher colors her conceptions about instruction and accommodation. For Debra, part of the role of being a teacher includes doing what is expected of you. Debra's underlying concern with doing what was expected of her in the classroom, at her school, as an intern, and as an education student had an impact on how she implemented instruction and therefore, how she accommodated for diverse learners.

Through repeated examination and discussion of the ways in which Debra agreed and disagreed with the people with whom she worked, I was able to tease out her beliefs and conceptions. The member check interview was also invaluable in Debra's case as a way for me to verify my interpretation of her beliefs and give her another chance to clarify her own conceptions.

Through her concern with compliance, Debra communicated a respect for written curriculum, or curriculum designed by veteran teachers. While she did not always agree with the way a lesson was structured or delivered, she did think enough of the lesson to deliver it to students and have her supervisor observe her using these methods with minimal alteration.

Debra told me that the whole second-grade team planned curriculum together and found it important to keep pace with one another, lesson by lesson, sharing materials

because resources were limited (RI 2). She was anxious about planning her unit, knowing that all the teachers would be using her lesson plans despite the fact that she was not familiar with their students or their teaching styles (I1). Although she found this grade-level collaboration valuable, she lamented that she had tried to contribute only to have ideas rejected by the other teachers. Her lack of success added to the anxiety of planning her unit (RI 2, 5).

In the classroom, Debra felt pressured to teach in a style similar to her CT's, and she commented to me that it was one of the reasons why her lessons did not always go well (RI 2). Often when she attempted changes, her CT would reteach the lesson the next day (RI 2) or interrupt to redirect the lesson (O 5, 7). However, Debra thought her CT was an effective teacher and that the students learned a lot from her (RI 5, MC). She commented that it was difficult for her to teach in that style, and she wished she could have "done something totally different that I was comfortable with to start with and that would have been better" (RI 2). Debra told me she felt bad when people observed her because they were not seeing the real Debra. Instead, she said they were seeing "me, acting like [Mrs. Dietrich]" (MC 334). Despite the pressure it caused, Debra felt compelled to continue teaching in a style with which she was uncomfortable, a level of acceptance of this form of instruction.

Although Debra was able to articulate her discomfort with teaching in this style – "I feel bad that you didn't really get to see how I'd do things" (I2: 622) – she was not able to articulate exactly how she would do things differently. Debra said she would do more community building (through Morning Meeting) and cooperative learning and delve more deeply into subjects rather than rush through as she believed she had to (RI

4). However, when pressed for details of how she would design these changes and why they would help, she usually talked about why the current structure of the day and time constraints made them impossible (RI 5, 7).

Debra also felt restricted by structures within the school. She said it was common practice for the curriculum resource teacher and the principal to collect and review every reading and math test to ensure that students were working on the proper grade-level material. Debra was pleased that the administrators knew how each individual student was performing, but she realized that it took away some of her options for testing accommodations (RI 5; I2). She believed that the principal would not allow students to retake a test or receive a modified test because she “was way too into testing, prompts, standards, and accountability” (RI 5). She told me, “I don’t really know of any schools that let [teachers] do that” (MC 193), particularly at Denton Elementary where “I don’t think that would fly at all” (MC 200). In support of this perspective, the CT indicated that she had very little power in the school to alter behavior plans (RI 3) or to change the number of spelling words for individual students (CT-D), indicating that there was a belief on the CT’s part that some things were beyond her control. Clearly, Debra felt that formal assessments were beyond her control. Despite the lack of empowerment on both Debra’s and the CT’s part, both of them spoke highly of the instruction they planned and delivered. They were both very satisfied with student progress and felt student needs were being met (CT-D; I2), again, suggesting a level of acceptance of the status quo.

In addition to the constraints of the school and her CT, Debra also felt influenced by her university instructor and his requirements for her unit plan. She told me she designed the unit the way she thought he wanted her to (MC), in addition to the perceived

constraints put on her by the grade-level team and her CT (RI 5). In explaining her unit to me, she said, “I have to defend a project that I wouldn’t really use myself. I had to do it that way because they told me to. So I did. It was frustrating” (MC 316-317). However, despite her acknowledgement that her unit was an exercise in compliance, she repeatedly told me that students got a lot out of the unit, learned a lot, and enjoyed it (RI 6, 7; I2; MC).

Therefore, despite the numerous ways in which Debra felt constrained during this placement, she consistently designed and implemented instruction that adhered to the expectations of others. Her confidence in and satisfaction with student outcomes when taught by these methods indicate Debra’s acceptance of the practices as at least somewhat effective.

Conception of Effective Instruction

Debra’s concern for compliance was an important influence on the ways in which she conceived of instruction and, therefore, accommodations. Debra’s view of instruction included components related to a desire for teacher control of behavior and instruction, and formative evaluation of student progress.

Teacher control of behavior and instruction

Debra’s emphasis on teacher control was not evidenced by an authoritative style of teaching and interacting with students, but was present none-the-less. Debra was a soft-spoken, mild-mannered teacher who designed lessons that relied heavily on teacher-led direct instruction and strict control of behavior. She also valued behavioral and instructional routines as a means of keeping students on task and focused on learning. She believed that controlling behavior and instruction in these three ways allowed students to achieve the content goals she had for them.

Teacher-led instruction. Debra conducted lessons that were largely teacher-led and controlled. She planned lessons almost exclusively from the teacher's manuals, selecting those activities that she found most useful. She told me that planning consisted of writing the next page of the textbook into the planbook and selecting the worksheets that her CT wanted her to use (I1; RI 2). While this was true for math, reading, and language arts, the philosophy was quite different for science and social studies, where no textbook was used and the units were planned by the grade level teachers (not Debra) to include hands-on activities and journal responses. In those two subjects, Debra reported that she sometimes knew a day ahead of time what lesson she was required to teach (RI 5).

Math and reading instruction was largely direct instruction, with modeling and examples during whole-group discussion, guided practice that was either small- or whole-group, and independent seatwork. Debra told me it was important to model examples in the same format as the independent practice, which she ensured by creating practice charts for the class prior to seatwork (RI 3). Students received an extensive amount of feedback on their work the same day that it was assigned. The classroom seemed to run like a well-oiled machine, and Debra easily slipped into the role of teacher, taking over completely the first two times I observed her because her teacher was absent (O1, 2).

In addition to the instructional style, teacher control of instruction was also evidenced by limiting student choice and keeping students busy during the majority of the day. In the seven times I observed, there was only one occasion when two students completed work early. These students were subsequently directed by the CT to the center

and free-time activity they could use (O 4). In every other lesson, students were occupied for every minute of instruction, either in teacher-led activities or seatwork.

Seatwork was, in fact, carefully planned as a way to control behavior. The CT told me that she chooses easier work at the independent level so that she is freed up to work with small groups or individuals without interruption (CT-D). Debra referred to this as busywork (I2), and sometimes altered the assignment to take away some of the redundant and more mundane tasks (O1, 4). However, she continued to plan direct instruction lessons that kept students occupied with a lot of independent seatwork over the course of the semester.

Debra did attempt to incorporate cooperative learning into two lessons I observed, but the structure was still very teacher-directed. Students were taught a concept using a direct instruction approach, with extensive modeling and guided practice led by the teacher, with some group work to reinforce the concept (O 2). No formal assessment occurred during these lessons, which Debra described as exploratory or introductory in nature (RI 2). Therefore, the cooperative learning activities she designed fit within her beliefs about teacher control during instruction.

Strict behavior control. To Debra, part of effective instruction was ensuring that students were “sitting still and listening so they would know what was going on” (I1: 143-144). Although Debra described her style of interaction as less direct and “abrasive” (RI 1) than her CT’s style, Debra still insisted on a classroom that was orderly and respectful. Behavior was controlled through strict adherence to the school-wide behavior plan – a chart with a pocket for each student displaying several colored cards that showed behavior status ranging from green for great behavior, to red for unacceptable behavior.

After an initial adjustment period, Debra began using the chart regularly and noted that it helped control behavior (RI 3).

Behavior was also controlled through repeated reminders to sit “eyes, hands, feet” facing front, to pay attention to the board, and to keep talk on task (RI 1, 4, 6, 7). During several reflective interviews, when I asked Debra what concerns she had, she focused on behaviors that needed to be kept under control. In addition, when I asked what accommodations she made in the lesson, she frequently mentioned ways in which she seated students or directed their attention to the lesson (RI 1, 4, 7). To Debra, these were effective accommodations because she believed that many students in the class had focus or attention difficulties, but were performing at a level similar to other students in the classroom (RI 5, 7).

She also did not allow students to sit in class without participating. She talked about one boy who would shut down when he was upset. “We’ve had to send him out of the room twice because he just wasn’t doing anything. He wasn’t acting out, but he just wouldn’t work. We couldn’t just let him sit there and not do anything” (I1: 208-210).

Use of routines. Establishing routines was not something Debra put into place, but it was a practice she supported and a goal she set for herself to accomplish during her internship. After her first observation in early September when she was discussing how well students did that day, she said, “One thing that helps is the routines that we have in place. [Students] know what to expect and they know what to do for the most part. Now they can do it” (RI 1). She told me that many of her students had difficulty focusing, and these routines were not only helpful, but necessary in helping them focus on learning.

Several instructional and behavioral routines were firmly in place by the third week of class when I observed. For example, there were procedures for how to come into class and how to sit “correctly” on the rug, and these procedures were accompanied by cues and verbal prompts. Instruction followed a very predictable format, which was evident because students needed very little direction during each subject, especially in math and reading. Students moved into the appropriate seating location for the lesson and needed very little direction for each scheduled activity. Instruction seemed predictable and comfortable for the students.

Even though Debra saw the benefit of putting routines in place, she questioned her CT’s inflexible enforcement of routines, particularly her practice of disciplining students for not completing seatwork. However, when she noticed the effect it had on the students, she changed her mind. She told me, “At first I was thinking it was too harsh, but now they are getting all their work done, so it’s really working out well” (I1: 139-140). She also kept the established routines in place because she said these students relied on routines and “freaked out if there are too many changes” (RI 5).

Formative evaluation to monitor progress

Debra believed it was very important to monitor student performance daily. Some type of formative evaluation was built into many of the lessons I observed. In reading, Debra checked workbook pages immediately during class and asked students to correct mistakes (O1, 4, 7). In math, workbook pages were checked informally while Debra circulated, and then formally each day before children went home. Students were pulled up to the teacher’s desk during writing instruction at the end of the day to fix mistakes on the workbook pages, receiving extra instruction to correct misconceptions when necessary (O 3). This was important to Debra: “I like that we did that [the same day], not

the next day or a week later. Then it tends to get too far removed, and if they didn't get that skill, they haven't gotten anything since sometimes" (MC 184-186).

The CT was clearly involved in this formative evaluation process each day as the primary person to remediate students (O 3, 6, 7). She told me she believes it is an effective procedure "for younger students who tend to forget things quickly" (CT-D). However, Debra did say that this is her own philosophy as well, and not just the CT's (MC).

One important aspect of this formative evaluation was that it was used to remediate but not as part of a student's grade. In other words, the evaluations that counted were the formal, summative evaluations such as tests and projects. The small steps leading up to these more formal assessments were non-graded. Debra told me that at some point, every student had been called up to make corrections, and that students would be assisted until they understood the concept. These smaller formative assessments helped her prepare students for the more formal, summative assessments, like post-tests. Debra told students post-tests are useful because "then we'll know we taught you something in the end when you get them right" (RI 2). Debra clearly valued formal assessments as measures of student progress but saw frequent, informal evaluation as a means to get students ready for the more formal tests (RI 5). She found this to be an effective way to ensure that students were learning the concepts she taught. The bottom line, for Debra, is that all students are eventually held up to a standard, but non-graded, formative assessments are effective ways to determine the level of support each student needs to achieve the standard.

Debra's view of effective instruction in action

A reading lesson I observed in early October was an example of a typical lesson in Debra's classroom (O4). All of Denton Elementary was divided into ability groups for reading, and Debra's reading group was comprised of nine students, grades two through four, reading at a grade level described as the second half of first grade. These students came from other classrooms, immediately sat down at the front of the room, and participated in a structured lesson with many components based on the county-adopted basal series. Students needed very little direction for each activity. In addition, behavior was carefully monitored and students were often reminded to attend with verbal cues or reminded to "keep the talk on what we are learning" (O4).

The sequence of activities was teacher-controlled, but very interactive. Four sentence starters were written on the board, and Debra asked for responses from several students to complete each sentence. Then she led them in a series of activities, such as rhyming games, identifying ending and beginning sounds of words, word building, spelling, and vocabulary. Students seemed to understand the instructional routines in place because they needed very little direction at the start of each activity.

After whole group instruction, half the students received small-group instruction and the other half worked on independent seatwork, rotating after twenty minutes. In the small groups, Debra had students read the story in unison, and she leaned forward to hear individuals read, correcting miscues and helping them stay on task. Either during small-group time, or within the next hour during journal time and special area classes, Debra or her CT checked all the seatwork and immediately pulled students to the back of the room to correct mistakes. Students finished all seatwork on the two occasions I observed, and

Debra told me that the consequence for not doing so was for students to pull a behavior card as a warning (RI 1).

During this lesson (O 4), as well as the other reading lesson I observed (O 1), the majority of students were engaged during the entire 90-minute reading block. In addition, although student behavior was controlled through the use of routines, cues, and verbal prompts, behavior was usually one of the first concerns Debra mentioned when we discussed each of these reading lessons (RI 1, 4).

All activities in this lesson were selected from the basal reading series. Debra told me that the teacher's manual has a variety of activities to choose from, and she selects the same activities that her cooperating teacher began using at the start of the school year. Debra's lessons typically followed this format, with whole-group work up at the chalkboard followed by independent seatwork. All four lessons Debra taught when her supervisor observed were in a format similar to this one (PW-1, 2, 3, 4). In addition, Debra's CT described this format as typical for Debra, as well as typical for herself (CT-D).

Conception of Accommodation

Debra articulated a broad definition of accommodations: "I think I would do whatever I had to do to make kids successful. . . . I'll do what I have to do to make sure [students] get it" (MC: 323 . . . 326). She said that she would shorten assignments or change the format so that students could work at their own levels. However, in practice she primarily offered different levels of assistance to students and had different expectations for the work they produced. These two forms of accommodation were important to Debra because they allowed her to accommodate without stigmatizing

students. Therefore, Debra's conception of accommodation included the following components: Avoiding stigma, differentiated expectations, and differentiated support.

Offered to all students to avoid stigmatizing

Debra believed that accommodations often made students feel "dumb" and made it hard for them to fit in with their peers (I1). Therefore, she believes that accommodations should be subtle—just barely noticeable to the student receiving the accommodation and invisible to peers. She believes that if the assigned work is drastically different, it makes students feel bad because "they know that they can't do the work the other kids are doing, and other kids are complaining about them. It just makes it hard for them" (I1: 341-342). She explained further, "I just don't ever want to make anyone feel bad based on their ability" (RI 5).

This idea appears to stem from her pre-internship placement in a classroom with a variety of included special education students. She described this experience as educational but fairly negative overall because she thought students were treated poorly by her cooperating teacher (RI 5; I2). This experience shaped her view that inclusion was not always a good idea, especially for students of lower ability who received accommodations which "may make them feel bad. You could tell [Raymond] felt dumb because he was so embarrassed" (I1: 300). She frequently mentioned Raymond, a student with emotional disabilities, and how the teacher would loudly announce to the class that he had to do only five spelling words and then scream at him to go out in the hall and practice again (I1, 2; RI 5). She explained, "It's really hard for these kids to fit in. You want them to feel normal, but I don't know if they ever do" (I1: 303-304).

One way that Debra attempted to avoid stigmatizing students was to offer accommodations to all students so that no one would be singled out. She did this with

math manipulatives, which were passed out to each student at the start of the year to keep at their desks. Students were allowed and sometimes encouraged to use their counters, but Debra felt that since all students had them, the lower ability students could pull them out and use them without feeling bad about it (RI 3). While this strategy is one actually instituted by the CT, her reasons for doing so are different. She told me she hands them out to all students, not to avoid stigma, but as an evaluation tool to determine students' math levels (CT-D). She took away all manipulatives in students' desks shortly after Debra left because at that point she knew "who still needed to count on their fingers and who didn't" (CT-D).

Debra also avoided stigmatizing students by offering testing accommodations openly to all students. On tests, she read each problem aloud to the class, but acknowledged that some students did not need or want this, and they were allowed to work ahead but could not interrupt to ask questions (RI 2). Sometimes she and her CT decided to test students in small groups, reading each problem aloud, but giving no other type of assistance (I2). Another testing accommodation, used primarily on science and social studies tests and offered to students with limited writing ability, was to let students dictate answers to them, or to pull students up after the test to read aloud what they had written if it was illegible (MC; I2). In all these cases, all students took the same test and were assessed using the same criteria.

Different expectations for individuals

To Debra, one of the most subtle yet effective ways of accommodating for students with diverse ability levels is to have different expectations for students, allowing them to "work at their level so they can be successful" (I1: 320-321). She described this primarily in terms of writing instruction, where she felt it was possible to push some children to

write more details, and push others to remember capital letters and periods (I1, 2; RI 5), or allow some to turn in messy work and others to rewrite (RI 1). Debra said that teachers can quickly make decisions to accept work from some students that would be unacceptable from others, and do so in a way that does not stigmatize students (I2).

This has not always been a philosophy with which Debra agreed. During her pre-internship she watched her cooperating teacher grade writing in ways that at the time seemed like favoritism to her. In that classroom Debra worked with many more students with disabilities that were included for the majority of the day, and she came up against this problem in many subjects. At the time she struggled with the fairness of allowing students of different ability to both make As for work of different quality, but she came to realize that these students were indeed trying their hardest, and small steps toward improvement should be recognized.

Debra told me that she still struggles with how to actually grade work when the quality is different (I2) which seemed to suggest that her conception of differentiated expectations meant that although she accepted work of lesser quality and did not push students to do more than they could do, grading was still fairly standardized. In fact, she was more likely to accept different levels of performance when it was for a non-graded assignment such as journal writing. Therefore, although she frequently mentioned differentiated expectations as an appropriate accommodation, she only seemed to use this in a formative sense. Students were all held to the same standards on assignments that counted. In that way, her conception of differentiated expectations still fits within the “more support . . . same work” framework identified at the beginning of this case.

An example of her use of different expectations in a formative sense was the use of student journals. In her classroom, journals were used mainly as morning seatwork where students responded to a prompt usually tied to the previous day's science or social studies lesson. Students worked on journals throughout the day because very few wrote an acceptable number of sentences in the morning. Some students, like Carolina (gifted), were prompted to add details and description, some were prompted to check for punctuation and improve handwriting, and others, like Nicoletta (LD), were allowed to dictate the entry to Debra and then draw a picture (O4, 5). In comparison, during a writing assignment I observed, students were asked to rewrite the first draft of a story that had no written feedback on individual papers (O 2). Debra told me that individuals received different levels of support while writing the first draft, but other than verbal assistance, students were not given focused, differentiated feedback on their writing. Nicoletta (LD) and Aeshea (LD) were allowed to work at Debra's desk so she could help them spell words and "just get going" (RI 2). Other than that, students were prompted to fix messy handwriting, but I saw no other evidence that Debra used different expectations to make accommodations for students that had different levels of writing ability.

Debra experimented with some differentiated grading during her unit plan on Colonial America, where she collected journals for her own evaluation even though the CT did not record those grades. Debra's assessment of journals for her unit did suggest that she was willing to consider differentiated grading for various levels of performance when she knew it was the best a student could do. She said:

Kids like Joshua (LD), he might have only had three sentences, but they were three really good sentences. Well, I'm going to give him an E [excellent], and I don't care if he doesn't have seven sentences. He's never going to have seven sentences. (I2: 326-329)

Although Debra's CT said something very similar related to accepting fewer sentences from some students who were not capable of more, she said that those students are "still getting N's on their writing because they don't have what they need." She told me she does this because eventually all students will be graded with the rubric for the state writing exam, without special attention because of their ability levels, and she wants to mirror that in her room (CT-D). Debra shared this philosophy for grading writing assignments. She believed it was important to grade students using the formal state procedure so that parents would understand how their children compared to other children on standardized assessment: "It's important to kind of tell where [students] are according to the scale that they'll be tested on later. It's important for them and for schools" (I2: 396-397).

Therefore, although Debra frequently mentioned differentiated expectations as an accommodation she made for students, she only used this accommodation for non-graded assignments, where I observed her encouraging students to improve different aspects of their writing according to the areas on which they needed to focus (O 1, 5).

Different levels of support

Another way that Debra offered accommodations to students in a way that she considered unobtrusive and subtle was to assist students using different levels of support after whole-group instruction. She worked with students individually and in small groups to varying extents, and considered this support to be an accommodation.

Individual assistance. Debra stated that it is important to teach students at their level, and this requires changes in the way lessons are taught or designed: "In every lesson you teach, you accommodate in some way. Either you change the lesson plan, or you do it differently for this student, and this student, and this student" (MC: 76-77). She

also believes that accommodating students with different ability levels is hard work:

“Even when they are doing the same thing, you have kids that are at different levels. You need to work with everyone at their own level and you have these people that are really high and really low and that makes it even harder trying to figure it out and get them what they need” (I1: 371-374).

In practice, I observed her teaching lessons that were not altered for students, but instead altered in terms of how much assistance she gave to individual students as she circulated (O 2, 3). She also mentioned this as one of the most frequent types of accommodation she provided (I2; U-D; RI 5; PW 1, 2, 3, 4).

To Debra, different support for individuals meant that during independent seatwork, some students required almost a whole reteaching of the lesson (RI 2), others just needed direction to get started (RI 7), and others needed no help at all (I2). Some needed problems read aloud to them individually, and others needed more teacher-guided practice (RI 3). This was also the CT’s philosophy, and she told me that every day in her plan book for math she writes “complete pages independently, remediate individually” (CT-D) because she thought it was important to help individual students in different ways.

Another way that Debra supported individual students differently was by allowing students with limited writing ability to dictate journal entries and short answer responses on science and social studies tests. Though she would like to offer this accommodation to anyone who needs it, Debra said that because of time constraints she was typically only able to offer this to Aeshea (LD) and Nicoletta (LD) who had the hardest time with writing (RI 7). She felt that this help was not stigmatizing because many students got

called up for extra help so these two students did not stand out (RI 5). Regarding grading of these dictated responses, Debra told me “[Aeshea] doesn’t fail anything if she tells me the answers. She won’t do as well as everyone else, but if she can tell you something that makes sense, it’s okay” (RI 5).

Small-group assistance. Teaching small groups of students divided by ability level was also an effective way of meeting student needs, according to Debra (RI 7). As mentioned previously, students were grouped by ability level for reading instruction across the entire school, a practice with which Debra agreed because it allowed her to teach students at the proper level (MC). Then, within her group of students, she further divided them into a higher and lower group, determined by oral reading fluency at the beginning of the year. Debra said that she pulled the higher group to work with her first in order to give the lower students, who were more easily distracted, some uninterrupted time to work on seatwork (RI 1).

In these small groups, Debra was able to lead the group in a choral reading of the story and still hear each student’s voice. In one reading lesson, she had several techniques for assisting students within the small group (O4). She leaned in closely to different students at different times, correcting pronunciation or directing their attention, without stopping the entire group. She had techniques for encouraging quieter students to participate, such as asking boys to whisper one page, and then girls to whisper the next. She also stopped frequently and asked numerous comprehension questions to all the students to gauge individual comprehension of the story.

While these techniques highlight Debra’s focus on individuals, it is the small group design that allowed her to do so effectively, and therefore, an essential aspect of her

conception of accommodation. In this regard, Debra's philosophy was supported by structures put in place by the school and her cooperating teacher. The CT told me she believes the best way to teach diverse learners is to group them by ability into small, homogeneous groups (CT-D). In addition, the CT thought Debra was very effective at this and was really tuned in to individual students' progress and performance (CT-D).

Conception of Diverse Learners

Debra thought about diverse learners primarily in terms of ability level. The accommodations she provided were mainly in the form of remediation as a result of formative assessment, or a form of differentiated support for students as they completed standard grade-level curriculum.

Who are diverse learners?

Debra's conception of diverse learners included students with different ability levels and different learning styles (I1). She expanded this to include students who were having difficulty in school because of social problems (I1), students who had difficulty focusing or attending (RI 1, 4), and students with challenging homelives or other "external things going on that affect learning" (MC 368). However, achievement level continued to be the main way she identified diverse students over the course of the semester.

Debra identified a range of ability levels in her classroom, separating out differences related to intellectual ability as well as emotional behavior. Her definition of diverse intellectual ability was strongly tied to special education labels, supporting her acknowledgement and respect for formal schooling structures. Her definition of diversity had an element of flexibility, however, as she also recognized that just because students were labeled similarly did not mean they needed the same things. She frequently

mentioned a girl named Carolina, who was labeled gifted but also had fine motor difficulties causing difficulties in writing and coloring. She said, “It must be so frustrating being so smart and not being able to do the work” (I1: 196).

Another student with diverse needs that Debra frequently mentioned was Aeshea (LD), who began the year without special education services because paperwork was lost at her previous school. Debra told me that Aeshea did not know her letters or numbers, could not write her own name, and was physically larger than the other children in class (I1). Debra and her CT began the process of getting Aeshea into a self-contained classroom right away (RI 7), and by the middle of October, she was receiving math and reading instruction in a resource room. Debra reported that Aeshea understood a fair amount of the general education content in science and social studies but was unable to communicate her knowledge in writing (RI 7). Both Debra and her CT considered Aeshea’s ability to be far below that of her peers (CT-D; I2).

Debra also identified students with behavior problems, and although none of them were formally identified with disabilities, most of the students she identified were working on some type of behavior plan with the Behavior Resource Teacher (BRT). Similar to her description of Carolina (gifted / fine motor difficulties) she did not assume that all students with behavior problems were functioning at low-levels. She identified two students for whom this was the case, but also identified one student, Israel, as a very strong student academically who happened to be on a point sheet with the BRT to control his emotional outbursts (RI 7).

Who actually receives accommodations?

Debra believed that every student needed accommodations at some point because everybody learns differently, and teachers should accommodate for these differences (I2).

She felt strongly that accommodations should not make students feel inadequate but instead should be subtle and non-stigmatizing. Therefore, many of the things that she considered accommodations were offered to the whole class, but often only utilized by students having the most difficulty.

Debra was willing to accommodate for students with disabilities, but she believed that there were specialists such as special education teachers who were better equipped to meet those students' needs (MC). This was evidenced in her practice by her treatment of three students with learning disabilities in math who were present for math instruction in her classroom before the schedule was aligned properly. These students were required to participate in the whole-group math lesson, but were then given basic skills math sheets to complete, rather than an adapted version of a worksheet to work on the skill. These students were just given addition and subtraction sheets, or dot-to-dot activities because of Debra's assessment that they were not capable of doing more (I2).

Debra believed all students were entitled to accommodations, as she defined them. However, in practice she focused her differential expectations and different levels of assistance on students she identified as struggling, usually through daily formative assessments. In addition, her accommodations were typically in the form of remediation aimed at preparing students to be ready for formal assessments that held all students to similar standards of performance.

Summary of the Cases: Traditional Approaches to Accommodation

Ashley and Debra approached accommodation in ways that were traditional in nature. They had standardized views of achievement and held all students up to those standards. When students had difficulty, they used specialized techniques to help students work toward the standard.

Although Ashley and Debra did talk about proactively designing instruction to take different learning styles into account, it was not their primary approach to accommodation. Their approaches to accommodation were more interactive in nature. Both of them relied heavily on formative assessment to identify students who were having difficulty with daily work, and those students were pulled to the back of the room for reteaching and more intense assistance.

Debra identified several students with limited writing ability, and she compensated for this by allowing them to dictate responses to her. Had she taken a more reconceptualized approach to accommodation, she might have found alternative ways for them to respond to the content or interact with the curriculum, rather than simply correcting for a writing deficit.

Similarly, although Ashley provided visual models and auditory clues for her students, she then expected them to work at a similar pace, with similar expectations and outcomes. When students fell behind or answered questions incorrectly, she resorted to remediation techniques rather than reflecting on ways that her curriculum had been problematic for them. In fact, when students did not achieve the established standard, Ashley often blamed students for not taking advantage of the opportunities she gave them to complete or correct work.

It is important to remember that all four interns in this study were considered exceptional interns, and all of them were considered successful by their CTs at the conclusion of the internship. The purpose of this study was not to compare the effectiveness of one approach to accommodations over the other, but instead, to explain the conceptualizations and actions of interns as they worked to meet the needs of diverse

learners. The cases were presented in two separate chapters in order to highlight similarities and differences that emerged in the way the interns approached accommodations.

CHAPTER 6 ACCOMMODATION DILEMMAS: “GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES”

In the two previous chapters I presented data related to the first two research questions. I described how each intern conceptualized and implemented accommodations for diverse learners. These data highlight the complexity of accommodations, both in how they are conceptualized and how they are implemented in the classroom. Each intern clearly wanted to do what she thought would best meet student needs, and this meant something different to each of them. In this chapter I present data related to the third research question: “What factors influence the extent to which the interns are able to put their personal conceptualizations into action?” The interns often experienced dilemmas as they put their conceptualizations into action, and their dilemmas affected the accommodations they used in the classroom.

As novices, the interns continued to learn about accommodations as they implemented them, and many of the ideas they talked about in interviews were still somewhat theoretical to them. They frequently used the word “struggle” as they tried to put their ideas about accommodations into practice. Sometimes the interns talked at length as if thinking aloud before deciding how they felt about the issues. In fact when Ashley read my summary of her numerous struggles with assessment, she laughed and said, “I’m going around in circles here! But that’s good because it was really my thought process at the time” (A-MC).

Despite the fact that the interns sometimes reached conclusions about the topics with which they struggled, they often revisited the issues in light of new experiences, or

they found that implementation of their ideals simply was not possible. Therefore, these struggles were abiding dilemmas for the interns. It is important to note that these dilemmas were not paralyzing, however, but more theoretical in nature. Each intern felt that she succeeded in meeting the needs of diverse learners in her classroom, despite internal conflicts about the ramifications of doing so. In other words, these interns were usually able to manage their dilemmas (Lampert, 1985) rather than solve them.

All four interns articulated struggles they were having, and, as could be expected, the nature and intensity of their individual dilemmas varied. However, the dilemmas centered around three main themes: definitions of fairness, the impact of accommodations on assessment and grading, and the challenges of providing accommodations. While not every intern struggled in each of these areas, the range of perspectives on each theme is presented below. In a later section I present data related to the influence of the teacher education program on interns' dilemmas.

Definitions of Fairness

The Merriam-Webster On-Line dictionary (2003) defines the word "fair" as impartial and free of bias. However, when used by interns who wanted to provide accommodations that were "fair" to all students, the definition was less clear. Interns' definitions ranged from thinking that fair meant equal amounts of work, to thinking that fair meant thinking about each child's needs separately. Their definitions impacted how the interns designed instruction and accommodations, causing internal tensions and sometimes tensions among students as well. The dilemmas the interns faced related to fairness were centered on trying to figure out for themselves what was fair (Is it fair?), and how to handle similar concerns in students and parents (It's not fair!).

Is It Fair?

Ashley was arguably the most concerned with ideas of fairness as they related to what accommodations she could provide students. As discussed in the cases chapter, she believed effective instruction meant holding all students up to high standards, but she knew that some students would need more help than others to get there. Helping some students more than others caused tension for Ashley because she did not think it was fair to the students who got concepts the first time, without accommodations or assistance. Although she stated that fair did not mean providing exactly the same things to students – “Certainly I don’t believe that fair means equal, but I do believe you have to be consistent” (A-RI 3) – she did believe that students at all ability levels should be required to complete equal amounts of work in class – “It’s not fair for one kid to do less work” (A-RI 6). Lower-achieving students were pulled from free-play time to finish work or receive remediation. In addition, more advanced students were expected to finish their regularly assigned work before completing the additional challenging work, rather than receiving alternative work at a higher level. She said, “We have to get the same grades for him, too, so he has to do all the work, too” (A-RI 2). She did eliminate one non-graded assignment for the highest reading group during her internship (A-RI5), but she told me that she could not eliminate too much because they still needed phonics practice. She was willing to supplement their workload but not alter it significantly.

Ashley realized that her definition of fairness meaning equal work for all students would have to be altered for students significantly below grade level, or students requiring significant accommodation or assistance. As described in the cases chapter, Ashley wanted some way to document that these students were not performing up to the standard. Providing adaptations and help to some students and not others seemed unfair

to Ashley, so she felt obligated to document this assistance. When she could document that it took a student multiple attempts to complete a worksheet, or that a student was only required to do half the spelling words, she felt much more comfortable making accommodations. In addition, when accommodations were prescribed on an official IEP or academic improvement plan (AIP), Ashley did not wrestle with the fairness dilemma because she felt that the formal documentation took teacher bias and favoritism out of the picture: “With an IEP, I can at least say that’s why I’m giving this child more . . . because a group of people got together and decided that was what this child needed” (A-RI 6). In other words, having this documentation allowed Ashley to manage her dilemma in a way that did not conflict with her definition of fairness.

In comparison, Kelly’s views of fairness were quite different from Ashley’s and did not cause a dilemma for Kelly. She believes that it is important to consider each child as an individual without comparing them: “I always feel like I have to think about each student. I don’t want to put them all in the same pot, I just can’t do that. I don’t think that’s fair, comparing the two” (K-RI 7). Kelly also had a problem with the concept of gifted education because it meant that some children were entitled to a more enriched, challenging education, and this did not seem fair to Kelly (K-I1). She compensated for this concern by providing the rest of her class the same types of project-based, problem-solving activities as gifted children and higher achievers were given during segregated activities or pull-out classes (K-RI 7). In other words, although she had a problem with the concept of gifted, it did not cause a dilemma for Kelly because she found a way to remedy a practice she viewed as unfair.

It's Not Fair!

All four interns expressed concerns that students or their parents might find some accommodations unfair (E-I1; A-I1; K-I2; D-I1). For example, when Erica obtained assistive devices from the occupational therapist for Rusty and Tony (EH), as mentioned in the cases chapter, she worried that other students would see these as “toys” and would want some, too (E-RI 4). In addition, Ashley and Debra were both concerned that parents would complain if grading accommodations were made (A-I2; D-I1). Despite these concerns, only Kelly and Erica had actual instances of student tension related to fairness in their classrooms.

Kelly noticed that some of her students viewed special attention as unfair, specifically related to her decision to allow Nathan to take his spelling test early with the CT. She did not see this practice as unfair because Nathan needed it at the time. However, she perceived that her students viewed it as unfair when they began telling her they wanted to take the test early like Nathan (K-I2). She knew it would be a management nightmare to provide this accommodation to everyone who requested it. For that reason, and because she felt that Nathan no longer needed it, she discontinued use of the testing accommodation for Nathan (K-I2). Kelly said that both of those factors were of equal importance in her decision to discontinue Nathan's accommodation.

Another instance occurred in Erica's classroom during a social studies lesson from her Communities unit, when I observed a student become visibly and vocally upset when he perceived things to be unfair (E-O5). Because of Erica's conception of effective instruction, she made it a point to involve students with difficulty focusing and attending, and she considered her use of them as “helpers” to be an accommodation for them. Although she had an incredible amount and variety of student participation built into her

lessons, it was obvious to me, and to the students, that she chose some students more than others to be her helpers, even when their behavior was somewhat off task. On one occasion, Casey called out “that’s not fair” when Erica selected John (ADHD) as her helper for the second time in one lesson. Erica continued on with her lesson, without acknowledging Casey, and continued selecting students to participate using her popsicle sticks and other strategies, ensuring that many students were chosen to respond and demonstrate answers. When I asked her about Casey, she said that she kept teaching for two reasons: First, this was an isolated incident, not a pervasive classroom problem; and second, she believed that these issues were best discussed with students privately or in small groups (E-RI 6). She said that if it continued to be a problem, she would explain to Casey that John was very active and needed to do things so that he could stay in control and learn along with everyone else. She said, “It’s usually not a big deal, though. But if it is, then ‘oh well’. I find it obvious that some students will not be learning unless I’m making those accommodations, so I’m not going to change [my approach]” (E-RI 6).

Although Erica and Kelly faced student tensions about the fairness of accommodations, it was not a dilemma for them. Debra, however, struggled with how students might perceive different treatment for different students despite the fact that this problem never manifested itself in her internship classroom. As mentioned in the cases chapter, Debra was very concerned that accommodations be subtle and non-stigmatizing because she believed that students felt “dumb” when workload or level were adjusted. She constantly worried how students felt about receiving accommodations, and that concern limited the types of assistance she offered.

Even though none of the interns felt it necessary to directly address the issue of fairness in their classrooms, several said they would address it if it became a persistent problem. All of the interns mentioned building classroom community as a solution to help all students recognize that people are different, with different strengths and weaknesses, and therefore different instructional and behavioral needs (A-I2; E-I1; D-RI5; K-RI 1). Erica told me:

If I could build a classroom community in a different way and be able to say, everybody is unique and everybody is different, and I do some things for you that I don't do for him . . . this is just something I do for him. (E-I1: 407-411)

In addition, Erica said that she would pull a student aside privately, like she was prepared to do for Casey in the scenario above.

Assessment/Grading

Although the four interns were willing to make accommodations for students who struggled, they were not always sure how this translated into grading and assessment. Kelly, who did not think it was fair to compare students, wanted to grade students according to how much individual progress they had made and the effort with which they approached tasks. Conversely, Debra was willing to provide a variety of accommodations on non-graded work and informal assessments but wanted to maintain standardized measures to compare children's progress.

Only Kelly was confident in her approach to grading and assessment, and did not discuss these issues as struggles or dilemmas. The other three interns all debated the issue and reported that they remained unsure about the best way to approach assessment related to diverse learners in particular. Their main concerns were related to two areas: standardized vs. flexible grading, and appropriate assessment measures.

Standardized vs. Flexible Grading

Figuring out how to grade students who did and did not receive accommodations was one of the most confounding problems for Debra and Ashley. Throughout the semester they both struggled with the question of whether an A for grade-level work equaled an A for modified work, and they were inconsistent in how they handled this question in practice, suggesting they continued to search for solutions.

As co-teaching partners during their pre-internship, they both worked in a classroom with several students who were performing below grade level and required significant curriculum modifications. They both talked about the necessity of those adjustments. Ashley said that students develop learned helplessness when they experience repeated failure because teachers fail to make those adjustments (A-I1). Debra said that students would become disheartened and frustrated if they could never achieve more than the lowest possible grade on standardized curriculum (D-I2).

These views suggest acceptance of a flexible grading system that allows students to be graded according to individual progress, effort, or degree of achievement of an altered objective. However, because of their underlying beliefs about standard grade-level achievement, both interns were extremely concerned about the impact of accommodations on resulting grades and did not feel comfortable having different grading standards for students. Ashley said:

I think that kind of curriculum adjustment is something that I have the hardest time wrapping my brain around. How can this child and this child both get A's when one is doing completely different work than the other, and they are both in the same grade? Do you grade on a standard, or do you grade on effort? I think grading is something I feel the most uncertain about. (A-I1: 445-448)

Both interns reported feeling uncomfortable with their pre-internship CT's method of grading, which they described as subjective and somewhat arbitrary (D-I1; A-RI6).

Therefore, it is not surprising that both of them talked about a desire to be objective and consistent in their assessment of students.

They believe that one way to achieve that consistency was to set grade-level standards of achievement and hold all students to those standards. Although they both had slightly different ways to accommodate to help students achieve the standard, both of them approached accommodation largely in the form of remediation. Ashley frequently assisted students that were “falling behind” (A-RI 1, 3) and needed to “catch up” (A-RI2) because she believed that all students should perform to some ultimate standard of achievement, and it was her job to get them there. Debra used daily evaluation to identify students requiring assistance as they worked toward an ultimate objective, although some students were allowed slightly different paths to get there, such as dictation or oral response to some test questions. Ideally, Debra and Ashley wanted students to work toward and be graded on uniform standards, despite their acknowledgment of the negative impact on students who were not capable of doing so.

Part of their concern regarding inconsistency was related to their perceptions about student and parent reactions to grades. Ashley said access to grading information was important for parents: “As the parent, I’d want to know if my kid wasn’t doing the same work as everyone else. And I’d want to know if my kid’s A is something different from someone else’s A” (A-I2: 119-121). Debra was concerned that flexible grading would send the wrong message to students and parents. To give students an A for working at their own potential, even though it was below grade level, would indicate incorrectly that students were performing on grade level, and would give parents a false sense of security. Using a standardized system of grading allows parents to compare their children with an

average child to gauge performance in relation to peers (D- RI5). She said that eventually all students in Florida schools are graded using established standards, so using them now also helps students understand what they still need to learn (D-RI 5, D-I2).

Debra's concern is not surprising when interpreted within her school context. In the state of Florida, all students are held to a grade level standard of achievement through the use of high stakes standardized testing. According to the state policy of assessing schools using a grading system, Debra's school had a C, the lowest grade of the four schools in this study, and teachers there were likely under pressure to improve scores on standardized tests. Debra's concerns for consistency in the use of state standards clearly impacted her assessment dilemma.

It is also important to look at how state context and district policy impact Ashley's first grade classroom when interpreting her assessment dilemma. Ashley's school received an A in the state grading system and likely did not have the same level accountability pressure as Debra's. However, Ashley's preoccupation with letter grades and grading on a standard may have been linked to the policy that required that letter grades be assigned in first grade, a grade level where students previously received more qualitative statements such as "satisfactory" and "needs improvement". It may be that first grade teachers at the school, and possibly across the state, are experiencing assessment dilemmas similar to Ashley's as they investigate the impact of accommodations on grading.

Ashley and Debra, as well as all primary grade educators in the state, were also operating under state guidelines that established fixed exit criteria for third graders based on attainment of a set reading score on the state standardized test. All students were held

to a set standard of achievement, and teachers in primary grades were under pressure to ensure that students were all reading on grade level by third grade.

Ashley and Debra arrived at different solutions for their dilemmas, although neither one of them actually used their solutions in practice. As mentioned in the cases chapter, Ashley felt strongly that any accommodations should be documented to qualify the resulting grade on any assignment or test for which standards were altered (A-RI 6; A-I2). Debra would create a grading system that allowed multiple grades on assignments to indicate effort, individual progress, and also progress on an official standard (D-I2).

In practice, they both toyed with flexible objectives or standards but remained fairly rigid about how that flexibility translated into grades. As mentioned previously, Debra allowed two students to orally respond to some test questions. This allowed the students to pass the test, but did not allow them to achieve grades similar to those who wrote answers. Regarding one student in particular, Debra said, “She doesn’t fail anything if she tells me the answers. She won’t do as well as everyone else, but if she can tell you something that makes sense, it’s okay” (D-RI 5). Similarly, Ashley allowed two students to turn in an assignment with fewer sentences than other students, stating that they were not capable of more, yet she held those students to the same standard of grading as the other students (A-RI 7).

Erica’s beliefs about grading were similar to those of Ashley and Debra. She believed in the use of standards because of the consistency and objectivity they represented. She said, “You can’t eliminate standards altogether. There has to be some kind of standard or you wash out the whole grading system, and then you wipe out the whole grade levels, and you move to only using social promotion” (E-MC: 73-74).

However, Erica seemed to struggle less with ensuring that grades be standardized. According to the state grading system, Erica's school received a B, which may have influenced her ideas about standardization. She did not struggle with the idea that an A for one student had to equal an A for another student who received accommodations, but she had a desire to be clear and precise about exactly how she was grading (E-I2) and this created a dilemma for her. Ideally, she would like to have assessment measures that were clearly linked to objectives, so that she could determine which students needed additional help in which area (U-E). She was concerned that if she varied from the guidelines she established for assessment, she might look "wishy-washy" (E-I2: 213). However, she also found the rubrics she created to be too rigid, failing to allow for student differences, so she decided that she was just going to have to look "wishy-washy" in certain cases because she knew some students needed a different way to express knowledge of the assessed content (E-I2).

In comparison, Kelly had a very different approach to grading than the other three interns. Related to her definition of fairness, Kelly believes that it is not fair to compare students to one another (K-RI 7). She said it is important to remember

where you are beginning with each student. If a student is really behind another student, and they perform at a certain level, or even if one student performed at a higher level, I wouldn't compare the two. I would keep their individual goals separate. (K-I2: 179-181)

This suggests that Kelly believes in flexible grading based on individual progress.

Kelly was also more consistent in how she translated her beliefs into practice, probably due to the fact that her CT had similar beliefs and had grading structures in place that made it possible. However, Kelly talked at length about her beliefs and her ideals, which were consistent with her practice. Kelly told me she dislikes grades and

actually records very few. Instead, she monitors homework and classwork to figure out who needs accommodations, gives them what they need, and then bases grades on what effort students put forth at that point – “who actually goes and tries with that extra help, and who just kind of doesn’t put any more effort in” (K-RI 7). Kelly said she looks more at the progress than at the actual numbers recorded, and for the first marking period, she and her CT “sat down and just talked about each kid for a while, and that was nice. I liked that” (K-RI 7). She explained her ideal grading system in a similar manner: “I would just look at individuals, look at their progress, person by person. How have they each grown? It doesn’t have to be all academic, either” (K-MC). She clearly did not value standardized means of assessment. When I asked how she expected her class to do on the state standardized test, Kelly replied, “I don’t know. I don’t care about those things” (E-MC: 172). She did want them to make a year’s growth, but she was confident that she could assess this by considering the growth of each individual. According to the state grading system, Kelly’s school received an A, the highest grade possible, and teachers at Kinsey Elementary may have been less worried about standards than those at Debra’s school. However, the pressure to maintain status as an A-school was likely present at Kinsey Elementary.

Kelly’s views were also supported in her unit narratives, where she discussed assessing students and assigning grades based on progress toward individual potential (U-K). For example, for the goal-setting project in her unit, Kelly described giving different grades for similar amounts of work because one student was capable of doing more, and the other needed more assistance (K-I2). Both girls were in the ESOL program, but one

had more advanced English skills and according to Kelly, should have been capable of completing the assignment independently. For the other girl, Kelly said:

I would take into consideration the language barrier. Maybe she's just not realizing what she should be doing to monitor her goal. And I should have worked with her more. . . . She needed the one-on-one to understand. I wouldn't take off for that. (K-RI 7)

Kelly did not perceive any barriers to implementing this type of grading system in her own classroom (K-I2). For her, flexible grading felt right and posed no potential problems for students, parents, or schools. She was prepared to document student progress through methods such as portfolios, which she felt would alleviate parent concerns (K-I2; K-MC).

Appropriate Assessment Measures

Although the interns had very little control over grading systems in place in each classroom and school, they were given some flexibility to design assessment measures for the unit plans they were required to create and teach. Because the interns were still learning how to evaluate student progress, they sometimes designed assessment measures that ended up conflicting with their views about standardized or flexible grading. When the assessment matched the belief, there was no dilemma. For example, Ashley believed in holding students to uniform standards and instituted teaching for mastery as her assessment plan. She created a rubric for each assignment that read more like a checklist: Points were based on the number of tasks completed or sentences written (U-A). She helped students reach those goals by allowing them to correct mistakes and giving them multiple chances or more time to finish work. When students did not reach the standard, she felt it was through no fault of her own (A-I2). She believed that students of all ability

levels had been given ample opportunity and assistance, and the resulting grades reflected what they accomplished.

Likewise, Kelly was able to find an assessment measure that suited her beliefs about grading. For her unit she required students to collect daily work in a portfolio and create class projects such as a book on feelings. She gave students two grades for this unit: One was for the completed portfolio, and one was for the project of individual goal setting and monitoring. For each grade she created a rubric based on completion of tasks. Even though her scores were based on degree of completion – all, partial, or none – she also created a comments section on her rubric that was used when assigning the two final grades. She put notes in this section about the effort students made or what additional help she should have provided them. She also indicated their level of language ability and her assessment of their level of understanding (U-K). Final grades were determined by assessing what each student should have achieved compared to what each student actually achieved, adjusted if she believed they needed more help and she failed to provide it, as in the example of the two girls in the previous section. She was satisfied that the grades she assigned adequately assessed each student's achievement compared to his or her own potential (U-K).

Erica and Debra had a little more difficulty finding an assessment that matched their beliefs about grading. For her unit, Erica designed rubrics that matched her lesson objectives. She initially liked the idea of a rubric because it was a way for her to communicate expectations and help students stay organized. However, the rubrics she created were similar to Ashley's rubrics: they were merely checklists of tasks completed. When Erica used these rubrics she found them too rigid and realized she was not able to

easily adapt the rubric for students who were not able to complete the written portion of the assignment. She reported that she altered the rubric for some students, allowing one to verbally respond to her rather than speak in front of a group, and allowing two students to receive a pass/fail grade rather than a letter grade because the writing assignment was far beyond their ability levels. She regretted not having thought of some alternatives ahead of time for these students. She took responsibility for their performance and used what she learned to think about instructional decisions in the future (A-I2; U-A). Erica learned about anecdotal records in her assessment class after her internship was over and told me she thought she would find them very useful:

The anecdotal records will be a great way for me to show progress over time. I can use my own judgments and document improvements students are making. I can also make note of how students are responding to certain assignments and find patterns to make accommodations. (E-MC: 99-103)

Erica continued to refine her ideas about effective assessment as she searched for a method of assessment that more clearly captured her beliefs about grading.

Debra was also struggling with how to design assessment that captured student achievement in a way that fit her beliefs about standardized grading. Her unit assessments had two formats: one type was based wholly on written responses in a journal, and the other was a post-test consisting of recalling facts directly tied to each lesson objective. Debra was not satisfied that either of these methods adequately assessed how much students learned during her unit. She realized that the writing assignments were much too difficult for many of her students who had difficulty communicating in writing (U-D). However, she forged on with the assessments because she believed it was what her instructor expected, and she did not create alternatives, other than letting two students dictate responses.

The post-test Debra created was even more problematic for her, despite the fact that she supported the use of pre- and post-tests in general because “then we’ll know we taught [students] something in the end when [they] get them right” (D-RI 2). However, at the end of her unit she began to realize that her post-test did not adequately assess student knowledge. She created test questions for each lesson objective, and she asked students to recall facts related to each topic. For example, one question was “List two reasons quilts were important in colonial times” (U-D). She told me that students did quite poorly on the written test, even though she allowed some students to dictate answers to her. However, she found that students were able to talk about the things they learned during an informal review for the post-test, when she had students do a free recall of everything they could remember about the unit. She was amazed at all they reported and realized this informal assessment was more useful in determining what students had learned (D-MC). However, because of her concern for complying with what she believed her instructor wanted, what her CT wanted, and what her grade-level team wanted, Debra felt obligated to use the post-test grades and the writing assessment grades as her final unit assessment and did not attempt to measure student growth during the informal test review that she found more informative. In other words, when Debra used the assessment measures she designed, she began to question her acceptance of standardized grading through summative measures, but she was unwilling or unable to explore alternatives.

Challenges of Providing Accommodations

The third dilemma that the interns faced was related to the challenges of putting accommodations in place. The interns found that the reality of making accommodations meant facing a variety of barriers, and they did not always know the most effective way to overcome these barriers. What each intern viewed as challenging differed, but common

themes emerged that related to the cooperating teacher, school culture, and managing the process of implementing accommodations.

Constraints Related to Cooperating Teacher

As mentioned in the cases chapter, Debra's implementation of accommodations was influenced to a great extent by her concern for compliance in a setting she viewed as extremely restrictive. She believed she was not allowed to teach the way she wanted to teach, but instead, found herself just "acting like [Mrs. Dietrich]" (D-MC: 334). Everything she did, from curriculum and material selection to assessment and grading, was colored by the control her CT had over her. On every occasion that she was present during a lesson I observed, the CT exerted her control (D-O 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). She interrupted Debra's lesson to either correct behavior or rephrase Debra's explanation, told Debra which worksheets to do, or jumped in to teach a lesson with Debra. Although Debra complained some about her CT's influence, she also said she learned a lot by working with her and found her placement very beneficial. However, the control offered Debra little opportunity to try out ideas she had learned and wanted to test out in practice (D-I1; D-MC). Even though this created a dilemma for Debra, her concern for compliance far outweighed her need to experiment with new techniques.

Apart from this more obvious example, the other interns also mentioned dilemmas related to working with a cooperating teacher who may or may not share their beliefs about accommodation. As Ashley said, "It's not my house, it's someone else's" (A-RI 3). The interns were very careful about not stepping on the toes of their CTs. All of them expressed changes they would like to make but knew they would have to approach change delicately. They also expressed concern for students, who would bear the brunt of temporary changes. Kelly said, "I can't just change everything because it would be

confusing to the children for me to come in and do something and then have her switch it back to something totally different when I left” (K-I2: 87-90).

Early in the internship, Erica approached her CT about making some accommodations for students who were not doing well on the daily language assignment where they were asked to edit several incorrectly written sentences. She suggested several alternatives to her CT, who said it was too early to lower expectations (E-I1). Erica was disappointed and knew she would teach differently when she took over, but she also wanted to go slowly and “not force it on the teacher. It is her classroom and she feels a big responsibility to her students” (E-I1: 97-98).

Despite concerns that all four interns expressed, two of them were able to implement substantial changes in their internship classrooms. Not surprisingly, both of them had the support of their CTs to do so (CT-E; CT-K). Erica made changes in the way she involved students in the lessons, the use of small-group instruction in reading that was adapted for ability level, and the implementation of a positive point system for behavior to balance out the punitive behavior chart. Erica’s CT said that she continued to use those practices in Erica’s absence (CT-E). Kelly’s CT reported that she was continuing to monitor the class goal that Kelly helped the class choose, not only because it was important for students to see things continued, but also because she thought it was an important goal for her class. In addition, although she did not feel able to continue teaching like Kelly, the CT reported that Kelly’s techniques for working with English language learners were incredibly effective and were often more effective than her own methods (CT-K). Both Kelly and Erica told me that despite small differences in philosophy, they knew they had a lot to learn from their CTs (E-I1; K-I1), and

surprisingly, their CT's both said the exact same thing about the two interns (CT-E; CT-K).

Constraints Related to School Culture

Another constraint that created dilemmas for the interns was related to systems in place within the school that limited the interns' ability to make accommodations they felt were necessary. Although all interns mentioned certain aspects of their schools such as curriculum or testing that were unchangeable, Erica and Debra felt more restricted in what they could do for children as a result of school culture.

Debra was clearly the most concerned with doing what was expected at her school, and felt very limited in the accommodations she was allowed to make. As mentioned in the cases chapter, the principal and curriculum resource teacher at her school monitored all reading and math tests, which made Debra hesitant to make testing accommodations, even though she knew some children needed them. She did not consider the administration's involvement unusual and believed that every school had similar restrictions that limited the ability to make accommodations. She said, "I don't really know of any schools that let [teachers] do that" (D-MC: 193). In fact, she believed that schools exert control over any type of accommodations that are made: "I'll make the accommodations that I have to make in my own classroom, to the extent that I can in my school, and hopefully things won't be so rigid that there's not room for it" (D-MC 335-336).

Erica and Kelly were also cautious about complying with systems within the school, but to a lesser degree than Debra. Erica said, "Any school I'm at will have its own ideas and systems for grading and I'll have to stick by that somewhat" (A-MC: 38). At her internship school, teachers were required to record grades on the comprehension tests

included in the county-adopted reading series and submit them to the curriculum resource teacher. However, there were no restrictions on how those grades were used by classroom teachers, which gave Erica more flexibility in making testing accommodations.

Kelly also realized that certain elements of school culture could affect the extent to which a teacher could do things the way she wanted. She said:

There were things in place, even though we had never met this particular group of kids before, there were things in place like school culture, curriculum, structure of the day, and the kids had been at Kinsey Elementary for two years already, so it was a way of doing things that I couldn't change. (K-MC: 379-380)

Despite these established ways of doing things at Kinsey, Kelly did not find them to be excessively restrictive. In fact, she said, "At Kinsey they let the teachers pretty much do what they need to do. It's more support for the teachers, rather than a directive role" (K-MC: 305-306). Therefore, although Kelly realized that school culture could cause dilemmas for teachers, it did not cause a dilemma for her during her internship.

Constraints Related to Management Issues

Internships give preservice teachers their first real taste of the realities of teaching, and these interns were faced with dilemmas as they began to implement accommodations that they had many times only discussed in theory. As Erica said, "You can talk about [accommodations] all you want, but until you try implementing them, it's another thing" (E-I2: 366).

Although all the interns seemed ready and willing to accommodate at the beginning of the semester, three of the interns – Ashley, Debra, and Erica – articulated specific concerns about how they would manage time, resources, and multiple activities needed to make accommodations once they took over full time. Debra said:

It's hard work. Even when they are doing the same thing you have kids that are at different levels, and you need to work with everyone at their own level, and you

have these people that are really high and really low and that makes it even harder trying to figure it out how to get them what they need. (D-I1: 371-374)

Ashley said that although she had learned about accommodations, she was somewhat unsure of how to implement them:

I know what they are. I know the term. I know what to look for. I know where to refer students for more help. I just don't really know what I can do and how to juggle all the other kids while I am doing it. I need to figure out how to have several different things going on at once. (A-I1: 519-522)

For Ashley this was difficult because of her perception that first graders needed a lot of structured teacher time that limited her ability to work with individual students. She solved this struggle temporarily in her internship by continuing to use her CT and parent volunteers to increase the number of adults available, but she was very concerned about how she would run the “three-ring circus where people are doing different activities all the time” (A-RI 5) in her own classroom. Even after the semester she struggled with this:

Academically, I think I can meet the needs, but it's the management of these needs and meeting everyone else's needs. . . . It's managing someone having a shorter assignment, or someone being pulled while you're supposed to be teaching them something. Just the orchestration of it all. (A-I2: 64-69)

Erica and Debra found that some of the accommodations they wanted to provide were not feasible or practical. When several of Erica's students were having difficulty expressing themselves in writing, she referred to the state guidelines for accommodations provided to her during her pre-internship semester. One suggestion was to allow students to dictate responses into a tape-recorder, but she found this accommodation totally impractical and the logistics overwhelming (E-RI 7). Similarly, Debra wanted to allow more children to dictate responses to her, but she did not have the time to work with each one individually. Therefore, she could only offer the accommodation to two students, and this bothered her (D-RI 7).

The management dilemmas these three interns experienced do not have simple solutions. They are likely the same types of dilemmas that classroom teachers face as they balance the needs of one with the needs of many.

Influence of the Teacher Education Program on Dilemmas

Although the four interns did discuss the three themes, not all of them struggled with each one. In fact, there were differences in the extent to which these struggles became abiding dilemmas for them. Ashley experienced each of the themes as a personal dilemma, talking through her thought process as she explored several alternatives and the implications of each. She seemed to be a very self-confident, efficacious intern, who read professional literature outside of class, and enjoyed having academic discussions about teaching. Therefore, although she talked about the three themes as dilemmas, she did not express doubt or concern about them or her ability to manage them. Instead, she viewed the mulling over of dilemmas as a normal and interesting aspect of teaching.

Kelly, on the other hand, discussed each of the three themes over the course of the semester, but did not struggle with any of them to the extent that they became abiding dilemmas for her. She, too, was a confident intern, but she had definite ideas about what she wanted to do for children and responded to dilemmas with consistency. Debra and Erica were somewhere in between, with occasional unresolved struggles as they learned how accommodations impacted the students in their classes. The differences in the extent to which these issues became dilemmas for the interns was interesting, especially in light of the fact that all four were in the same teacher education program. However, such a finding is not surprising when examined through a social-constructivist lens. Each intern brought different life experiences to the program, and then had different instructors and different field experiences once there. Therefore, while experience in the teacher

education program cannot explain all variation in the dilemmas of these interns, certain elements of the program do provide insight into the dilemmas. Interns talked about programmatic theme, coursework, and assistance from instructors.

Programmatic Theme

Three of the interns mentioned the influence of a programmatic emphasis on inclusive pedagogy. In the unified program, special education content is infused with general education content during courses taught in the junior and senior year. Ashley told me that her friends from non-unified programs did not learn about exceptionalities or behavior management, and she felt that the unified program offered better preparation on how to help students with disabilities (A-I2). One helpful aspect was an emphasis, which some of them describe as an over-emphasis, on learning about various categories of exceptionality and special education law (E-I1; A-I2; D-I2). Ashley told me:

If you talk to any PROTEACH student, they can throw you any term you want to hear. We can talk a good game. But do I feel like they've prepared me to tackle all these things? Somewhat. I think because I know what kinds of diverse needs these kinds of learners have . . . makes me better prepared to face them. (A-I1: 390-392)

However, Ashley went on to say that this emphasis was uneven, covering some topics too often, and some topics not enough: "I think there is a lot of redundancy as far as learning what the labels are, and not enough about telling me exactly what to do" (A-I1: 392-393).

Debra expressed the same concerns, adding that the program did not cover any information about how to accommodate for students with severe disabilities or giftedness (D-I2).

Coursework

Related to the more general influence of programmatic theme, all of the interns specifically mentioned courses that were designed to help them meet the needs of diverse

learners. All the interns reported that accommodations were covered specifically during one class session of their pre-internship seminar, during which time they were provided a booklet on accommodations created by the state department of education (Florida Department of Education, 1999). In addition to this course, they mention other courses that covered the topic. They found some of these courses helpful, while other courses just created more dilemmas for them.

Erica found a junior-level course on special education content and inclusive classrooms to be especially useful in helping her form her opinions about the rights of students with disabilities to be included in the general education classroom (A-I2). She said that prior to this course she considered teaching special education, but she was discouraged when she learned of the restrictive settings of resource rooms, which she found to be excessive. She decided that she would find a way to meet the needs of diverse learners in the general education classroom, which meant learning how to accommodate.

Kelly also talked about a course that was particularly helpful to her in learning how to meet the needs of diverse learners. Since Kelly conceptualized diverse learners largely in terms of cultural background and differences, she found her second ESOL course taken after the internship to be extremely relevant to learning how to accommodate for these types of students. She lamented that this course was provided after her internship and wished it had been offered sooner: “I was the teacher, and I should have had this knowledge beforehand. I was responsible for those children and should have had the full training” (K-MC: 28-29).

The courses the interns took were not always helpful, however. In fact, Debra and Ashley specifically referred to a master’s-level course on assessment that actually did

very little to help them manage their dilemmas related to assessment. Ashley took the course prior to her internship placement, and Debra took it after. Debra reported that the assessment course was too theoretical, centering on a dichotomous debate of standardized testing vs. measuring individual progress, without a real discussion of how the two work in reality (D-MC). Ashley made similar comments, and said that many grading dilemmas were presented but not resolved during the course, so she continued to struggle with that issue (A-I1). She would have liked advice from practitioners on how to design grading systems for classrooms where accommodations were provided, possibly through case studies or videos of master teachers (A-MC).

It may also be that the interns were seeking conclusive solutions for accommodation dilemmas that remain unresolved in the field of education. However, it is clear that Ashley and Debra wanted more assistance in learning how to manage these dilemmas in practice and felt somewhat unprepared to tackle these issues during their internship placements.

Assistance From Others

All of the interns reported receiving assistance from people associated with the teacher education program to help them learn how to accommodate. Although I did not present information or direct the interns in working through their dilemmas, all four of them reported that it was helpful to examine accommodations with me and appreciated the time to reflect on instruction and student progress (A-RI 6, MC; E-I2; D-I2; K-I2). This suggests that it may be helpful for interns to examine accommodations with someone familiar enough with their practice and their instructional context to help them manage their dilemmas. Richardson (1994) refers to this person as a “dialogue partner”

(p. 9) in her discussion of the use of practical inquiry as a means for improving teacher practice.

Peers in the program were also helpful to the four interns in helping them learn how to accommodate. Kelly and Erica both reported learning a lot from their pre-internship co-teaching partners, whom both describe as their best friends (E-I2; K-MC). Debra and Ashley were co-teaching partners and roommates, and both of them mentioned the benefits of reflecting together about common experiences.

Instructors and supervisors were helpful to varying extents. Erica remembered learning a lot from her pre-internship seminar instructor during long class discussions about how to help struggling students (E-I1). In addition, her internship seminar instructors brought in two trainers who did a dynamic presentation about accommodations and provided the interns with materials. From the trainers, Erica got the idea to talk to the occupational therapist about assistive devices (E-I2). In contrast, Ashley and Debra reported that their seminar instructors and supervisors did not emphasize accommodations at all, other than to require them to fill in the accommodations section on the PATHWISE lesson plan with routine strategies such as “more help” or “more time” (A-I2; D-MC).

Summary of the Influences of the Program on Intern Dilemmas

Considering the inconsistent manner in which accommodations were covered in the teacher education program, and the inconsistent manner in which various people provided the interns with support, it is not surprising that the interns experienced dilemmas to varying extents. Although I did not examine the teacher education program in depth and cannot make claims about the coverage and integration of topics related to accommodation, the perceptions of these interns are relevant. They were selected for this

study because they were recommended as outstanding preservice teachers; therefore, it is reasonable to assume that they were likely to have benefited from the teacher education program. Understanding how the interns accommodate for diverse learners and the dilemmas they identify as they learn to accommodate is certainly informative as we study the impact of unified programs on preparing future general educators to meet the needs of students with disabilities in their classroom.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore how four interns prepared in a unified general and special education teacher education program conceptualize and implement accommodations for diverse learners. Meeting the needs of students with a wide range of abilities is an important skill for teachers in today's classrooms. Current legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act and the Reauthorization of IDEA require that all students, even those with identified disabilities, be held to state and local accountability provisions. It is no longer adequate to simply ensure access to the general education curriculum, but instead, student progress in that curriculum must be demonstrated. Teachers are expected to meet the needs of all students, and to do that they need to be ready, willing, and able to make accommodations.

Existing research suggests that teachers are willing to make accommodations for students with diverse needs, but they do not feel ready or able to do so. General education teachers report that they have not been prepared to teach students with diverse needs (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995; Whinnery et al., 1991), and instruction in general education classrooms tends to be largely whole-group and undifferentiated (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; Brown et al., 1991). Unified teacher education programs have emerged as one way to help general education preservice teachers become ready to meet the needs of diverse learners in their classrooms. This study was designed to explore the understandings and abilities of preservice teachers prepared in one such program, as they encountered the reality of providing accommodations for diverse learners.

To understand how each of the interns conceptualized and implemented accommodations for diverse learners, a phenomenological approach was used. Four participants were selected, recommended as capable interns who were placed with cooperating teachers known to allow interns freedom and flexibility. I observed each intern seven times, with post-observation interviews afterward to discuss each lesson. I also interviewed each intern before and after the semester, each interview lasting approximately an hour, to explore her understandings and dilemmas more completely. Since the purpose was to find out how each of them thought about what it meant to accommodate, member check interviews were also conducted for the purpose of verifying that my interpretations were accurate.

Data analysis was on-going throughout the study in a spiral process of analysis similar to one described by Creswell (1998). This process consisted of organizing data, reflecting and writing notes in the margins, creating categories, and then describing, interpreting, and representing the experience for each participant. Halfway through the semester and then again at the conclusion of the internship, an “essence” (Creswell, 1998) of the experience was created for each participant to review and verify. This essence was an accounting of how each intern conceptualized and then implemented accommodations for diverse learners, related to research questions one and two. Also included in the essence were descriptions of the interns’ accommodation dilemmas, related to research question three.

The cases in Chapters Four and Five are expanded versions of these essences, reorganized by themes related to each intern’s conceptualization of accommodation. The dilemmas chapter is a cross-case analysis of the struggles the interns had as they put their

conceptualizations into action in the classroom. Together, these three chapters present a description of how four interns prepared in a unified program think about and implement accommodations.

The interns all felt prepared to accommodate for diverse learners, and all of them talked about the importance of being able to do so in light of increasing efforts to include students with disabilities in general education classrooms. They had different approaches to making accommodations, and their approaches were tied to their conceptions about effective instruction. They identified students that needed accommodations and thought about ways to help those students. They implemented various types of accommodations and talked about dilemmas these accommodations created. Although I did not measure student outcomes to determine whether the interns were in fact meeting the needs of all learners, there is evidence to suggest that the interns were able to do so. The cooperating teachers all reported that the interns were successfully meeting the needs of the students in their classes, and two of the teachers even suggested that the interns were more capable of doing so than they were.

In this chapter, I will discuss how these findings extend the existing literature base. I will also present implications for teacher educators, school-based personnel, and the research community.

Extending Existing Literature

Findings from this study clarify the thinking and actions of interns as they try to meet the needs of all learners. Specifically, these findings expand what we know about accommodations in the general education classroom in three ways. First, the interns' conceptions about accommodations illustrate the views of accommodation that are suggested in the literature and expand the rigid traditional view that is typically used in

special education research. Second, the interns identify constraints related to implementing accommodations that created dilemmas for them and required careful negotiations, a concept not yet considered in the special education literature. Third, adding classroom performance in a study of the learning of unified teacher education program participants adds a dimension to a literature base that typically stops at self-report. Each of these areas will be discussed in this section.

Two Views of Accommodation

As mentioned previously, research studies have shown that general education teachers make very few accommodations for students with diverse needs. Research thus far has been largely in the form of studies based on traditional views of accommodation: Researchers have gone into classrooms looking for strategies teachers use to remediate or compensate for student deficit. However, as one of the interns pointed out, sometimes accommodations are hard to see unless the observer has both an understanding of a student's particular difficulties as well as an understanding of the teacher's decision making process as she considers the education of that particular child (E-11). What Erica was suggesting with this comment was a different approach to accommodation that I termed a "reconceptualized view" of accommodation in Chapter Two.

Typically, special educators have defined accommodations as ways to bypass student deficits (compensation) or to provide intense instruction to allow students to work with the curriculum in place (remediation). Although the purpose of compensation is to redesign curriculum, materials, pacing, and grading (Zigmond & Baker, 1996), the outcome is still to bypass student deficit, the hallmark of a traditional view of accommodation. This is different from a reconceptualized view of accommodation that centers on curriculum, as Pugach and Warger (1996) have suggested. Other researchers

adopting this view of accommodation have suggested a new perspective on curriculum that moves away from the idea of curriculum as formal knowledge that students must acquire (Ford, Davern, & Schnorr, 1992; Stainback & Stainback, 1996). Instead of a focus on student deficit, the focus would be on curriculum and how diverse learners will interact with that curriculum (Warger & Pugach, 1996). This difference is more than semantic word-play. It is a philosophical shift that removes the student as the center of the problem and replaces him or her with a focus on curriculum (Pugach & Warger, 2001). This allows talk to be centered on ways that curriculum can be changed to better accommodate all learners.

The idea that there could be different understandings of accommodation or adaptation has begun to appear in the special education literature. McLeskey and Waldron (2002) began their study of teacher perceptions of curricular and instructional adaptations with the assumption that the teachers they were working with did not wish to simply replicate special education curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom. Although they did not use the terms “traditional” and “reconceptualized” views, McLeskey and Waldron did in fact talk about very similar ideas. They found that the general education teachers preferred adaptations that resulted in “classrooms that were rich in ‘effective instruction’ and ‘differentiated instruction’” (p. 51) rather than adaptations that were similar to specialized instruction provided in special education settings. In other words, the teachers’ views were similar to a “reconceptualized view” of accommodation as used in this dissertation.

While a discussion of these two views of accommodation has begun to appear in studies such as McLeskey and Waldron’s (2002), limited research has been done to study

the two views in practice in the classroom. In fact, the only related study in a recent review of research was by Kliewer and Landis (1999). They examined teachers' meanings of curricular individualization in literacy instruction and found that disparate assumptions about disability guided the teachers' practices. These assumptions were based on local and institutional understandings of disability. Local understandings were context- and student-specific, while institutional understandings were based on rigid, decontextualized presumptions about the nature of disability. Kliewer and Landis found that teachers who had local understandings of disability were able to reconceptualize literacy instruction as non-linear, focused on student strengths rather than deficits requiring correction. Kliewer and Landis were looking at literacy instruction in general and were not focusing their study on understandings about accommodation.

The findings from this study expand the literature base to show the two views of accommodation in practice. The interns did have different views of accommodation, and those views were related to their views of effective instruction. Ashley and Debra were quite traditional in their orientation to accommodations. Since their goals included having all students work to grade-level standards, they both approached accommodation largely as remediation for those students who were not keeping up with classwork. They used formative evaluation methods as daily checks to keep track of student performance and to identify students for reteaching or to give them more time to finish assignments. In addition, Debra let two students with poor writing skills dictate responses, and both interns relied on increased levels of one-on-one assistance for students who were struggling. Neither intern made significant changes in the way she approached curriculum to proactively design instruction to meet student needs.

Kelly and Erica used approaches that were slightly different, and more in line with a reconceptualized view of accommodation. They both thought about curriculum and instruction in terms of what made them problematic for students who struggled. Kelly added hands-on, active experiences and role-play into her lessons because she knew that her large ESOL population would need a variety of ways to interact with and discuss content. Erica thought about her instruction carefully to ensure that students were focused and attentive because she knew that many of them had difficulty with this. Both interns considered their students' specific problems as they designed curriculum to meet those needs.

A reconceptualized view of accommodation does not preclude the necessity of providing some student-specific accommodations based on individual deficits. Erica provided many such accommodations, such as assistive devices for Tony and modified lined paper for Terrence. However, she provided those accommodations with the understanding that they helped her students focus on or interact with curriculum. This was different from Debra allowing dictation, which was a way for Aeshea to demonstrate her knowledge of the pre-established curriculum.

As mentioned previously, student achievement data were not collected to indicate the comparative effectiveness of the two approaches to accommodation. To a casual observer, the academic pressure in Ashley's classroom and her dedication to pulling all students up to grade level standards may be a desirable outcome. However, that approach raises questions about the impact on students like Alan (LD) who was constantly being remediated and pulled from free-play time. Comparatively, the relaxed academic atmosphere in Kelly's classroom may appear to excuse some students like Juan (ESOL)

from working hard, and her individualized approach to grading students may raise questions of subjectivity. Would Kelly's casual approach to accommodations be affective for students with more substantial cognitive disabilities? Since she did not teach reading or math to any students with identified disabilities, it is unclear whether she would have been able to adapt instruction and curriculum in ways that met the needs of students with more significant needs.

As these findings reflect, accommodation is a complex concept. It is important to understand more about what teachers are thinking, their goals for students, and the effect of different views of accommodation on student achievement if we are to fully understand how teachers accommodate. Interpreting teachers' use of accommodation in practice may be expanded through the use of multiple views of accommodation. In addition, case descriptions of these two views of accommodations in real classrooms will make the discussion of accommodation more practical and less theoretical. Rich descriptions of teachers engaged in accommodation will provoke conversations of teachers and/or preservice teachers as they learn how to accommodate.

Political Tactics of Negotiation

In addition to overemphasizing a traditional view of accommodation, special education researchers have tended to dictate that accommodations be implemented with little concern for contextual barriers that created dilemmas for these interns. All four interns recognized constraints, such as cooperating teacher, school, and district, that affected their ability to put their conceptualizations into action. The interns knew that they had to carefully negotiate implementation of accommodations, and each intern approached this negotiation differently. As Debra explained, "I've learned how to play the game" (D-RI 5). Findings from this study suggest that interns adopt political tactics of

negotiation as described by Goodman (1988) as they negotiate the various constraints encountered.

Goodman (1988) suggested that active, reflective interns employed five tactics as they developed and implemented instructional strategies in the balancing act of reconciling their beliefs with the constraints of the school system. Those tactics were:

- Overt compliance – Preservice teachers using this tactic were anxious to fit into the existing system. They adjusted their beliefs to align with current practices and did not criticize those practices. This was a common tactic early in internship placements.
- Critical compliance – Interns using this tactic looked similar to those using overt compliance, but these preservice teachers criticized current practices and talked about alternatives that would fit their own beliefs better. This was the most common tactic employed by interns in Goodman’s study.
- Accommodative resistance – The interns using this tactic began to make small, incidental changes that were added to existing classroom procedures or curriculum. Classroom results were not substantially different, but the intern was able to try out ideas that better suited his or her beliefs.
- Resistant alteration – Interns using this tactic made changes to the content or procedures in the classroom in ways that enriched and altered the instruction.
- Transformative action – Interns who used this tactic made significant changes to the education of students.

Although Goodman focused on the extent to which interns implemented instruction that required teachers to be reflective, active decision makers, his framework is also relevant for interpreting the actions of the four interns in this study as they negotiated the implementation of accommodations. All four interns used Overt Compliance initially as they learned about the students in the class and how the cooperating teacher designed instruction to meet student needs.

As discussed in the cases chapter, Debra’s instruction was heavily influenced by her concern for compliance, but it was not the Overt Compliance Goodman described.

Debra used Critical Compliance, and she felt very restricted in the instruction and types of accommodations she could offer. Although all the interns criticized current practices related to use of accommodations, Ashley and Debra used this tactic to the greatest extent. Both of them were dissatisfied with the ways in which they felt required to make accommodations or to assess student progress, and they talked about alternatives that they would attempt someday in their own classrooms. Both of them struggled with dilemmas related to fairness and grading, and they were not able to reconcile those beliefs to fit with current practices. Ashley and Debra were also unwilling or unable to attempt changes that would significantly impact the education of students with diverse needs in ways with which they were more comfortable.

Kelly and Erica were able to change their practices to meet the needs of diverse learners in ways that reflected their conceptions of accommodation. Kelly's changes were somewhat less substantial than Erica's, partly due to the fact that Kelly believed there was very little that needed changing. As discussed in the cases chapter, she and her CT had very similar beliefs about meeting the needs of diverse learners, so the changes Kelly made were more in line with how Goodman describes Accommodative Resistance and Resistant Alteration. Kelly modified the format of instruction to include kinesthetic activities to give students active experiences with content because she felt that students with limited English proficiency needed that accommodation. She also relied heavily on one-on-one assistance during seatwork to provide individualized guided practice to students who needed it without holding back faster students. Changes such as these enriched the education of the children with limited English proficiency, and the CT said that Kelly met their needs better than she could.

Erica also made substantial changes to her internship classroom, and these changes were in line with Goodman's Resistant Alteration. Erica instituted a positive behavior point system to balance out the punitive system in place. Only on one occasion did I see her use the punitive system, indicating that in fact, she had essentially replaced that system with her positive system. In addition, she incorporated several instructional changes that were substantial: she implemented cooperative learning and group projects; small-group center activities in reading with differentiated work for groups at various reading levels; and a focus on group alerting and attention strategies for the whole class as well as reluctant learners. Although these changes were not specifically related to accommodations for diverse learners, Erica considered them changes that directly impacted the learning of all students and specifically, struggling students. To Erica, any instructional change that was focused on student learning was a form of accommodation. What made Erica's changes especially significant was the fact that her CT continued to use all of them when Erica left, and even commented that she never would have thought of some of them. However, Erica's changes did not reach the level of Transformative Action because they did not allow students more control of their own learning.

Special education scholars have not used Goodman's political tactics of negotiation (1988) as a way to interpret teachers' implementation of accommodations. Accommodations are seen as a legal right for students with identified disabilities, and teachers are legally bound to provide them. However, it may be that teachers actually negotiate the implementation of accommodation in ways that align with their beliefs about effective instruction, fairness, and grading, as the interns in this study appeared to do. Teachers also contend with other factors such as the expectations of the school leader

and the grade level team. If this is the case, then their beliefs and tacit assumptions may need to be confronted and explored if we are to expect teachers to accommodate in ways that differ from their current beliefs and practices.

In addition to local constraints at the school and district level, the interns also had to negotiate implementation of accommodations through state-imposed constraints. The interns rarely mentioned constraints at the state level, such as the emphasis on standardized testing and accountability demands, possibly because they were placed during the fall semester when preparation for state testing is not as intense as during the spring semester, or because state context was accepted as a given. However, schools in Florida are operating in a context where standards are put into place for all students, which might very well limit the flexibility of teachers considering accommodations and provide yet another constraint for teachers to negotiate.

To summarize, colleagues, grade-level teams, administrators, county-level personnel, and state policies all impact how classroom teachers conceptualize and implement accommodations. As Goodman suggested, if our goal as teacher educators is to prepare teachers to be active, reflective decision makers – and here I substitute “active, reflective accommodators” – we would benefit from a serious examination of what that looks like in the classroom, with real constraints and real barriers to negotiate.

Adding Classroom Performance to Studies of Preservice Teacher Learning in Unified Programs

Looking at classroom practices of program participants and graduates should be, but rarely is, an important part of studying preservice teacher learning. This study extends existing literature by looking at actions in conjunction with beliefs and conceptions of program participants. The majority of research on program participants and graduates of

unified programs has been based on perceptions of preparedness rather than actual classroom performance. Although this study only examines practice during an internship semester, observations of these interns add detail to a literature base that previously relied on self-report and perceptions of employers. As Erica said, “You can talk about [accommodations] all you want, but until you try implementing them, it’s another thing” (E-I2: 366).

Erica’s view is supported by Richardson (1996) and Pajares (1992) who suggest that a separation of beliefs and actions is not possible. The relationship between beliefs and actions is seen as interactive (Richardson, 1996), so the artificial separation of one or the other in a study fails to give a complete picture of a participant’s knowledge. In addition, Pajares suggests that any assessment of teacher beliefs must include assessment of a teacher’s verbal expressions, predispositions to action, and teaching behaviors. In this study when I looked at the interns’ conceptualization of accommodation, I included interviews that indicated what the interns knew and believed about accommodations (verbal expressions), their ideas about how to accommodate in their own classroom someday (predispositions to action), and their implementation of accommodations in the classroom (teaching behaviors). In addition, assessing classroom performance also increases ecological validity (Kagan, 1990), which refers to the extent that a construct holds true in a real classroom. Without evidence of classroom performance, the discussion of accommodations is a purely theoretical or hypothetical one, and therefore lacks ecological validity.

Studies of teacher education program participants are rarely designed using the three components Pajares (1992) identified. Time and resource demands make it

prohibitive to do so on a grand scale. However, smaller scale studies, such as this study of four interns, clearly extend the existing literature base with depth and detail. In particular, the findings in this study explain the conceptualizations and actions of interns prepared in a unified program as they make accommodations for diverse learners. As mentioned in the literature review, only one similar study exists in peer-reviewed journals, focused on the decision-making processes of interns prepared in a pilot study for a unified program (Corbett et al., 1998). To understand more about the abilities of preservice teachers in unified programs as they prepare to enter the teaching field, more studies are needed that explore the actions and understandings of program participants. This study, as well as the study by Corbett et al., expands a literature base by offering more complete pictures of the abilities of preservice teachers.

Implications

The findings of this study are not intended to be used to generalize to the population of all interns prepared in unified programs. In addition, the participants and their settings were carefully chosen to optimize the likelihood that participants would be capable interns and the placements would allow them some flexibility to make accommodations. Despite these limitations, these findings have implications for teacher educators, school-based personnel, and the research community.

Implications for Teacher Educators

Knowing more about how these preservice teachers conceptualize accommodations and the dilemmas with which they struggle as they plan and implement them is helpful for teacher educators designing coursework related to accommodations. As mentioned in the cross-case chapter, the interns had different approaches to accommodations despite the fact that they were all taught in the same teacher education program. The interns

identified different aspects of their programs and their experiences that affected their understandings of accommodation. Ashley and Debra were strongly affected by their pre-internship experience; Kelly was affected by the classroom composition during her internship; and Erica frequently mentioned the influence of instructors in the teacher education program. There was no common experience or course that all the interns pointed to as being particularly helpful. However, it could be that the thematic integration of concepts related to accommodation across many courses and experiences in the program created a context in which preservice teachers constructed understandings about accommodation over time.

Understanding interns' dilemmas is important because it highlights elements of preservice teacher learning that may need more attention. The various dilemmas the interns faced fell into three themes identified in the cross-case chapter: issues related to fairness, grading and assessment, and implementation constraints. For these four interns, selected because they were recommended as strong students likely to have successful internship experiences, the teacher education program may have failed to address these issues adequately. Admittedly, course discussions and other readings and assignments may have addressed the themes without helping these interns come to conclusions, or it may be that the themes are abiding dilemmas related to the implementation of accommodations without any conclusive solutions. However, the dilemmas the interns identified clearly indicate areas that could use more attention during a preservice teacher education program.

It may be that required readings and course discussions were too theoretical to help interns learn to manage their dilemmas. The interns told me they thirst for practical

examples related to their dilemmas that take the theoretical discussions in courses to the level of classroom implementation. A book such as Tomlinson's (2001) *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms* does just that. Scenarios are presented that help readers see what discussions about fairness look and sound like in a classroom and in parent conferences; lists of practical steps for managing classrooms with differentiated instruction are presented; and an entire chapter is dedicated to grading, discussing alternatives and the benefits of each. Another book with cases discussing dilemmas interns face is by Rand and Shelton-Colangelo (2003). Ashley also suggested adding video-taped lessons of master teachers, as well as discussions with teachers about alternatives for setting up grading systems, as ways to increase understanding of accommodations in real classrooms. The interns in this study wanted more practical experiences with accommodations to help them manage their dilemmas. Knowing what types of dilemmas interns face when making accommodations will assist in course design.

Understanding how the interns in this study conceptualized and implemented accommodations will assist unified program designers and administrators in thinking about the overall goals and outcomes of unified programs. Specifically, what should be the goals of a unified program, regarding the preparation of general educators? Is the goal of a unified program to create teachers who are able to teach a wide range of students? Are preservice teachers learning what they need to learn in order to help students with diverse needs? How should programs be designed to realize the goals?

The interns in this study appeared willing to accommodate for diverse learners with mild disabilities, although Ashley and Debra both questioned the inclusion of students in

general education classes who were not able to do work that was close to grade-level standards. Even though they both planned lessons that were undifferentiated, whole-group lessons, such as the lessons that Baker and Zigmond (1990) saw when they concluded that general education teachers may not be meeting the needs of diverse learners, they also built in time daily to help struggling learners, which is something that Baker and Zigmond did not see on a large scale. Is that enough improvement in the ability of general education teachers to accommodate? Or, should unified programs be doing more to ensure that preservice teachers proactively think about curriculum as flexible and able to be differentiated to meet a variety of goals for students? This study is a small slice, albeit a rich slice full of description, that will aid program designers in thinking about the goals of unified programs and the types of teachers they hope to prepare.

Another implication of this study for teacher educators is linked to the literature on novice teachers. The interns in this study did not appear to be mired in the concerns of self and survival that Fuller (1969) identified as typical for novices. In addition, none of them struggled with classroom management, another typical concern for novices as identified by Fuller and Bown (1975). The interns were able to focus on the needs of individual students and accommodate for them, supporting the findings of studies that indicate interns are capable of focusing on concerns such as these, previously attributed to expert teachers (Copeland & D'Emidio-Caston, 1998; Corbett et al., 1998; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Admittedly, the interns in this study were selected because they were stellar students. However, this finding has implications for teacher educators as they

consider the learning and capabilities of preservice teachers who are able to transcend the concerns of typical novice teachers.

Implications for School-Based Personnel

This study also has implications for school-based personnel, specifically those involved in the induction of beginning teachers. The interns identified dilemmas that they continued to struggle with toward the end of their teacher education programs. It is likely that they will continue to think about these issues as they begin teaching in their own classrooms. Knowing more about the kinds of dilemmas these preservice teachers faced will assist administrators and mentors in providing supports for novice teachers as they begin accommodating diverse learners in their own classrooms.

The interns were very concerned about the constraints of school and district and believed that they were going to be restricted in the types of accommodation they could offer to students. It may be that this perception is a stronger factor than the reality of administrative constraints and consequently affects the implementation of accommodations. However, it is also possible that the constraints are real. It may be helpful for administrators to have discussions with novice teachers about school and district policies related to providing help for struggling learners. Learning more about the personnel and material resources available to them would also inform novice teachers about the range of options for students.

Pairing novice teachers with mentors who are able to help them think about and plan for diverse learners is also critical. The interns in this study reported that they had theoretical knowledge about accommodations but lacked practical knowledge of how to apply their ideas. Mentors who are skilled at accommodating would help these teachers use the knowledge they have attained.

There is no reason to believe that the dilemmas with which these interns struggled are peculiar to novice teachers. In fact, experienced teachers who are faced with the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms identify very similar struggles related to adapting curriculum and grading (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002). In addition, Debra frequently mentioned that accommodations can stigmatize students, which has been identified as a common concern of teachers (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; McIntosh et al., 1993; Vaughn et al., 1998). Experienced teachers may need some of the same types of supports as novice teachers, or may benefit from collaboration or teaming (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002). Identifying teacher leaders who can model effective practices and accommodations and help teachers manage their dilemmas will assist schools in making inclusion successful.

Implications for the Research Community

This study also has implications for the research community in terms of identifying areas that warrant further investigation. The participants in this study were interns, operating in classrooms that were not their own. They all mentioned ways they would do things differently when they had more freedom to do so. Beyond the constraints of internship, what do graduates of unified programs actually do in their own classrooms? Longitudinal studies are needed of graduates of unified programs as they enter the teaching force. Large-scale, quantitative studies could add evidence related to a population of program participants, and qualitative studies could provide in-depth information about the understandings and the classroom performance of graduates.

It will also be important to understand how graduates of unified and non-unified programs compare. Is there any added benefit of a unified program, or do both types of graduates teach and accommodate in similar ways? Are they equally effective in meeting

the needs of diverse learners? Research is needed to understand the differences among graduates from different types of programs.

Because this study was designed using phenomenology, the focus was on the conceptions and experiences of the participants, not of the cooperating teachers. Interviews with the cooperating teachers were used as triangulation rather than primary sources of data to provide evidence about the influence of the cooperating teacher on the conceptions of the interns. However, in a study based on constructivist principles, the role of the cooperating teacher in the interns' construction of knowledge of accommodations is a very important one. Future studies would benefit from a more intense study of the influence of the cooperating teacher as interns conceptualize and implement accommodations.

Student outcomes are quickly becoming the gold standard by which teacher effectiveness is judged. Teachers are being held accountable for student achievement through the use of accountability provisions in many states. In this study I did not attempt to measure the impact of accommodations on student achievement. This would have provided important information about the effectiveness of one approach to accommodations in relation to another approach, although making causal claims about the direct relation of accommodations to achievement would be difficult. More research is needed to understand the impact of accommodations on student achievement. New legislation that ensures students not only have access to but make progress in the general education curriculum will require that their progress be assessed through reliable and valid means.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT LETTERS

Dear PROTEACH Intern:

I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Teaching and Learning at the University of Florida. The purpose of this letter is to secure your consent for participation in a study of the accommodations interns make for diverse learners. I will be conducting classroom observations and interviews with four interns from the School of Teaching and Learning, and interviews with their cooperating teachers. I want to learn more about how interns prepared in our unified program make instructional accommodations for students with diverse needs. I am asking your consent for the following:

- To conduct a preliminary interview with you to learn about the classroom in which you are placed.
- To observe you 10 times during the semester in your internship placement. Observations will last approximately one hour and will be scheduled ahead of time. I will collect field notes that focus on your use of instructional accommodations for students with diverse needs.
- To conduct post-observation interviews with you following the observations to discuss your use of instructional accommodations.
- To obtain the PATHWISE data collected by your field supervisor during the 4 scheduled observations.
- To conduct a follow-up interview with you after the semester has ended to discuss the study process, specifically to obtain your feedback and suggestions for future studies. During these sessions I will also share interview transcripts with you for the purpose of verification and accuracy.
- To interview your cooperating teacher after your internship has ended, to gather information on her beliefs about diverse learners and accommodations, and her perception of your ability to meet the needs of all students. This will be conducted after all your evaluations and grades are submitted, and after I've completed all interviews and observations with you.

I do not perceive any risk due to your participation in the study. In fact, students generally enjoy the opportunity to talk about their education experiences. There will be no compensation for participation in this study. Your identity will be confidential to the extent provided by law. Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw your consent to participate and to discontinue your participation in the study at any time without prejudice.

Please sign and return to me a copy of this letter. Keep the second copy for your records. If you have any questions about the study or the procedures for data collection,

please contact me (392-9191 x 288 or adamsa@coe.ufl.edu), or my advisor, Dr. Elizabeth Bondy (392-9191 x 247 or bondy@coe.ufl.edu). If you have any questions about the rights of research participants, you can contact the University of Florida Institutional Review Board Office, P.O. Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, 32611.

Sincerely,

Alyson Adams, Principal Investigator
Doctoral Candidate

I have read the procedure described above for the study of interns accommodating for diverse learners. I agree to participate in the procedure, and I have received a copy of this description.

Signature of Participant

Date

_____ Initial here if you give me permission to maintain contact with you after this study is completed for the purposes of contacting you in the future regarding a follow up study.

Supplement to Informed Consent Letter
Accommodations Interns Make (AIM) for Diverse Learners
Protocol #2002-144

I give permission for Alyson Adams to collect artifacts and lesson plans related to my use of accommodations for diverse learners. I understand that this material will be used as part of the study, Accommodations Interns Make (AIM) for Diverse Learners, in which I have agreed to participate and for which I have previously signed an letter of informed consent. If I decide at any time to withdraw my participation, all artifacts and materials will be returned to me and not used in any manner for this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Dear Cooperating Teacher:

I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Teaching and Learning at the University of Florida. The purpose of this letter is to secure your consent for participation in a study of the accommodations interns make for diverse learners. I will be conducting classroom observations and interviews with four interns from the School of Teaching and Learning, and interviews with their cooperating teachers. I want to learn more about how interns prepared in our unified program make instructional accommodations for students with diverse needs and how the internship context influences their decision making.

I am asking permission to interview you one time, after the Fall internship has ended, to gather information on your classroom context, how you plan for and teach students with diverse instructional and behavioral needs, and your perception of your intern's ability to meet the needs of all students. This will be conducted after all intern evaluations and grades are submitted, and after I've completed all interviews and observations with the intern.

I do not perceive any risk due to your participation in the study. There will be no compensation for participation in this study. Your identity will be confidential to the extent provided by law. Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw your consent to participate and to discontinue your participation in the study at any time without prejudice.

Please sign and return to me a copy of this letter. Keep the second copy for your records. If you have any questions about the study or the procedures for data collection, please contact me (392-9191 x 288 or adamsa@coe.ufl.edu), or my advisor, Dr. Elizabeth Bondy (392-9191 x 247 or bondy@coe.ufl.edu). If you have any questions about the rights of research participants, you can contact the University of Florida Institutional Review Board Office, P.O. Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, 32611.

Sincerely,

Alyson Adams, Principal Investigator
 Doctoral Candidate

I have read the procedure described above for the study of interns accommodating for diverse learners. I agree to participate in the procedure, and I have received a copy of this description.

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX B
PROGRAM MATERIALS

Unified Elementary PROTEACH Course of Study: UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

Semester 1		Semester 2	
Composition	3	EDF 1005 Introduction to Education	3
Mathematics	3	Biological Science	3
Social and Behavioral Science	3	Humanities	3
Physical Science	3	Composition/Literature	3
Humanities	3	STA 2122 Statistics	3
Semester 3		Semester 4	
EDG 2701 Teaching Diverse Populations	3	EME 2040 Intro to Ed. Technology	3
SPC 2600	3	Mathematics	3
Humanities:	3	Humanities	3
Physical or Biological Science with lab	3	Developmental Psychology	3
General Psychology	3	General Education Elective	3
Semester 5		Semester 6	
EDF 3115 Child Development for Inclusive Education	3	EEX 3257 Core Teaching Strategies	3
EEX 3070 Teachers and Learners In Inclusive Schools	3	EEX 3616 Core Classroom Management Strategies	3
SDS 3430 Family and Community Involvement in Education	3	SPA 3002 Communication Disorders	3
LAE 3005 Children’s Literature in Childhood Education	3	EEC 3706 Emergent Literacy	3
MUE 3212 Music for the Elementary Child	2	EDG 4930 ESOL Language and Culture	3
ARE 4314 Art Education for Elementary Schools	2	HSC 3301 Health Science Education in Elementary Schools	3
Field Component: Bright Futures integrated in to EEX 3070; Project Book Talk integrated into LAE 3005		Field component: Classroom observation and practice infused into EEX 3257, EEC 3706 and EEX 3616	
Total	16	Total	18
Semester 7		Semester 8	
SCF 4310 Elementary Science Methods for the Inclusive Classroom	3	LAE 4314 Language Arts for Diverse Learners	3
LAS ##### Science (3000 or above)	3	ENC 3254 Writing for Prof. Commun.	3
MAE 4310 Teaching Mathematics in the Inclusive Elementary Classroom	3	SSE 4312 Social Studies for Diverse Learners	3
LAS ##### Math (3000 or above)	3	LAS ##### Social Sciences (3000 or above)	3
EME 4406 Integrating Technology Into the Classroom	3	EDE 4942 Integrated Teaching in Elementary Education	3
Field Component: Integrated into SCF 4310, MAE 4310 and EME 4406		EDE 4942 involves Placement in elementary setting for 15 hours per week	
Total	16	Total	15

GRADUATE YEAR/ Masters Program
(36 hours)

Certification Options

During the graduate year, students may select from two certification tracks.

Option A: Dual Certification Track

- Confers Elementary and Special Education Certification
- 12 hours specialization coursework taken in special education
- Students may select severe or mild disabilities concentration

Option B: Single Certification Track

- Confers Elementary Certification
- Students select a 12 hour specialization in one of three areas
 - A) Elementary Inter-disciplinary: 3 hours each advanced pedagogy in literacy, math, science and social studies (technology infused)
 - B) Elementary Specialist: 12 hours advanced content pedagogy in literacy, math/science, or technology
 - C) ESOL Specialist: 12 hours advanced ESOL pedagogy

Coursework

EDE 6948/EEX 6863 Internship	12 hours
EEX 6786 Transdisciplinary Teaming....OR.....	
EDE 6225 Practices in Childhood Education	3 hours
EDF 5552 Role of Schools in Democratic Society	3 hours
EDF 5441 Assessment In General and Exceptional Student Ed	3 hours
EDE ##### Curriculum, Methods and Assessment for ESOL	3 hours
Specialization (Includes 3 hr. Practicum for Special Ed Only)	12 hours

** This document describes the program for all students who entered from fall, 1999 through spring, 2001. Program modifications to accommodate new state mandates are in progress and will be implemented for all students who enter fall, 2002.

APPENDIX C
DATA MANAGEMENT LOG

Interviews

Participant	Context	Follow up	Member Check	Cooperating Teacher
Erica	8/28 75 min.	12/13 60 min.	1/28 30 min	12/3 45 min.
Kelly	9/5 75 min.	12/6 60 min.	2/21 75 min.	12/4 50 min.
Debra	9/8 60 min.	11/25 80 min.	2/12 40 min.	11/20 35 min.
Ashley	9/15 75 min.	11/19 50 min.	2/4 40 min	12/4 60 min.

Observations

Erica -- TOTAL TIME: Observations: 390 min (6 1/2 hrs) Interviews: 120 min (2 hrs)

1	9/9	Saxon Math Lesson & Math Meeting 60 minutes (11:30 – 12:30) Reflective interview after (15 min) & some email
2	9/19	Social studies Lesson (Table of Contents) 45 minutes (8:00 – 8:45) Reflective interview after (10 min.) & email
3	9/25	Math Lesson & Math meeting 60 minutes (11:30 – 12:30) Reflective interview after (15 min.)
4	10/8	Community Unit Lesson (maps) 45 minutes (8:00 – 8:45) Reflective interview next day via phone (20 min.)
5	10/17	Community Unit Lesson (voting) 45 minutes (8:00 – 8:45) Reflective interview after observation #6
6	10/23	Reading Lesson (Balto) 90 minutes (9:00 – 10:30) Reflective interview after (40 min)
7	10/28	Science Lesson (inherit/traits) 45 minutes (8-8:45) Reflective interview after (20 min)

Kelly -- TOTAL TIME: Observations: 415 min (<7 hrs) Interviews: 105 min + email

1	9/9	Morning Meeting & writing 70 minutes (8:00 – 9:10) Reflective interview – some during seatwork (10 min.), some email, some phone.
2	9/16	Morning meeting (end) & math (odd/even) 80 minutes 8:30 – 9:50 Reflective interview after (20 min)
3	9/23	Reading Lesson 55 minutes (11:35 – 12:30) Reflective interview later...phone (15 min.)
4	10/9	Personal Health Unit Lesson (goal setting) 45 minutes (8:30 – 9:45) Reflective interview via email
5	10/16	Personal Health Unit Lesson (feelings) 45 minutes (8:30 – 9:15) Reflective interview via phone (20 min.)
6	10/22	Spelling & Science Lessons (digestion) 75 minutes (12:30 – 1:45) Reflective interview after (20 min.)
7	10/29	Math Lesson (sunshine math) 45 minutes (9-9:45) Reflective interview after (20 min)

Debra --TOTAL TIME: Observations: 460 min (7.67 hrs) Interviews: 140 min (2.33 hrs)

1	9/10	Reading Lesson (bears) 90 minutes (7:55 – 9:25) Reflective interview an hour later (15 min.)
2	9/16	Science lesson, writing lesson, end of math lesson 90 minutes (12:15 – 1:45) Reflective interview after (20 min)
3	9/24	Math lesson (greater than/less than) 55 min (9:35 – 10:30) Reflective interview after (10 min)
4	10/1	Reading Lesson (Poppleton the Pig) 90 minutes (7:55 – 9:25) Reflective interview via email
5	10/18	Colonial America Unit Lesson (homes) 45 minutes (1-1:45) Reflective interview after (60 min.)
6	10/22	Social Skills Lesson (cooperative learning) 45 minutes (9:45 – 10:30) Reflective interview via email
7	10/29	Colonial America Unit Lesson (jobs) 45 minutes (1-1:45) Reflective interview after (35 min.)

Ashley -- TOTAL TIME: Observations: 425 min. (>7 hrs) Interviews: 160 min (2.67 hrs)

1	9/17	Reading & morning work 90 minutes (8:10-9:40) Reflective interview after (20 min.)
2	9/24	Math Lesson 60 min (11:20-12:20) Reflective interview after (20 min.)
3	10/2	Reading/Writing block 95 minutes (8:10 – 9:45) Reflective interview after (30 min.)
4	10/8	Rainforest Unit Lesson (terrariums) 45 minutes (1 – 1:45) Reflective interview after (10 min.)
5	10/14	Rainforest Unit Lesson (emergent layer) 45 Minutes (1-1:45) Reflective interview after (20 min.)
6	10/22	Rainforest Unit Lesson (taste test) 45 minutes (1-1:45) Reflective interview after (30 min)
7	10/28	Rainforest Unit Lesson (saving the RF) 45 minutes (1-1:45) Reflective interview after (20 min.)

Artifacts: PATHWISE Observations (4 each) & Units

Name	Artifact	Received artifact?
Kelly	Personal Health unit PW 9/6 PW 9/26 PW 10/7 PW science lesson (no date)	Yes (& changes) Yes Yes Yes Only lesson plan
Erica	Communities unit PW 9/12 PW 9/16 PW 9/30 PW 10/7	Yes (& reflection) Yes Yes Yes Yes
Debra	Colonial America unit PW 9/12 PW 10/8 PW 10/14 PW 11/5	Yes (& reflection) Yes Yes Yes Yes
Ashley	Rainforest unit PW 9/18 PW 10/1 PW 10/14 PW 10/31	Yes (& changes) Yes Yes Yes Only summary

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PARTICIPANTS

Interview 1 Protocol (Classroom Context)

1. Tell me about the classroom you are interning in.
2. Tell me a little about your cooperating teacher.
 - a. How does she interact with children?
 - b. What is her teaching style?
3. Tell me about the students in this classroom and their academic needs.
 - a. Are there students you are concerned about?
 - b. Do you have any ESE students in this classroom?
 - c. How and where do they receive their instruction?
4. Now think about diverse learners in a broader, more general context. What do you think it means when we talk about diverse learners?
 - a. Who are they?
 - b. What do they have problems with?
 - c. What does it look like when they struggle?
 - d. Where have you learned this information?
 - e. Do you have any prior experience with diverse learners? Explain.
5. What is your understanding of accommodations?
 - a. Who is entitled to classroom accommodations? Why?
 - b. Who makes the decisions about accommodations?
 - c. When are the decisions made?
 - d. Do accommodations ever hinder student learning? Explain.
 - e. Are accommodations different from modifications or adaptations? Explain.
 - f. Where did you learn this information?
 - g. Do you have any experience making accommodations? Explain.
6. How will you plan for the different needs of students in this classroom? What kinds of things will you consider when making these decisions? Are there barriers or dilemmas that you'll have to consider?
7. What are your expectations for this internship?
 - a. What do you want to work on?
 - b. Will any of your prior experiences have a huge impact on this internship? How?
8. How much freedom do you think you'll have in this classroom?
 - a. Do you feel comfortable to do things your own way?
 - b. Can you make changes to the curriculum or the way things are taught?
 - c. How much freedom do you think teachers at this school have?
 - d. Are they allowed to make changes to the curriculum?

Post-Observation Interview Protocol (following each classroom observation)

1. So how do you think it went? Were all of your objectives met?
2. Evaluate the success of your lesson in terms of how individual students performed.
 - a. To what extent did students learn what you intended? How do you know?
 - b. Talk about a student who easily grasped this lesson. Did you do anything in particular to help him/her succeed?
 - c. Talk about a student who had difficulty with this lesson. Did you do anything in particular to help him/her succeed?
3. What accommodations did you make today?
 - a. Why did you choose that particular accommodation?
 - b. When did you make that decision?
 - c. What do you know about this particular student that made that accommodation appropriate?
 - d. How did you learn how to use that particular accommodation?
 - e. Did you experience any difficulty implementing this accommodation?
 - f. Have you used this accommodation before? Explain.
 - g. Would you use this accommodation again? Explain.
 - h. Did anything affect the implementation of this accommodation?
 - i. What do you plan to do next for this particular student? Will you change the way you plan for him/her based on what you learned today through using that accommodation?
 - j. (If student says no accommodations were made today) Were there any other ways that you helped meet the needs of different students instead of making accommodations during the lesson? Would you do things differently next time?
 - k. Are there any accommodations you considered and then did not implement? Talk more about that.
4. Think back over the past week. Did you attempt any accommodations that really worked or really bombed? Tell me more about that.

Interview 2 Protocol (Follow-up interview after field placement has ended)

1. How do you feel about your ability to meet the needs of diverse learners in your internship?
 - a. Do you feel prepared to do so in your own classroom?
 - b. After you graduate, do you think you'll teach in a classroom in which it will be necessary to make accommodations for diverse learners? Talk about this.
 - c. Who are diverse learners and what does that term mean?
2. Did this internship experience (or any of the people involved) have any influence on how you now think about teaching or accommodations, or how you actually teach?
3. Do you feel it is important to make instructional accommodations? Why or why not?
 - a. Who is entitled to classroom accommodations? Why?
 - b. Who makes decisions about accommodations?
 - c. When are the decisions made?
 - d. Do accommodations ever hinder student learning? How?
 - e. What kinds of dilemmas do you encounter regarding accommodations (either planning or implementing)?
 - f. Where did you learn this information?
4. How much freedom did you have in this classroom?
 - a. Were you allowed to make changes to the curriculum or the way things were taught? Would you give me an example, please.
 - b. How much freedom do teachers at this school have?
 - c. Are they allowed to make changes to the curriculum? Can you give me an example?
5. What advice would you give an intern continuing on with this set of students next semester?
6. Thinking back to your pre-internship last semester, did you accommodate differently then? Why or why not?
 - a. Have your ideas or beliefs about accommodations changed because of your preinternship? If so, how?
 - b. Have your ideas or beliefs changed because of your interaction with a co-teacher? Explain.
7. Tell me a little bit about your participation in this study. Did my involvement in your classroom affect your teaching in any way? Is there anything I can do to make this an easier process for other study participants if I were to do it again?
8. (Present a narrative interpretation of the participant's definition of diverse learners and accommodations, based on prior interview data). This is how I interpreted your thinking about diverse learners and accommodations based on our previous interviews. Do you feel this is an accurate portrayal? Is there anything you'd like to modify or add?
9. As I have begun analyzing my data for this study, I have identified a theme of _____. Do you think I'm on the right track? Does that seem to fit with your experience?

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS

Introduction: As you know, last semester I was conducting a study involving _____ who interned in your classroom. Part of my study concerns understanding why she made some of the instructional decisions that she did. Research suggests that the cooperating teacher is one of the most influential factors in intern decision-making. For that reason, I wanted to understand a little more about you and your classroom, and also your perceptions of how _____ seemed to meet the needs of all students.

(Context Questions)

1. Would you tell me about some of the routines and features of your classroom such as...
 - a. Instructional grouping?
 - b. Service delivery for students with special needs?
 - c. Discipline procedures / managerial routines?
 - d. Instructional routines?
 - e. (any special features that I've noted during previous classroom visits)
2. Can you tell me a little bit more about why you set things up in these ways?

(Knowledge / Beliefs about accommodations / learners)

3. Would you tell me a little bit about this group of students? Are they diverse? Explain. (probe for who they consider "diverse" and what kinds of needs these diverse learners have)
4. What do you do when confronted with students whose instructional and/or behavioral needs differ from those of the majority of the class? (probe for information about how they accommodate, when they make these decisions, who gets the accommodation)
5. Do you seek outside help? Explain.

(Perceptions of Interns' ability to meet students' needs)

6. What is your overall assessment of _____'s ability to meet the needs of diverse learners?
7. Can you give me some examples that helped you draw this conclusion?
8. Would you have done things differently? Explain.
9. How would you characterize your role as cooperating teacher, particularly as it relates to helping _____ meet the needs of all students?

APPENDIX F
DOCUMENT SUMMARY FORM

Participant Code: _____

Site: _____

Date: _____

Name / Type of Document: _____

Brief summary of contents:

Initial researcher reaction to the experience:

Unusual circumstances during the experience?

Overall importance of these data?

Questions posed by these data?

(Adapted from Miles & Huberman, 1994)

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Alyson Adams was born April 18, 1967, in Bangor, Maine, during a spring snowstorm. Alyson lived in Okinawa, Japan, during her eighth grade year, and lived in Ramstein, Germany, during high school. Having acquired a taste for sunshine, Alyson then moved to Gainesville to attend the University of Florida. She received a bachelor's degree in finance in December 1988, and a master's degree in elementary education in May 1992, with some exciting adventures in Atlanta in between.

Alyson began her teaching career at Fort McCoy K-8 School in the middle of the Ocala National Forest. She taught fifth grade for three years and sixth grade for two, and she received the Marion County Golden Apple Rookie Teacher of the Year Award in 1994. During her five years of teaching there, Alyson was the general education co-teacher in one of the first inclusive classroom models in Marion County.

Alyson resumed teaching in Gainesville, Florida, after two years maternity leave with her daughter, Hannah. She taught at Howard Bishop Middle School for one semester in a classroom for students identified as at-risk, before returning to college to pursue doctoral level studies in the area of general and special education collaboration. She was awarded a two-year fellowship through the Florida Leadership and Inquiry in Teacher Education grant, funded through the Office for Special Education Programs. She was also awarded one year of support through the AERA / Spencer Pre-Dissertation Fellows Program.

Alyson pursued the areas of collaboration, inclusion, and teacher education through a variety of coursework in both the Department of Special Education and the School of Teaching and Learning. In addition to coursework, she explored assistantships that would expand her knowledge in these areas. Alyson worked on a grant through the Department of Special Education to study collaboration in two urban schools. She also taught a special education course on learning strategies and collaborated with cross-departmental teaching teams of instructors and course planners.

Alyson's desire to keep one foot in each of the worlds of special education and general education is also evident in her record of professional service. During her doctoral program, Alyson was actively involved in the Special Education Association of Doctoral Students and served on the coordination committee for the Unified Teacher Education Program. She was also a member of the American Educational Research Association and the Council for Exceptional Children.

In the future, Alyson plans to work with teachers, principals, and parent groups to improve the education of students in high poverty schools, through her appointment as Program Coordinator at the Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida. Through the Center's Florida Teacher Fellowship Program, she hopes to help create a collaborative network of professional educators in Florida schools.