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Interagency Collaboration for the Provision of Services to Migrant Children with Disabilities: An Exploratory Study

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Interagency Collaboration for the Provision of Educational Services to Migrant Children with Disabilities: An Exploratory Study

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
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DEDICATION

An Entry from My Research Journal: *January 7, 2014*

In my frustration for writing today, I thought of the person who put me here, Angie. Without her, none of this would have happened – She is a dear person forever in my heart- Love you Angie – Thanks for giving me the encouragement to reach infinite heights- You are my #1!

I dedicate this work to you, Angie Black. You gave me that "one moment in time." My educational journey began because you believed in me despite the many educational obstacles that being a migrant student dropout, migrant worker, teen wife, and teen mother brought to my life. I will never forget the many words you constantly shared with me to encourage me during this educational voyage. Through your sentiments, you imparted your belief in me to succeed, your statements of motivation, similar to the one that follows, contributed to the reason I entered into all of my educational programs, including my Ph.D. program which afforded me the opportunity to engage in this dissertation study about migrant students. My future endeavors on behalf of our migrant students and families will be guided by your advice:

> *"You are the brightest star in my sky. What I love most is that your brightness illuminates the shadows darkening the doorways of our migrant families. Keep beaming the light of hope to those in despair." Angie Black*

Gracias, Angie, te debo mucho, y te pago con eterno amor. *¡Lo logre!*

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ABSTRACT

Migrant students face many challenges to their educational experiences due to the migratory lifestyle of their families as they seek employment in agriculture across state and school district lines. For migrant student with disabilities, these challenges are exacerbated. Migrant children with disabilities may be eligible and entitled to educational services from migrant education, special education, and ELL programs which are distinct federal programs coordinated as separate agencies. This exploratory study examined the extent to which, if any, collaboration exists within three Florida school districts' providing educational services to migrant children with disabilities through the migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. Data were collected through personal interviews with nine district level supervisors, one each per district: migrant education, special education, and ELL programs using a semi-structured interview protocol. Data were analyzed through a latent content analysis to identify, code, and categorize patterns (Mayan, 2009) regarding the extent to which, if any, supervisors collaborated when developing and coordinating educational services for migrant students with disabilities. Further, data were reviewed through document analysis provided by the participants or accessed through school, district, or state websites. Finally, the data from the interviews and document analysis were aligned with Gitlin et al. (1994) five-stage model for collaboration framework to determine the extent to which, if any, the characteristics of the five stages for collaboration exists for each district, and if not, the potential for them to be developed and lead to collaboration. The intent of this study was to explore current practice and use this knowledge to provide recommendations for future practice and scholarship regarding interagency

collaboration between migrant education, special education, and ELL programs providing educational services to migrant students with disabilities. The findings for this study suggest that collaboration benefits students, programs and overall school systems. However, instilling a spirit and developing a culture of collaboration is challenging and requires direct deliberate and explicit work by the districts. Recommendations for research and practice are provided.

Chapter One

Introduction

I grew up in a constant state of mobility on the highway, between states and counties, and enrolling in many different schools along the way. I traveled alongside my father, mother, and siblings so that my parents could provide for the family by harvesting fruits and vegetables. Our family was a part of a community known as migrant farmworkers. Participating and accessing educational services other children regularly received was difficult, if not impossible, due to the isolation our living conditions created. Attending school regularly and maintaining educational continuity was a challenge and resulted in a fragmented educational experience that at times did not meet my needs. As a current educator, I realize that meeting the educational needs of migrant students in constant transition is a complex process that requires extensive time and effort. For many migrant families, this additional time and effort is not available as the economic survival of their families takes precedence. Unfortunately, for many migrant students, as it was for me, the frustration, stress, and pressure that obtaining an education presents is stronger than overcoming it and many end up dropping out of school. I dropped out of school, but thanks to some very persistent educators, I was able to recover and succeed despite obstacles to graduate high school and earn several higher education degrees. Graduating from high school and from college was not easy; however, with the positive influence and guidance I received, I excelled and received more education than I could possibly have imagined. With the education I received, I have been a successful classroom teacher for migrant students, have planned and

coordinated educational programs for migrant students as a school based administrator, and currently making decisions and implementing programs as a district level migrant program supervisor responsible for migrant education programming in many schools district-wide. Hence, I bring to this research study the unique and multiple personal perspectives of a child from a migrant background, a teacher working to meet the needs of migrant students, and an administrator of migrant programs at the school and district level. I now have the opportunity to blend these experiences with my research studies to address perhaps the most challenging group of students, migrant students with disabilities. These children face all of the obstacles typically associated with their mismatch between family's lifestyle and traditional school settings while also navigating the additional concerns that arise because of a disability.

Migrant Students

Schooling

For migrant students, mobility and language present challenges for participation in assessments and schooling (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009; Green, 2003; United States Department of Education, 2002). Throughout the United States, migrant students enter the public school system at various times during the school year. They often enroll late or leave early to accompany their parents as they travel extensively to search for agriculture employment. In some cases, migrant students leave school without formally withdrawing and accessing records (Cranston-Gingras & Paul, 2008; Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009; Green, 2003; Lozano-Rodriguez, J. & Catellano, J., 1999) or completing important standardized assessments necessary to promote them to the next grade level or to enable the receiving school in making appropriate academic placements (Cranston-Gingras & Paul, 2008; National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992; Pappamihiel, 2004). Some migrant students also struggle with their education because they have limited English

language skills required to be able to successfully perform in all English instruction classrooms (Artiles, & Ortiz, 2002; Artiles & Harry, 2006; Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009; Green, 2003). The Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training (ESCORT, 2011) conducted the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) in the state of Florida regarding migrant students and found that 48% of migrant students in Florida are identified as English language learners (ELLs). Almost half of migrant students in Florida receive academic support for language which adds a layer of challenge that places migrant students in a vulnerable situation. Research shows that for non-English or limited English speaking students, it can take up to seven years for them to develop the academic English skills (English skills needed to interact with textbooks and educational settings) necessary to perform at the same pace as their non-ELL peers (Collier, 1995; Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Keiffer, & Rivera 2006; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian 2006; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Moore & Zainuddin 2003; Oakeley, Urrabazo, & Yang, 1998). Although mobility and language are two areas that are identified in the literature as causing academic struggles for migrant students, another area of concern with regard to students from migrant backgrounds is the compounding effect of disability on some of these students (Strong & Maralani, 1998). Disability, including learning disabilities that are not addressed and accommodated in the classroom could potentially result in additional risk factors in an academic setting (Ortiz, 2001).

Students with Disabilities

Providing educational services to migrant students with disabilities can be a challenging task; as an attempt to counteract the risk factors these students face, federal legislative policies exist that can mitigate some of these risks including Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA and the Migrant Education program (MEP). Both of these programs provide additional academic and

social service support that can contribute to successful academic achievement for migrant students with disabilities. The existence of federal programs provides migrant students educational supports that are above and beyond the core instruction and are developed in response to the challenges that migrant students confront. Migrant students are considered one of the most disadvantaged groups entering schools (Cranston-Gingras & Paul, 2008; Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009; Green, 2003; National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992; National Migrant and Seasonal Headstart Collaboration Office, 2009). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2006), there are 400,000 students classified as migrant in the United States. Of these, approximately 32,166 live within the 67 school districts in Florida (ESCORT, 2011). Data reports from the Florida Department of Education (2006) show that 3,813 migrant students in Florida are dual classified as migrant students with disabilities. Students are identified as migrant if they travel across county and state lines with their families to search for agricultural employment (NCLB, Title 1, Part C, Migrant Education Program, 2001) because of economic necessity. High mobility throughout the school year affects school attendance and performance and is the primary distinguishing factor that presents challenges to school systems in the delivery of services to migrant students and this is enhanced for migrant students with disabilities.

Migrant Lifestyle Challenges

In addition to mobility, migrant students often face other challenges associated with the migrant lifestyle such as poverty, cultural and social isolation, age-grade discrepancy, limited English skills, varying curriculums, inconsistent school attendance, immigration issues and poor health that exacerbate an already dismal situation (Cranston-Gingras, & Paul, 2008; National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992; Pappamihiel, 2004). Migrant students often suffer from health issues that result from accompanying their parents to the agricultural fields where

they are exposed to pesticides, chemicals, dangerous equipment, and extreme weather. This exposure has been linked to health issues and other disabilities (Hanson & Donahue, 2003; Strong & Maralani, 1998) that for some migrant students present negative implications for schooling. The migrant lifestyle's environmental, societal, economic, political, and educational factors coupled with disability further places migrant students in jeopardy of school failure and leaving school without receiving a high school diploma (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009; Green, 2003).

Academic Deficits

The work group of the CNA (ESCORT, 2011) conducted a study of the academic performance of migrant students as compared to non-migrant students in Florida and found that migrant students' proficiency in reading on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) was significantly lower, especially at the secondary level (ESCORT, 2011). A student is considered to be proficient in reading if they score a level 3 or above on the FCAT test. Reading proficiency is especially important for students who are in third and 10^{th} grade because grade promotion and graduation is dependent on these scores. Given that migrant students' reading achievement levels have remained constant (ESCORT, 2011) at level 1 and level 2, which is considered below proficiency, for several years in most school districts, the forecast for the potential success of migrant students will continue to be alarming. In their report to the state migrant education program director, the ESCORT (2011) work group found that only 38% of migrant students score proficient in reading on the FCAT as compared to 61% of non-migrant students. The percentage drops to 28% for migrant students who are also classified ELLs. Since reading is the foundation for all other content, the academic achievement of students is dependent on learning to read (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Gunn, Feil, Seeley, Seversen, & Walker, 2006).

In his 10-year longitudinal study "Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation" Hernandez (2011) found that the students in poverty who could not read proficiently by the end of third grade were four times more likely to leave school without graduating and the risk factor further increased if basic reading skills were lacking. Students in these circumstances are considered to be in "double jeopardy" of dropping out (Hernandez, 2011). Considering that many migrant students with disabilities and limited English language skills are from families in poverty and in some cases not proficient readers, the "double jeopardy" risk factor increases for this subgroup of students and their double jeopardy threats become triple and quadruple threats when the academic risk factors of migrancy and disability are considered.

Migrant, Special Education, and ELL Students

Data from the FDOE (2006) reports regarding migrant students enrolled in Florida school districts indicate that some students are simultaneously classified as migrant student, exceptional students (ESE), and ELL students. Therefore, to meet varying educational needs of migrant students with disabilities, school systems are faced with accessing academic support from three distinct federal programs, in this case, migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. Services provided by these programs are supplemental in nature and are beyond the core instruction with an emphasis on enhancing the educational support migrant students receive that cannot be met through the regular core instruction or school programs. Each of these programs has established rules and regulations for identification, eligibility, and service provision based on a pre-established set criteria. The identification of migrant students is possibly the most difficult due to the mobility of their families and the complicated nature of how data are collected which is usually inconsistent and varies (ESCORT, 2011). The enrollment data collected for the CNA

(2011) reports there are 32, 166 eligible migrant students in 60 Florida school districts (ESCORT, 2011) while the consolidated state performance report for the same year (2011) showed 27, 382 eligible migrant students. The data I used for the purpose of this study was from the FDOE (2006) data reports which showed 39,408 migrant students in Florida. These data reports were used in this study because of their inclusion of disability and ELL categories pertinent to this study. Of the 39, 408 migrant student enrollment found in the FDOE (2006) data, 3,813 migrant students were reported as migrant students with disabilities and 11,398 were migrant students with limited English proficiency (FDOE, 2006). The knowledge of enrollment of migrant students who are in all three categories is important to note for this study. Despite the inconsistencies of the data, which is common for migrant students, the presence of migrant students with disabilities cannot be ignored and deserves attention. Migrant students in all three categories are eligible for educational services from three distinct federal programs: migrant education, special education, and ELL, and thereby present a complicated case to school districts serving them through supplemental supports beyond the core program.

Migrant Program Eligibility

The Migrant Education Program (MEP) establishes criteria to identify students for services (NCLB, 2001). These criteria are based on a specific determining factor for migrant students, mobility, which is caused by the agricultural employment of the migrant students' families. However, the focus of the MEP is on identifying migrant students in order to immediately begin provision of supplemental support services through a case management approach. Identifying and referring migrant students for services from all other agencies they are entitled to receive is the focal point of the MEP.

Special Education Program Identification

Similarly, special education program staff are also responsible for identifying students; however, in this instance the distinguishing factor that establishes the need for service provision is a specific disability category such as “specific learning disability,” “intellectual disability,” or “emotional/behavioral disabilities.” The identification procedures and establishment of educational supports for special education services are more extensive and lengthier due to the assessment and evaluation process which could be extended when students move or lack appropriate school records as is the case for migrant students. At the time the identification procedures are completed, educational services are established by developing an individual education plan (IEP) and outlines the educational supports school staff are required to provide.

ELL Program Identification

Other services that migrant students with disabilities may qualify for are related to language acquisition. Many migrant students with disabilities are ELL and require language support in the classroom. The types of support ELL students receive are established by Title III, Part A, Language Acquisition Program (No Child Left Behind, 2001) requirements and these are developed to provide services that address English language skills. ELL programs also have identification procedures that establish service provision based on language assessments for children learning the English language. Specifically, ELL programs identify students for language enhancement programs by conducting an initial survey of the students’ home language. When a student discloses that they speak a language other than English at home, then further assessments are conducted including tests that measure the level of English, including speaking and listening skills a student possesses. Through these assessments students are classified either non-English, limited English, or fluent English and their programs can be prescribed.

Variability in Identification

At times, the variability of the focus of each program leads to a disjointed service delivery plan for migrant students with disabilities that also have lack of or limited English language skills. Students with needs related to mobility, disability, and language acquisition present unique challenges to school district programs that typically operate in isolation. The knowledge required to plan and deliver services that address each one of these academic-focused needs would possibly benefit migrant students with disabilities if shared among the three programs. Collaboration among the three programs is necessary so that migrant students with a disability (some ELL) receive adequate educational services to meet the challenges that mobility, disability, and language acquisition present to their educational experiences.

Challenges of Service Provision for Migrant Students with Disabilities

Mobility

Researchers in the field of migrant education have described migrant students as "invisible children" and one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of students due to the nature of their family's need to pursue agricultural work in various counties and states (Cranston-Gingras & Paul, 2008; Hanson & Donahue, 2003; Pappamihiel, 2004; Strong & Maralani, 1998). In addition to being highly mobile, many migrant students and their families speak little to no English which further complicates their educational experiences (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009) because migrant families are less apt to pursue additional educational support especially when a sense of any legal aspect may be necessitated such as the potential legal implications of special education. Moreover, migrant students with disabilities are easily overlooked because they live in employer provided housing that is often long distances and shared by other families as well as secluded from school vicinities. Through no fault of their

own, migrant students with disabilities find themselves in situations that complicate the identification, assessment and evaluation process.

Time

The identification, assessment and evaluation procedures for disability determination take an extended period of time, sometimes, most of a school year (Dixon, Donovan & Cross, 2002) which most mobile migrant students rarely complete. If and when the disability determination is started, transferring migrant student records to the receiving schools is a complicated process resulting in loss of more irreplaceable time. Complicating this is the fact that most migrant families leave from one county or state to another without having the necessary time to formally withdraw their children from school creating a gap in records for the receiving school. Migrant students arrive at the new school late and in most cases without records which in most cases, necessitates a new assessment and evaluation process further creating barriers to appropriate educational supports.

Language

Complicating matters further is the lack of appropriate assessment tools that are used, and in some cases, without taking into consideration the native language of the student (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002; Grant & Barger-Anderson, 2009) creating a lengthier identification process to identify a disability if one exists. Federal law requires ELL students be tested in their native language by a psychologist who is fluent in the student's native language which many school district struggle to hire. These professionals are scarce and difficult to recruit hence leaving schools with the need to rely on untrained interpreters and or use of tests that may not be interpreted correctly (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). Further, parents who speak little to no English complicate the assessment procedures when professionals have a need to contact or bring to the

planning table non-English speaking parents to acquire approval for administering assessment tests. Collectively, there are a number of factors that take additional time, resources, and collaboration on the part of migrant education, special education and ELL providers. Migrant students with disabilities are perceived to be a small group of students; however, many factors contribute to their identification or misidentification and hence make them an under-served group of students worthy of greater attention (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002; Artiles & Harry, 2006; Artiles, Rueda, Salazar & Higadera, 2005).

Theoretical Framework

My aim for this study was to explore the extent to which, if any, interagency collaboration practices exist among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs within school districts educating migrant students with disabilities. Further, I wanted to identify factors that participants perceive support or impede such collaboration and how these factors affect the delivery of educational services to migrant students with disabilities as perceived by the supervisors of these programs. The intersection of the three federal programs (departments) as a whole and interwoven system is presumed in this study to be necessary practices for the effective identification, assessment, and evaluation of migrant students with disabilities. Since all three programs require compliance for the monitoring of the educational experiences of migrant students with disabilities, a joint effort among the three programs could strengthen the outcomes. The focus of this study was to explore to what extent, if any, three school district's federal programs merged their efforts through interagency collaboration to structure one system for the delivery of educational services to migrant students with disabilities. Focusing on a theoretical lens that relates to a "system" lead me to my choice of Systems Theory.

Systems Theory

According to Cummings (2008) the goal of Systems Theory is to validate that the sum of the whole (collaboration between the individual programs) is greater than its parts (individual programs) and that through the joining of each program an effective system results (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Once the individual parts manage to join as a system, it has the ability to adapt and change based upon given circumstances that may surround it (Weinberg, 2011). In other words, a system can adapt and change based upon the daily interactions or joint efforts between its parts within the whole (Gall et al., 2007). This is where Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Emerson, 1976) can provide a combined frame with Systems Theory from which to explore how the contribution of all the parts can merge to result in a whole that meets the needs and expectations of all the parts (Gall et al., 2007).

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

SET provided me a perspective from which to look at how the individual departments of a school system establishes as a future whole (Gitlin et al., 1994). SET is included in this study since the constructs of social exchange, negotiation, role differentiation, and environment of trust as used by Gitlin et al. (1994) model for collaboration. Further, the constructs closely related to observing the professional interactions of what I wanted to study regarding the extent to which, if any, interagency collaboration exists in the provision of educational services to migrant students with disabilities. Therefore, the model for collaboration was an informative lens from which to view the study data regarding relationships among groups. Emerson (1976) suggests that all relationships within a group require a give and take attitude, meaning that what one gives out, one expects to get back. SET theory principles establish that what people feel about a relationship with other entities is dependent on the perceptions they have of the

balance between what is put into the relationship and what results from it. Gitlin et al. (1994) also incorporated other constructs of SET: exchange and negotiation and coupled it with team building literature concepts of role differentiation and environment of trust to elucidate that for effective collaboration to exist among groups of people, these must guide the relationship and perceived to be equitable. The assumption is that programs will be more apt to work together if they feel there is an equal exchange of rewards and benefits. In this study of public school system's federal program collaboration, the compliance with legal requirements of each program coupled with effective equal provision of educational services to migrant students with disabilities is presumed to be the equal exchange of rewards and benefits. Consequently, the mutual benefit would be a holistic service delivery for migrant students with disabilities when the programs merge as one system. The tenets of SET as used in the Gitlin et al. (1994) five-stage model for collaboration related to my study because program leaders are under constant accountability with regard to program regulations, compliance, and student performance. In most cases there are some differences among each program's compliance requirements, but also similarities. The goal is to identify where educational services overlap and how professionals responsible for these programs can work together for the purpose of successful joint efforts in program compliance and educational service delivery for migrant students with disabilities.

Five-Stage Model for Collaboration

Gitlin et al. (1994) five-stage model for collaboration (see Figure 1) provides a "systematic" theoretical lens to identify at what stage, if any, of collaboration the districts of study are functioning as a collaborative whole.

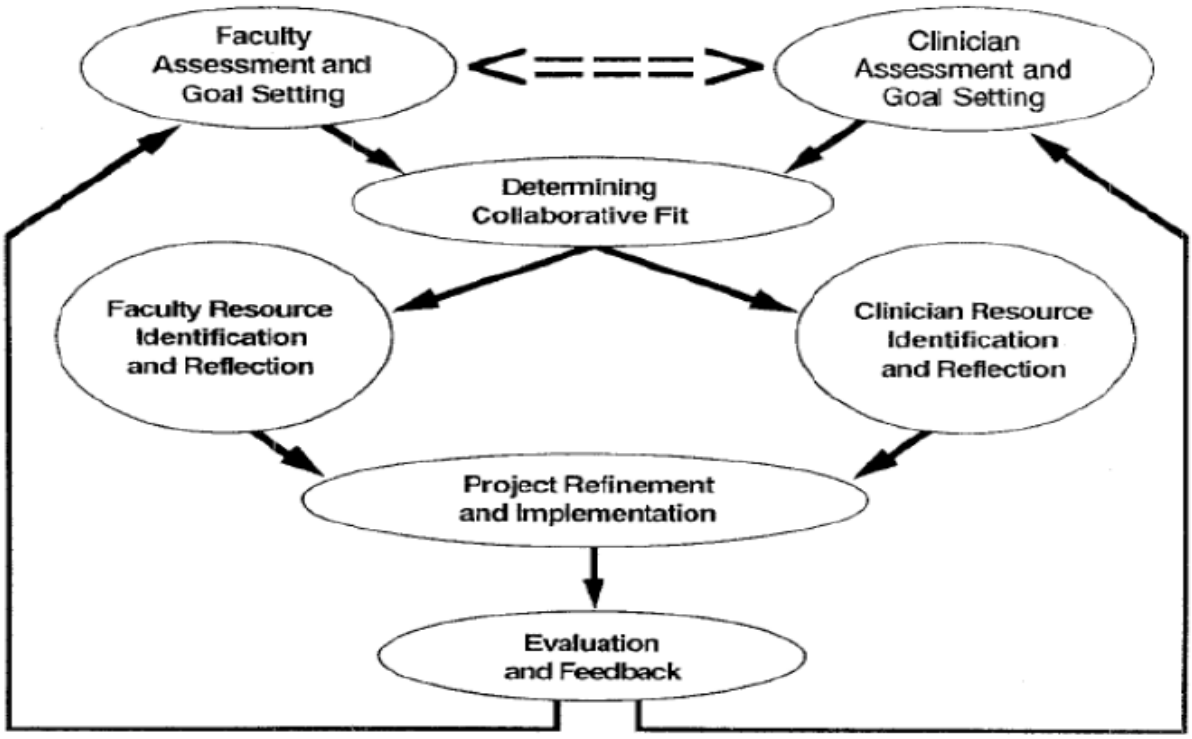

Figure 1. Five-Stage Model for Collaboration

Rationale for Using the Five-Stage Model for Collaboration

Meeting the goals and objectives for each program could be achieved through collaboration; however, defining the essential criteria of collaboration and how these look functioning within an educational or professional team is what this study investigated. The incorporation of this model guided the study as an additional lens from which to focus while exploring collaborative practices among migrant education, special education and ELL programs if any, and to what extent they are perceived by the participants to affect the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities. The inclusion of the indicators and behaviors contained within each stage of the Gitlin et al. (1994) five-stage model for collaboration provided me an appropriate framework to reinforce and corroborate findings. According to the model, the collaboration among groups of individuals who join in the exchange of resources and professional expertise takes time and evolves as the various indicators of each level of

collaboration appear. Although this model was developed specifically to investigate collaborative processes between institutions of higher education and health service organizations, the construct of collaboration was the focal point of the five-stage model of collaboration which can be applied to other organizations or teams. Therefore, it was effective in the exploration of this study regarding collaborative practices among migrant education, special education, and ELL program supervisors implementing the program components to provide education services to migrant students with disabilities.

Gitlin et al. (1994) analyzed collaboration through a lens of SET and teaming literature. These two theories provided them a systems' view that includes human interaction. The goal was to determine how these relate to a team member's views regarding if an interaction of this type leads to rewards. In most cases, team members focus on the give and take of each team member, as one that involves equal exchanges and returns. Additionally, how team members view give and take relationships as well as equity in rewards, could affect their professional behavior within teams. With these constructs in the forefront, the following five stages make up the five-stage model for collaboration and will be described: I. Assessment and Goal Setting; II. Determining Collaborative Fit; III. Resource Identification and Reflection; IV. Project Refinement and Implementation; and V. Evaluation and Feedback.

Five-Stages of the Model for Collaboration

Stage I: Assessment and Goal Setting. In this stage, each team individually assesses their goals to determine if their individual program goals could be better met through a collaborative partnership. For teams to move to the next stages, all members of the group see a mutual goal. Additionally, each team member identifies what aspects of their program they are willing to relinquish and or share, allow others to take on, and how much commitment and openness to

accept others' ideas exists. The team cannot move to the next step until there is a willingness from all members to commit the time necessary to maintain the team approach. Self reflection questions are considered related to importance of issues or goals, how personal interest and ideas fit, personal expertise possessed, resources required, commitment level, willingness to work with others, and the degree to which the member is willing to accept responsibility for the team work. Accepting responsibility for these areas will highly influence acceptance of the project. Migrant education, special education, and ELL programs all develop goals and objectives for their individual programs annually as a prerequisite to apply for funding so during this activity a consideration could be made about merging with each other. Indicators: individual program assessment and individual program goal setting.

Stage II: Determining Collaborative Fit. In this stage, the individual programs have conversations with one another regarding how their individual program goals intersect and can be conducive to collaboration. A common denominator that connects each team's goals highly influences if the teams will collaborate. Ongoing meetings among the programs for the purpose of deciding if there is a collaborative fit continue. A shared commitment influences a continued discussion to move forward to begin role differentiation of the team member. Roles (based on professional expertise and knowledge) are discussed, trust begins to evolve (a commitment to share and relinquish some responsibility), and conflict resolution strategies are effective. The activities of Stage II could continue until a decision and a commitment to unite efforts is reached, resources required to continue are perceived to exist, and group structure begins to form. A commitment to join as a team and engage in a collaborative process begins to emerge during this stage. Therefore, ongoing meetings are critical. Migrant education, special education, and ELL programs have migrant students with disabilities in common so a collaborative fit could be

viewed to exist, especially since all the programs provide supplemental academic support. Indicators: ongoing meetings; negotiations; role differentiation; evolution of environment of trust; collaboration potential.

Stage III: Resource Identification and Reflection. In this stage, the programs have been meeting as a group repeatedly and conversation is fluid and previous stages are simultaneously discussed during team meetings. Successful movement forward requires individuals to do an assessment of their respective institution's resources (finances/human resources) to determine if these can compliment or contribute to the goals of both teams. A self reflection by each member regarding the amount of time, commitment, resources, and professional knowledge each individual possesses and is willing to relinquish is conducted. In some circumstances and with various team members, this is the stage when the negotiations evolve as a method of refining the team culture through a discussion of each group's contribution to the collaboration and either modify original plan or continue with it. A culture of trust begins to form and is characteristic of open communication that contributes to effective conflict resolution as issues arise and team meetings continue to evolve as a regular activity. Indicators: resource identification; reflection to continue collaboration.

Stage IV: Project Refinement and Implementation. In this stage, the teams have met repeatedly and from the modifications or established plan from the previous stage commit to continue collaboration. Ongoing communication continues, effective conflict resolution is present, and differences in opinion are accepted. At times, additional members may be invited to the team. When this is viewed from the perspective of migrant education, special education, and ELL, the project could be demonstrated, for example, during the interdisciplinary team meeting for the purpose of developing an individual education plan (IEP) for the child, completing a

certificate of eligibility for migrant education services, or meeting as a committee to determine the language needs of the child. The completion of each of these program requirements could be the beginning of an ongoing service plan that is established jointly. This example directly relates to my proposed study because each member of the team has different professional skill sets that directly relate to the provision of services to migrant students with disabilities. Although the student is one individual, the program leaders that are responsible for meeting the students' needs are from several departments. Indicators: review of stage III outcomes; procedures refined; roles redefined; additional members if necessary.

Stage V: Evaluation and Feedback. In this stage, the teams have been collaborating and need to conduct and evaluation of their activities and efforts. A culture of trust is reinforced because there is a willingness to communicate about the program's performance in an open forum as well as a desire to listen actively, and have the flexibility to embrace new ideas when appropriate. The outcomes of this stage facilitate adjustments and modifications, if necessary, so that collaboration can continue. If the collaboration continues, a clear understanding of roles, commitment, and plan for achievement of goals must be shared. Migrant education, special education, and ELL programs each have respective program requirements and the intersection of these requirements in service delivery could contribute to positive and effective collaboration for the teams in meeting the specific goals each one has identified as important for the successful educational outcomes of migrant students with disabilities. The five stages for collaboration are overlapping and behaviors from any given stage can be present at any time during team work (see Figure 2). Reflective questions regarding goals, communication, participation, conflict resolution, decision-making, and levels of trust are all considered by the team as part of success

measure. Indicators: evaluation regarding functioning of team; task completion; self reflection questions.

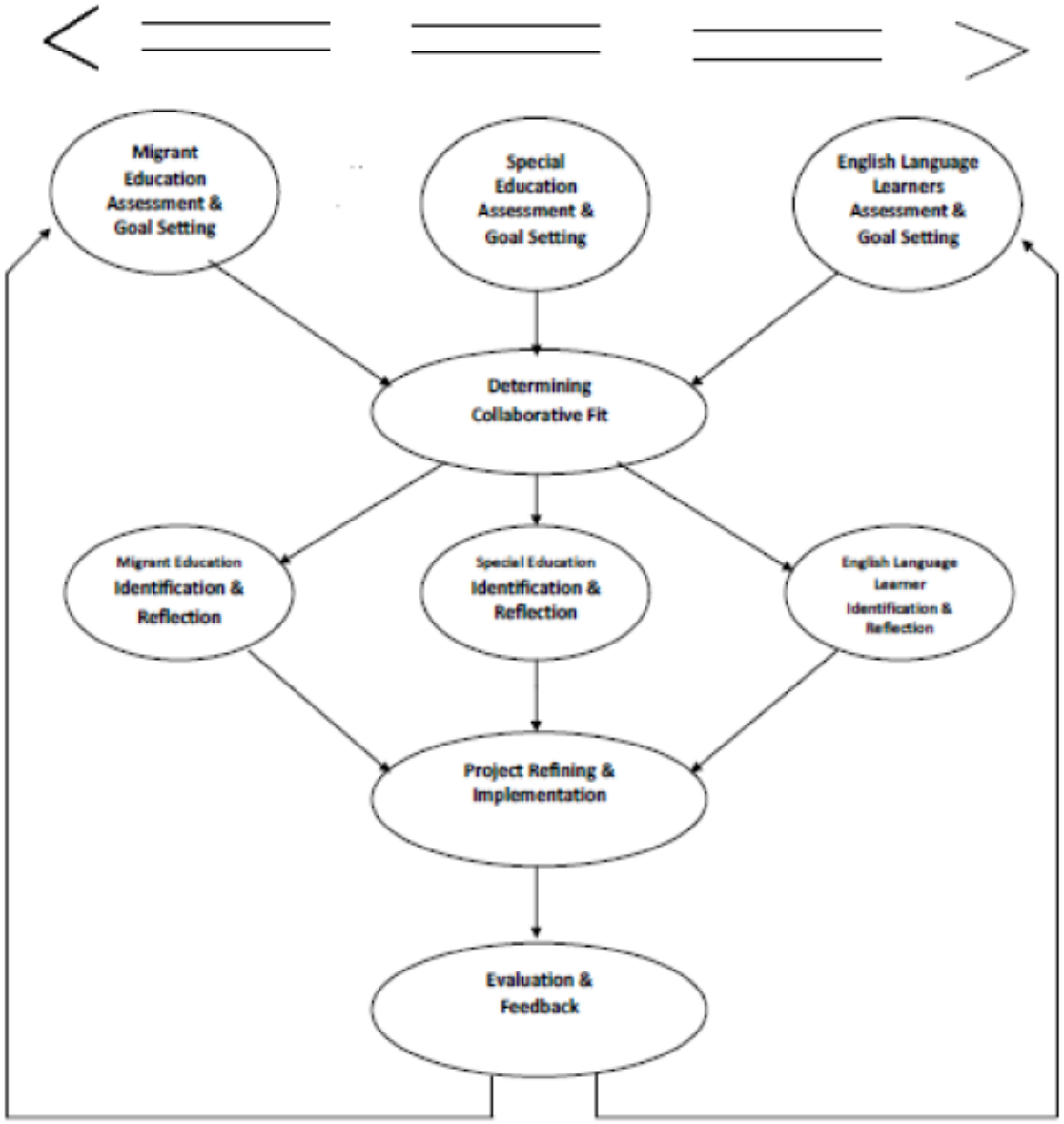

Figure 2. Gitlin, Kolodner, & Lyons (1994) Five-Stage Model for Collaboration Applied to Migrant Education, Special Education, and ELL Programs

Collaboration Framework as a Lens

Serving migrant students with disabilities can be a complex and involved process. Practices that promote collaborative processes between the migrant education, special education, and ELL programs that are responsible for effective educational outcomes for migrant students with disabilities could possibly result in effective practices. Gitlin et al. (1994) five-stage model for collaboration provided a lens from which to explain that in order to understand a systems' structure, it is necessary to understand how the people (individual parts of the system) within it interact and view the rewards that could result from working with other professionals. Furthermore, when team processes were viewed through a Systems Theory perspective, it helped me clarify how and if the sum of all parts together (migrant education, special education, and ELL), in the system, are more effective than each part on its own and if the SET constructs of "exchange and negotiation" coupled with team building concepts of role differentiation and environment of trust were evident as determinants of success. The stages of the Gitlin et al. (1994) five-stage model for collaboration model guided a portion of my study as I explored to what extent, if any, collaborative practices existed between migrant education, special education, and ELL programs serving migrant students with disabilities.

Defining what encompasses successful interagency collaboration from the perspective of the migrant education, special education, and ELL program supervisors could result in promising practices conducive to the provision of holistic services. Anderson-Butcher and Ashton (2004) identified these types of services as "wrap-around" because several systems join together for the Well-being of the child (p. 42). When youth come into the educational system with multiple challenges related to health, mental, learning, and physical challenges, the systems involved in supporting their educational needs must find and explore any and all systems and methods that will support healthy youth development (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004). These activities

and services are critical when working with families of disadvantaged backgrounds such as migrant families. Ultimately, the educational success of migrant students with disabilities is the responsibility of all local educational agency personnel regardless of their expertise. Because of this responsibility, it made sense that as an educational system, effective strategies for identifying and academically supporting migrant students with disabilities would necessitate strong interagency collaborations and that these collaborative practices are promoted to facilitate the task of leading migrant students with disabilities to academic success.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which, if any, interagency collaboration exists among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs in the delivery of educational services to migrant students with disabilities in three Florida school districts. Additionally, to identify the factors perceived to support or impede such collaborations and to describe the perceptions of the views of supervisors about how collaboration affects the delivery of educational services to migrant children with disabilities. The results of this exploratory study could contribute an alternate understanding of the nature of the relationships that exist, if any. Exploring existing collaborative practices, if any, was an important beginning to this alternate understanding as was defining how and if current practices of interagency collaboration could be improved or developed for the educational benefit of migrant students with disabilities. The goals of this study were to inform current practices of interagency collaborations, provide an alternate method for understanding the dynamics of existing interagency collaborations, if any, and enhance or contribute to the development of promising practices for migrant education, special education, and ELL programs serving migrant students with disabilities.

Qualitative research methods guided by a Systems Theory perspective were used in this exploratory study. The purpose of viewing my study participants through a systems perspective lens seemed appropriate since public school districts are considered a system. Framing the school districts used in this study from the perspective of a system built from various components allowed me to investigate if the individual programs working together as one system leads to a strengthened and more productive form of service delivery for migrant students with disabilities.

The use of a Systems Theory perspective method seemed reasonable and compelling because of my own personal connection to this research. I experienced the systems of ELL, migrant education and special education as a student, practitioner and researcher and this gave me a part to whole perspective (as I described earlier in this chapter). In my study of federal program departments, the expertise and skill level of each individual defined the attributes of the parts of the system while the internal relationships would be the program personnel's interaction with other departments which were what constituted the whole (school system), the environment for all of these various parts and the intersection of practices of all the programs (Gall et al., 2007). Moreover, the results of this study contributed to the extremely limited literature in the field of research regarding migrant students with disabilities and the affects of interagency collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs on service delivery.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. In what ways, if any, do migrant education, special education, and ELL programs collaborate in the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities?

2. What factors, if any, are perceived to support interagency collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs? What factors, if any, are perceived to impede such collaboration?
3. What are the perceptions of the participants regarding how interagency collaboration affects the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities?

Significance of Study

An understanding of the current interagency practices among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs is important for improving or developing further promising practices that could improve or enhance the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities. Such collaboration could contribute to increased educational performance outcomes for migrant students with disabilities. As the number of migrant students with special needs steadily increases (Cranston-Gingras & Paul, 2008; Green, 2003), it is grave for migrant education, special education, and ELL program supervisors to understand the commonalities in their practice and develop or improve a system of coalesced service delivery among their respective departments so that the educational achievement of migrant students with disabilities is successful.

Furthermore, program supervisors' participating and agreeing to the implementation of interagency collaboration (Johnson, Zorn, Tam, Lamontagne, & Johnson, 2003) will support them as they educate and train employees within their department as they develop appropriate service delivery methods and models for serving migrant students with disabilities that includes collaboration. The results of this study may provide an important contribution to the achievement of this goal by offering findings regarding how interagency collaboration can support or hinder service delivery for migrant students with disabilities. This study focused on

program supervisors of migrant education, special education, and ELL programs because these are the individuals who as leaders could promote change within their respective departments. Johnson, Zorn, Tam, and Lamontagne, (2003) in their study "Stakeholders' Views of Factors That Impact Successful Interagency Collaboration" concluded that it is critical for upper management to be involved and committed to establishing a procedure for collaboration for it to be effective. Supervisors serve as upper management staff in school district offices and are considered leaders in the field of education and of their respective program empowering them with leverage to implement change.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the constructs under investigation were defined in the following manner:

1. Migrant Education Program Director/Supervisor. The district level individual responsible for the supervision of migrant education service delivery and program personnel (i.e. migrant recruiter, migrant advocate, migrant instructional assistant, migrant social worker) serving migrant students in the field or at schools.
2. Special Education Program Director/Supervisor. The district level individual responsible for the supervision of special education services in schools. This individual is responsible for supervising the coordinators of exceptional student education. In some districts, these individuals are assigned by exceptionality (i.e., behavior, autism, specific learning disabled, emotional, etc).
3. Migrant students. Children who travel between county and state lines to accompany their parents while they search for agricultural employment (i.e., harvesting fruits and vegetables, fishing, packing houses, etc.) and are challenged by educational

disruptions throughout the school year (NCLB, Title I, Part C, Migrant Education Program, 2001).

4. Migrant students with disabilities. Children identified as migrant students (see above) and have a documented disability as outlined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004).
5. English Language Learner. A child whose first language is not English, and for the purpose of learning, is being provided support services in the classroom that address the development of English language skills (Office of English Language Acquisition).
6. Interagency Collaboration. Collaboration is a symbiotic relationship among agencies, which are represented by their experts, who focus on shared goals and visions (Townsend & Shelly, 2008) with a linkage that allows for an integrative approach to problem solving and resulting in solutions that represents a perspective that "is more than the sum of each participant's contributions" (Gitlin et al., 1994, p.16).
7. Service delivery. Providing supplemental educational support, social services, outreach and advocacy among other referral services to migrant students 0-21 years who meet eligibility criteria as established on the Certificate of Eligibility (COE). In terms of Special Education, service delivery includes referral, identification, evaluation, individual educational plans (IEP), classroom accommodations, and reassessments. ELL services include language assessments, classroom and curriculum support, evaluation, and testing (NCLB, 2001).

Delimitations

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which, if any, interagency collaboration existed in three Florida school districts. The goal of this study was to be able to

inform and assist in the improvement or development of best practices for collaboration for migrant education, special education, and ELL programs serving migrant students with disabilities in school systems. Considering that migrant education, special education, and ELL programs are all federally required and funded, findings from this study may be of interest to all supervisors in other state school districts in the United States. Despite that the focus of this study was for Florida practitioners of migrant education, special education, and ELL programs serving migrant students with disabilities, this study could inform relationships among the three programs or other federally regulated and funded programs.

Limitations

Several limitations existed within this study. Sample size was limited to districts serving high populations of migrant students. It could be possible for outcomes to differ for districts serving smaller migrant populations. Moreover, the service delivery methods and practices for migrant education, special education, and ELL programs can vary by district. Therefore, the findings may not apply. Finally, there were differences among districts regarding job roles and responsibilities, so the lack of uniformity in roles and responsibilities across districts limit the findings. The study used a self-reporting measure, which relied upon the frankness of participants which could also limit the findings because vital information may not have been reported because of perceived threats. To minimize the perceived threats I emphasized the study's confidentiality clause, use of pseudonyms, opportunity to ask questions, and the ability of participants to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason.

Chapter One Summary

This chapter provided an introduction of the need to explore interagency collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs when providing educational

services to migrant students with disabilities. A description of migrant student population, the federal programs that exist to support them and how these intersect were discussed. Finally, systems theory and SET perspectives were presented as they relate to this study and the use of the Gitlin et al. (1994) five-stage model for collaboration framework. In Chapter Two, a historical perspective of migrant education, special education, and ELL programs will be presented as they relate to migrant students and educational service delivery. Additionally, interagency collaboration specifically regarding the limited studies on collaboration directly related to migrant education programs and other youth serving agencies, effective practices of interagency collaboration, challenges to interagency collaboration, and the benefits of interagency collaboration will be discussed as they relate to service delivery to youth and to this study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which, if any, interagency collaboration exists among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs in the delivery of educational services to migrant students with disabilities in three Florida school districts and to identify factors that are perceived to support or impede such collaborations. Further, the perception of the participants regarding how interagency collaboration affects service delivery was also studied.

This chapter provides a description and history of the three federal programs: migrant education, special education, and ELL programs that serve migrant students. Additionally, a profile of migrant students with disabilities and implications for education are discussed. Finally, research studies providing an informative perspective of interagency collaboration among various community service agencies that serve youth such as migrant students are presented. The discussion of these research studies include topics related to interagency collaboration such as interpersonal factors, effects of interagency collaboration on service delivery, and factors that were found to support or impede such collaborations. The review of the literature related to this study focused on the desire to identify studies that could contribute to the exploration of interagency collaboration existing among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs in the delivery of educational services to migrant students with disabilities in public school systems.

Federal Policy

Migrant Education Program

In 1960, Edward R. Morrow's documentary, "Harvest of Shame" created a national awareness about the poor economic conditions of migrant families and how these conditions caused negative impacts on the educational success of migrant students. Specifically, the documentary pointed to the illiteracy that resulted from the sporadic educational opportunities migrant students encountered. Migrant students travel extensively to accompany their parents while they search for agriculture employment. Since crops are seasonal, migrant families tend to move several times during the year resulting in fragmented educational experiences for their children. In his documentary, Morrow (1960) highlighted the fragmented educational experiences and outcomes of migrant students and is credited with influencing changes in federal legislation regarding labor and education for migrant farmworkers and their families (American Postal Worker, 2005). In 1965, under the leadership of Lyndon B. Johnson, and as part of the Great Society initiative, the provision of educational services to migrant students was defined when congress enacted the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA), Title I, Part A. In 1966, the ESEA was amended to include the Migrant Education Program (MEP) because it was found that due to the frequent movement of migrant students, Title I, Part A, could not meet all of their educational needs (Papamihiel, 2004). In 2002 the ESEA was amended and signed into law as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and included the MEP under Title I, Part C and is the current policy used in MEP program implementation (No Child Left Behind, 2001). The Office of Migrant Education (OME) is the national governing agency regulating MEPs at the state level and is responsible for awarding funding to states for distribution at the local school district level. The MEP funds support high quality education programs for migratory children and help ensure

that migratory children who move among the states are not penalized in any manner by disparities among states in curriculum, graduation requirements, or state academic content and student academic achievement standards (NCLB, 2001). Funds also ensure that migratory children are provided with appropriate education services (including supportive services) that address their special needs, and that such children receive full and appropriate opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet (NCLB, Title I, Part C, Section 1306).

Reauthorizations of the ESEA continue to address the needs of migrant students. NCLB, Title I, Part C, sections 1301 through 1309 (2001) describes the rules and policies that govern provision of migrant education and allocation of funds. For fiscal year 2014, the Department of Education Congressional Action Table reported that $374, 751, 000 was appropriated to the MEP for migrant education activities provided by local education agencies specifically school systems (US Department of Education). Considering the budget challenges and sequestration of funds for other programs, the substantial funding appropriated for the MEP evidences the importance placed on migrant students' education based on their unique educational needs. The MEP focuses on six major areas:

(1) support for programs of high quality;

(2) avoidance of educational penalties due to education disparities;

(3) provision of appropriate education and support services;

(4) design of programs that help children overcome education barriers;

(5) provide opportunities to meet same state and local standards as non-migrant; and

(6) children benefit from state and local reforms (Pappamihiel, 2004, p. 16).

Identification of migrant students is important to their educational success, yet challenging, due in large part to the transient nature of their lifestyles. Migrant students travel extensively with their families based on agricultural forecasts. Mobility challenges identification and recruitment (ID&R) of migrant students yet it is the "cornerstone" of the MEP (US Department of Education). ID&R is directly related to the funds that school systems receive from the state to provide for the educational opportunities of migrant students. Through in-depth interviews, MEP staff access information from migrant families that is used to complete enrollment through the certificate of eligibility (COE). Only migrant students with a current COE are provided supplemental educational support services; therefore, the completion of the COE is vital. Eligibility for the migrant education program criteria are as follows:

> [Be] a child who is, or whose parent or spouse is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a migratory dairy worker, or a migratory fisher, and who, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain, or accompany such parent or spouse, in order to obtain, temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work
>
> (a) has moved from one school district to another;
>
> (b) in a State that is comprised of a single school district, has moved from one administrative area to another within such district; or
>
> (c) resides in a school district of more than 15,000 square miles, and migrates a distance of 20 miles or more to a temporary residence to engage in a fishing activity (NCLB, 2001, Title I, Part C, Section 1309, definitions).

Effective methods of identifying and recruiting migrant students require extensive coordination efforts. Coordination establishes a procedure for professionals to jointly plan services that migrant students are entitled to receive. Supplemental educational supports are

developed to help migrant students meet the same educational achievement standards as their non-migrant peers (NCLB, Title I, Part C, Section 1301 [3], 2001).

The Florida MEP's Service Delivery Plan (SDP) is the OME required written plan of service delivery. It is written to address the areas of concern delineated in the Florida Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA). The SDP contains performance targets, needs assessments, measurable program outcomes, service delivery, and evaluation criteria related to the CNA for states implementing the migrant program (SDP, 2006-2010). To effectively deliver support activities, the SDP recommends interagency collaboration. Although the collaboration recommendations in the SDP do not specifically mention the special education program, it is specifically stated in the program assurances for funding which is directly tied to the SDP. The collaboration specifically described in the SDP is related to partnerships among teachers, community organization, social service agencies, and colleges/universities. The SDP's (2006-2010) purpose is to summarize findings from the CNA which is the document that discusses and disseminates the results of the state assessment conducted regarding the educational needs of migrant students in Florida. The SDP is created to "provide a framework of measurable outcomes and progress indicators to determine effectiveness [of migrant education programs]" (p. 6). Further, it contains a description of the evaluation instruments that are used to describe the outcomes of the program's activities.

In sum, the MEP requires identification of migrant students, coordination of services, and provision of services that will support migrant students in meeting the same academic standards that non-migrant students are expected to meet. Section 1306 (1a), (1e), (1f), and (1g) of NCLB, Title I, Part C, of the MEP (NCLB, 2001) specifically discusses coordination and collaboration among the MEP and other federal, state, and local programs that migrant students are entitled.

Through collaborative efforts, it is expected that planning, integration, and availability of educational services accessible to migrant students are established through a joint effort.

Special Education Program

Prior to the 1970's, there were limited institutional level legislative policies impacting the education of students with disabilities including migrant students. Students with disabilities were isolated from their non-disabled peers and parents' options for education were to educate them at home, pay private institutions, or institutionalize them in segregated places (Winzer, 1993). However, parent groups such as ARC became prevalent advocacy groups and brought to the forefront the need for improved practices for children with disabilities. By 1968, training for teachers, captioning of films, and inclusion of children with disabilities in pre-school and elementary and secondary schools had occurred (Winzer, 1993). In 1975, congress enacted PL 94-142, The Education of All Handicapped Children Act, which established that children with disabilities must be provided a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and taught by highly qualified teachers (Winzer, 1993). For further understanding of this era, a review of the socio-political climate within the country preceding PL 94-142 is necessary.

Before the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's and 1970's, the 1954 Brown V Topeka Board of Education ruling marked the beginning of a focus on equity for students from marginalized groups. In this case the courts ruled that separate was no longer equal in regard to education; however, the equity measures were influenced by race, specifically children of minority groups, and not inclusive of students with disabilities (Winzer, 1993; Yell, 2006). Class action law suits such as PARC V Pennsylvania (1970) and Mills V Board of Education (1972) rulings established rules for equality for students with disabilities. These court cases concluded

that the due process and equal protection rights of students with disabilities had been violated because children with disabilities, similar to children of other minority groups, also had a right to FAPE (Yell, 2006). In each instance, the court ordered that children with disabilities be educated to their fullest capacity in environments that contribute to the most successful outcomes. Prior to PARC and Mills, students with disabilities were educated in segregated institutions away from their non-disabled children. These court cases along with the push from parental advocacy groups, and combined with the equal opportunity clause of the Civil Rights movement, paved the way for the enactment of the 1975 P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. The establishment of P.L. 94-142 dramatically changed the educational lives of children with disabilities (Itkonen, 2007; Winzer, 1993).

P.L. 94-142 established criteria that schools could not refuse to educate students with disabilities. Moreover, students with disabilities were entitled to receive an education unique to their learning needs. Further, as part of their funding criteria, schools were responsible for ensuring that students with disabilities were included in all school plans to qualify for federal financial incentives (Yell, 2006). In essence this legislation became the foundation for federal special education funding, as well as for FAPE in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (Boyer, 1979; Itkonen, 2007; and Yell, 2006). P.L. 94-142 provided students with disabilities access to educational opportunities that were absent prior to the enactment of the act. The focus of this era was related to "access" to education for all students with disabilities (Yell, 2006, p. 71).

There were no significant changes regarding P.L. 94-142 during the 1980's. Perhaps the most significant change was a slight shift of focus from school-aged children to a focus on early intervention for infants and toddlers. In 1986, the Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Act (ITDA) was passed and required states to engage in interagency coordination in the delivery of

early intervention services (Part H) to infants 0-2 years of age. Eventually, this part was amended and merged into the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA and is now known as Part C of the act. Access to educational services continued to be a focus during this time and included all children infants and older.

In 2004, the PL 94-142, Education for All Handicap Children Act, was amended to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). IDEA (2004) contains four sub parts: part A (purposes and definitions), part B (state plans for FAPE), part C (infants and toddlers), and part D (implementation, research, personnel, and professional development) (Yell, 2006). The most significant part of IDEA for educators in public schools is Part B. Through Part B, states are required to detail and develop implementation plans in order to receive funding; specifically, they must outline plans to meet the requirements of FAPE for students with disabilities (Yell, 2006). When states submit a plan under this section they are ensuring the government that they will provide FAPE to students with disabilities and follow the provisions of this part: zero reject; identification and evaluation; free appropriate public education; least restrictive environment; procedural safeguards; technology-related assistance; personnel development; and parental participation (Yell, 2006, p. 91). The zero reject principle states that students with disabilities are entitled to FAPE without regard to the severity of their disability. Schools cannot exclude children because of a belief that a severe disability would inhibit learning, cause unacceptable behaviors, or be considered contagious (unless it would harm other children). Children are provided special education services after school districts have determined through evaluation and assessment that there is a disability. Therefore, school systems are responsible for the evaluation and assessment of students. Finding the children to evaluate their needs and to provide them with an education at public expense is part of evaluation and assessment. As part of the evaluation and

assessments, the unique needs of students must be taken into consideration guide the provision of services to students in the least restrictive environment (LRE) which includes, but is not limited to public schools, special classes/schools, homes, or hospitals/institutions. In all of these processes, procedural safeguards are guaranteed to the parents and include general safeguards, independent evaluations, appointment of surrogate parents, due process, appropriate preparation of teachers, and inclusion of technology and other assistive equipment (Yell, 2006).

In situating the context of migrant students within the requirements of IDEA, it is clear that schools are responsible for providing services to migrant students with disabilities as established in IDEA, Part B. Migrant students with disabilities are possibly the most difficult children to find due to the transiency of their lifestyle; however, the school districts are responsible for identifying eligible students. In section 300.11, C (2) of IDEA (2004) "highly mobile children including "migrant children" as "other" children are mentioned as being included in child find requirements for states (IDEA, 2004). For migrant students, time is of the essence when they are being considered for special education services. Relocation of the family during the initial evaluation phase could cause delays that are directly related to the difficulty of transferring of record between school districts and or states. Records transfer is critical to providing services to migrant students with disabilities and is included as a specific guidance in the Code of Federal Regulations (US Government Printing Office):

> The LEA [local educational agency] must cooperate in the secretary's efforts under Section 1308 of *ESEA* to ensure the linkage of records pertaining to migratory children with a disability for the purpose of electronically exchanging, among the States, health and educational information regarding such children.
>
> (34 CFR 300.213)

Collaborative measures between schools and parents for developing and implementing services for all students with disabilities especially at the evaluation stage are established through IDEA.

Along with records transfer requirements for migrant students with disabilities, another requirement of IDEA is related to non-English or limited English speaking students and their evaluation. IDEA (2004) delineates the processes for the evaluation of ELL students, specifically, and possibly the most challenging criteria is that evaluation must be conducted in the students' native language (Section 614, (3) ii, IDEA, 2004). Therefore, evaluation instruments that take into account the language criteria had to be developed. The Language requirements that now exist in legislation can be directly attributed to litigation cases such as the Diana V. State Board of Education (1970) (Yell, 2006). The case was presented in court on behalf of Diana, a non-English speaking student who had been placed in an EMR classroom on results from a Stanford Binet Intelligence Test administered in English. It was determined in the courts that because Diana was not fluent in English, the test was not accurate. Similarly, a class action lawsuit representing eight Mexican-American children followed regarding inappropriate testing. The class action and Diana court cases led to a settlement via a consent decree. Based on the consent decree, additional testing of Mexican-American children was required to be administered in their native language, Spanish. When tested in Spanish, the students scored 15 points higher indicating that that the prior evaluation test did not take into account her limited English language skills. Therefore, the courts ordered that students who had been tested using English IQ tests and placed in special education programs needed to be reassessed to ascertain if the evaluation and placement was accurate. Reassessment had to be in the child's native language so that disabilities were not confused with lack of English language skills. Migrant families in large part are non-English speaking and often have limited formal education that

makes their involvement challenging. Obtaining evaluation permission (Section 614.D, IDEA, 2004) and explaining due process to non-English speaking parents is difficult yet important. School systems are responsible for making sure that parents understand their rights under the law. Finally, IDEA (2004), Section 614, D, requires that school districts maintain responsibility for evaluation of a student even if they move to another state. When children move, states are expected to coordinate with each other to make certain that children's academic supports are not neglected inadvertently. Children with disabilities who transfer from one school district to another in the same academic year are coordinated with such children's prior and subsequent schools. IDEA (2004), calls for this to happen as necessary and as expeditiously as possible, to ensure prompt completion of full evaluations. This means that the responsibilities for providing educational programs for students with disabilities must be developed through coordination and collaboration as a combined effort among agencies. For the purpose of this literature review, these agency programs are migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. Collaboration is mentioned in IDEA in various forms and situations and is related and attributed to effective outcomes for students with disabilities. The following sections of IDEA are related to this study:

> Sec. 300.714(b)(3) : Develop and recommend policies concerning effective inter- and intra-agency collaboration, including modifications to regulations, and the elimination of barriers to inter- and intra-agency programs and activities;
>
> Sec. 611(h)(6)(C) : D]evelop and recommend policies concerning effective inter- and intra-agency collaboration, including modifications to regulations, and the elimination of barriers to inter- and intra-agency programs and activities (IDEA, 2004).

These two sections highlight the importance of collaboration among programs and agencies delivery educational programs to students with disabilities.

English Language Learner Program

Prior to official legislation, non-English speaking students were left to sink or swim within their educational classrooms (Nieto, 2009). A slight shift of this practice resulted when an influx of Mexican Spanish speaking students in the 1930s brought an awareness of the need for language assistance of non-English speaking students. Additionally, during the same time, concern about the high dropout rates for Spanish speaking students was brought to the forefront of law makers. During the 1960's, in response to the high dropout rates, activist groups began to form and protest the unacceptable dropout rates of Spanish-speaking students. Fifty percent of Spanish-speaking students were not completing high school nationwide and this was attributed to the lack of bilingual programs (Porter, 1998). Law makers and educators could not ignore that the lack of bilingual programs was a contributing factor to the dismal education experiences of non-English speaking students; consequently, this lead to the development of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (BEA) (Porter, 1998).

The BEA encouraged states to experiment with "pedagogical approaches" that would lead to meaningful learning for non-English speaking students (Nieto, 2009). The push for meaningful learning experiences for non-English speakers was reinforced by the Civil Rights Act of 1964's policy of equality and non-discriminatory opportunities to all students. The Civil Rights Act was perhaps the single most influential legislation that created the most urgency in the development of the BEA (Nieto, 2009). Although lack of English language ability was not specifically mentioned as an equality measure, not providing supports for the development of English skills, denying students the opportunity to learn because they lacked English language

speaking skills resulted in discriminatory practices. Schools were obligated to, among other support services and educational access, address the language needs of their students especially if they were receiving federal funding which was one of the purposes of the BEA (Nieto, 2009).

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination based on national origin as well as color or race in public institutions receiving public funding including public schools. Therefore, a public institution could not simply exclude a child from education on the basis of their ability to speak English. In 1968, the Bilingual Education Act (PL 90-247), which is also known as the Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Baca & Cervantes, 2004) was enacted. The act was developed to make certain that non-English speaking low-income children were educated through bilingual programs, techniques, and methods that lead to competency in the English language (Baca & Cervantes, 2004). Further requirements included resource development, resource dissemination, and parent involvement projects. Although providing programs that met English language acquisition was a requirement of the BEA, the types of programs, resources, and parent projects used were at the discretion of school districts (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988). Often time these programs were created with little systemic evaluation and did not always result in effective programming for students. Ineffective programs resulted in some legal cases brought to courtrooms.

The landmark court case Lau v. Nichols (1974) contributed to a change in programming for non-English or limited English speaking students and lead to congress' amendment of the BEA. The Lau v. Nichols (1974) legal team argued on behalf of a group of Chinese parents that the simple provision of materials, teachers, and instruction in English do not provide equitable services and are not sufficient to help non-English speaking children be successful in school, the courts agreed (Pappamihiel, 2004). The 1974 Lau decision influenced the enactment of the PL

93-380, Equal Educational Opportunities Act, which required school districts to take action in meeting the needs of non-English speaking children. The courts concluded in Lau v. Nichols (1974) that:

> Basic English skills are at the very core of what these public schools teach. Imposition of a requirement that, before a child can effectively participate in the educational program, he must already have acquired those basic skills is to make a mockery of public education. We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful (para. 9).

As a result of the Lau case, a set of compliance monitoring requirements were written by the Health and Education Welfare Office of Civil Rights (1975) known as the Lau remedies. These remedies resulted from the court case Castaneda v. Pikard (1975) as a method to monitor the appropriateness of programs for English language learners (Teitelbaum & Hiller, 1977). The Lau Remedies as written below are used to determine appropriateness of bilingual programs (Teitelbaum & Hiller, 1977).

(1) The program the recipient chooses is recognized as sound by some experts in the field or is considered a legitimate experimental strategy;

(2) the programs and practices used by the school system are reasonably calculated to implement effectively the educational theory adopted by the school; and

(3) the program succeeds, after a legitimate trial, in producing results indicating that students' language barriers are actually being overcome.

As a new decade commenced in the 1980's, two amendments resulted in different regulations for the BEA. Both of the BEA amendments of 1984 and 1988 are identified as

Title VII- Bilingual Education Programs and policy of these amendments focused on creating capacity among school districts to serve English language learners. Through these amendments, school districts were provided flexibility in the innovative programs they would use to address students' English language skills while maintaining their native language. Additionally, various populations of LEP students such as students in preschool, special education, gifted and talented programs were highlighted and included. Again, flexibility in instructional methods for limited English students was left to the discretion of the school districts as was the professional development of teachers. To reinforce the efforts of these school programs, the act also called for family literacy programs to encourage parental participation in all aspects of non-English speaking students' education so that the result would be a more effective educational program (Bilingual Education Act Amended, 1984). Finally, the amendments increased funding for bilingual programs and also provided fellowships for professional development and support for research of quality bilingual programs and instructional methods. It was during the 1988 BEA amendment that funding for bilingual programs began to shift to English only programs and a three-year limit for students to learn English was imposed on bilingual programs (Bilingual Education Act Amendment, 1988; Stewner-Manzanares, 1988).

Prior to the 1990's, the focus of instruction for non-English speaking students continued as a non-government prescribed educational program. Through the decades, the BEA has gone from no definition of bilingual education at one end of the spectrum to preference for bilingual programs (English and native language simultaneously) in the reauthorization of the BEA in 1994. During this time, the goal of the BEA was to provide programs that supported bilingual proficiency for all non-English speaking students and assist them be competitive in the global

economy (de Jong, 2011). The inclusion of English speaking students with non-English speaking students contributed to bilingualism and became a focus in all bilingual classrooms (de Jong, 2011). School districts were given autonomy for choosing bilingual programs; however, they were required to shift from describing the teaching methods used to the anticipated outcomes and achievement of the students participating (Porter, 1998). Ultimately, the major impact that the 1994 reauthorization of BEA had on school systems was a systemic reform which included bilingual programs, the inclusion of indigenous languages, and increased funding categories for special academic instruction "to ensure that limited English proficiency students master English as they develop high levels of academic attainment in the content areas" (de Jong, 2011, p. 42).

In 2001, the BEA was reauthorized as part of the No Child Left Behind (2001) and its name changed to Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students, Title III, (ed.gov). The goals of Title III, is to provide English language learners with programming that will help them learn English so that they can be mainstreamed into all English classes. The goal of this part is for ELL students to "attain English language proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging standards as all children are expected to meet" (de Jong, 2011, p. 29). In our current accountability system, ELL students take the same tests and assessments as other students. In addition, ELLs are administered tests annually to evaluate their English language skills. School districts are responsible for this testing and for programming that will support the language needs of ELL students. Section 1003.56 (2) of the Florida statutes (2011) defines and ELL student,

> as an individual who was not born in the United States and whose native language is a language other than English; an individual who comes from a home environment

> where a language other than English is spoken in the home; or an individual who is an American Indian or Alaskan native and who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on his or her level of English language proficiency; and who, by reason thereof, has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or listening to the English language to deny such individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English (Online Sunshine).

In the Migration Policy Institute's ELL Information Center Fact Sheet Series, Batalova & McHugh (2010) reported ELL enrollment of 234, 934 for Florida. Based on these data, ELL students make up approximately 5% of the student population in Florida schools. Many ELL students are also identified as migrant and the most recent data available from the Florida Department of Education (2006) reports that in Florida, 11,398 migrant students are also ELL students. It is evident that migrant students are dual classified in terms of language and are entitled to support services from both programs. The following information is contained within the NCLB (2001) Title III program, section 3253:

> (a) COORDINATION WITH RELATED PROGRAMS- In order to maximize Federal efforts aimed at serving the educational needs of children and youth of limited English proficiency, the Secretary shall coordinate and ensure close cooperation with other programs serving language-minority and limited English proficient children that are administered by the Department and other agencies (para. 3)

Hence the need for collaboration among federal programs that provide educational supports to ELLs. NCLB (2001) Title III, sections 3124, 3212 B (vii), 3213.2 (b), (f), and (h), 3214 A (iii)

and (b), all mention the need for collaboration and coordination when providing services to ELL students and ELL students with disabilities and requires aligning activities and services with other programs to support effective programs for ELLs; therefore, the need to establish interagency collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs.

Collaboration Requirements of Federal Programs

Migrant education, special education, and ELL programs all have interagency collaboration as criteria (NCLB, 2001). However, *if* and *what* effective practices exist is severely limited not documented in the literature as it specifically relates to migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. Considering the importance of special education provisions and student achievement, it is critical to encourage school districts to develop a plan for collaborative practices among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. The extent to which, if any, migrant education, special education, and ELL programs collaborate to provide supplemental educational supports and services for migrant students with disabilities is not fully known. It is a fact that many migrant students with disabilities and limited English language proficiency cross all three programs strongly leads to the assumption that collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL professionals would greatly enhance the outcomes of the service delivery to migrant children with disabilities. Artiles & Harry (2006) found that culturally representative individuals provide a sense of comfort and trust for families that lack English language skills. Often time special education programs lack such representatives and therefore could benefit from collaboration with migrant and ELL personnel. Although interagency collaboration is recommended in several studies, researchers in the field found that collaboration is for the most part, non-existent among educational programs such as migrant education, special education and ELL programs despite this need (Artiles & Harry,

2006; Keller-Allen, 2006; McCardle, Mele-McCarthy, & Leos, 2005; National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992; Pierce & Ahearn, 2007; Salend et al., 2002; Strong & Maralani, 1998). Furthermore, these same researchers advocate for policy that creates an interagency partnership to meet the needs of disadvantaged, ELL, and mobile populations including migrant students with disabilities. This study seeks to explore, to what extent, if any, interagency collaboration exist within three school systems providing educational services to migrant students with disabilities in the state of Florida.

Policy: Migrant Students with Disability and ELL Status

The goals of legislative policies for migrant education include guidelines and appropriation of funds so schools can provide supplemental educational services and other support services to migrant students that address the educational disruption related to their family's migratory lifestyle. Migrant students with disabilities who may also require supplemental support for language are included within this group and must meet the same academic standards as their peers (NCLB, part C, 2001); receive educational services that meet their unique learning needs (IDEA, 2004); and be provided with programming that does not penalize them due to the lack of English language skills (NCLB, title III, 2001). For migrant education, special education, and ELL programs services could be streamlined through collaborative efforts among all three programs. Migrant students cross the eligibility lines of all three programs; therefore, federal program leaders would benefit to do the same. At times, systemic practices can jeopardize the seamless delivery of educational services among migrant education, special education and ELL programs because each program has their own set of rules and standards. Considering the complexity of legislative rules and the importance they are given, there is clearly a need for migrant education, special education, and ELL programs to closely collaborate in the delivery of

educational services to migrant students with disabilities. Further, developing a collaborative practice that blends, to the extent possible, the standards of service that combines resources and professional expertise could become the impetus for ongoing partnerships resulting in student success. Unfortunately, the extent to which, if any, migrant education, special education, and ELL (federal programs) engage in interagency collaboration and what supports or impedes the practice is not fully known and has not been documented in the literature.

ELL Migrant Students with Disabilities and Misidentification for Special Education

Many migrant students receive support for language enhancement. Often, it is difficult for educators to differentiate between a language need and a learning disability. Researchers in the field (Artiles & Harry, 2006; Brown, 2004; Harry, 2007; McCardle, Mele-McCarthy, & Leos, 2005; Salend, Duhaney, & Montgomery, 2002; Wagner, Francis, & Morris, 2005) found that ELL children often are misidentified as ELL students when in reality they are in need of special education services or vice versa. Lack of or limited English language skills can cause a bypass of proper evaluation of special education services because the language becomes the focus of educational support. This could lead to serious repercussions for student achievement. NCLB (2001), Title III specifically outlines the expectation that state education agencies (SEA), districts, schools, and community-based agencies will "consult" with one another when developing plans to educate children who lack or have limited English language skills. Funds are granted to these agencies to "close the achievement gap" of ELL children (English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement Act, 2002). The four major areas of responsibility are grant administration, recommending policies for best practices, monitoring funded programs, and strengthening coordination and collaboration among federal, state, and local programs serving ELL children (English Language Acquisition, Language

Enhancement and Academic Achievement Act, 2002). This reinforces the need for this exploratory study of interagency collaboration. Exploring if these partnerships exist and to what extent they produce positive outcomes for service delivery could improve the efforts of state and local agencies providing educational services to migrant students with disabilities who may also be ELLs.

The extent of interagency collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs, can affect how individual education plans (IEP), individualized family service plan (IFSP) and family conferences are developed and supported. For example, when representatives from the various programs that serve migrant students do not collaborate, interpreters need to be accessed and in some instances these individuals are not experienced with the complexities of special education or language acquisition (Strong & Maralani, 1998). Ohtake, Santos, & Fowler (2000) discuss the importance of understanding the various forms of interpretation of language when a third party is utilized for translating. The various interpretation models can affect communication between individuals. Specifically, Ohtake, Santos, and Fowler (2000) stress how interpretation can be further affected when communication is among service providers and interpreters, interpreters and families; and service providers and families.

ELL Students and Special Education Identification

Over-Identification

Reviewing the history of educating ELL students, it is evident that not much has changed over time. Artiles & Ortiz (2002) found that for 35 years children who speak more than one language or considered bilingual have been misplaced and overrepresented in special education programs. Similarly, Mercer (1973) discovered that Mexican American children (75-90% of

migrant students are Mexican American) were 10 times as likely to be placed in special education as were white children. Mexican American children identified with a disability are placed in classrooms for children with intellectual disabilities two to three times more often than white children (Chandler & Plakos, 1969).

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Report *Minorities in Special Education Briefing Report* (2009) concluded that Hispanics receive special education services half as much as would be expected while ELL children receive less frequently than the general population. While Donovan and Cross (2002) in their report to the National Research Council and the Harvard Civil Rights Project (2001) both report that Hispanic and ELL children are over represented in special education programs. For years researchers have studied and found that ELL overrepresentation occurs because of language-related issues such as biased assessment practices, inconsistent bilingual education programs, professionals confusing language needs with learning difficulties, testing practices, cultural disconnect, teacher attitudes, and overuse of behavior interventions (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; Figueroa, 2002; Garcia & Yates, 1986; Grant & Barger-Anderson, 2009; Ovando & Collier, 1992). The IDEA learning disability exclusionary clause mandates that ELL students must be given the opportunity to learn in a classroom where they are taught in a language they can understand; however, this clause is usually ignored and results in misidentification for special education (Artiles & Harry, 2006).

Under-Identification

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Office of Educational Research (OERI, 1988) found that migrant students with disabilities were under-identified in special education programs. Similarly, D'Emilio (2003) and Zehler et al. (2003) in their descriptive studies of ELLs with disabilities, report that ELL students with disabilities were under-identified in special education

programs. This implicates migrant students with disabilities since many migrant students are also identified as ELL. Artiles et al. (2000) reported that researchers have neglected to include ELL children in the analysis of minority overrepresentation. OERI (1988) spoke specifically on migrant students by stating that the "ill-equipped" (p. 31) status of migrant students' parents' because of the migratory lifestyle impedes progress for migrant students with disabilities and their families. OERI (1988) recommends that educational systems that "enfranchises all our citizenry" (p. 31) is necessary to make certain migrant students with disabilities are afforded their education without challenges to program delivery processes. One of the roles of migrant education professionals is advocacy and they establish strong relationships with families and migrant students and serve as mentors, counselors, advocates, and role models that help them succeed in school (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009). Without the advocacy and assistance from migrant professionals, migrant families will not receive the support necessary for their children with disabilities. Migrant professionals are the representatives for migrant parents and without an effective partnership with special education and ELL programs, the services could be fragmented and the inconsistency of identification of ELL migrant students with disabilities will continue.

Interagency Collaboration

Definition of Interagency Collaboration

Several definitions of interagency collaboration exist in the literature. A formal or standard definition among all the studies was not clear; however, common in most of the definitions is a shared mission, goals, and relationship. Warmington, Daniels, Edwards, Brown, Leadbetter, Martin, and Middleton (2004) conducted a literature review of interagency and cross-professional collaboration. The emphasis was on theories related to activity, organizational, narrative/evaluative (a theoretical), and good practice. From this review they defined

"interagency working: involves more than one agency working together in a planned and formal way, rather than simply through informal networking." They also indicated that interagency working can be at a "strategic or operational level" (p. 13). Other similar definitions were in literature reviews from social work, child welfare, early childhood, head start, early intervention, juvenile justice, schools, health, and educational programs (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004; D'Amour et al., 2005; Rivard, et al., 1999; Townsend & Shelly, 2008; Vermont Agency of Human Services, 2005; Zhang & Schwartz, 2006). All of these agencies also have in common providing various types of services to children and families in need. Based on the literature and the goals of this proposed study, the definition most pertinent is "collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals" (Townsend & Shelly, 2008, p. 102). In this case, the common goal would be to provide combined education services to migrant students with disabilities who may lack English language skills.

Effects of Interagency Collaboration

Effective interagency collaboration can exist if agencies share their missions (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004) and collaborate in service delivery (Rivard et al., 1999). For the most part, studies on collaboration have been conducted using qualitative research methods that incorporate interviews, focus groups, and surveys and are designed as frameworks that contribute to an understanding of the effectiveness of interagency collaborations. Some of the studies have explored benefits and challenges (collectively in the study) (Zhang, Schwartz, & Lee, 2006) to interagency collaborations while others concentrated on how linkages are developed (Rivard et al., 1999). A couple of literature reviews discussed and promoted interagency collaboration frameworks that could be useful for establishing collaboration. The primary purpose of these

literature reviews was to identify the existing core concepts and theoretical frameworks for developing interagency collaboration and to provide a framework to identify collaborative practices between teams (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004; Branson & Bingham, 2009; D'Amour, Videla, Rodriguez, & Beaulieu, 2005; Gitlin, L.N., Lyons, K.J., & Kolodner, E., 1994; Vermont Agency of Human Services, 2005).

In most instances the literature seems to regard interagency collaboration as an effective method of service delivery for various youths and family serving agencies. However, no studies were located that specifically address the effects of interagency collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs serving migrant students with disabilities. This study was conducted with a goal to contribute to the gaps in the literature regarding collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs by examining from the perspectives of the supervisors of these programs, the extent to which, if any, collaboration exist in the provision of services to migrant students with disabilities. Additionally, findings from this study could contribute knowledge to existing successful collaborative practices and also be a factor to developing the practice in school districts where collaboration is non-existent.

Interagency Collaboration Studies Related to Migrant Students with Disabilities

Studies regarding the collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs serving migrant students with disabilities are practically absent from the literature and have been for decades (Strong & Maralani, 1998; National Migrant and Seasonal Headstart Collaboration Office, 2009). No research, empirical or other, was found specifically related to interagency collaboration among these three federal programs. Two studies were directly related to collaboration between migrant education and special education. Study 1 was a study of interagency collaboration among migrant education, special education, and migrant head start

programs. Study 2 was a study of interagency collaboration between migrant education and special education. These two studies are discussed in the next section.

Study 1: Migrant Education, Special Education and Head Start Program Collaboration

First, a study incorporating a national survey conducted by Strong and Maralani (1999) sought to identify the existence of disability within the migrant population. A purposive sample of farmworkers in six states including Florida, were surveyed to investigate the extent of existing disability conditions of both adults and children and how agencies serving the population coordinated services. Strong and Maralani (1999) found that developmental disabilities or delays were the most prevalent among migrant children and concluded that these negatively impact their schooling experiences. Of the sample studied, only 7% of parents reported their children receiving special education services which could be attributed to the lack of coordination among programs.

Part of Strong and Maralani's (1999) study sought to investigate the extent of coordination among migrant education, special education and Migrant Head Start programs. The qualitative data from the study revealed that the coordination between migrant education and special education varied among the sites studied. In some cases, migrant education program staff did not have knowledge of migrant students' disability nor did they provide service to migrant students with disabilities. In others, migrant staff facilitated special education evaluation and made certain migrant students were not overly referred. In these instances, migrant staff provided services jointly with the special education program. The coordinating of services for migrant students with disabilities was more prevalent for children receiving services from the Migrant Head Start centers. This was due in part to rules that require these centers to give priority to 10% of migrant children with disabilities. Part of the services includes transition

services for migrant students entering schools. Because of this, Migrant Head Start centers and special education programs were found to have the strongest relationship when coordinating educational services for migrant students with disabilities while migrant education and special education programs were the weakest (Strong & Maralani, 1998).

Study 2: Migrant Education and Special Education Collaboration

The second study regarding collaboration regarding service delivery to migrant children with disabilities was published by The National Commission on Migrant Education (1992) titled "Invisible Children: A Portrait of Migrant Education in the United States." This publication includes a special section on migrant students with special needs and a description of the challenges professionals face when providing educational services to migrant children with disabilities. The Commission found that factors such as lack of time, resources, training, language, culture, communication, and coordination between migrant education and special education programs had the most impact on service delivery to migrant students with disabilities. Interestingly, it was also noted that coordination between migrant education and special education is an important attribute to service delivery; however, the commission's research in the field of migrant education found that program collaboration between migrant education and special education programs, particularly in schools, is not always evident and varies in scope (National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992). These two studies are the most closely related to the current study about interagency collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. Since the literature regarding interagency collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs is severely limited, the findings from this study represent a substantial contribution to the field.

Interagency Collaboration Practices

Youth Serving Agencies

Studies regarding interagency collaboration of migrant education, special education, and English language learners' programs are extremely limited. However, a broader review of the literature has resulted in other interagency collaboration studies that relate, to an extent, to the educational programs (migrant, special education, and ELL) of this study and service provision to youth. Studies regarding interagency collaboration among social service agencies and early childhood, local districts and community, special education and early childhood transitions, early head start and schools, and child welfare and juvenile justice systems (Branson & Bingham, 2009; McWayne, Broomfield, Sidoti, and Camacho, 2008; Noonan, Morningstar, & Erickson, 2008; Rivard, Johnson, Morrissey, Starrett, 1999; Summer, et. al, 2001) provide some information that could inform this study. Although not specific to migrant education, special education, and ELL programs, these studies provided a comprehensive description of interagency collaboration, the benefits they present as well as the challenges that can arise.

Youth Serving Agency Interagency Collaboration Effects

The underlying factor this literature review informed this study about was collaboration and although the systems or organizations illustrated within the literature are not clearly stated as migrant education, special education, or ELL programs, the partnering, teaming, combined, or commingling of service delivery practices discussed within these studies are important to this study. Interagency collaborations exist within various sectors of the community. Practice is documented for educational settings including early childhood (McWayne et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2006), and higher education (Townsend & Shelly, 2008). Other interagency collaborations noted involved healthcare agencies (D'Amour et al., 2005), social service agencies, state, private,

and federal programs (Rivard et al., 1999). The encompassing goals of these partnerships are to develop a more comprehensive service delivery plan for children and families in need. Others, such as early childhood programs serving children with disabilities (Branson & Bingham, 2009; McWayne et al., 2008; Summers, Steeples, & Naig, 2001) must exist (IDEA, 2004) because they facilitate the transition of children from early childhood programs into regular schools, an important step for the future educational lives of children. These interagency collaborations' service delivery methods closely relate to the population that this study seeks to research; however, it lacks a direct connection to migrant students with disabilities. The collaboration components within these agencies involve professionals partnering in a comprehensive service delivery plan that includes working collaboratively in the identification of children and families, combining resources, and participating in time saving joint meeting with each other's organizations (Summers et al., 2001).

Factors Related to Effective Interagency Collaborations

Interpersonal

Although many factors relate to interpersonal relationships, positive relationships and communication are vital. The literature defines interpersonal factors as mutual respect, commitment, trust, support, and a shared vision (Summers et al., 2001). Further qualitative studies conducted found that positive relationships form when agencies and individuals have the ability to build relationships with various constituents (Noonan et al., 2008). Branson and Bingham (2009) reported that a critical variable for interagency collaboration requires strong supportive relationships to improve the quality of service delivery to children and families. Rivard and colleagues (1999) conducted a secondary data analysis on the effectiveness of interagency collaboration among state, regional, and county agencies in service delivery to child

welfare and juvenile justice programs. The study involved an analysis of data collected in two waves from the North Carolina Children and Youth Agency Network study. The purpose was to assess changes over time in system structure and performance. Quantitative methods were used to analyze the data. The study found that close interpersonal relationships between state and local professionals result in closing the gaps that exist in service delivery and contributed to a stronger "system of care" (p. 76). D'Amour et al. (2005) concluded that collaboration among groups is a collective action that facilitate and addresses client needs. However, for this to happen, mutual respect and trust must govern and be a focus of the relationship.

Communication

Central to building interpersonal relationships is communication. Studies involving qualitative methods of interviewing, surveying, and focus groups (Branson & Bingham, 2009; McWayne et al., 2008; Noonan et al., 2008) found that communication is critical to building positive relationships in organizations from different sectors. D'Amour et al. (2005) conducted a literature review that began with an initial review of 588 papers, condensed to 80 in a second review, and finally resulted in 27 papers reviewed. They found that conceptual frameworks regarding inter-professional collaborations described the factor of sharing (communicating) as a strong indicator of successful collaborations. A limitation of this study was that the frameworks outlined in the study did not involve empirical studies that could have reinforced the results.

Several studies conducted related specifically to interagency collaborations in the delivery of services to special education children (Chamberlain & Spencer, 2005; Farmakopoulou, 2002; Pfeiffer & Cundari, 2000; Rivard et al., 1999) identified the importance of partnerships for serving children with special needs and their families. Pfeiffer and Cundari (2000) posit that collaboration is a form of consultation. It requires individuals to work together combining their

expertise to achieve solutions to mutually encountered challenges. Important for this to happen is communication between two or more individuals and seven conditions guide its development:

a. team ownership of the problem;
b. joint planning and implementation
c. parity among the parties;
d. active participation;
e. shared accountability;
f. pooled resources; and
g. voluntariness (p. 111).

All of these factors necessitate that the team members maintain open communication characteristic of support for a shared mission and goal of exceptional delivery of services to children with special needs.

Interagency Collaboration Challenges

Partnerships that have a shared mission and open communication are expected to be successful. However, there are instances when interagency collaboration outcomes can be impeded. Challenges to interagency collaboration include conflict, philosophy, resistance, push-pull relationships, structural difficulties, scheduling, limited knowledge, non-engagement, support, and control (D'Amour et al., 2005; Hunt & Hunt, 2004; McWayne et al., 2008; Pfeiffer & Cundari, 2000). All of these stem from the lack of interpersonal skills among organization professionals. Johnson (2003) and his colleagues documented in their study that interagency collaboration is an evolving process and one that requires extensive time and effort. The conclusions were derived from their study of departments and agencies that work with young children with disabilities. To determine the challenges that inhibit interagency communication

they interviewed 33stakeholders from nine states and three private social services department. The participants were asked *"what"* collaborative efforts exist and several open-ended questions to identify challenges to collaboration. The results of the study found, among other factors, that lack of support, commitment, trust, culture, and understanding of collaborating agencies as the strongest inhibitors to interagency collaboration.

Pfeiffer and Cundari (2000) conducted a literature review in which they sought to identify the obstacles to interagency collaboration in order to support inclusive education efforts. The obstacles they mentioned can be classified into either interpersonal (knowledge, understanding, identification, language, roles, attitude, and beliefs) or organizational (philosophy, legislation, rules, funding, information, and procedures) challenges. All of these can compromise the successful collaboration of professionals. However, Pfeiffer and Cundari (2000) suggest that "[e]ffective teams must balance efficient task completion with successful group processes" in order to overcome the challenges (p. 117). In certain instances, group process may not be functioning and this may be how challenges arise for interagency collaboration.

Interagency Collaboration Effects on Service Provision

Reduces Duplication of Services

Although the literature is limited in empirical studies related to effective, long term interagency collaborations, research still calls for further studies that document how it can impact service delivery (D'Amour et al., 2005; Pfeiffer & Cundari, 2000; Bayne-Smith, Mizrahi, & Garcia, 2008). Several studies document that successful outcomes from interagency collaboration exist and result in children and families receiving positive results. Professionals that work collaboratively can save time, resources, and avoid duplication of services (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004). Moreover, strong professional partnerships create a culture of

acceptance and respect that trickles down to children and families (McWayne et al., 2008). Providing services to children and families can be costly especially when resources are not used efficiently. With the changing economy of today, this could contribute to fragmented services (McWayne et al., 2008; Rivard et al., 1999). Interagency collaboration is an avenue that could reduce negative outcomes while assisting children and families mitigate the difficult circumstances they face regarding accessing services from several agencies for the same child (Farmakopoulou, 2002).

Provides Holistic Services

McWayne and colleagues (2008) did a study of interagency collaborations in early childhood programs to examine the experiences of initial collaboration efforts' impact on the provision of child services. To inform the study they used close-ended and open-ended survey questions to interview 15 staff members. The respondents indicated that interagency collaborations helped them improve services to children and families, and this created new opportunities for the children and families to improve their situations. Some of the staff members appreciated the opportunity to engage with the families closely and posited that the collaboration contributed to stronger bonds and a more holistic service plan. Similarly, Zhang and colleagues (2006) found that interagency collaborations provided for a more "seamless system of services" for their clients. Most importantly, a family centered collaboration increased the support that agencies received from parents, not only during their interactions with the agency, but also in the home-based services they are provided (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004).

Creates One-Stop Access

In a study to identify high performing local districts and communities serving children with disabilities, Noonan, Morningstar, and Erickson (2008) conducted a qualitative study with 36 people across 29 districts. The study incorporated six 1-hour telephone focus groups and seven individual telephone and seven interviews with the transition coordinator (person responsible for assisting students' transitioning from school to employment) identified through the Transition Outcomes Project Database, a shared online portal used to report services. Further, an additional six focus groups were held with state education agency representatives from five states to "clarify, confirm, and expand on the focus group results" (p. 134). The purpose of the research study was to ascertain what strategies and interventions were conducive to effective interagency collaboration. As part of this project, local school districts agreed to complete a checklist of 20 compliance items from a review of IEPs to identify areas of improvement. Findings led to 11 key strategies that local education agencies (LEA) found within their school districts that they perceived contributed to improving interagency collaboration for the support and training of students and families in self-sufficiency. The eleven strategies found to be effective were: flexible scheduling and staffing; follow-up after transition; administrative support for transition; using a variety of funding sources; state-supported technical assistance; ability to build relationships; agency meetings with students and families; training students and families; joint training of staff; meetings with agency staff and transition councils; and dissemination of information to broad audiences (Noonan, Morningstar, and Erickson, 2008). In this study, it was found that interagency collaboration could benefit children with disabilities and their families by providing a one-stop delivery of service. Furthermore, interagency collaborations such as these were found to lead to other collaborations increasing the

service children and families receive devoid of the need to navigate through numerous agencies, program rules, professionals, and travel to several different locations.

Conclusion

Review of the collaboration literature reveals that interagency collaborations require strong interpersonal relationships, a shared vision, and high levels of communication. Strong collaborations can be developed if leadership personnel commit to it. Although there are challenges that can inhibit interagency collaborations, the benefits to children and families outweigh them. The studies were conducted in a vast array of agencies; however, one common denominator in all of the studies was the service delivery to children and families. For the most part, the children discussed within the literature come from disadvantaged backgrounds, some in dire poverty, and suffered from some form of disability or health risk, requiring services from more than one agency.

The studies described ranged in subjects from early childhood programs to children in transition. Usually, the services required to mitigate children's circumstance require families to have connections with more than one community service agency (health, education, social, etc.) and navigating them is quite challenging if not impossible. In terms of migrant students with disabilities and their families, navigating several systems can be an intimidating task because of limited English language skills, legal issues (immigration), low or lack of literacy skills, and transportation needs rendering their access of services null. Therefore, creating an interagency collaboration among the systems that serve them (migrant education, special education, and ELL programs) could prove beneficial. Unfortunately, the literature does not inform the field of the collective fields of migrant education, special education, and ELL programs regarding the existence of collaboration thereby leaving a gap about the subject in the literature and in

professional practice. With this research study, I hope to contribute to the literature of an interagency collaboration among federal educational systems that serve migrant students with disabilities and their families as well as to practice for the school districts and professionals that serve them.

Summary of Chapter Two

Chapter Two provided a description of the three federal programs: migrant education, special education, and ELL highlighting historical information on the policies as well as instances of collaboration contained within the legislation. Additionally, studies on interagency collaboration practices in youth serving organizations highlighting effectiveness, challenges, and benefits to service delivery were discussed as they relate to this study. In Chapter Three, the study's method, including participant selection, data collection, and data analysis will be presented.

Chapter Three

Method

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which, if any, interagency collaboration exists between migrant education, special education, and ELL programs in the delivery of educational services to migrant students with disabilities in three Florida school districts (systems). The study was implemented to explore the extent of collaborative practices existing, if any, the factors that support or impede these practices, and to study the perceptions of supervisors regarding how collaborative practices affect the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities. The results of this exploratory study could support the development of collaborative relationships that result in a holistic approach to the delivery of educational services for migrant students with disabilities for school district supervisors and or directors working as leaders in federal programs. Exploring practices that currently exist, or do not exist, was an important beginning for this study because results could lead to increased understanding of how and if current practices of interagency collaboration can be improved or developed for the educational benefit of migrant students with disabilities. The goals of this study were to inform current practices of interagency collaborations, provide a method for understanding the dynamics of existing interagency collaborations, if they exist, and to enhance or contribute to the development of promising practices for migrant education, special education, and ELL programs serving migrant students with disabilities in school districts.

Research Questions

1. In what ways, if any, do migrant education, special education, and ELL programs collaborate in the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities?
2. What factors, if any, are perceived to support interagency collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs? What factors, if any, are perceived to impede such collaboration?
3. What are the perceptions of the participants regarding how interagency collaboration affects the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities?

Theoretical Framework

This study employed qualitative research methods to answer the research questions. Straus and Corbin (1990) describe qualitative research "as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (p. 17). Qualitative research methods are not meant to generalize the findings but rather to provide "ways of finding out what people do, know, think, and feel by observing, interviewing, and analyzing documents." (Patton, 2002, p. 145). Creswell (2007) further defined it as having an "interpretive characteristic" and "a form of inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear, and understand (p. 39). Additionally, the researcher's interpretations cannot be separated from their own background, history, context, and prior understandings." (p. 39) These types of studies provide an understanding of a specified construct under investigation in greater detail (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008) which in my study was the construct of collaboration as it relates to the joint efforts of district level professionals leading federal program initiatives in a public school system. A public school system is made up of many departments, including federal programs that work toward the same goal of educating children. How and in what cases

federally funded programs collaborate in the delivery of educational services to migrant students with disabilities is what was of interest in this study.

Systems Theory

I used qualitative methods guided by a Systems Theory perspective to investigate the extent, if any, select school systems' federal program departments engage in collaborative practices on behalf of migrant students with disabilities. What made this method reasonable and compelling was two-fold. First, I have experienced the systems of migrant education, special education, and ELL programs as a student, practitioner and researcher. Each of these parts has provided me with a connection that gives me a part to whole perspective (see Chapter One). In other words, how I experienced the programs in each component of my life and these can contribute to how I developed my theory of a school system's work. The Systems Theory approach is also appropriate to use when one looks at an organization's individual parts as they relate to the whole (Gall et al., 2007). In this study, the individual parts are the federal departments and the whole is the school district/system. I allowed for the school districts/systems to be the whole of which I understand to have several parts (departments) and framed them within the identified four parts of a system (Littlejohn, 1992):

1. Objects (parts, variables, or elements),
2. Attributes (qualities or properties),
3. Internal relationships (among the objects, parts, variables, or elements), and
4. Existence within an environment (p.41).

Each one of these parts interacts with the other parts and contributes to a larger whole created by the intersections of the individual parts and then becomes a distinct and unique whole and could be perceived as more useful than the individual parts (Gall et al., 2007).

In this study of federal programs within school district departments, the objects were the individual programs (human resources, funding resources, and program rules). The expertise and skill of each individual defines the attributes while the internal relationships are the program personnel's interaction with other departments' staff. The school district then is the environment for all of these various parts and the intersection of practices (collaboration) of all the programs contribute to the environment's effective whole and complete system. Since I wanted to examine how the individual parts (migrant education, special education, and ELL programs) of the school system work as interdisciplinary agents, the part to a whole view of Systems Theory contributed greatly to my research focus. Patton's (2002) explanation for the use of Systems Theory research further strengthens this choice of theory. He mentions three points related to research utilizing a Systems Theory approach:

1. a systems perspectives is becoming increasingly important in dealing with and understanding real-world complexities, viewing things as whole entities embedded in context and still larger wholes;
2. some approaches to systems research lead directly to and depend heavily on qualitative inquiry; and
3. a systems orientation can be very helpful in framing questions and, later, making sense out of qualitative data (p. 120)

Considering that the focus of this study was to explore how, and if, migrant education, special education, and ELL programs work as interdisciplinary agents, this approach greatly contributed to my research focus. Patton (2002) believes that the effects of individual parts are not what create performance, but the individual parts interacting together combining to make a whole is what leads to more positive outcomes. Patton's description of Systems Theory directly

relates to what Gitlin et al. (1994) consider an effective collaboration as described in their article "Model for Collaborative Research or Educational Teams" and demonstrated in their five-stage model for collaboration framework (see Chapter One). The ultimate goal for the use of this model was to provide an additional lens from which to align the district data findings and explore through this method existing, or non-existing, collaborative practices. Further, this alignment could show that if districts work as a group then this leads to "[p]roblem formulation and solutions [that] reflect a perspective that is more than the sum of each participant's contribution." (p. 16). The collaborative model was developed from the perspective of SET (see chapter one), specifically, the constructs of exchange and negotiation which is considered a further influence for partnerships to be effective. Gitlin et al. (1994), point to the importance of all group members' need for receiving a benefit from program collaboration of which exchange and negotiation is at the forefront and explained by SET principals.

Context of the Study

Although some types of collaborative practices are seen in schools between instructional and non-instructional staff during classroom co-teach models, child study teams, IEP meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and other school-based activities, this study focused on district level federal program leaders' practices as they related to collaboration, specifically in educational service provision through the migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. All of the participants held offices at the district level building of their respective school district and were in a leadership capacity for their particular program. The school districts chosen for this study have student enrollments between 46,000 to 176,000 and are located within Florida's 67 school districts.

Selection of Participants

Criteria

The selection of districts was done through a purposeful sample because I wanted to focus my recruitment on personnel that currently hold leadership roles in migrant education, special education or ELL programs. Mayan (2009) described qualitative purposeful sampling as a method "to understand the phenomenon of interest in-depth." (p. 61) For this study, the phenomenon of interest was the collaborative efforts practiced among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs providing federally funded educational services to migrant students with disabilities and this was the focus of my exploratory study. In some instances, migrant students with disabilities are also ELL and this factor was considered when looking at potential districts. Two questions as recommended by Mayan (2009) guided the selection of my sample. These were, "Who can give me the most and the best information about my topic?" and "In which contexts will I be able to gather the most and best information about my topic?" (p. 62). Patton (2002) describes purposeful sampling as being conducive to focused inquiries that "permit inquiry into and understanding of a phenomenon in depth" (p. 46). Also, the deep understanding of the data can transfer to information-rich cases which are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry." (p. 230) According to Patton (2002), "[s]tudying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations" (p. 230). The purpose of my study was to explore collaborative practices and not to make generalizations about how these collaborative are applicable to other districts or settings. In addition to the sample being purposeful, the school districts and participants had to meet the following criterion:

1. The district enrolls students from migrant backgrounds with disabilities including those identified as ELL;

2. The district participant is supervisor, director, or other leader that oversees the implementation of the federal program services (migrant, special education, ELL);

3. The district leaders for migrant education, special education, and ELL programs all had to agree to participate (Patton, 2002).

District Recruitment

The sample was chosen in two steps. First, to make certain the districts with the highest number of migrant students with disabilities were identified, I reviewed the Florida Department of Education demographic reports (2006). These reports contained enrollment information categorically on the number of students in the state and the number of students identified as students with disabilities (SWD), migrant, ELL, and migrant SWD. The reports contained disaggregated numerical data for each of the student groups for the 67 counties in the state and by disability category for SWD. The organization of the information (program category and enrollment numbers) made it a simple process to identify the largest migrant student enrollment districts to include in the sample recruitment. From the review of reports I identified a total of ten districts from which to recruit. Although the district in which I hold a supervisor's role for the migrant education program is considered the second largest districts in Florida, I did not include it in order to avoid any perceived conflicts with data and/or research procedures.

Second, I made direct contacts with the districts chosen from step one. The university IRB required that I gain approval from at least one potential district before the university would approve the study. Consequently, I focused on getting an approval from one of the top three

districts identified. From the three, I used the first one that provided me a study approval letter that I needed to gain approval from US. The process of gaining approval for my study proved to be the most challenging because the districts I was applying to and the university had the same requirement of the approval letter before they would allow me to conduct the study.

A request was made to the two largest migrant enrollment districts through their internal research and evaluation departments. Through this process, I encountered some roadblocks in obtaining approval from two of the anticipated three high-migrant student enrollment districts. The number three largest district (categorized by size of migrant student enrollment) presented the most challenges. It took me two months of recruitment efforts to apply and ultimately obtain the notice of denial for the research study. However, I felt like something was missing and that I needed to follow up. At that point I began three days of persistent back and forth communication from the beginning of the first recruitment denial to the final denial of the request. It began with the receipt of an email describing the reasons for the denial. Of all the reasons they gave, I was certain that it was all a misunderstanding resulting from their interpretation of my dissertation proposal method. With the hopes of clarifying their concerns, I decided to write an appeal email to them outlining and responding individually to all of their bulleted concerns and used quotes from my proposal to support it. In addition to the written appeal, there were three other individuals (two of whom are doctoral students) who got involved and made an attempt to assist me with gaining approval; however, all of our efforts were unsuccessful. As a final attempt, I initiated a direct phone call to the person in charge of the approvals; however, she refused to speak with me and sent me a message was with the assessment assistant in her department. Through that message, I was told that I could not speak with her (director) because she was on vacation. I pleaded with the assistant to speak to someone else and she insisted that there are no

other individuals that I could speak to because the director's decision of the study request was final. Regrettably, I had to move on, and unexpectedly was able to practice interpretation of people's intent and formed the theory that their unwillingness to collaborate for research that possible could have lead to helpful informative data then I could conclude, to an extent, the district may not believe in or practice collaboration.

Conversely, the second district took a completely different and opposite approach. In this particular instance, the person in charge of giving me the "no" answer was supportive, kind, and made an attempt to explain why he believed the study had been denied. His efforts to "soothe" the outcomes were demonstrated by him through a telephone call he personally made to me to give me the results of the request and why he thought the study had been denied. His efforts demonstrated that there are some individuals within districts that wish to support and collaborate with outside sources and possibly be able to understand district guidelines and procedures as they relate to the topic of study. His final recommendation was that I should attempt to request the district's approval to conduct the study the following school year because the possibility of gaining approval would be higher. Unfortunately, my timeline was not conducive to this and I had to move on. Interestingly, the signature of his email included an encouraging quote and as superstitious as this may sound, I believed that it was a message to me that soon my efforts of recruiting my participants would change for the better. My theory of this district was somewhat different than the former, it is possible that there may be some collaborative processes happening, and that it was merely a matter of not recruiting at the right time and I will remember this for a possible future study.

Since I had faced roadblocks with the first two districts, I had to reassess what I was going to do especially since two of the anticipated three districts I wanted to use had denied the request

and without school district agreement the university IRB would not grant me the study approval. In an effort to save time, I chose five additional districts from the original list of ten to compliment the one district in my original sample that was pending approval. I followed the procedures for all five of the additional district's research and evaluation departments and submitted an application for an approval from each. In the interim of applying to other districts, I received an official letter of approval from one of the school districts in the original group which enabled me to get IRB approval from the university to begin the study, six months after initial recruitment began.

District Selection

From the second group of applications submitted, I was able to gain approval from four of the five districts. At the completion of the recruitment process I then chose the districts based on the acceptance of the individual participation of a supervisor and or leader for each, migrant education, special education, and ELL program, and I continued to focus on selecting district with the highest migrant student enrollment. At the end of this process I had three districts, including one of the original largest districts I recruited. Although, the anticipated three largest districts did not pan out for me, I was fortunate to recruit three districts considered medium and large districts based on migrant student enrollment. The largest migrant student enrollment district is the one I hold a supervisor's role; therefore, I did not include it with the intent to avoid any perceived conflicts with data and or research procedures.

Supervisor Recruitment

After I selected my districts, I moved to recruit the supervisors within each district. Again, the idea of choosing participants that information-rich cases and thick rich data (Patton, 2002) guided my purposeful sample. The potential participants' telephone and/or email addresses

were accessed from the appropriate district's website or from the migrant representative for the respective district. Participants were recruited through email communication, face to face conversations, technology-based (text messages, instant messages, telephone call, etc) conversations and or through a relationship with other participants. Potential participants were sent through email a packet containing a recruitment letter, consent forms, the interview protocol, and the district letter of approval as a password protected document. The recruitment letters explained the study, as did the consent forms, and included an invitation to participate in the study. One week after the initial email, a follow up email was sent to confirm the receipt of the documents as well as to answer any questions regarding the study documents or procedures that may have resulted from the documents. Through the second email, I asked for a written agreement through the email and began to schedule the interviews. All of the participants who agreed to participate did so in writing through an email and expressed their preference for this method of communication. All participant recruitment meetings except for two were scheduled through email communication. The other two were scheduled through telephone and in person conversations.

Supervisor Selection

This recruitment procedure was followed for all of the districts with potential participants. At the end of the recruitment process, I had nine participants. There were three participants for each of the three districts one each representing migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. Eight of the participants were female and one was male. All of the participants held leadership roles in their departments. Their job titles were "manager", "director", "senior administrator", "specialist" "assistant director" and "coordinator"; however, all had similar responsibilities of implementing a federal program that provided educational

supports for migrant education, special education, and or ELL students. The average years of education experience for the participants was between 27 years and an average of 12 years in their current position. When asked about the reasons for establishing themselves within the field of migrant education, special education, or ELL programs, all of the participants stated they went into their chosen field because they wanted to help students from special populations and cultures. Several of the participants recounted how their personal experiences as a student in one of the programs studied in this research encouraged them to get in the field and be an advocate for the students served.

Because there were a small number of participants per district (three), and their roles for the respective positions very specific, i.e. the district employed one person as a "supervisor" per program, providing too much descriptive information about the participant could threaten identity and therefore this description is provided in a collective general format. Anonymity was extremely important for the participants of this study; therefore, demographic information was not collected nor required for participation in the study. To further maintain anonymity, in most cases, the program (migrant education, special education, and ELL) each supervisor represented was intentionally not mentioned for most of the participant excerpts.

Data Collection

Interview Protocol

Mayan (2009) recommends the use of semi-structured interviews when the researcher has some knowledge of the focus of interest enough to formulate the questions but not enough to know the answers. My experience as a supervisor of migrant education in a large district that educates migrant students with disabilities of which 78% are ELL, positioned me as someone having some knowledge of the roles, responsibilities, and procedures supervisors perform when

providing educational services to students eligible for federal program services. Further, I have a sense of the amount of collaboration that exists within my own district; however, these practices are unique to my district and not necessarily indicative of other districts' practice or of sufficient scope to form conclusions about collaborative practices that exist in other school districts in the state. My personal experience with federal programs and collaborative practices along with the professional experiences of my college peers gave me confidence that the interview protocol used in this study was an appropriate and feasible instrument to collect data to explore to what extent, if any, collaborative practices exist among program supervisors for migrant education, special education, and ELL programs.

The piloted semi-structured interview protocol was developed by the researcher and a university professor. Once the questions were formulated, two special education doctoral students experienced in the fields of migrant education, special education, and ELL programs analyzed and reviewed the content of the questions on the interview guide. Both doctoral students were familiar and experienced with qualitative research and they used their research and program experience to check and gauge the potential effectiveness of the data that could be collected and if the information would be sufficient to address the research questions. The interview protocol's title is *District Supervisor/Director Interview Protocol* (Appendix A). The instrument was developed on April 23, 2010 and piloted in a school district with an IRB approved pilot study (see pilot study at the end of this chapter).

Interview Protocol Questions

The questions from the semi-structured interview protocol were used as a guide to explore district level practices of collaboration as they relate to providing federal program educational services to migrant students with disabilities who in some cases may be an English language

learner. Six questions (with sub-questions) and a 7th open ended question were posed to the participants for responses. Questions 1 (RQ 1) was formulated to gather data about "how" and "if" the participant takes "ownership" in serving migrant students. The follow up question provided an opportunity for further probing to determine if the participants actually engage in providing services. Question 2 (RQ 2a, 2b) focused on the participant's role in serving a migrant student with disabilities and the follow up questions identified initial interactions with other departments. Question 3 (RQ 3a, 3b) was used to determine the extent to which interactions with other programs occur and to what extent collaboration was demonstrated. Questions 4 and 5 provided the researcher information to identify the perceived benefits and challenges of the collaboration as viewed by participants (RQ 3). Finally, the open-ended question provided the participant an opportunity to discuss their perceptions regarding how interagency collaboration among all programs contribute to effective educational service delivery for migrant students with disabilities and to further recommend how collaboration can be improved, if this was perceived necessary, or developed if it did not exist (RQ 3). All interview questions' purpose was to explore how migrant education, special education, and ELL program supervisors/directors perceive interagency collaboration among their respective programs and to collect data that describes the practices. The responses to these questions provided me data that could assist me to determine if there are similarities or differences of supervisor roles and responsibilities in each district in serving migrant students with disabilities and how these similarities or differences intersect across the three programs.

Participant Interviews

Eight of the nine interviews were conducted in the participants' district offices or nearby conference rooms. The ninth participant invited me to meet her "half way" at a Barnes & Noble

store so that I did not have to make a second trip to her district offices. On the pre-scheduled interview day, I provided the participants 15 minutes of the appointment time to ask further questions about the study prior to obtaining their signatures on the consent forms. By providing the participants the study forms and interview protocol prior to the interview day, it provided them the opportunity to think about and formulate questions for me as the interviewer as well as get comfortable with the content of the questions they would be asked. The participants' interviews lasted between 30-90 minutes and were all audio-taped with participants' permission and later used for the transcribing of the data and reinforce accuracy of the data transcription. By audio-taping the interviews, it provided me the opportunity to focus on the conversation to phrase the questions clearly, focus on the participants' "proxemic" (attitudes communicated through personal space), "chronemics" (pacing of speech, i.e. silence), "kinesic" (body language) and "paralinguistic" (variations of voice flexion) (Gall et al., 2007, p. 255) forms of communication not always observable or apparent through an audiotape. Furthermore, the personal items in a participants' office provided me with another form of non-verbal communication appropriate to observe as a form of data collection (Gall et al., 2007). The participants were not offered any type of compensation or reward. All of the data collected was stored and maintained under lock and key in my home office and only accessed and used for the purpose of this research study.

Transcription of Interviews

I personally transcribed all of the data from the audio-taped interview within 24 hours of collecting the data. Simultaneously, I wrote notes in my research journal regarding striking thoughts or words from the tape recordings as I continued to produce the transcripts. Transcribing and journaling my own data allowed me to "immerse" myself in the data as I

transitioned from the field to the beginning of analysis. The opportunity for further "checking" of the data during the transcribing was invaluable because I was able to listen to the tape recordings of the interviews repeatedly. Also, I had the ability to compare the conversation on the tape recorder with the written data I compiled and to listen for changes in voice flexion, pitch, and capture all of the nuances resulting from listening and re-listening. Because I had used a digital recorder for all of the interviews, I made backup copies of all the digital audio recordings by tape recording them into individual micro tapes as an added protective measure of the data. Additionally, I made several copies of the transcripts and stored them in a secure location so that I could have a "cleaner" typed version if needed. I have not had the need to access them but have them in case of an unforeseen event caused the originals to be destroyed (Patton, 2002) and also to follow the IRB record rule. Prior to formulating conclusions and or findings, the transcripts were returned to the participants for member checking. After the transcripts were checked, analysis began and category tables were developed and were also sent to the participants for member checks.

Research Journal

A research journal was maintained during the entire research study. It was used for note taking, field notes, description of districts, and to write down thoughts or patterns of the data. The research journal provide me the opportunity to document the study procedures, noting specific observations or complications and this served to create an audit trail (Mayan, 2009). The journal and field notes were used to document my thoughts and to describe any changes and or adjustments including frustrations about my research activities that occurred during the study. During the data analysis, these documents provided me the opportunity to reflect on the final coding, categorizing, and theme development as well as to incorporate my feelings, thoughts,

and plans for the format of the report as I moved through the process of analysis and writing. I was able to document how I arrived at the final results of my research findings and also served to ensure a non-biased data collection process. Through the research journal, I provided myself with a tool for reflexivity and method of questioning my thoughts and interpretations as the researcher of a topic that is close to me and daily part of my life (Mayan, 2009).

Documents and Artifacts

Given (2008) describes the use of artifacts and documents as "a rich source of data" (p.25) and "key sources of social scientific data" (p. 230). She writes that the use of artifacts and documents provide the researcher with information not available through observing study participants or from interview conversations. Given (2008) highlights the use of artifacts to "support or challenge other data sources and literature, to generate or confirm hunches, and to help provide thick description of people and/or settings. The story they tell is valuable." (p. 25) I collected related documents and artifacts as a means of data triangulation; however, this was not as easy as anticipated because it was optional and not a requirement of participation. Most of the documents provided by the participants to present examples of collaboration were documents that were accessible through district and state websites rather than personal documents they used in their daily roles. Several participants did provide documents and artifacts such as procedure forms, district policy manuals, fliers of interagency meetings, referral forms, self-evaluations (migrant), and other one-page documents. Further documents I personally accessed from the state and federal websites (Office of Migrant Education (OME), Office of Special Education (OSEP), and Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) and included state/federal request for proposal guidelines, funding project applications, special education outcomes reports,

consolidated state performance reports, and other reports that contained demographic information and are public record, accessible to anyone.

Data Analysis Part I

Interpretivism

Interpretivism is a method of looking at data with the goal of understanding (Patton, 2002). The basis for understanding is looking at human intent as it relates to meaning. In an exploratory study such as this, interpretivism provided me the opportunity to understand and learn what is happening through the formulated meaning of the participant which then I can use to derive at an understanding that includes the distinct orientation of the people being studied. There are no priori assumptions to structure the data (Bochner, 2005). This understanding is gained by human perception of the word and the following principles guide the interpretive analysis: facts are based on human interactions; facts are shared understandings/meanings and are not predictable; and fact interpretation focuses on words and not numbers (Bochner, 2005).

The researcher influences, to an extent, the study's situation; therefore, flexibility is important to allow for changes in research methods that lead to gathering rich data. The flexibility in the research methods provided me an opportunity for the data to clearly answer the "how" and "why" of the study (Patton, 2002). The facts-values of the participants cannot be separated and inevitably can lead to prejudices by the participants and the researcher. The researcher in this case needs to be open to attitudes and values of the participants and has to suspend prior cultural assumptions because interpretivism studies view reality as socially constructed (Bochner, 2005). Through the process I maintained a journal and notes about my assumptions especially since I am very connected professionally to the federal programs which I studied in this research. In these cases, the analysis becomes descriptive and explanatory and the

study is viewed in a holistic and systematic perspective because everything and everyone being studied is connected (Bochner, 2005). Hence, I relied on this perspective as I analyzed all of the data I collected. I kept my prior assumptions in check and framed my analysis from the perspectives of how my participants make sense or meaning of their professional roles within their own context.

Pre-Analysis

To stay close to the data and not lose any subtleties that I observed, I transcribed the tape-recorded interviews within 24 hours of each participant's interview. It was important for me to stay concentrated on the content of the interviews, so when I perceived myself as moving beyond this state, I took a "mind" break between transcriptions and on some occasions I transcribed in a different day to maintain focus on the data. The data from the written transcripts were analyzed concurrently (as they began to form a collective whole) as the transcripts were developed for each participant. Mayan (2009) states that "the qualitative researcher collects data, analyzes them, collects more data to fill in the gaps, analyzes them, collects more data, and so on" (p. 88). This process contributed to further clarification of responses from the participants as the research process continued. The format in which all of my interviews were scheduled and conducted, allowed me to engage in the process of collecting, analyzing, colleting repeatedly so that my understanding could grow and assist me with the formulating of models or diagrams of the data (Mayan, 2009). The first step was to conduct an initial review of the data by marginally coding the interviews with my preliminary thoughts, ideas, and observations using a latent-content analysis method (Mayan, 2009).

Latent Content Analysis

Latent content analysis requires reading and re-reading of the transcripts which I did repeatedly. In an exploratory study it is an appropriate method for making sense of the data while using a content analysis approach (Mayan, 2009). The content of the transcripts were read on numerous occasions in their entirety, and marginal notes were an ongoing process as were highlighting and underlining the important terms or concepts found within the transcripts. Identifying, coding, and categorizing the primary patterns in the data are what Mayan (2009) describes as a latent content analysis. Each time I read the transcript, I used a different color ink or highlighter or I wrote the date of the additional reading of the material on the transcript so I could begin to see if the concepts were changing or becoming constant and saturated. Through this phase I prepared the transcripts to find, refine, and elaborate concepts, categories, and then (Mayan, 2009) to prepare the data to be transferred to giant newsprint which would happen once all of the interviews, transcripts, and member checks were completed.

Steps of Latent Content Analysis

The following steps were taken and guided by Mayan's (2009) latent content analysis:

Step 1: Coding

Each interview transcript was maintained in a main file by district then by individual files within the main file for each program participant for each district. The files contained the original transcripts and a second copy of the transcript with marginalia, highlighting, and underlining of the "persistent images, words, phrases, concepts, or sounds within the data" (Mayan, 2009, p. 94) I did prior to receiving the member checked transcript. Once the member checked transcript was returned, I compared it with my original thoughts and patterns transcripts and I was careful to make certain that I noted the changes to the transcripts the participants made.

I read and re-read the member checked transcripts to capture additional thoughts or perceptions gained from the revised document that resulted. Engaging with the transcripts from the onset of data collection afforded me an opportunity to become "familiar" with the data so that I could "organize" the data for further analysis (Mayan, 2009).

Each time I read and reread the data and listened to the interview tape-recordings, I continued to highlight and write notes on the margins of the transcripts until I felt I was repeating what I was writing and I was not getting new information, a process Mayan (2009) calls saturation. Because my interviews were conducted over an extended period of time, I was able to have prolonged time in the field for seven months allowing for ongoing analysis. Additionally, analysis of multiple sources of data further supplied me a varying perspective as I continued to analyze the data. This iterative process of analyzing the transcripts was followed for all nine interview transcripts and member-checked transcripts from the onset of data collection. I did not allow for lapse in time from one interview to the next to begin the process of transcribing and reading the data. Mayan (2009) terms this process a "systemic pattern of data collection-analysis-collection-analysis, ad infinitum" as critical to effective data collection and analysis (p. 88). Because I wanted to be able to *touch* and *feel* the data, I decided to manually work with the data through paper and scissors and so, I turned my family room into a data analysis lab room and used giant newsprint to begin the next step of analysis which was forming categories from my notes, highlights, underlining, and marginal scripts, research journal notes, and document analysis.

Step 2: Categorizing

Although Mayan (2009) recommended using a computer word program to "account for the data in a meaningful yet manageable way" (p. 95) and begin to form themes, because I am a

visual learner and I have to be able to see as a whole what I am learning, I used the old fashion paper/pencil method and I took the transcripts and transferred all of my initial thoughts, margin notes, underlined words/quotes, and wrote them on sticky notes (including on the sticky note the page number of appropriate excerpts) for all nine participants, by district, and pasted them on giant newsprint posted on my family room walls. When I had transferred every word, phrase, thought, and observation I had found in the transcripts, I began to cluster the sticky notes on the newsprint based on similarities of content (by participant). It was similar to moving puzzle pieces around until you find where the pieces connect. Once each district participants' data were clustered individually, I then moved to combine the clusters of categories for each participant within each district collectively. The use of different color sticky notes for each participant provided me a quick overview of where data were beginning to converge by district and this further reinforced the initial categories formulated. As I was doing the clustering, the interview transcripts were in my hand and I was comparing transcript content to the content on the walls. When I felt content with the clustered sticky notes for each group in each district, I moved on to the next step, and gave each cluster of sticky notes a category and or sub-category name. To reinforce the data and to be able to see it all fit together, I then literally sat in front of each district's newsprint and begin to formulate tables on the computer as with the data posted on the wall. This process allowed me to see the data collectively in front of me in a more portable manner and individually by district. At the end of this process, I had three tables of potential categories and sub-categories (one each district) for my data which I used to judge by what Mayan (2009) describes as "internal homogeneity and external homogeneity" (p. 97).

Step 3: Internal and External Homogeneity

Internal homogeneity is determined by looking at the individual categories and

ascertaining if all of the data contained within the category fit. To determine if I had external homogeneity, I looked at my clusters of codes and tables across all categories formulated to decide if the categories were indeed separate and distinct and I did not need to combine further. During this process, I made certain that I did not need to further combine any categories because of similarities across categories since Mayan (2009) suggests that if data analysis is done exhaustively then the resulting number of categories should be restricted to ten or twelve. When I analyzed all of my tables with this process, the highest number of categories that resulted from the data was nine so I was confident that internal and external homogeneity had been achieved from the categories.

Step 4: Conclusions and Themes

According to Mayan (2009), "Themes are thought or processes that weave throughout and tie the categories together. Theming, then, is the process of determining the thread(s) that integrate and anchor all of the categories." (p. 97). It was through this process that conclusion were formulated. To begin to engage in this step I immersed myself in the data once again in a global overview of what I had up pinned up on my walls. As I moved from section to section, I decided that to make the data more transparent, I would take all of my research questions and begin to answer them one by one for each district using the categories and sub-categories that had already been established. This process led to another round of analysis of the data as it was in the tables and also on the walls on the newsprint. Each question was written on a separate newsprint page and posted on the wall next to the clustered categories for each district. One by one, I answered each of the questions by district based on the data. This process continued until all of the research questions answered were answered based on individual district data. These data were then clustered by question to refine and collapse the data into one to three themes per

question. The research questions' themes were then clustered together as a whole and a table was created that included the data summaries across all of the districts (nine participants). From these data, I was able to formulate themes and conclusions. Finally, all the transcripts, codes, and themes were given to the external reviewers who were experienced in the fields of migrant education, special education and ELL programs and the population. One of the reviewers works as an ELL program representative in an out of state school district. The second reviewer is the director of the Migrant Education Center, and the final reviewer is a doctoral candidate in the department of special education. These reviewers' codes were refined until there was a .95 agreement between reviewers and the researcher. Rubin and Rubin (2005) describe the process of data analysis as "the process of moving from raw interviews to evidence-based interpretations that are the foundation for published reports." (p. 201)

Throughout the entire data analysis and writing process, the data remained posted on the wall and I read and reread the data on the wall consistently and repeatedly throughout the entire process. Along with all the newsprint of the data on the wall, I also had newsprint for each research questions and several newsprints for "recommendations" which I used to have constant interaction with the data by writing down thoughts and conclusions as I moved through the data analysis process. To maintain my data analysis as a "circular process" (Mayan, 2009, p. 97), every day before I began to write, I refreshed my memory of all the themes and conclusions formed by reading and rereading the newsprint, transcripts, tables, and overall conclusions that had resulted from this process. Going through the motions of this daily allowed me to be secure that the conclusions found were not done prematurely and that I had engaged in "sustained, iterative, and recursive interaction with textual data" (Given, 2008, p. 121). Once the themes had emerged and conclusions were developed, I began to review the transcripts one more time to pull

out the statements that were supportive of the themes by returning to the sticky notes on the posted charts on my family room walls. To make this process simple, during the coding and categorizing process of all of my data, I placed page numbers on each of the sticky notes to remind me where to go to access the participant excerpts I highlighted as important to quote to reinforce and validate the conclusions I made from the data.

Data Analysis Part II

Artifacts and Documents

The collection of artifacts and documents were part of this study. The purpose of collecting the artifacts and documents were to provide me with an alternate lens from which to describe and explore the realities of the federal program leaders from the perspectives of their own roles and responsibilities. Although all of the participants were provided the opportunity to provide artifacts and documents as they saw fit, not all of the participants provided them. Given (2008) states that "artifacts become data through the questions posed about them and the meanings assigned to them by the researcher." (p. 23) The artifacts and documents I collected were analyzed through a modified version of the "Document Analysis Template" in Mayan (2009) Appendix C (p. 147). The below form (Form 1) resulted from the modified version from Mayan (2009) and guided the analysis of the artifacts and documents that were provided or accessed for this research study (see Figure 3). The ultimate goal of reviewing the artifacts and documents were to identify any form or instance of collaboration as it was described through the interviews or to corroborate or support participants' statements. Additionally, federal and state documents were analyzed for instances of established rules for collaboration. Further, outcome reports such as evaluations, consolidated state reports, special education monitoring reports, and other state/federal documents were analyzed to either support or refute the data collected.

Document Analysis	
Title of document	
Organization	
Date	
Author	
Type of Document (e/g newspaper article, ad, journal article)	
Background of Author	
General overview/ Purpose	
Unique Characteristics	
Intended Audience	
Tone/mood (feelings evokes by the doc)	
Viewpoint from which doc. is written	

Figure 3. Modified version of Mayan (2009) "Document Analysis Template" in Essentials of Qualitative Inquiry (p. 147).

Data Analysis Part III

Alignment of Data with Five-Stage Model for Collaboration

The third and final analysis of the data was conducted by aligning the findings of the study to the Gitlin et al. (1994) five-stage model for collaboration. Through the alignment of the data with the framework, I created an additional lens from which to analyze the results of the study as well as use it as a method to triangulate the findings. Mathison (1988) discusses triangulation as created with varying formats as a means to increase the validity of a study. Specifically, she states "there is no magic to triangulation" (p. 13) rather it is a way to improve the research

techniques that we use. This study's triangulation of data was achieved by using interviews, artifacts, documents, research journal, and the collaboration framework. The framework provided an alternate explanation or as Gall et al. (2007) specify, the ability to "reconcile" the data of the phenomenon of collaboration as perceived to exist by the participants. It provided me with a supplementary lens from which to explore if collaboration was evident among my participants, and if not, was there a potential for it to be developed based on the two distinct definitions, one created by the participants, and one created by the model. Therefore, as Mathison (2008) states, "different methods produce different understandings of phenomenon" (p. 14).

Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility means data make sense and are an accurate representation. The participants all did member checks of the data transcripts and categories. The extended period of data collection time spanned over seven months providing me a prolonged engagement in the field with the participants which added credibility to the study. Further, the data were triangulated by incorporating various forms of data collection and analysis including interviews, artifacts, documents (participant provided and school and state website accessed), and the five-stage model for collaboration framework. Finally, all of the categories, sub-categories, and conclusions were reinforced or corroborated with participant quotes and external evaluators and these strengthened themes (Mayan, 2009).

Transferability

Transferability is the applicability of findings to other settings. In order to accomplish this I used a researcher journal which contained descriptions of the setting (people, time, place,

interactions), my personal reflections, feelings, ideas, confusion, hunches, interpretations of what I observed and instances of what struck me as interesting or unusual (Gall et al., 2007; Mayan, 2009). The field notes contained within the research journal also contributed to reflexivity because it provided me with documentation of my feelings as I analyzed the data. Moreover, excerpts of my research journal were incorporated into the final reporting of the data. Through and with all of these methods, I accomplished transferability and created an audit trail others could use to replicate the study (Gall et al., 2007; Mayan, 2009).

Dependability

Dependability is the review of how decisions are made throughout the study. Again, the use of the research journal to create an audit trail documented how the research study was conducted and how decisions were made and research procedures applied or changed. Finally, data were dependable because of a code-recode process with external researchers. Three transcripts were provided to two doctoral students experienced in the fields of study to individually code. This process resulted in a 90% inter rater agreement. To reinforce the inter rater, the same two doctoral students were also provided with the categories, sub categories, and conclusions to corroborate or challenge the results. This process coupled with the audit trail provided me assurance that my study was dependable (Gall et al., 2007; Mayan, 2007).

Confirmability

Confirmability is addressed by answering the question: Are my findings logical? The use of multiple data sources allowed for more accurate inferences and conclusions and reinforced these data through the audit trail and reflexivity. Mayan (2009) defines reflexivity as

> the process of being highly attentive to how and why you make decisions and interpretations along the research way, critically examining your personal-

researcher role and how this interfaces with all-even the most minute-aspects of the research" (p.137).

Engaging in reflexivity throughout this research study helped me improve my research practices and thus continued to provide me with opportunities to become a better researcher, not only in this study, but in future studies I will conduct. Prior to making assumptions or forming conclusions of the data I was reading, I asked myself the question and entered dialogue into my journal regarding what I was analyzing. Each study has its uniqueness and it is up to me as the researcher to determine the best methods and procedures to follow including how to analyze the data logically. The use of reflexivity in this study contributed to my sense of what is and what is not through consideration of the phenomenon I studied (Watt, 2007). Studies regarding migrant students with disabilities are scarce and so my conduct of this study and my use of the best possible research methods is of utmost importance because the results of this study may be a contributing factor in addressing collaborative practices between migrant, special education, and ELL programs within public school districts.

Pilot Study

To prepare for this dissertation study, a pilot study to test the interview protocol and study procedures was conducted in a local school district that enrolled and provides services to migrant students. The purpose of the pilot study was two-fold. First, the testing of the interview protocol provided me the opportunity to gauge the extent to which the questions are clear and able to elicit responses in the areas of interest in accordance with the research questions. Second, the pilot study provided me the opportunity to test and gain feedback on the research procedures and activities that I used for this study. These two steps have provided valuable information that has enabled me to make adjustments where necessary. Cresswell (2007) recommends piloting the

interview protocol to further “refine” the questions and procedures that will be employed. Furthermore, by incorporating a pilot study, a researcher can measure the amount of observer bias, framing of questions, and adapt research procedures (p. 133). Before I conducted the study, I followed all Institutional Review Board (IRB) application requirements for engaging in research studies involving human subjects and received approval. Prior to recruiting the participants of the pilot study, the district level research review approval process was also followed and an approval was received from the research department.

Data Collection

Interview Protocol

Prior to engaging in this dissertation study on collaboration, piloting my interview protocol was critical in clarifying the knowledge I was seeking to gain in my study and also for providing preliminary information on the extent to which, if any, collaborative practices existed between district departments serving migrant students with disabilities in the pilot district. The purpose of a pilot study is to "get preliminary answers to such questions, only a small number of participants are needed. Based on their reactions, decisions can be made on modifying research methods so that subsequent research with larger numbers of participants is more likely to be fruitful (Orcher, 2005, p. 96). Furthermore, "A pilot study is an initial study that is conducted to determine feasibility. For instance, it helps to answer the following questions

1. [W]ill participants fully cooperate?
2. [W]ill there be a high rate of participation? and
3. [D]o the measurement tools work as expected? (Orcher, 2005, p. 96).

Cresswell (2007) recommends piloting interview protocols to further "refine" the questions and procedures that will be employed (p. 133). Also important to this dissertation study was

testing the interview protocol because in doing so, the researcher can measure the amount of observer bias, framing of questions, and adapt research procedures in a larger study (p. 133). van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) recommend piloting the interview protocol to increase internal validity by:

- administering the questionnaire to pilot subjects in exactly the same way as it will be administered in the main study
- ask[ing] the subjects for feedback to identify ambiguities and difficult questions
- recording[ing] the time taken to complete the questionnaire and decide whether it is reasonable
- discarding all unnecessary, difficult or ambiguous questions
- assessing whether each question gives an adequate range of responses
- establish[ing] that replies can be interpreted in terms of the information that is required
- check[ing] that all questions are answered
- re-word[ing] or re-scale[ing] any questions that are not answered as expected
- shorten[ing], revis[ing] and, if possible, pilot[ing] again (Source: Table 3.23 in Peat et al. 2002: 123 as cited in van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001)

Interviews

I tested my study instrument by interviewing three district level professionals in charge of migrant education, special education, and ELL programs in a small rural school district serving migrant students among the approximate 69,000 students enrolled. Each interview lasted between 60 to 90 minutes. The participants included a director (special education), supervisor (migrant), and district resource teacher (English language learners). All participants had at least

12 months experience in their current position and had been employed with the district between 10 and 15 years in various capacities including classroom teaching. Although the district resource teacher was not the intended participant, the supervisor of English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) funneled the responsibility of participation to this level. The ESOL supervisor had only held the position of supervisor for a period of three months. Each one of these individuals is responsible for overseeing their respective programs in a leadership role, two at the district level and the third at the school level in five different schools including elementary, middle, and high schools. The participants were recruited through email communication followed by a follow up telephone call and email. The first recruitment email included a copy of the consent forms and study description to provide information on the purpose and intent of the study. The follow up conversation (email and/or telephone) provided the participants the opportunity to ask questions about the study and consent forms. Both the director of special education and supervisor of migrant education agreed to participate during this second interaction and scheduled their interviews. On the day of the interviews, I obtained signatures on the consent forms prior to beginning the interview which lasted between 60-90 minutes as planned. Recruiting the supervisor for ESOL was challenging and finally the district resource teacher was recommended. I followed the same procedure as I did with the director and supervisor to gain consent. Once all the consent forms and study questions were answered, the interviews were scheduled and the interview questions were emailed to them for review before the 60 minute interview.

On the day of the interviews, I gave all of the participants an additional opportunity to ask questions about the study before proceeding. I also got signatures on the consent forms from participants after a short review and opportunity for questions. The interviews lasted

approximately 60-90 minutes, the director's (first) was held in her office, the supervisor (second) chose her home, and the district resource teacher (third) was held in a remote location outside of the school setting. Each of the interviews was transcribed within 24 hours to produce transcripts and these were returned to all of the participants for member checks and clarification/correction of responses within one week of the interview.

Data Analysis

Transcripts

All of the participants returned the transcripts with their corrections and recommendations through email within one week of receipt of the transcripts. I did a comparison of original and reviewed transcripts and noted the changes. Each transcript was analyzed by coding, categorizing, to arrive at themes and to determine if the responses addressed the questions asked. This was done by first reading and rereading, highlighting, and annotating initial thoughts on the margins of each transcript. Secondly, I coded and categorized the data to arrive at themes. I continued to analyze the data and collapse themes until no new themes were identified. A doctoral student assisted me in the data analysis to reach inter rater agreement of at least .80 and an agreement rate of .87 was achieved. Overall, the data that I gathered from the interviews resulted in responses that were pertinent to the information I intended to access for this dissertation study.

Results

Findings Regarding Interview Protocol

A few recommendations from the respondents for rewording (i.e. order of the words in the questions) some of the responses led to minor changes to the interview protocol based on the feedback of the participants and were adapted for the interviews conducted this dissertation.

Further, results of the pilot study, suggested that minor changes to the interview instrument were necessary. These changes were based on participant recommendations and include rewording of the questions and/or revision of the order in which the words were written. For example, in question 3, participant #1 advised that instead of asking "How do you interact with individuals from migrant education, special education, and ELL programs", I should change it to "When working with students who are migrant, ESE, and ELL, how do the departments interact?" (transcript #1).

Another recommendation from the same participant included allowing more wait time for responses before moving on to the next question. The recommendations from participant #2 (transcript #2) were to use plural words instead of singular so that more "information" could result. For example, going from "What do you see as a factor?" to "What do you see as some factors?" and this participant recommended this for most of the questions that were written in singular format. Finally, participant #3 recommended rewriting question #1 as "Who is primarily responsible for educating migrant students with disabilities in your school/district". She stated that this would help me "to get at the different layers of responsibilities for educating individual students and/or groups of students." However, because I am interested in collaborative practices between federal programs at the district level, I chose to leave this question as is to maintain the focus where it is intended, with district level supervisors. Although school personnel procedures and collaborative practice are important, the purpose of my study was to explore district level procedures regarding collaboration.

Findings Regarding Collaboration

Collaboration is Limited. Findings of the pilot study school data showed that collaborative practices among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs are

limited. An analysis of the data resulted in findings that are indicative that the collaboration that exists between these federal departments is brief and not typical, purposeful, or customary in day to day operations. For each of the questions asked, each of the participants had a different response that ranged from a strong collaboration to a brief, passing in the hallway type of interaction. When asked "who is primarily responsible for educating migrant students with disabilities?" both the supervisor and director responded "everyone's" while the district resource teacher said the "classroom teacher." However, when prompted about how the education is documented, all three respondents mentioned the federal requirements of the IEP and other educational records as taking priority.

Role and Responsibility. Each of the respondents had their own version of the role they play in educating migrant students with disabilities. The director replied that her role was to provide "technical assistance and professional development" while the supervisor stated she "steers others" and the ELL district resource teacher said she did not have a role in educating migrant students. This aligned with her response that it is the classroom's teacher's responsibility to educate migrant students with disabilities.

Reasons to Collaborate. A couple of questions asked about what kind, for what purpose, and how do interactions with other departments take place. The responses about interacting with other departments ranged from strong interactions as in meetings to "problem solve" or discuss "field trips" or "scholarships" to interactions in the "hallway" or vague email communication to none; however, the director briefly made a statement that there is definitely a strong need for a variety of people to interact in these situations. When prompted about factors that could establish or support collaboration responses included proximity of offices, common

planning days, and having cross program/school/and district level experience of each other's program requirements.

Challenges to Collaboration. On the contrary, when asked about the factors that hinder collaboration, both the supervisor and director mentioned factors that included federal program requirements misalignment which lead to non-collaboration instead of collaboration even though coordination of programs is a requirement of all three programs. The ELL district resource teacher mentioned time, location, scheduling, and also the knowledge of job responsibility as factors that inhibit collaboration. Collectively, the responses from the pilot school systems' participants resulted in outcomes that are indicative of collaborative practices are informal at best and weak at their worst; however, these efforts seem to be the result of a systematic function versus a lack of desire from the human resource.

Implications and Conclusion

The pilot study provided me insight into specific research activities I needed to adjust so that this dissertation study could be implemented as effectively as possible. For example, conducting the interviews in a neutral setting outside the participants' professional office or home would be more effective in terms of distraction and noise. Personal offices and homes seemed to produce too much distraction for the participants from employees entering to remind of other meetings to children in the home requesting assistance with various tasks. The home interview was held outdoors in a patio and every time the participant walked into the house to assist the children, her voice volume was not loud enough to be picked up by the audio recorder. In the larger study I intend to use a higher quality audio recorder and will explain to the participants the importance of staying near the audio recorder so that their voices can be clear on the recording. The responses I received from the interview held in a neutral setting (not personal

home/office) were richer and lengthier than the responses I got from the office/home interviews. This could be attributed to the fact that there were no interruptions of telephones, staff, or children. In the neutral setting, the participant asked for clarification of questions and expanded on her answers. However, this participant was not the intended participant and her answers supported more school level activity rather than district level which is what I was more interested in for this study. My plan was to consider the exclusion of districts where individuals other than those intended to be interviewed were delegated to participate. Because individuals who are not supervisors/directors usually do not have decision-making authority that district level supervisors/directors possess, using a non-district leader limited the rich data I accessed from the ELL district research teacher's interview because school level employees (most district resource teachers are based at a school) do not engage in the planning of federal or state level program activities.

Summary of Chapter Three

Chapter three included a discussion of the methods, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and description of the five-stage model for collaboration framework. Additionally, an in-depth discussion of the results of the pilot study conducted prior to this dissertation study was provided. In chapter four, the findings from this study will be provided as well as a discussion of how the data findings align with the framework.

Chapter Four

Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which, if any, interagency collaboration exists among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs in the delivery of educational services to migrant students with disabilities in select Florida school districts.

The results of this study are presented in two sections. In section one, the results are reported by research question. First, an introduction for each category is presented. Then sub-categories pertaining to the categories are provided. Direct quotes from the participants are included to support the categories and sub-categories generated by the data. In addition to participant quotes, findings from document analysis are incorporated where appropriate to further explain, support, or highlight the categories and sub-categories presented. After each research question, a summary of the data for each research question is presented.

In Section Two, participants' perceived practices of collaboration are aligned with the indicators described by Gitlin et al. (1994) five-stage model of collaboration framework. Along with the interview data, this comparison is used as a basis for a discussion in Chapter Five regarding the extent to which, if any, interagency collaboration exists between migrant education, special education, and ELL programs in the delivery of educational support services to migrant students with disabilities. Further, the framework allows for an assessment

of indicators that must be increased, improved or developed by districts for collaboration to be established.

The participants for this study are supervisors, overseers of services provided for migrant education, special education, or ELL programs in the three districts targeted. For this study the term *supervisor* and *participant* will be used interchangeably. The term *leader* refers to the upper level supervisors, who directly supervise the participants of this study.

Table 1 was developed to provide an overview of the categories and sub-categories by research question. To better understand the organization of data, categories are provided as they relate to the research questions. Table 1 provides an overview of the data findings prior to the findings narrative section. The data were analyzed through an iterative process and codes were drawn and then collapsed into sub-categories. The categories were collapsed into sub-categories.

Section One: Results by Research Question

Research Question One

In what ways, if any, do migrant education, special education, and ELL programs collaborate in the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities?

Examples presented by the participants of ways they collaborated in the school districts of study varied and did not seem to be directly related to an ongoing partnership between supervisors of migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. The responses of the participants regarding means of collaboration for this section fell within two categories: reasons for collaboration and modes of communication as collaboration.

Reasons for Collaboration. Despite repeated attempts to get participants to talk about ways they collaborated they consistently described “ways of” collaboration as “reasons for” collaboration. Examples fell under several sub-categories of reasons to collaborate, namely,

collaboration due to procedural requirements, collaboration due to need to increase resources or services, and collaboration for problem solving.

Table 1. Categories and Sub-Categories Spread

1.	In what ways, if any, do migrant education, special education, and ELL programs collaborate in the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities?	
	Reasons for Collaboration	Procedural Requirement Resources or Services Problem Solving
	Modes of Communication as Collaboration	Technology-based Communication Impromptu Conversations Written Formats
2.	What factors, if any, are perceived to support interagency collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs? What factors, if any, are perceived to impede such collaboration?	
	Systemic Features	Structure of the Department ----Impede Time Constraints ------Impede Size of District --------Impede Location of Offices----Impede Human resources----------Impede Staff Turnover--------Impede Leadership----------Impede Professional Development------Impede
	Personnel Characteristics	Knowledge----------Support Expertise----------Support Communication Between/Within Dept----Support Personnel Roles and Responsibilities------Support Professional Development----------Support Relationships----------Support
3.	What are the perceptions of the participants regarding how interagency collaborations affect the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities?	
	Effects of Interagency Collaboration on Student Services	Identification --------Effect Professional Expertise-----Effect Student Success----------Effect Culture----------Effect
	Effects of Interagency Collaboration on Procedural Methods	Program Compliance-------Effect Funding----------Effect Benefits of Collaboration---Effect

Collaboration Because of a Procedural Requirement. Participants discussed a primary reason for collaboration as a procedural requirement. Funding assurances require that programs participate in collaborative efforts. The bulk of procedural requirements described by participants were in the form of documentation for compliance. Participants stated that they provide information to other programs as required per protocol. In the following excerpt, a participant talks about how the inclusion of their program on an RtI flow chart creates an avenue for them to actively participate when a migrant or ELL student is being considered for special education eligibility. According to her, the flow chart is a pre-requisite for referral to special education evaluations. The participant describes the use of the flow chart as an opportunity for migrant and ELL supervisors to make sure that academic interventions are being implemented with fidelity. The document serves as a constant reminder that without the return of this checklist to the migrant education and ELL department, a student who is served as a migrant and ELL student cannot move through the RtI tier process.

> [W]e are built into the whole RtI process. I have to say that it's not specifically on the migrant side, although it works if it's a migrant student, because we are on this ELL flow chart. We know ahead of time when students are coming up because if a student is going to move from tier I to tier II, and they're an ELL, and perhaps they're migrant, and they're moving from tier I to tier II, they cannot move to tier II, or be considered for tier II until the specialist [migrant/ESOL] has gone in the classroom and done an observation to ensure that ESOL accommodations are in place and that the lack of accommodations is not prohibiting the student from making progress, and so there's this whole piece that's built in and it give us the opportunity to know when something's coming up.

The same flow chart was mentioned by another participant in the same district as a mechanism to "enforce" the procedure of notifying migrant staff about migrant students' academic decisions. She pointed out that prior to making any formal decisions about the student, a migrant or ELL supervisor must be informed. The participant also indicates that despite the existence of this document, problem solving teams at times meet without getting information from migrant and or ESOL teams. In this example, the existence of the flow chart was described as follows:

> Often, PSTs [problem solving teams] meet to discuss the lack of progress of a migrant student without getting the opinion of an ESOL/Migrant specialist who has observed that student. However, with the introduction and attempt to enforce the use of the flow chart, there has been more involvement with the ESOL/Migrant department.

Similarly, another participant spoke about using the home language survey (HLS) as a tool for meeting a procedural requirement. This supervisor described the HLS as a document that served as an indicator for her department to review the individual education plan or other disability records that could point to language concerns prior to making decisions about the student and special education eligibility.

> We look at, first we look at the home language survey, and then we look at the IEP they bring or the disability that they have and then we have to determine whether it is, which one is [language or disability], for example if I have a child who is ESE and ESOL and migrant, I need to look at [and question] is that disability in that native language.

Another example of collaboration induced by documents or written tools and because of a procedural requirement was offered by another participant. When describing the document, she explained that it is used as a referral to access services for migrant students. In this case, the

referral alerts the migrant education department that a student could be a potential migrant student and may need migrant services.

> Schools aren't always Title I schools and have no additional support and so they rely on us to follow up with social services type issues, we have a referral that they use in order to initiate that.

In the following example, the participant discussed the benefits of receiving documents provided by other programs for the purpose of translating. She described the translation procedure as being one that allowed her program to be better informed about other departments' procedures because of the information contained within the documents. She regarded the translation of documents as a benefit for her department because it provides them an opportunity to know what is happening with the district and other students.

> Yes, and because the ESOL side, Title III side of me has a district translator in my department, that's another in because when he's translating documents or forms, I see them, you know, so we know what's going on and what needs to be translated so that gives us and in, into things [information], you know, yeah.

Compliance of federal or state regulated procedures were described by the participants as one of the many "challenges" supervisors confront in providing educational supports to students. Supervisors said they are inclined to direct their attention to compliance items in the funding documents of their respective programs. A supervisor said that at times, because migrant students are not clearly identified or categorized in documents, it challenges him to not disregard an otherwise eligible student.

> Well, I think the challenge is always that, I guess most of the grants have their own kind of authority and what they're designed to do and what their main focus is, and, uh.. we

> tend to focus on that and you know, the migrant piece is not, at least in IDEA, is not clearly defined in the assurances.

A supervisor in another district discussed how state reporting requirements procedures led to collaboration with other departments because of a need for data. Collaboration in this instance was described by the supervisor as being one that was preempted by a conversation to access data needed for a report required by the state or to discuss any updates regarding the migrant education program. In these instances, the supervisor believes that "listening" to important procedural information is a form of collaboration as described in this excerpt:

> Well obviously, first one [collaboration] is in reporting, because we do have to federally report what we do for our migrant students, so in the reporting piece there is communication, you know to make sure we know, who are, how many students do you have that are eligible under and are classified migrant, you know, do they have IEPs, you know, and that's kinda the piece where major collaboration if there's something that is being rolled out or disseminated through the migrant education program and it's important for ESE or ELL to be at the table then we are invited to the table so we can hear.

One participant explained a procedural requirement in her district regarding ELL students and ESE evaluation potential as a form of collaboration. The possibility that a student served by several programs who may need to be evaluated for ESE services leads the supervisors of the programs in this district to meet. In the interim of meeting, the supervisor shared that others may also be invited to contribute to the pre-eligibility activities. In her description, she shares that the procedure is identical regardless of the students' classification.

> [T]he LEP committee will come together, and I hope this is what they tell you, cause this is the way it's always worked, um, they'll come together, if they thought that the student needed an evaluation or testing or whatever, they will either engage the staffing specialist into the meeting too, or maybe one of the teachers, or have some kind of discussion to walk them through the process to see if the student is ESE and that process works the same for all kids, it doesn't matter if they're ELL, migrant, you know, whatever, so we have a standard process for evaluations and determining eligibility, you know, that we follow through the state.

In the sub-category, procedural requirements, participants reasoned that collaboration was necessary for overall program procedures and compliance areas. The collaboration in these cases is influenced by the need to complete the various documents.

Collaboration for Resources or Services. The category "reasons for collaboration" also included as a "reason" the need for accessing resources and or services. Several supervisors discussed collaboration practices especially as they relate to the need for accessing resources and services. Participants mentioned daily challenges related to limited funds and or resources. Despite these challenges, participants stated that the access of resources or funding from each other promotes collaboration albeit unplanned.

> At the district level, um, I email, have conversations with the other district person, um and that's come up a few times when they have specifically had a need, it may be for an evaluation instrument, or it might be that there is a large population that needs to be evaluated all at once, and then we have had these conversations together about what we can do, of where we can get the additional support or funding.

Another supervisor shared that collaboration among programs in his district were specifically during the evaluation phase of a student. He shared that it is in the evaluation phase where program services are determined. To determine the educational resources and services program expertise is necessary. Therefore, this supervisor stated that collaboration in the form of discussing program services happens when it is determined which program has the ultimate responsibility for the student.

> I think it's more through the evaluation process until it's determined that the child goes to eligibility for service, so then you know whether the child will be eligible for services under a Title I program, whether it'll be eligible for services under an ELL program or whether the child will be eligible for services under IDEA and one of those will become the primary one.

Similarly, collaboration in this district was also discussed as conversation held by supervisors when purchasing equipment or technology. This participant spoke of collaborative practices that evolved as a conversation about how her program's resources could be enhanced by another in order to buy computer equipment and licenses for non-ELL students. She added that if resources were needed for other populations of students than the supervisors of those respective programs communicate to determine this.

> [W]e've purchased Imagine Learning, and Imagine Learning requires a certain server be placed at the school and that was a big deal with the technology people here, um, getting that placed, but then once that server is there then another program can come in and purchase additional licenses for kids, you know, if they didn't fit into our population.

On the other hand, participants also cited federal grant activities as generally being greater than the funds allocated to support them creating a resource distribution challenge. The

prescriptive ways of how federal funds are to be spent were regarded by the participants as creating challenges to collaboration between supervisors. Program rules about fund expenditures were considered by the participants as issues that go beyond the control of program supervisors, yet can create a system of ownership that does not always result in collaboration. In the following quote, the participant converses about "supplanting":

> You know, then you have also the issues frequently of supplanting, you know, these are my funds, that's what they're used for, these are your funds, that's what they're used for so it's hard to get to the table to say okay let's join forces, let's use the fundings, let's all agree that you give, you give, you give, let's address it, that's usually one of the hardest things to be able to get to.

Another supervisor noted that often their program is viewed as having an abundance of resources or funds and how this belief challenges her daily. She recounted how she struggles with reminding others that funds are limited and not always available for purchases.

> Well the other thing is because of the grant requirements of our funding, it's hard for people to understand that just because we get federal grants doesn't mean we have a bucket of money that we can just go do whatever we want, you know, no, I can't buy that for you out of that [grant money].

Funding matters were compliance issues that the participants often referred to as inhibitors to collaboration. When and how grant resources and or funding can be used for activities challenged the supervisor's unity regularly. The participants shared that compliance with program rules about funding leads them to have to say to remind others that rule makers outside of the school system guide rules. "We establish the procedures based on the rules from DOE."

Supplanting rules were mentioned by several of the supervisors as challenges to collaborative efforts. An analysis of state legislation for migrant education, special education, and ELL programs found that rules of federal funding expenditures state that "Funds must be used to supplement not supplant existing state, local, and other federal funds." A supervisor expressed that supplanting is part of their daily challenges and conveyed that "It is a shared decision, but we always ensure that we are not supplanting, and that our efforts are focused on students and families." Supplanting was regarded by the supervisors as one of the most pressing compliance items affecting their daily work that lead them to establish a written procedure.

> We had to work really hard in setting parameters because Title III constantly reminds LEAs about supplementing and not supplanting and so we have developed procedures and flow charts as to who is responsible in various areas of referring students for evaluation for special education and there's a definite role that we play.

In other instances, federal or state rules resulted in supervisors collaborating as a "forced" activity. Supervisors stated that back and forth conversations with one another at times resulted to determine which program paid for certain activities. The supervisors' description of the activities contained actions that were short duration while some of the others were longer. This supervisor spoke about a time when the "need" for an evaluation tool required her to engage in conversation with the ELL program.

> One [collaboration] was uh, the recognized need for some evaluation tools, and, it was very interesting because it was at a very specific school and it was because the school said I shouldn't have to pay for it out of my budget, um, the title I or ELL said, well we don't have the money in our budget, or line of coding and so then we looked at the ESE budget, the special education budget said, you know, where can we find it there, and

> so there was that collaboration there that was forced because of a need to get this school evaluation tool.

Similarly, a participant discussed how the varying rules of federal programs stipulate which program provides needed resources. A participant provided an example describing times when she has taken responsibility for a needed resource or service in order to facilitate the next step of the evaluation process for a migrant student. She communicated that there are times when "stepping" in is necessary to facilitate a student receiving services that another program cannot provide. For this participant, facilitating the evaluation for a student as quickly as possible encourages her to fund the needed service.

> We can help with transporting because they can't give that service, or the parent is not taking the next step to an evaluation, or that the student needs eye glasses, or a hearing test, and the parent hasn't been able to get them the glasses, and the glasses is the next step because they can't go on with the evaluation because the child does not have glasses, and we are able to use migrant funds to step in and make sure they get their eye exam.

Resources and the funding of one-time, short term services were common topics spoken about by participants in regard to examples of collaboration. Supervisors perceived these types of activities as an effective form of collaboration especially when it meant that a student could not receive other more involved services from the special education program.

> [B]ut up here, I haven't had any issues when I ask and they're really good, and vice versa, we had a student that was, not too long ago, a student that had a disability, and he had a medical issue, well the records came in Spanish, so they couldn't service the child and then they came to me so I would translate it, what the medical note said and then they are able to get the services for the child.

Participants discussed collaboration as resulting from providing services by being a family liaison. Several participants discussed collaborating with other programs due to a need for a family liaison to facilitate program procedures. A Family liaison in this instance was described as a resource and served as another method to keep program supervisors informed of students' progress. This supervisor expressed that being a resource for others helped her make certain a smooth service provision for the students. Therefore, she viewed the service of providing human resources for other programs as beneficial for both migrant education and ESE.

> [S]o we are the key, you know we are the ones who unlock the door, so there's a lot of trust in us [migrant education]. They could do it themselves, but they like to work through us, it's like, easier**.** Yes, but it's good, this is the way we are able to know what's going on, to make sure that things are not moving in the wrong direction, that kids are not being over identified, or that they're not being skipped.

In addition to facilitating a connection for professionals, another participant also spoke about the importance of relationships with families as a factor leading to effective services. She explained how some professionals misunderstand the families. In her conversation she said that many people in her district find migrant and ELL populations as a confusing population. This leads to establishing relationships because of the need to facilitate family connections. The migrant supervisor in this instance said "We've always been open with this; we seem to have the ability to cross the line that many other departments don't because many educators still feel that they do not know exactly what to do with ELLs and migrants."

Another migrant supervisor discussed the same sentiment. She also stated that because of the trusting relationship of the program representative with other professionals and parents, the connection between school and home is easier and effective especially when conducting home

visits. The migrant supervisor pointed out that they [migrant] are the key to establishing the relationships.

> They need someone to go with them to visit with the family, maybe they haven't been able to locate them and they're not home when they go and so we work with them to make the connections.

According to another migrant supervisor a strong parent-program connection exists in the migrant education program. She described how the established trust between the parents, schools, and farms with the migrant Home School Liaison (HSL) provides opportunities to extend services within and outside the school district. Relationships between the HSL, school, and families were considered by this migrant supervisor as contributing to successful program outcomes for everyone.

> [A]nd really just to preface it all, our HSLs have a huge span of the number of migrants they work with, some work with a lot more ELLs and very few migrants, and then this person that I'm talking about works with a lot of migrant um students, so not only has he served as an interpreter, but he has built trust with the staff and with the parents, [and] he is a regular visitor and really one of the only ones who are really truly welcome to visit, to make home visits with the farm, to visit the office and post information too, you know.

Still another migrant supervisor echoed the sentiment that migrant personnel are often recruited to be a family liaison especially when trying to locate a family. According to this supervisor, the migrant program personnel are the mold that holds the relationship in tack and creates opportunities to initiate contacts.

> They need someone to go with them to visit with the family, maybe they haven't been able to locate them and they're not home when they go and so we work with them to make the connections, to get signatures for kids to be able to be tested. You know, to initialize the parent consent, and to also follow up with any issues that sometimes occur at schools.

Trust is also discussed in the following example by a supervisor. She conveyed how she facilitates or makes the communication with a family simpler by facilitating the understanding of the special education program so that the stigma associated with certain programs is removed.

> We take the word special and we eliminate it and say you know, there may be another program that would help your child in a higher degree than what we're able to and once that trust factor has been established, parents seem to be a little more willing.

In the example that follows, the supervisor pointed to the importance of meeting families where they are. At times, the communication is initiated by others within the department and then facilitated by the supervisors as was in the following example.

> And they put me right away in contact with the social worker, bilingual psychologist, and they went into the school and, because the parent had gone to the school and the school did not know where to go. So the call came to me and I went directly to the school and the social worker was able to go to the school and give the child the evaluation that the child needed.

Collaboration for Problem Solving

Participants spoke regularly about collaboration resulting from the need to solve a problem. A supervisor shared that collaboration is "[a]lways school based unless the case is escalated for some reason and the district has to get involved." School level collaboration was

mentioned by the participants as the location for collaboration. Supervisors relied on their subordinates to have collaboration with their school colleagues; however, they stated that when program employees struggle to move ahead, supervisors then become the initiators of action.

> I do not intervene until they hit a stumbling block and then at that time, I put the spin on contacting the next person in line to make sure that it happens. We do that with our social workers, we do that with any other type of programs that exists in the district, and every now and then, I have to reach out to someone else to another counterpart and we can make the wheels move just a tad faster, but then I drop out again because it's not the image that I want the program to bare.

Problem-solving is widespread for program supervisors and was a common theme resulting from this study. Problems were usually addressed by the supervisor after an attempt by another employee resulted unsuccessful. One supervisor said "as a [supervisor], the specialist reports to me, but, I supervise the specialist, but it doesn't come to me unless there is a problem." Several of the participants affirmed that problem-solving is instrumental in bringing supervisors together and results in collaboration among programs.

> Yea, and the problems are out there, it's the recognition of the problem, the identification of the problem. So that's the part, that's the key, that's the area that if we can highlight here is the problem, how we are gonna solve it together, that's what brings us together.

Many supervisors stated that getting involved in situations required there to be a problem that was beyond the scope of a subordinate employee to handle. In these instances, supervisors described working together for the solution of an unresolved problem. The following sentiment states as much:

> If it comes to me, it's probably an issue that hasn't been resolved at a school center by the time it gets to my office or when there are issues where migrant advocates have not been successful at a particular school location, that's when we generally are involved.

Another supervisor echoed the sentiments as she explained that when things do not get done, it is always the supervisor of the program that must get involved to create solutions or to solve the problem.

> It's brought to the district's attention that this was the issue, and this isn't happening, so, and then that's when we get involved.

Modes of Communication as Collaboration

For the category modes of communication as collaboration, the data are distributed into the following sub-categories: technology-based communication (telephone or email), impromptu conversations (meetings, events, hallways), and communication via written formats. All of these communication events happened incidentally rather than through dispositional and or deliberate protocol.

Technology-Based Communication. Participants identified writing an email or picking up the telephone to ask a question was a form of collaboration. In several instances, the email or telephone call was conducted because some type of need arose that one supervisor did not know how to solve. So, she stated that "At the district level, um, I email, have conversations with the other district person, um, and that's come up a few times when we have specifically had a need. Another proclaimed the use of telephone calls as filling the gap of distance. "In a district this size, it's easier to pick up the phone, because we are so big" while still another supervisor pointed to the opportunities of collaboration resulting from being on email distribution list.

Through this mode of communication she ensured that she is always invited to committee meetings.

> Well because I make sure I am on mail lists for the supervisors of elementary and secondary ed and other contact lists. Don't forget, it's not a huge district, so there's one person over elementary schools, and every time he's going to have a meeting, I get copied, I get on the lists, the email lists, and I'm on curriculum committees, ESE, testing.

Impromptu Conversations. The participants viewed impromptu conversations or conversations initiated through the interactions of supervisors attending unrelated meetings as a form of collaboration. Not only did she state that conversations are initiated because of interacting with other people, she indicated that the conversations sometimes revolve around the topic of the need to establish collaboration. The supervisor states:

> A director goes to those meetings and they sit together, um, you know for a period of time, it's every couple of weeks I believe, and sometimes in those meetings, those kinds of things, they get to communicate about needs in schools and the need for collaboration get spawned, you say, oh yes, I remember I have to ask you about this.

Still in other instances, the same supervisor relayed that after certain meetings, people are provided the opportunity to talk about issues or concerns they may have and in certain instance these conversations result in "triggers" about special education concerns.

> At those meetings, once the agenda is over, each person gets an opportunity to talk about maybe a concern or a current issue that may be occurring. That triggers the conversation. The conversation may not happen there but I could very easily turn to the ESE persona and say we need to talk about this and we go out in the hallway.

Collaboration was also described as occurring between supervisors when issues come up and the department is contacted and asked for information or as in this case, “feedback”. The connection was made because of the need for information from another. In this instance, supervisors were linked in collaborative practices even though it was a conversation that was initiated because another program needed information to make a decision about a migrant student. “Well we collaborate in the sense that you know when an issue is brought up or recognized you know we are contacted and of course we give feedback and have discussion about it.” Similarly in this case the participant’s connection with another was regarding a question about a student who was receiving services from both ELL and ESE. This particular discussion was considered easy by the supervisor because they were in close proximity. The supervisor said “When we have questions about a student who is ELL and ESE, I usually go next door to xxx and just ask her.”

Written Format. Collaboration was also described as resulting from communication relayed by services and procedures outlined in written documents, computer reports, or procedural manuals. In this example, a migrant student was transition from pre-school and was an ESE student. The supervisor pointed out that in situations when student are transitioning into schools, programs review IEPs to understand the procedures that need to be followed. She also mentioned that program procedures are where it all begins.

> So when there are kids that are in head start, eligible for services that are migrant, then we work very closely in transitioning those students to services with IEPs, so that’s an example of kinda of the close collaboration where it happens, it’s in the field and the programmatic areas where that happens.

Other written formats that supervisors relied on and considered collaboration were related to accessing information through a management information system. A supervisor pointed out that everyone should know who the ESE kids are because of an automated computer system. She stated that in her opinion, everyone should be able to identify ESE students because of the coding within the system.

> Well on a personal note, I would think that any department, just like our department, have an awareness of their students with special needs because on our district system there is a coding, so you would be able to readily know whether or not a particular child might be in need of a particular service or is receiving another service.

A supervisor spoke about the review of an IEP as an indicator of a student's program eligibility and how this led to interaction among program personnel. She expected that her employees would follow the procedures handbook if the IEP indicated that a student is ESOL or ESE. "In our procedures, we specify if the child is ESOL and ESE, you need to consult with your staffing specialist, look at the IEP and look at the other pieces." On these occasions, the supervisor stated that close consultation between program employees results.

Summary of Data for Research Question One

The data for research question one yielded two major categories: reasons for collaboration and modes of communication as collaboration. For the category reasons for collaboration, three sub-categories were identified. These include collaboration due to procedural requirements, collaboration as a result for the need to share resources and services, and collaboration to problem solve.

Research Question Two

What factors, if any, are perceived to support interagency collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs? What factors, if any, are perceived to impede such collaboration?

Analysis of the data for question two resulted in two categories: systemic features and personnel characteristics. In the category systemic features, three sub-categories emerged: structure of the department; human resource; and professional development. Structure of the department, includes descriptors (codes) of time constraints, size of district and location of office. The sub-category of human resources contained the descriptors (codes) of staff turnover and leadership. The third and last sub-category is related to professional development.

Systemic Features

In discussing factors that impede or support collaboration, participants presented time constraints, size of district and location of offices as factors that impede collaboration. These two descriptors were collapsed under the sub-category of structure of the department which in turn came under the category of systemic features.

Structure of the Program. Participants offered time constraints, size of district and location of offices as descriptors of structure of the department, which impeded collaboration. These factors were perceived by the participants to cause constraints that separated supervisors. Consequently, program supervisors consistently noted that they performed the responsibilities of their positions in isolation. The isolation was attributed by a supervisor as subsisting as a common practice for many years.

> Historically we have worked in silos, uh, federal programs have been isolated as this is IDEA, this is migrant, this is title I, this is ESOL and with those silos everything has remained in and of itself without a whole lot of collaboration.

Working in silos as a routine practice was also evident in the next statement made by a supervisor in the same district. The supervisor alludes to the fact that historically, the programs have been autonomous despite being in the same district level department. According to her, it is a common practice for programs to work independently of one another.

> I don't know, I'm not really sure, I just think that things get separated out, you know, it's the natural way that that things happen, you know, even as a small part of the Title I department, we were for some time, kinda separated out.

At times even when the district supervisors were within the same department, the distance or proximity of another's office influences the extent to which an effort will be made to make a connection with other program supervisors. The notion of distance was noted by the following supervisor as influencing how often and to what extent she interacted with others in her department.

> But I think, the proximity there is because, and I think also at uh, because that way when you get an IEP you don't have to go far to find some help, a lot of times, and it's just the way it is when you have to get up and go do something, it's like well, I'm gonna do it in a minute, I'm gonna finish this and then I'm gonna get up and go across the way or to the next building, I really think proximity makes a huge difference.

As with structure of a department, the size of the district was described as a barrier to forming or establishing partnerships or communications with others by several of the participants. The silo effect was mentioned as an inhibitor by this supervisor and she expressed how working in

isolation, away from others, is influenced by the size of a district. She said "when you get to a larger district, where, you know, the departments are so big, uh, I think that adds to the silo effect that we don't have that communication." Communication challenges were also mentioned by another supervisor as contributing to her isolated way of work. She stated that

> Probably lack of personnel, not having the person to follow up. Not having conversations. The demands of doing our own roles and responsibilities related to our jobs. We are all spread too thin to have time to chat about new ideas.

The absence of communication was viewed by this supervisor as inhibiting her interactions with other colleagues and this was intensified by the lack of time she perceived to contend with daily. This sentiment regarding restrictive time is evident in her next expression "we are all busy running on our own treadmills and do not have or make the time to get together unless there is a real reason…a problem."

The responsibilities of positions and the amount of work they are required to conduct on a daily basis results in lack of collaboration as an ordinary day to day practice despite the willingness that may exist to collaborate. Time constraints were ascribed as factors that rendered communication lost. In the following example, a supervisor conveyed that because of time, personnel are not only working in isolation but also "forget" that others are available to help.

> [W]e get so busy caught up in what we are doing, that we just keep going and then forget that oh wait we could do better if we talked with one another, we could streamline things, um, so it's just somebody making the effort, um to do that.

Human Resources. Supervisors shared their perceptions of how staff turnover and leadership were obstacles for collaboration. In her description of her daily role as a supervisor of ESE, this supervisor recounted instances in which the lack of conversations was directly related

to her daily tasks. According to the participant, these tasks placed her in situations of isolation because there are not enough people available, or employed, to help her meet the requirements of her daily work.

> Probably lack of personnel, not having the person to follow up. Not having conversations. The demands of doing our own roles and responsibilities related to our jobs. We are all spread too thin to have time to chat about new ideas. We are putting out fires and not looking for where they may start.

Often time, the relationships that district supervisors have with each other determines the types of supports one is willing to provide or the extent to which one will go to assist when understaffing occurs. In the following example, the participant gave in and provided the support needed with the focus on the benefit to the student.

> [A]nd so they will say they are understaffed and even when you think you shouldn't be providing it, you want them to outsource or contract with somebody, that can become an obstacle because you think, you want to push them to the point where it becomes their problem, that they own it, because you know they could find people if they really searched, but sometimes that would deny the benefit to the child, so you have to make a decision, and, you know without enabling those in ESE.

Upper-level leadership (i.e. superintendents, assistant superintendents, chiefs, officers, and board members) were viewed by supervisors as responsible for the existence or non-existence of collaboration practices. Factors such as leaders' "belief", "theory", "background" and "practice", were all mentioned as contributing, or not contributing, to collaboration.

> Since I started in this position, the styles of the two previous directors were to keep Title I and Title 1 part C and Title III separate, to the extent that we met separately and while we

> were often working with the same students, we did not collaborate or communicate. Our newest Director of Title I has a much stronger ESOL background so we now meet together and collaborate about what we need to do and plan together.

Supportive leaders who establish a system that requires departments to work together were perceived by the participants to have a strong effect on collaboration. In the following instance, collaboration was attributed to the structure of the department, although in this case, the collaboration between programs, did not always work.

> I like the way… honestly… we have our days when it doesn't work, but the way they have aligned our division, like I said, of teaching and learning, and how there is, you know, some expectation that the department has common planning, common strategic, administratively, the last couple years, and, that, you just really gotta get used to it, that's all.

Sporadic procedures were mentioned by the participants as contributing to lack of collaboration. Supervisors shared instances in which their leaders made it a procedure but then with the change in the leadership (staff turnover), the procedures became dormant. A supervisor described that the current practice of non-collaboration could be reestablished by upper leadership especially when determining the roles of federal program supervisors. The supervisor in this example is assigned several federal program responsibilities and because of this, the nature of collaboration becomes extinct because as she explained, one cannot collaborate with oneself.

> Uh, when we had it [collaboration], it worked well and then you know we just recently changed leadership here, and so, you know, it sort of has been on the wayside for a while, I think that, that would be my suggestion, is to make sure, and I know a lot of departments, a lot of departments wear the same hats, some districts are not as large as

> ours, some districts have one person that you know does multiple programs and so they are collaborating with themselves, you understand? Like the Title II, and Title I program are all in this office, and Migrant. So Title I and migrant collaboration happens with me, you know that type of thing. It's when those other departments are not in the same building that's important.

System leaders were perceived to play a critical role in establishing collaborative practices at the district level. This supervisor expressed that collaboration could happen if department chairs lead the practice, or engaged in the activities and served as role models for their subordinates. In this instance, the system's leaders were viewed as engaging in collaboration and acting as role models for other subordinates yet questions the lack of practice among supervisors.

> Our upper leadership does it on a weekly basis, so why wouldn't the next level down do it, you know. I think the department chairs could request their area staff work more closely with the other departments representing the students on a regular schedule. Each area has staff meetings that could incorporate speakers from other departments. This would build relationships, if not already established, so that when a need arises, items get the immediate attention.

Professional Development. Participants perceived that a lack of professional development regarding how departments function was a factor that impedes collaboration. In this district, a program supervisor discusses the complexities of providing professional development that includes training regarding all programs and the need to include all levels of employees in this activity.

> Um, I think the knowledge thing still comes in a lot, I mean I do, we are trying to do a lot more professional development just on awareness of what ESE is, all the way down to our teachers and stuff, I think that our ESE, ELL, migrant, the more specialized programs that you have and systems that you have, it's harder for the general teacher, administrator, whatever to know those.

The difficulties resulting from district and school level employees' lack of knowledge about federal programs was a common discussion among supervisors. A supervisor reflected on the complications she faces daily when enrolling ELL or migrant students. She pointed to the lack of professional expertise as contributing to the challenges that arise when determining if a student has a language or learning disability. In this example, the supervisor points to the need for professional development as crucial in order to recognize the "red" flags that may be present for students.

> Because so many things are going on in the classroom and when they come in as migrant, and they come in as ELL students, some of them don't have prior schooling or limited schooling, so it's very difficult to determine what exactly the problem is and the training, the personnel, may not be trained to look for the disability or look for those flags and it could be something that we are attributing to language proficiency issues for many, many years when from the beginning it was something else so that's a big challenge because we are so large.

Professional development was perceived to be a solution by supervisors when discussing special education through various programs. The difficulties challenge supervisors because of the many "specialized" programs that exist within a district. The need for educating professionals was

mentioned by a special education supervisor as contributing to possibly creating opportunities for others to understand the various programs available for special education students.

> We are trying to do a lot more professional development just on awareness of what ESE is, all the way down to our teachers and stuff, I think that our ESE, ELL, migrant, the more specialized programs that you have and systems that you have, it's harder for the general teacher, administrator, whatever to know those, I mean, and it wouldn't be expected, I mean, I'm not expected to know everything about ELL, you know, um, so, I think that sometimes though that can be a barrier because when you are having to verbalize or communicate some needs and stuff, people aren't as a tuned to listen or soak it in because they just don't understand, but it's not that they don't want to, they just...

Supervisors viewed that professional development is important and contributes to federal program knowledge. This supervisor understood the importance of staff training for effective practice and mentioned that "The leadership at the district office facilitates the training and coordination of services with other leadership personnel in different departments."

Personnel Characteristics

The category of personnel characteristics contains two subcategories: lack of knowledge and interpersonal relationships**.**

Lack of Knowledge. Participants stated that lack of knowledge, lack of expertise, lack of knowledge about personnel roles and program rules, lack of communication among and within the programs results in lack of collaboration. These descriptors were collapsed under the category of lack of knowledge. Participants expressed the need for accessing program knowledge as a form of collaboration. Participants described accessing information about another's

program rules as a collaborative activity resulting in effective practice. Supervisors explained that contacting others to get clarification of program rules or procedures happened on a "needs basis" and specifically to access information on how one program could contribute to the improvement of another.

> We do that on a needs basis type thing where we would just contact that department explain to them what are needs are in order to make our program work better we need to have a better understanding of what that those rules and information is and it's on an as needed basis and I would contact them.

Another supervisor talked about how critical it is for programs to know other program's rules. In discussing her access to knowledge of other program requirements, she expressed it in terms of an "enlightenment" that contributed to building her knowledge of other program's requirements. She recognized that this knowledge is important when establishing educational services for students.

> You know, enlightenment, but it was part of me being trained in all of the requirements of all the other things, because we get caught up in what we're doing and we know our law inside and out and our requirements, but we don't realize that the other people, their requirements, and, um, we need to when we are providing those kinds of services to students in schools.

Student success and appropriate educational planning was also mentioned by this participant. In discussing second language learners, a supervisor of ESE emphasized "if you don't know what you're doing, you can easily miss a step, you know, you can do an evaluation and not realize that it should've been done in their native language and that can delay things you know." Her

statement was a reflection on the importance of having the necessary knowledge of other program procedures.

Relationships. The sub-category "relationships" refers to the manner in which program supervisors' exhibit parity of goals and functions and how these results in increased instances of collaboration. In several examples supervisors described the effectiveness of working in collaboration with other programs as affected by program "fit". Supervisors who considered their program a "natural fit" with another spoke of it in terms of similarities in program rules and also as one that resulted from being assigned to the same department. A special education supervisor stated below that this provides "opportunities" for collaboration.

> The ESE and ELL departments fall under the same division of teaching and learning and we are right next door to each other; therefore, we interact all the time. Our programs are very similar in regards to compliance, federal mandates, etc., so we have common threads, staff, needs, and issues along with students we share.

Concerns about not being in close proximity to a program that is considered similar to another was expressed as worrisome and possibly as negatively impacting the perceived collaboration practices some supervisors. Being a "natural fit" was a common reason perceived to result in effective practices between two distinct programs especially when offices were in close proximity of one another. In the following excerpt, the ELL supervisor expressed a concern as she reflected on the possibility of her department being moved away from the special education department:

> That works wonders, it has been really, when we, were moved from ESE to the other department, that was one of our fears, that they were going to move us away from ESE

> [department], because a lot of our ELLs are, for some reason they go together. We look at strategies for ELL and strategies for ESE, they are very similar.

Being a "natural fit" was also attributed to the students' demographics and culture. In this instance, the supervisor spoke of how the factor of a student's "multi lingual" label made it a fit for both migrant education and ELL programs to work together. In her opinion, the common language background of the students created a system of overlap making the partnership of the program supervisors an easy task. She stated "Well ELL is probably the easiest group that we collaborate with just due to the nature of the programs being multi-cultural.. most of our migrant students are multi lingual so that's a natural fit."

A participant suggested that relationships among members of a program or across programs are desirable because it increases instances of collaboration especially at the school level. The ELL supervisor of a district explained how she attempts to promote good relationships with her employees especially at the school level.

> Our department doesn't have specific support for that, I coordinate the people that are going in to the schools to provide support for ELL they have a little bit of background in ESE, but each school as an ESE person, a staffing specialist, and an ESOL person, what we do is encourage those two to know each other and become good friends.

Summary of Data for Research Question Two

Data analysis for question two resulted in two categories; systemic features and personnel characteristics. Participants perceived most factors as impediments to collaboration (Structure of the program, time constraints, size of districts, location of offices, human resources, staff turnover, and leadership). As factors that support collaboration, participants offered professional development activities.

Research Question Three

Perceptions of Interagency Collaboration

What are the perceptions of the participants regarding how interagency collaborations affect the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities?

Supervisors in this study discussed their perceptions of how interagency collaboration affects the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities. In discussing their perceptions, the majority of the participants believed that interagency collaboration could result in positive outcomes for the students as well as improve the procedural methods of service provision. In this section the perceptions of the participants will be discussed as they relate to two categories: effects of interagency collaboration on student services and effects of interagency collaboration on procedural methods.

Identification of Students. All of the participants in this study expressed the importance of providing quality services to migrant students with disabilities. In their conversations of the effects of interagency collaboration on achieving this result, most of the participants realize that student achievement is the ultimate goal of any school system. Participants expressed that success of students is dependent on meeting their unique individual needs. Therefore, the appropriate identification of students with disabilities was mentioned by one supervisor as the main role of an ESE supervisor. According to him, FAPE is at the forefront and appropriate identification is key and includes migrant students with disabilities. He pointed to his role as "My role really is again, in ensuring that we are providing FAPE to our students that are eligible under IDEA including students who are migrant."

The importance of properly identifying students with disabilities was a common discussion among participants. Not only do they feel it is important to identify a child with disabilities, in several instances the concept of misidentification was mentioned as important to avoid especially when working on behalf of students. This requires an understanding of specific populations because this may affect ESE identification for example in cases of second language learners. The interagency collaboration of district level supervisors was seen as an important factor in preventing the misidentification or over-identification of students into special education programs. However, this same participant mentioned that at times trying to avoid misidentification leads to a child's services being postponed when in fact they could have been provided sooner had the supervisors worked in collaboration during the evaluation/assessment of the student:

> [P]robably a lack of resources sometimes um, people, personnel resources number one, um, I think maybe family sometimes just don't know where to go or teachers don't know and they maybe delay things, not because they are being negligent but just because they're not sure what the issues might be you know and so they are trying different things and going through interventions and stuff and it ends up that they could've done something sooner than they did, um, and that's just a knowledge base.

Supervisors have a clear understanding that there are numerous guidelines that affect how each program delivers services, but they also embrace the idea that quality services for students can be achieved through interagency collaboration.

Professional Expertise. The "pooling expertise" as a factor that could positively influence identifying students with disabilities was discussed by participants. They realized that it is impossible for one person to understand and or have knowledge of all the federal rules that

govern each individual program. This sentiment was expressed by a supervisor who said "the more specialized programs that you have and systems that you have, it's harder for the general teacher, administrator, whatever to know those, I mean, and it wouldn't be expected, I mean, I'm not expected to know everything about ELL, you know." Therefore, working together as a team to combine the knowledge base each one brings to the table could result in more effective student identification outcomes. In several of the interviews, the participants mentioned that they had experienced a positive outcome for a student because of the student's enrollment in another federal program. In these instances, supervisors expressed how the expertise and knowledge of another program supervisor facilitated the services a student received beyond special education and in certain instances enhanced or increased the services available to the student because another program "stepped in" to assist

> [O]r the parent is not taking the next step to an evaluation, or that the student needs eye glasses, or a hearing test, and the parent hasn't been able to get them the glasses, and the glasses is the next step because they can't go on with the evaluation because the child does not have glasses, and we are able to use migrant funds to step in and make sure they get their eye exam because the health worker will take the parent and child to the eye exam and then we have the funds to get their glasses for them (charitable donations).

This participant discussed how it is easier to get things done when one has the expertise. However, despite having the knowledge and expertise needed to follow through on a service, she also recognized that collaboration is necessary and would make tasks easier. Again, it is the natural way of work and meeting the responsibility of day to day tasks that creates a system in which it becomes much easier to be a one-man show working in isolation from others instead of seeking a partnership.

> Just, I think, being so involved, I don't know how to really explain this, the challenge is to remember to make sure that you pull the other stakeholders in. Sometimes it's very easy to work in isolation, because you think you're the expert, you're in the know, and you forget sometimes to reach out, depending on the urgency of how quick something needs to be done, or uh, whatever the schedule of the day is actually, you know, it interferes with sometimes getting outside of that silo.

Student Success. Although the responsibility for the students was perceived to be governed by laws or regulations of respective programs, the supervisors did not describe any instances of working together to provide the educational services collaboratively. Instead, a release of responsibility for services from other programs resulted. When discussing possibilities of program working together concepts such as "little consideration," "trump," "supplemental," and "precedence" were concepts mentioned and related to supports or lack of support from other programs for the student based on the perceived ownership of a student one program must take over another. Supervisors used various examples to discuss this theme and made statements such as:

> [I]f they're already a student with a disability then their ESE services trump everything; ESE a lot of times trumps ESOL because that's where they get more services and more support, more of everything, through the ESE services; There is little consideration for the federal guidelines for migrant; We are supplemental on top of whatever services are already being offered; and IDEA and the IEP takes precedence.

In the absence of collaboration between groups, programmatic rules or lack of programmatic rules to encourage collaboration appeared as factors impeding the practice. In several instances participants used the federal requirements of their programs to establish that

collaborative practices related to the comingling of federal programs when providing services to the same individual student are not existing; therefore, limiting or preventing perceived opportunities for collaboration.

> Historically we have worked in silos, uh, federal programs have been isolated as this is IDEA, this is migrant, and this is title I, this is ESOL and with those silos everything has remained in and of itself without a whole lot of collaboration.

Program rules in some instances created a system of ownership, but then in others, it also provided an opportunity for program supervisors to come together, to take a joint ownership for student activities that overlapped all programs. In these types of settings, program supervisors had the opportunity to discuss their respective program's requirements and assign who would do what. Although, it ultimately boiled down to who was going to "fund" and be "responsible" for certain components of one overlapping activity, it was perceived as a way to educate and provide others with examples of how programs can be united to become holistic in service delivery.

> [I]t was a formal meeting called together.. we sat down in one room and they said, yeah they are required to do that. Well then why are they asking us, well they shouldn't be because they should be here and the ELL should be involved in that training, because that's the other thing that happens, well that's a migrant student so migrant has to pay for that, that's an ELL student so ELL, so Title III has to pay for that, that's an ESE so this has to pay for that, they look at it as separate and really it's all one piece.

The importance of preventing student failure while increasing academic achievement of students was apparent through the interviews with the participants. District level supervisors want the best outcomes for students but several mentioned that being compliant with the law at times inhibits the connections they make with other supervisors even though these connections

could result in effective practices for service delivery to students. Building on this idea of program regulations, the participants expressed that they felt that an interagency collaboration would create an opportunity for supervisors to share knowledge about other federal programs and most importantly about the students receiving services from them. One supervisor commented that if there is an established interagency council it would lead to "better integration and coordination of services between migrant, ELL/ESE through action plans."

Culture. In several instances, the participants discussed that when professionals work together, preconceived notions or assumptions of students can be minimized. This was the sentiment expressed by a participant in the following statement

> I know there's a general lack of cultural sensitivity and understanding for a lot of educators who are, you know, have not really had the experience and been immersed in the um you know, what the migrant lifestyle is about, what some of the kids um have gone through, um so, so that is an overall challenge to help people understand.

Often times, the demographics or culture of students leads to assumptions that may affect how services are coordinated or delivered to migrant students. In one of the interviews, a migrant leader stated how trust in them is built around the "mystery" of how others view migrant and ELL programs. She went on to say that other programs see them as "different" and further stated that they "do not know what to do with ELL and migrants" because educators lack knowledge of the programs and its jargon. Therefore, in these situations, program supervisors believe that an interagency collaboration with federal programs could minimize this perception. Because of experiences such as these some supervisors become proactive and develop tools that bring people together for the benefit of providing services to students. The participant describes this process

> Our department along with the bilingual psychologists and other members of special education, created a RtI flow chart so that the PSTs at school would have a better understanding of how we must work together to make determinations about students coming from a different language and culture backgrounds.

Another supervisor described a similar experience of how a written tool is being used by professionals to coordinate services for migrant students she stated that "Yes, the referral initiates a request for service provided by the migrant staff."

Effects on Procedural Methods

Program Compliance. Maintaining compliance with federal program regulations was mentioned repeatedly by the participants. In several instances the supervisors described this aspect of their positions as a barrier to collaborating with others for the benefit of students. As one supervisor stated "I think the challenge always is, that most of the grants have their own kind of authority and what they're designed to do and what their main focus is and we tend to focus on that." Still another supervisor said "There is very little consideration for the federal guidelines for migrant when we are looking at special education, um, there's nothing that's really considered..." In their responses of how interagency collaboration would contribute to their provision of services to migrant students with disabilities, supervisors spoke of how this joint effort would contribute to "coordinating" and "streamlining" educational services in a "holistic" and "seamless" manner. This type of service provision was mentioned by the participants as one that would assist federal program supervisors to avoid duplication of services.

Funding. Some of the participants discussed how in some instances, schools or principals took advantage of accessing the same services from several of the programs because the supervisors are not communicating with each other about what services they are funding.

> I don't know because this isn't, this isn't migrant issue, it's a Title I thing that's coming to my mind that people schools are asking for different supports from us and then they ask Title I, and then they ask ESE and they are asking us for the same thing and then they collect all of these pieces, that all of us never knew that we were all giving to this one thing.

Consequently, this resulted in a misuse of funds that could have been more effectively used for another identified need. Another incident was described by the same participant. While participating in a professional development meeting the same concern of funds expenditures lead to a formal meeting between supervisors to determine which of the program funds should be used and it helped clarify that the funding of the professional development was inappropriately charged to her grant.

> Because this summer I was involved in a training where I realized that oh, this is a requirement of Title I for them to do this, so then why are they asking for Title III to do that, Title III funds shouldn't be used to do that, Title I should be first, so now we had a meeting, it was a formal meeting called together, we sat down in one room and they said, yeah they are required to do that.

In this case, all of the supervisors from various federal programs are able to discuss their respective program requirement and decide together as a team what needed to happen in that particular instance. On several of the interviews situations of times when funds were not used appropriately were discussed and the majority of the participants believe that if an interagency collaboration existed, this would not happen as often. Participants believe that through interagency collaboration federal program supervisors would be able to more effectively keep others informed of their respective program procedures and thereby help prevent inappropriate

use of program resources such as funds. Interagency collaboration is seen by the participants as important for coordinating funds effectively and creating a system of checks and balances so that educational services to students can be maximized. A coordinator stated "It is only through collaboration with all participants that we can be sure that we provide the highest quality educational services." Federal program supervisors understand that they are not expected to know all of the regulations from all of the federal programs existing within a school system, this participant stated "I'm not expected to know everything about ELL you know"; however, they do accept the fact that without an interagency collaboration, the knowledge they can receive from other professionals is limited and leads to limited resources for students and challenges procedural practice for all federal programs. The participant stated again "Well the other thing is because of the grant requirements of our funding, it's hard for people to understand that just because we get federal grants doesn't mean we have a bucket of money that we can just go do whatever we want, you know."

Benefits of Collaboration

In discussing prior procedural practice, several of the participants discussed past methods of "collaboration" that had existed and how they believed these practices had affected the effectiveness of their program procedures. One participant shared that by professionals coming together, the ability to see the whole picture and not just pieces is increased and this leads to more quality services because everyone is sitting together and determining how one relates to another.

> The benefit of collaboration is that academic decisions will be based on all the pieces of the puzzle rather than just one or two. The group will take into consideration language

> acquisition as well as disabilities and how they are related to provide the best services possible to the student.

Participants believe that having an interagency collaboration is necessary and beneficial for appropriate program services to students and also for all federal programs to be effective with their practices. In many instances the participants relayed their message that indisputably, the main reason for having established interagency practices is to make certain that students get a quality educational experience and that the resources and funding mechanisms that provide these services are managed in an effective manner. In the following conversation, the procedural compliance of supplanting again is a concern for following proper procedures; however, as the participant states, this could be avoided if all "stakeholders" are linking together for the purpose of a quality program for the student:

> The benefit of collaborating with other program supervisors when coordinating services/support to ELL Migrant students with disabilities is that the students will benefit from a more comprehensive plan that ensures that supports for students are not duplicated, ESOL and Migrant programs are not supplanting services that are the responsibility of the school, district or ESE program, and most importantly all stakeholders are involved in the planning and implementation to ensure that students are receiving the highest quality educational services.

Again in the following excerpt, students and procedures were mentioned as the two most important reasons for joining as group through interagency collaboration. Again, the participant in the following example once again makes it apparent that they are cognizant of the fact that federal programs have various types of resources and combining these resources can result in more access to services.

> The benefits include being able to provide the best possible service to students using all the possible resource available. The students and families can be offered the best/most services possible. The funds can be stretched to provide for the specific needs of the students.

A supervisor from a different program stated almost the exact same notion of comingling resources to increase quality and access of services to families.

> It is very beneficial to collaborate with other program leaders when planning and coordinating services for ELL Migrant students who also have disabilities. Because different programs may have parts of the information about ELL Migrant students, we need to access the information from all programs to be sure we are doing the best job possible to ensure that the support is maximized and that it is not duplicated.

Summary of Data for Research Question Three

Participants' perception of the importance of services identification, professional expertise, student success, and cultural sensitivity was considered a pre cursor to beneficial interagency collaboration. Supervisors believed that collaboration is a positive effect on the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities. Data of this study show that interagency collaboration for coordinated provision of educational services to migrant students with disabilities is perceived to result in positive outcomes. In addition, participants perceived understanding of program compliance and funding as procedures that are challenging when professionals do not collaborate. Interagency collaboration can have a positive impact in improving educational services for migrant students with disabilities. It was also perceived as a process for avoiding duplication of services and wasteful spending of federal funds. Migrant

students with disabilities receive services across several federal programs and the participants view that if federal program supervisors could work together in this endeavor the ultimate outcome can be effective educational services.

Section II

Five-Stage Model for Collaboration

In this section, the three districts' data are aligned with the five-stage model for collaboration as developed by Gitlin et al. (1994). The model is based on the premise that individuals have common goals and the desire to work together on a specific project, concern or issue. The model contains five stages that are believed to affect effective collaboration between groups of people. Each of the stages contains indicators that are characteristic of group collaboration. These indicators will be used to align with the data of this study.

The nine participants from three Florida school districts described their perceived collaborative practices with each of the programs, migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. Since migrant students with disabilities in many cases require educational services that overlap migrant education, special education, and ELL programs, determining the extent of collaboration between these three distinct programs is important. The assumption of this study is that migrant students with disabilities may cross all three programs. The following table presents the results of the data as they align to the five-stage model. Following the table of the model, a narrative is provided discussing the data and matching indicators for each stage of the model.

Alignment of Data to Stages

Data suggest that program supervisors engage in program assessment and in the development of program goals for their respective programs annually. These were evidenced in the funding proposals which are required for all three programs.

Table 2. Five-Stage Model for Collaboration (adapted from Gitlin and Lyons, 2014).

STAGE	TASK	Primary Indicators	Data from 3 districts
I	Assessment & Goal Setting	-Program Assessment (PA) -Individual Goal (IG) Setting	(PA)/(IG)- Evidenced: Review of Previous Year's Goals and Submission of State Project Application for Funding with Established Individual Goals (Migrant, Special Education, ELL) Evidence 2/2
II	Determination of Collaborative Fit	-Ongoing Meetings (OM) -Negotiation (N) -Role Differentiation (RD) -Evolution of Environment of Trust (T) -Collaboration Begins	(OM) - No Evidence: Annual Sporadic Leadership Meetings (N)- No Evidence: Specific/Problem Driven (RD)- Evidenced- Program Trumping/ Expertise (T)- No Evidence Limited Collaboration Evidence 1/4
III	Resource Identification & Reflection	-Identification of Resources (IR) -Reflection on Whether to Continue (RC) Collaboration	(IR)- Limited Evidence (RC)- No Evidence Evidence 0/2
IV	Project Refinement & Implementation	-Outcomes of Stage III Reviewed (OR) -Procedure Refined (PR) -Roles Redefined (RR) -Additional Members (AM)	(OR)- No Evidence (PR)- No Evidence (RR)- No Evidence (AM)- No Evidence Evidence 0/4
V	Evaluation	-Focused Internal Team - -Functioning Assessment (FA) -Task Completion (TC) -6 questions (Q)	(FA)- No Evidence (TC)- No Evidence (Q)- No Evidence Evidence 0/3

S**tage I: Assessment and Goal Setting**

Stage I is described by Gitlin et al. (1994) to include a self-assessments and development of goals be each team individual. Potential team members reflect individually on their desire and feasibility to work toward a goal. Programs must identify a common project, issue, problem, have a belief that the investment of time in the project is worth it, possess a willingness to

explore the project, perceive to have sufficient resources, identify gaps in resources, and consider that the benefits are worth the cost. An extensive amount of time commitment is required during this stage of self-assessment.

Stage II: Determination of Collaborative Fit

According to Gitlin et al. (1994) in Stage II, programs come together to determine how they fit in terms of collaborative effort. Gitlin et al. (1994) suggest ongoing meetings to discuss mutual goals, commitment, negotiation, role differentiation, and building an environment of trust. If these are identified as existing there is collaborative fit.

Data suggest that in Stage II programs exhibit limited collaborative fit. Participants shared that ongoing meetings are not common practice. According to participants the meetings between departments are induced by problems that arise or to provide general information. These often happen annually. In this stage Gitlin et al. (1994) provide four indicators. According to data, one indicator (role differentiation) is evidenced. Participants indicated that expertise leads to collaboration and these were evidence in programs providing translation services, or functioning as family advocates, or assessing for disabilities.

Stage III: Resource Identification and Reflection

According to the five-stage model for collaboration framework, the indicators for Stage III are ongoing reflection and establishing an environment of trust. Gitlin et al. (1994) explain that at this stage, teams return to their respective departments and individually continue to reflect on the group work, established culture, and also on their personal willingness to work within the established culture and parameters. Refinement or renegotiation of roles is the result of reflection (Gitlin et al.,1994) and determines if collaboration is possible.

According to data findings, none of the four indicators presented in the Stage III of the model for collaboration framework are present. Participants reflected on lack of collaboration and provided many examples of impediments to collaboration. None of the participants' data suggested that there is ongoing renegotiation with other programs as an outcome of reflective practice about ways to better collaborate.

Stage IV: Project Refinement and Implementation

Gitlin et al. (1994) describe Stage IV with the indicators of continued reflection on collaboration, adjustments to the collaboration, and roles redefined. They point that in some instances additional individuals may be recruited for resources or expertise which may necessitate further negotiations of all group members.

Following data analysis no indicators were evidenced for Stage IV. None of the participants suggested role redefining based on collaborative practice or inclusion of additional members in the collaborative practice in order to add to needed expertise.

Stage V: Evaluation

Gitlin et al. (1994) describe this stage as evaluative. Indicators are an in-depth evaluation of Stages 1 - IV, group communication, conflict resolution, followed by decisions making. In this stage, further planning for future work is discussed based on the evaluations conducted.

No evidence of indicators for Stage V was found in the data. Participants conveyed the idea of programs "trumping" each other on service provision of migrant students with disabilities. Participants did not suggest joint opportunities for evaluative behaviors related to interagency collaboration.

Conclusion of Alignment of Data to Collaboration Framework

Based on the indicators of collaboration from this model, the three districts of study do not meet the criteria to define their efforts as collaboration. Of the 15 indicators chosen from the model for collaboration developed by Gitlin et al. (1994) only three were evidenced in the data findings. All three indicators are related to behaviors that are conducted individually (i.e. self-assessments, individual goal setting, and role differentiation as a result of participant's acknowledgement of their expertise). Therefore, the results of the data aligned to the stages of the model for collaboration support the findings and conclusion that there is limited, or lack of collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs in the districts of study.

Summary of Chapter Four

The findings of this study support the conclusion that program supervisors work independently of one another despite being housed within the same district and or office building. Based on the analysis of data, the perceived causes of isolated work among supervisors are related to systemic features. Participants described collaboration with examples of informal, single incident activities influenced by the need to meet a requirement for their respective programs or solve a unique problem and not as an ongoing practice. Chapter five will include a detailed discussion of the findings presented in chapter four. Further, the implications, recommendations, and conclusion of the study will be provided.

Chapter Five

Introduction

This study explored the extent to which, if any, interagency collaboration exists among three federal programs. The participants were supervisors of migrant education, special education and ELL programs in three Florida school districts that provide services for migrant students with disabilities. Specifically, I investigated the ways, if any, that migrant education, special education, and ELL programs collaborate and the factors participants perceive to support or impede such collaborations. Also, I focused on how the participants perceived the effects of aforesaid collaboration in the coordination of educational services for migrant students with disabilities. Three school districts were chosen based on a three prong criteria. Supervisors selected to participate had to work in districts with enrollment of students from migrant backgrounds with disabilities. Given the migrant profile, some of the students enrolled as migrants are also ELL. Therefore, supervisors from ELL programs also participated in the study. For this study, supervisors were defined as those who oversee the implementation of federal programs focused on the targeted population. Furthermore, to be selected, supervisors from all three programs within the district had to agree to participate.

The data were collected using a semi-structured interview protocol. Data collected from the participants' interviews were coded and categorized through an iterative process. In addition to the data gathered from interviews, I analyzed district documents provided by the participants or accessed through public schools, state, and federal websites. Finally, the interview data were

further examined through an alignment with the Gitlin et al. (1994) five-stage model for collaboration framework. The alignment of the data to the framework provided the study and additional tool for an exploration of collaborative indicators, if any, existed as described by supervisors regarding their daily practice.

Summary of Findings by Research Question

Research Question One

Based on the results of this study regarding the extent to which, if any, migrant education, special education and ELL programs collaborate in the delivery of services for migrant students with disabilities, the data reveals that collaboration among programs that serve migrant students with disabilities is limited in scope and breadth. In answering this question participants offered reasons for and modes of collaboration. Participants stated that they collaborated only when they needed to obtain information, access resources or funding, step- in as family liaison and to problem-solve. These activities all related to particular situations rather than an established protocol. Descriptions of activities were short-term and related to specific cases rather than continuous and fluid. Participants described impromptu, cursory activities as collaboration and presented as evidence of collaboration the search for answers from counterparts in order to solve a problem and access resources or funding. Participants spoke of modes of communication as finite such as sending an e-mail, brief conversations pre or post meetings and written documentation. In these instances, supervisors created opportunities to establish communication with the other programs and develop solutions for a one-time issue or problem. In other words, brief contact with another program could provide a benefit for the existing need. Social exchange theory suggests that individuals will join others because of the expected benefits they will receive (Gitlin et al., 1994). Despite the examples provided data show that the extent to

which supervisors collaborated were found to be superficial, lacked depth and structure, and were limited to informal conversations that were linked to activities that did not require any long term commitment (i.e. telephone, email, hallway conversations). A supervisor stated "In a district this size, it's easier to pick up the phone, because we are so big."

Other reasons for collaboration were related to federal program leaders' need to gain knowledge of another program's structure and or procedures. There were several instances when the program staff connected because of a professional development activity for a specific district procedure. However, these professional development opportunities were sporadic and short term because they were provided for a specific purpose and not necessarily as an ongoing event. Migrant education, special education and Ell programs collaborate in limited and superficial ways.

Research Question Two

Research question two focused on the factors, if any, that are perceived to support or impede interagency collaboration between migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. Participants understood the benefits of collaboration and the need for collaboration. However, they mainly identified factors that impede collaboration. Participants consistently offered district and personnel characteristics as impeding collaboration. Two categories of factors were identified: Systemic features (location of offices, time constraints, size of district, high degree of staff turnover, lack of professional development, leadership) and personnel characteristics (lack of communication among and within programs, difficulties with interpersonal relationships associated with personality styles, lack of knowledge about personnel and or program roles, beliefs and leadership). One participant stated "I do not think leadership provides time for proactive work. We are all reactive and spread too thin"

and reasoned this characteristic as a contributing factor in the district's lack of collaborative efforts. Also, the presence of systemic features resulted in doing work in silos and the characteristics personnel exhibited were presented as the outcomes of silo work. The practice of working in silos is described by one supervisor as "very easy" because it allows for completion of tasks or activities of which one has the most knowledge. She explained that

> Because you think you're the expert, you're in the know, and you forget sometimes to reach out, depending on the urgency of how quick something needs to be done, or uh, whatever the schedule of the day is actually, you know, it interferes with sometimes getting outside of that silo.

When providing reasons for why people work in silos, some of the participants mentioned that it was due to the culture of the school district, the practices that were established by leadership, and others mentioned lack of innovation and time constraints. Despite understanding that working in silos prevents the development of effective partnerships, participants explained that working in silos saves time and allows them to meet the demands of their respective positions. Participants also recognized that they were more inclined to engage in collaborative work when the need to problem solve surpassed their agency's or program's resources or knowledge. As a result "problems" were the most mentioned factor as contributors to collaborative behaviors. When subordinates were unable to solve problems at the school level, communication between supervisors at the district level was initiated. Supervisors attributed "problems" as factors they perceived support collaboration. In responding to the question: "what helps you collaborate?" a supervisor responded "problems, we collaborate when we have problems." The need to resolve an issue or problem was the most cited reason that the participants gave for increased efforts at collaborative practices.

It was apparent in the interviews that supervisors relied heavily on school level collaboration between their respective program employees. Therefore, if school level employees solved the problems, district level supervisors were less likely to engage in collaborative practices with their district level peers. Several of the participants alluded to the idea of the importance of positive relationships in generating collaborative practices, by stating that they made sure that their school level staff became “good friends” so that program procedures and practices are conducted effectively and problems minimized. Despite the presence of “problems” being construed as an imposition on time and resources, it was also seen as the impetus for increased collaborative efforts.

Several participants suggested that migrant education program staff collaborated in the provision of special education services to migrant students by serving as a liaison or providing one-time services such as transportation and translation, which special education programs cannot provide. According to one participant, once the connection with the family is made and service delivery is established, the migrant education program staff takes an indirect role in the ongoing service planning and provision and the focus becomes record keeping for their respective program.

Other program-related events mentioned as supporting collaboration included one-time participation in annual events or interagency fairs in which many agencies, including district and community, provided each other with a description of their respective program services. The objective of such events is to distribute knowledge of roles and responsibilities of each agency and or program, hopefully resulting in increased or improved collaborative effort. These practices were apparent in documents such as agendas, program manuals, meeting fliers, and other policy information documents provided by the participants.

The lack of definition of collaboration, lack of protocol as well as leadership's lack of focus on collaboration impedes collaborative practices. The definition of interagency collaboration provided by individuals was unique to participants' perception of collaboration rather than imparted through a district's established protocol. Also, participants' definition of collaboration is related to the functions they perform such as one-time meetings, document sharing, and program knowledge seeking. This could be attributed in part to the districts lack of established protocol to guide them toward a common practice. A supervisor stated "The district leadership would need to make it [collaboration] a priority so that then it would become something that gets attention." Participants perceived the lack of collaboration as attributed to their immediate supervisor's failure to establish and support collaboration.

Research Question Three

Research question three attempted to report participants' perception of how interagency collaboration affects the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities.

Collaboration was perceived to minimize student failure and keep students from "falling through the cracks." Participants perceived collaborative efforts among the three programs as a way to lessen assumptions about students that are bicultural, bilingual, ELL, and or have a disability. Experts working together provide each other important student information that contributes to the coordination of educational services. Consistent with these findings is the report published by the National Commission on Migrant Education (1992), which concluded that lack of coordination between migrant education and special education personnel are barriers to appropriate service provision. Program coordination results in more informed considerations about student's unique language and cultural features. Each program has access to different data sources and specialized personnel. The combination of expertise and data from each program

facilitates identification of services for the student. The results of these practices were perceived to help professionals ensure free and appropriate public education for migrant student with disabilities, void of duplication of effort and conducive to a comprehensive education plan. This perception of the importance of collaboration did not translate to practices.

The participants perceived working collaboratively as a contributor in increasing knowledge about the different programs, which results in increase overall professional knowledge. Through an understanding of the requirements of other programs, duplication of services is avoided, which is more likely to result in a more effective service delivery system. Funding and resource sharing were considered by supervisors to be important factors ensuing from collaboration and these practices would lead to "streamlining the services" while minimizing the inappropriate use of resources. For the participants this benefit of collaboration is perceived as important because they are accountable for compliance and to be good stewards of the federal funds they receive. Participants shared that collaboration would support the coordination of funding and in turn would help all of the programs maintain compliance for funding and avoid violations of the supplanting rule.

Summary of Alignment of Research Questions to Collaboration Framework

A summary of the findings resulting from an alignment of Gitlin et al. (1994) five-stage model for collaboration to determine the level of interagency collaboration among the three supervisors for each school district was conducted. The summary of the data results are presented by each stage of the model.

Stage I relates to the disposition towards collaboration, willingness of members to participate in a collaborative environment, knowledge of the department, member expertise, and overall commitment to the process. Participants were keen to the idea of collaboration given their

views of the benefits of collaboration. Participation in this research study indicates that supervisors felt that they were experts in their discipline, and that they have a willingness to collaborate with others. For each program under study, participants offered goals associated with compliance with policies and mandates for their disciplines, suggesting knowledge of their programs. Therefore, an assumption is made that the participants have an appropriate assessment of and recognize the goals of their respective programs. In the project application for funding for each program, supervisors must develop and attest to annual measurable goals and objectives for their program.

In Stage II the members of each program meet to determine the collaborative fit among programs. For this stage Gitlin et al. (1994) suggest the presence of three activities when determining collaborative fit: negotiation, role differentiation, and evolution of an environment of trust. Participants described incidents of brief conversations with other program supervisors in the process of accessing resources. These interactions were portrayed as brief and oriented towards a specific problem. These interactions were not the result of negotiations or developed into “serious negotiations” extending “over a long period of time” (Gitlin et al., 1994, p.24). Participants did not describe interactions that were indicative of extensive discussions or intricate arrangements. Participants indicated that preplanned or routine interagency meetings extending over a long period of time are non-existent. Given the data collected it is evident that programs do not exhibit a spirit of interagency negotiations. This is also true for role differentiation and consequently evolution of an environment of trust. Participants in fact were unable to define the roles and responsibilities of other program members. Lack of trust was apparent in incidents described by the participants. Participants questioned the presence of members of other programs

in individual education plan meetings and made statements that suggest an attitude of “they do their thing and we do ours.”

In Stage III members of the program identify resources and engage in reflection about collaboration and their willingness to continue collaboration, thus overlapping with Stage II. The objective is to be better prepared for the process of renegotiations. Participants identified resources needed from their programs in order to problem solve. However there was no evidence of reflective behaviors related to what resources they can contribute to other programs. Participants expressed the belief that resources should be shared but did not present situations which resulted in the sharing of resources. All participants exhibited superficial reflective behavior when answering the questions. Some of the questions required several probes in order to yield an answer. This feature of the interview was interpreted as the participants’ limited disposition towards reflection about the intricacies of collaboration.

Stage IV and Stage V were non-existent according to the data. Participants did not offer instances where they refined and re-adjusted roles or evaluated the functioning of a collaborative venture. The absence of Stage IV and V is expected given that data shows the programs are not engaging in common goal planning, negotiation, role differentiation, and the building of a trusting environment. Data findings support that all three districts have not moved beyond Stage I of the five-stage model for collaboration. Although some of the activities exhibit superficial characteristics of the five stages, these are not structured or balanced to result in collaboration among the three federal programs, migrant education, special education, and ELL. The findings from this study suggest supervisors of migrant education, special education, and ELL programs struggle with establishing or building a culture that supports collaboration even though migrant students intersect all three of the programs.

Discussion

I am the district level migrant education supervisor for one of the school districts in Florida with the largest enrollment of migrant students. The migrant education program serves a population of students with varied needs. These needs require that the program interface with a number of different agencies and programs. Migrant students may have challenges in terms of educational disruptions, isolation, issues with health due to exposure to agricultural chemicals or equipment, substandard housing, language barriers, and high mobility as condition of parental work (Cranston-Gingras & Paul, 2008). In order for appropriate educational services to be provided it is crucial that services for these students address the conditions listed above. These conditions can best be addressed through extensive collaboration among different federal, state agencies and school district programs. The migrant education program functions to supplement, facilitate, and advocate service provision for migrant students.

As a program supervisor for one of the largest migrant education programs in Florida, I have often felt challenged by the perceptions and ideologies of the educational potential of migrant students presented from the supervisors from other programs. Their perceptions of migrant students as students with high failure rates and educationally "needy" due to performance challenge the accountability measures they must meet. In other words, migrant students do not "fit" into their plan of action for individual teacher evaluation and school grading performance. Since migrant students arrive late to school and withdraw early, educational systems do not make their education a priority. Gibson and Hidalgo (2009) conducted a four year ethnographic study on the barriers to education for migrant students and found that among other factors, migrant students get "pushed out of the system" because of their failure to meet state standards (p. 686). Further complicating successful school completion was the inability of

parents to work with classroom teachers due to lack of formal schooling of the parents (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009). Migrant students do not fit the mold of "high performing" students and in many instances are not included in the local accountability measures for state performance because they enter school late and withdraw early; consequently, migrant students are often considered "students" of the migrant education program and as a result discounted from the educational services that schools should offer to all students (Gibson and Hidalgo, 2009; Green, 2003; National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992). This is in direct contradiction to the Migrant Education Program's goal:

> The goal of the Migrant Education Program is to ensure that all migrant students reach challenging academic standards and graduate with a high school diploma (or complete a GED) that prepares them for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment (Migrant Education Program -- State Formula Grants).

Personal Reflection - Researcher's Journal Entry January 1, 2014:

I think some people in education don't believe in or agree with the perceived excess of services to migrant students; or criticize or question why or should it be or exist that some kids get more services than others? In their minds, the answer to this question is a solid "no"! The frequent comments such as "it's not fair" or "we can remove migrant children off our lists since the migrant program can provide" are a constant theme in my schema that drives me nuts!!! They [education professionals] see migrant students as "outsiders", not belonging, and taking from other children who truly "deserve" it- ☹

The perception that the migrant program is involved and thus responsible for migrant students prevents appropriate access to services that are needed. Given the traditional perception of "their students" versus "our students" I have often felt that there is a general misunderstanding

about the function of the migrant education program. By the same token, there is also lack of knowledge about who the migrant student is and the services needed to serve these students. Many supervisors from other programs underscore the transiency of these students as a factor in the agency or programs' ability to provide services. However, more relevant than the time that the students spend in the district, is the time that it takes to access support services from all or any of the programs. One could argue that lack of interagency collaboration delays service provision thus impacting service delivery.

The services are developed for students who are non-migrant and as a result do not appropriately respond to migrant students. The recognition of the large number of migrant students is often not considered and or non-existent in the development of services. I have consistently spoken about the need for knowledge about the district's student population as well as knowledge of the lived realities of students in the planning of services. Despite the satisfaction I feel with hearing myself advocate for these students, I am often confronted with a quiet crowd followed by a quick change of subject. In my hours of frustration, I often question myself if it is my duty as a supervisor to consistently sound like a "broken record" about what needs to be done for these students. For me the answer seems to be in the level of collaboration agencies and programs must have in serving migrant students. However, I have yet to feel that collaborative efforts are present or even that a collaborative culture is being developed. The attempts I have made at requesting or at times instituting a collaborative spirit with my counterparts have often ended abruptly due to what is termed lack of resources or time. Seldom, the long-term benefits of collaboration are considered.

Personal Reflection – Researcher's Journal Entry, January 8, 2014:

I went to a meeting today and there was a lot of talk about collaboration and its feasibility. Seems to work with community agencies so why can't it work for school districts? The lady representing the YMCA even knew about RtI tiers and interventions! Wow, if only school systems had the same views.

In addressing the challenges of my position, I am often confronted with my own background as a migrant student. I use my experiences to better understand the lived realities of migrant students. I must also confess that I use my background to convince my counterparts that positive possibilities exist for these students. The uncovering of my own background is necessary when I feel that others have deep seeded stigmas about who the migrant student is and what they can become. In sharing my background, I always gauge my level of passion for the subject matter of migrant students because I do not feel that others share my feelings. In the best of possibilities I see glimmers of an attempt to understand what it is to be a migrant student. However these attempts generally require that I tolerate the sense of pity and prejudice exhibited about these students.

My interest in this subject matter comes from my background as a child in a migrant family, an educationally underserved migrant student, a drop out migrant worker, a parent of migrant students, and the challenges I have found as a supervisor of the migrant education program. This study is a strong attempt to bring collaboration to the forefront in the provision of services for migrant students with disabilities. A summary and discussion of the results of this study as well as implications and recommendations for future practice and research follow.

Collaboration Defined

Collaboration is defined throughout this study; however, I felt it appropriate to repeat the definition for the purpose of making the connection to the implications. Collaboration is defined in literature as a symbiotic relationship among agencies, which are represented by their experts, who focus on shared goals and visions (Townsend & Shelly, 2008) with a linkage that allows for an integrative approach to problem solving and resulting in solutions that represents a perspective that "is more than the sum of each participant's contributions" (Gitlin et al., 1994, p.16). Consistently, researchers discuss collaboration as an essential characteristic if successful service provision is to occur (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004; McWayne et al., 2008; Rivard et al., 1999; Farmakopoulou, 2002). Moreover, the recognition of the importance of collaborative efforts is translated into law. Collaboration and coordination are discussed in the legislation for migrant education, special education, and ELL programs (NCLB, Title I part C; Title III part A, IDEA section 32 14). Despite the scholarly and legislative emphasis on collaboration, there is limited knowledge of the collaborative practices that exists in school systems that serve migrant students with disabilities, hence the need for this study.

Implications

Collaboration is Beneficial for Students

> The benefits include being able to provide the best possible service to students using all the possible resource available. The students and families can be offered the best/most services possible. The funds can be stretched to provide for the specific needs of the students. I don't think there are non-benefits of collaboration.

All nine supervisors interviewed for this study recognized and stated that collaboration is beneficial in theory and practice. The participants recognized that "[t]he benefit of collaboration

is that academic decisions will be based on all the pieces of the puzzle rather than just one or two." They viewed collaboration as a way to generate services that are holistic rather than splintered. Participants pointed to collaboration as conducive to providing professionals with opportunities to share important student data collected independently by each program, which can enhance education plan development. Several of the comments made about the benefits of collaboration were related to how collaboration could provide the opportunity for a more comprehensive education plan for the students. Collaboration was viewed as connecting "all of the pieces of the puzzle" which helps group members achieve the "highest quality educational services." These views presented by participants related to the idea of collaboration. They were not necessarily presenting the picture of collaborative practices for their district. With these perspectives participants demonstrated an inclination towards collaborative practices which appeared to come with the belief that a collaborative environment is beneficial for all. This view is supported by the literature. Anderson-Butcher and Ashton (2004) found that professionals that work collaboratively save time, resources and avoid the duplication of services. Most importantly, Anderson-Butcher and Ashton (2004) reinforce that these outcomes cannot be achieved through independent work. A strong collaboration among agencies is a requisite to avoid the challenges that are encountered when professionals do not combine their level of expertise and induces a culture of "working smarter" while strengthening the "children's learning and healthy development" (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004, p. 45).

Similarly, in their study regarding the eleven effective strategies of high performing districts, Noonan, Morningstar, and Erickson (2008) echoed the importance of collaboration between professionals as a benefit for student success and a critical component for avoiding "fragmentation, duplication, and inadequacy" of service provision (p. 132). Particularly, it was

noted in this study that youths with disabilities would greatly benefit and improve their educational performance if educators collaborate at all levels of a school system especially when youth are in transition (Noonan, Morningstar, & Erickson, 2008). In their interview with Chamberlain & Spencer (2005) Cook and Downing emphasized the importance of collaboration when meeting the needs of students with disabilities emphasizing that the method in which services are provided should not be a barrier for service provision (Chamberlain & Spencer, 2005). In the interview article "The Practicalities of Collaboration in Special Education Service Delivery," both Cook and Downing specifically mention that when people collaborate for the benefit of all students, then including students with disabilities, or with other needs, becomes easier regardless of the collaboration model exercised in a specific discipline or school (Chamberlain & Spencer, 2005).

Personal Reflection – Researcher's Journal Entry, December 26, 2013:

So – Collaboration – Do we need it? Will it make things better? Is this response dependent on opinion? The participants "seemed" to think it could help, but do they really feel this way or did they say it because they think it's the right answer? These are all good questions- I know that collaboration is helpful. I buy into the idea based on my personal belief and practice, but I also know it's a very difficult practice to build. I have been trying for 3 years!!!

Collaboration is Challenging

> On the other hand, team collaboration across departments brings with it challenges if each member is not sold on the idea that there is a benefit for all participants. Each department representative must join in to become a member of this new diverse team. The lack of buy-in will derail any team. So the emphasis can't be on one department but on the entire organization which represents each department.

The results of this study indicate that the practice of collaboration is perceived as challenging. Although the participants verbalized collaboration as beneficial for effective educational service provision to migrant students, they had difficulties providing examples that were consistent with the definition of collaboration. This was a strong indication of the participants' lack of knowledge of the true essence of collaboration as an integrative approach. Often their perception of the importance of collaboration forced them to present examples. Yet, the examples lacked an important attribute of collaboration. These examples did not reflect shared goals, lacked agency linkage, or the solutions presented did not reflect an integrative approach to problem solving (Gitlin et al., 1994). Some examples presented collaboration as an outcome to solving a particular case rather than collaboration as a strategy used and characteristic of the way of doing things. Ideally, in a perfect educational system, students would not need to be classified or labeled to be a constant focus of educational planning; however, some students, such as migrant students with disabilities, would not receive a complete educational service without the special programming available to them.

Unfortunately, the structure of accountability today serves as a constant barrier for professionals and thus results in collaboration being strictly practiced for cases that require immediate attention in regard to state and federal measures of accountability. Pfeiffer and Cundari (2000) conducted a study regarding obstacles and barriers to collaboration and echoed that because of legislative mandates and regulatory requirements a system that lacks collaboration results and destroys the possibility that professionals can integrate for service delivery. Further, the emphasis on meeting agency regulations inhibits a joint effort among professionals and ultimately results in fragmentation of services. Similar results regarding

fragmentation were noted by Noon, Morningstar, and Erickson (2008) and further expanded to identify the lack of collaboration results in insufficient services for students.

Personal Reflection – Researcher's Journal Entry December 29, 2013:

To what extent, if any, do districts collaborate for the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities? They really don't – It was hard to get them [participants] focused on it [collaboration] throughout the interviews and is very apparent in the transcripts. It's a constant search for an answer of how to best meet the educational needs of special populations, in my case, migrant students, that seems to not be important for educators to find.

Collaboration Challenged by Compliance

> Well, I think the challenge always is, that most of the grants have their own kind of authority and what they're designed to do and what their main focus is and we tend to focus on that and you know, the migrant piece is not, at least in IDEA, is not clearly defined in the assurances that you have. There are assurances that we have in the IDEA grant, and you know there are assurances to charter schools, assurances to private schools, but there's nothing there that really talks about, any assurances for this particular group [migrant].

Participants understood collaboration in conceptual ways rather than what they do in practice. Therefore, they could express their understanding of collaboration but did not necessarily perceive it as an attainable practice in their daily work. For most participants, the concern for meeting federal and state requirements for their individual program was at the forefront of their daily work. Consequently, compliance with their respective program's policies also resulted in limited consideration for the assistance that other program professionals could provide despite the fact that migrant students with disabilities, in many cases, cross all three

programs (migrant education, special education, and ELL) in terms of eligibility for supplemental academic support. Interagency collaboration was perceived by participants as a crucial contributor to appropriate identification of students with disabilities. Special education terms such as misidentification, under-identification, and disproportionality were used to discuss the repercussions of lack of collaboration between programs. Accurate identification of student's needs was perceived as an important component to successful educational outcomes, as a result one can conclude that lack of collaboration is detrimental to students. For the participants this benefit of collaboration is perceived as important, not solely for student outcomes, but because they are accountable for the federal funds they receive.

Participants shared that collaboration would support the coordination of funding and in turn would help all of the programs maintain compliance for funding and avoid violations of the supplanting rule. Consistently, compliance was reiterated as an important reason to collaborate; however, at times, these views were not exclusive to the belief that collaboration could result in successful outcomes for migrant students with disabilities but rather as a view that collaboration supports successful program compliance first. Issues with compliance resulting from this study are consistent with studies of multiple researchers (Bayne-Smith, Mizrahi, & Garcia, 2008; Zhang, Schwartz, & Lee, 2006; Johnson et al., 2003; McWayne et al., 2008) who found governmental and or federal policies as inhibitors of collaboration. For the participants of this study, compliance is especially prevalent given the varied rules and regulations governing migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. Although each program has as its component collaboration and coordination, there is a lack of protocol from the policies for implementation. Additionally, the lack of linkages among the three programs gives way to a focus on compliance rather than on successful educational outcomes of students. District

professionals' focus on compliance is directly related to maintaining the program funds and this contributes to the perception that without funds, services are limited or non-existent thus creating a double-edged sword situation for supervisors resulting in chronic dismal outcomes for migrant students. A recommendation from the National Commission on Migrant Education (1992) called for better coordination and integration of services which necessitates local, state, and federal changes; however, the extent to which the policies differ since then seems to be insignificant.

Personal Reflection – Researcher's Journal Entry, December 22, 2013:

I still see a lot of push-pull among programs [for responsibility of migrant students]. I think federal program requirements without intent, creates hostility among professionals; it's almost like it [collaboration] has to start at the federal level; however they give the money [to states] and rely on states to do the rest- then the states give to the districts [funds] and districts become the coordinators of how things happen- although compliance is still state/federally led and we have annual audits- As, supervisors, do we really have control… sigh

Collaboration Challenged by Perceived Hierarchical Structure of Services

> Well it's really, it's really just dialogue on okay, if a student comes in and they are, if they're already a student with a disability then their ESE services trump everything, all their needs as far as language anything like that is reflected in their IEP.

The examples presented by supervisors were described with solutions that were indicative of a hierarchical structure of services, resulting in one agency "trumping" another. It is interesting to note that in most instances special education departments were positioned as the "highest" agency while migrant education was perceived as "lowest" in the decision making process. One participant noted that "there is little consideration for the federal guidelines for

migrant when we are looking at special education, um, there's nothing that is really considered other than that [special education]." And another reflected that there is, to the best of her knowledge, no system "to classify students as migrant and gear services to them in the same capacity as we do ESE/ELL." The supervisor also questioned migrant education program personnel's "availability to attend the IEP [meeting]", clearly indicating the exclusion of such personnel in the eligibility and review process. According to the migrant program funding application assurances,

> Migrant program personnel will be actively involved in committees/meetings where decisions are made that may affect migrant students. This participation includes but is not limited to English Language Learners (ELL) Committees, Exceptional Student Education Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meetings, Student Success Team (SST), Discipline/Expulsion Hearings, Attendance Hearings, Health Meetings, etc. [NCLB, 2001, Section 1304 (b)(1)(a)(b)(c)].

The hierarchical structure of services is indicative of a system that focuses on the compliance with federally funded mandates first and foremost rather than a student focused approach. The concern for compliance by the special education providers may also be the result of the history of legal proceedings within the field of special education in comparison to the field of migrant and Ell education. The legal vulnerability of special education is construed as adding to the challenges of collaboration. These finding are consistent with Pfeiffer and Cundari's (2000) study in which they found policy constraints, eligibility mandates, variability of eligibility, and regulatory requirements as barriers to implementing services to children with special needs. McWayne et al., (2008) reported similar findings in their study of human services

agencies and identified that threats from legislative demands creates a culture of service delivery that does not support professionals working together resulting in fragmented services to children. Personal Reflection – Researcher's Journal Entry, January 1, 2014:

The label of the student continues to impact services- I still believe we work in a "pass the buck system"- I said it, it's true- I fight with it every day as a professional MEP [migrant education program] person- I know- our own staff doesn't know sped [special education] and they really are overwhelmed- it's overwhelming for them- for me- we work in a regulated profession, but 500 migrant students with disabilities rely on us, how many more are there? Will they be successful?

Collaboration Challenged by Systemic Features

> So I think that the more we could collaborate, and you know, in the smaller districts, where they all sit in one office, and maybe one person holds all, so many hats, there is better collaboration, but when you get to a larger district, where, you know, the departments are so big, uh, I think that that adds to the silo effect that we don't have that communication, but I think it [collaboration] definitely would be helpful.

The results of this study show that isolation of supervisors challenge opportunities for collaboration. Participants referred to working in "silos" as a deterrent to the interconnected flow of collaborative opportunities. The imagery presented of departments as "silos," a structure standing on its own, independent of any other departments again indicated the limited opportunities for collaboration. The conditions resulting in "silos" were associated with personnel characteristics and systemic features. Personnel characteristics were described as lack of expertise, lack of communication among and within programs, difficulties with interpersonal relationships associated with personality styles, lack of knowledge about personnel and or

program roles and beliefs such as “we do our thing and they do theirs.” Systemic features included location of offices, time constraints, size of district, high degree of staff turnover, lack of professional development, and leadership. Supervisors remarked on having no control or authority to change systemic features. In their study of successful collaboration strategies as resulting from focus groups of participants from interdisciplinary vocations, Bayne-Smith, Mizrahi, and Garcia (2008) found that a strong predictor of successful professional collaboration is heavily dependent on management principals and administrative knowledge. According to this study, administrative knowledge includes “building the infrastructure, establishing and enforcing decision-making processes, developing a flow of information, implementing communication linkages and other mechanisms for outreach feedback, and the all-important task of managing meetings (p. 7). In some instances, the supervisors in this study alluded to some of these existing; however, they relied heavily on upper level administrators to take the lead to make it happen, which in most cases was absent. Additionally, the participants in this study all worked for the same system so these findings contribute to literature when focusing on public school systems.

Participants gave no indication of consistent practices such as interagency monthly meetings, knowledge of other supervisors or programs roles and responsibilities or established interagency activities such as professional development. Supervisors noted one specific time that a joint professional development was offered. However they focused on the issue of which department was responsible for funding the training rather than considering the benefits of a joint, collaborative venture among departments. None of the participants considered professional development in the scheme of collaboration and or as a measure that supports collaborative practices.

The systemic challenges to collaboration mentioned in this study are consistent with Pfeiffer and Cundari's (2000) literature review findings. In their review of collaboration literature, Pfeiffer and Cundari (2000) suggest that in order to establish collaboration, tasks and group processes must be defined, balanced, and aligned to organization structures. Similarly to the findings of this study, Pfeiffer and Cundari (2000) found lack of balance and established organizational procedures to be common obstacles to productive collaboration.

Personal Reflection – Researcher's Journal Entry, August 28, 2013:

As I parked, I looked around and then began my walk up to the HUGE building housing ABC [name of district]. There was a large pile of trash lying on the ground and it was evident it's inhabited by homeless people (blankets, clothes, etc, on grass). I walked in, passed security, and asked for my first interviewee and I was sent to an information desk. The building is huge- 8 floors and there were many people sitting, standing, and lined up against the wall – While I was signing in the name of my interviewee, the name was not coming up and the attendant had no clue who the person was. It was surprising, but I guess it shouldn't be since my participants didn't know where each other's offices were located. So I finally found the name, signed in, got my badge, walked around and just waited, endlessly it seemed, while someone came down to get me and take me through security to board the elevator. As I waited, I looked around and was in awe at how large the place is. It reminded me of a courthouse. It was apparent that the size of the district does not allow for people to know each other especially considering the processes one must go through to just enter the elevator that gets you to other departments.

Collaboration as Reactive Not Proactive

> Problems. We collaborate when we have problems that need to be solved. Identification of problems is what really brings us together. When we both [migrant education and

special education] recognize a problem. Yeah, and the problems are out there, it's the recognition of the problem, the identification of the problem. So that's the part, that's the key, that's the area, that if we can highlight, here is the problem, how are we going to solve it together, that's what brings us together.

In the instances in which the participants described examples of collaboration, the activities were single incidents or sporadic activities that emerged during the school year resulting in collaboration being accidental or incidental. Collaboration was presented as a reactive response rather than proactive practice. Collaboration became a reactive response when resources or funding could not be accessed by a program, when language barriers or relationships with families required a mediator or specific documentation needed to be generated as compliance tools. One participant described this mode of collaboration as "forced" due to its reactive characteristics. Most of these single incidents were the result of an issue or problem that required immediate attention. Furthermore, in most cases, the issues and problems were tied to a compliance or procedural requirement needed to meet a reporting deadline.

It is noteworthy that participants referred to a scheme of sharing documentation. Two participants indicated that prior to students being moved from tiers of service, the instructional team required documentation attesting to student observations by migrant and Ell personnel. The objective of this requirement is to verify if all appropriate interventions are being implemented prior to the decision that an intervention did not meet with success. A participant from another district indicated that a referral protocol exists for students to be identified or supported by the migrant education program. This referral is completed by Ell, special education department or any other professional who knows of the student and the needs their respective programs cannot support.

Personal Reflection – Researcher's Journal Entry, January 5, 2014:

How many [migrant] students with disability have I coordinated services for? I can remember three – These instances are always because someone from ESE visits our offices. We do support child find – Javier [pseudonym] and I need to begin to focus on sped like we said we were – What will we do? We need to be innovative! Why do I not push more for a partnership that could make a huge difference in the lives of our migrant students? This study has made me think introspectively about it! I cannot give up, NEVER..

Collaboration Remains an Ideal

> It [collaboration] doesn't happen as frequently as you would like to see it happen. It can happen in some situations, you know, but it doesn't happen as frequently, and I don't think that it's just here [school system], I think that you will see that in many places [school systems].

Based on the findings of this study, collaboration does not occur. As implied in the above quote, collaboration, again as defined in this study, does not seem to be an urgent matter and the belief that one is not the only system not engaging in it appears to relieve the burden of pursuing the practice. Due to their profile, migrant students with disabilities require combined services from migrant education, special education and or ELL programs. Interagency collaboration can be a determinant in the success of migrant students with disabilities. Therefore for the population of migrant students with disabilities interagency collaboration is crucial and should be a focus for school districts with such population. According to the findings of this study in order for interagency collaboration to occur, it should be developed and sustained through systemic effort. Several studies (Noonan, Morningstar, & Erickson, 2008; Pfeiffer & Cundari, 2000; Rivard et al., 1999; Townsend & Shelley, 2008) support the need for systemic

functions to be at the forefront when incorporating features that support interagency collaboration. An understanding of the benefits of interagency collaboration was expressed by the supervisors who participated in this study. They also alluded to their willingness to collaborate; however, their desire is clouded by the perceived challenges existing in their district. One supervisor said "In a district this size, it's easier to pick up the phone, because we are so big. Yes. I cannot imagine the length of time it would take if only district leadership [supervisors] is involved in all the issues for migrant and ESE." In this instance, a hint of a desire for collaboration is apparent; therefore lack of or limited collaboration is most likely not the result of lack of desire or willingness by supervisors. But, rather features such as time, size, and lack of established procedures imbedded within the institution allow for diminished collaboration. It is then important that the institution's organizational structures be considered when developing and sustaining interagency collaboration.

Without a more formal and structured method for establishing interagency collaboration, collaboration among federal program supervisors will continue to be an ideal and migrant students with disabilities may continue to be at risk for failure while professionals will potentially struggle with program implementation. The results of this study point to the need to further develop a spirit of collaboration among programs, the establishment of protocols specific to how collaboration among programs should exist, increased knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of each program by all programs, and leadership that models and engages in collaborative efforts. Local and state level administration collaboration was highlighted as critical to the success of the high performing school districts studied by Noonan, Morningstar, and Erickson (2008) regarding collaboration. Joint trainings and meetings that included local administrators, state administrators, and students and families regarding the establishment of

policy and procedures was conducted through a cyclical nature and prior to establishing changes, the groups engaged in determining the effectiveness of the changes. Therefore, it is clear that engagement of leadership at all levels is necessary if the supervisors of migrant education, special education, and ELL programs are going to move toward establishing a culture of collaboration (Chamberlain & Spencer, 2005; Gitlin et al., 1994) that leads to successful educational outcomes for migrant students with disabilities.

The data support the conclusion that interagency collaboration is perceived as an ideal rather than a characteristic of daily work affairs. Across the districts of study, reasons given for lack of collaboration were more similar than different. All participants were able to describe what they perceived to be a benefit of collaboration; however, in the same instance they negated the benefit by adding the "but" after their discussion of the benefit. Overall participants shared perceptions of interagency collaboration and student outcomes as positively correlated. Also, participants perceived increased interagency collaboration as beneficial to the students, programs and supervisors. Following analysis of the data provided for all three research questions, it is concluded that the perceptions of participants about collaboration are not evident practice in the field. In question one, participants clearly saw reasons for collaborative practices but presented scenarios that were limited in collaborative practices. In question two, when offered the opportunity to discuss supports and impediments to collaboration, supervisors consistently provided examples of impediments to collaboration rather than supports. In question three, participants presented perceptions of collaboration as beneficial to students, programs and personnel, however again they spoke of the challenges they encountered.

Personal Reflection – Researcher's Journal Entry, November 28, 2013:

They're not saying that it's [collaboration] what they're doing, they are describing what should be or would help.

January 3, 2014

Participants spoke more on the reasons for not collaborating than providing examples of its [collaboration] existence – If I had interviewed myself – what would I have shared? I don't think it would be much more different- Really would not be – One thing is apparent across districts- collaboration is practically non-existent and that needs to change. I will continue to try.

Recommendations for Research

There is limited research about the collaborative efforts among migrant education, special education and ELL programs. Given current predictions of the increase of population demographics of diverse students such as migrant students (Green, 2003) and the limited availability of research regarding migrant students with disabilities and education, it is recommended that research addressing the needs of such population be undertaken. Results of studies regarding migrant students with disabilities and challenges to education should then be incorporated in administrator preparation programs. Since federal programs are a large portion of local school systems, and compose a large portion of school and district administrator functions, incorporating an education component in preparation programs that results in an increase of knowledge for creating a system of interconnectedness while focusing on the federal and state regulations would minimize the effects of non-collaboration existing in school systems. Compliance is not going away and should be everyone's responsibility not just the supervisors of federal programs because migrant students with disabilities are everyone's students. A lack of

ownership will continue to reinforce dismal educational outcomes for migrant students with disabilities.

Studies that target parents of migrant students with disabilities would also allow for a better understanding of the overall benefits of collaboration between migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. Studies show that collaborative teams that include parents and students result in better outcomes (Artiles & Harry, 2006; Springer, Sharp, & Foy, 2000; Noonan, Morningstar, & Erickson, 2008; Rivard et al., 1999). Parents play a critical role in the development of IEPs for their students; therefore, how they perceive and navigate the procedures of special education could contribute crucial information for the establishment of collaborative practices in schools and districts serving migrant students with disabilities.

In an effort to better understand levels and quality of collaboration among members of the same program, research on intra-program collaboration should also be undertaken. If federal program staff cannot collaborate internally; it will be difficult for collaboration to be established with *outsiders* from other programs (Gitlin et al., 1994). Longitudinal studies on students who were enrolled in effective programs or districts that have been deemed highly collaborative could provide data on the effects of interagency collaboration on student outcomes. Research studies on this topic would assist with professional development geared towards increasing and improving interagency collaboration.

Research regarding federal program collaboration should include qualitative as well as quantitative. Qualitative studies provide opportunities to explore topics in depth to create descriptions and guide in the development of theory. Quantitative studies offer the opportunity to look at outcomes and survey or develop rating scales with large number of samples allowing for generalization about interagency collaboration across larger populations. Since migrant

education, special education, and ELL programs receive funding that is funneled through federal, state, and local level entities, longitudinal studies regarding successful collaborative practices' impact on student achievement could provide informative findings nationally. Considering that migrant students, including those with disabilities, travel extensively nationwide, so longitudinal studies could prove beneficial in improving educational service delivery for migrant students with disabilities nationwide.

Recommendations for Practice

Districts should partner with institutions of higher education in order to coordinate studies to improve professional development on the topic of collaboration. It is also important that districts develop protocols for collaboration in order to deliberately guide staff towards a collaborative environment. Technical assistance papers, presenting the requirements for collaboration among all three programs potentially support and instill a spirit of collaboration. An organizational chart and the completion of a checklist are perceived as effective practices based on data from participants. These tools would enhance a focus on meeting program criteria and reinforcing a joint effort for the delivery of services to migrant students with disabilities. The establishment of written procedures that are reinforced and practiced by top level leaders could support a working definition of collaboration so that supervisors have the opportunity to have a guide from which to work, thereby addressing the debilitating factors of time, size of district, and proximity of departments.

A framework similar to the one presented in this study by Gitlin et al. (1994) could be developed that outlines collaborative practices as exemplary among programs that serve students who cross several programs and is inclusive of the federal rules for collaboration. Further, combined goal setting is critical as a blended activity to set the climate for collaboration so the

model I would change the goal setting (stage I) to a combined effort and not as an individual activity. Currently, Stage I of the model asks each group to individually establish goals prior to establishing collaboration. The time that is wasted doing this could jeopardize moving forward within the other stages if goals are not viewed as a collective activity rather than individual process. Further, the framework should be adopted to include local and state directors in charge of school systems. The framework could be included as a tool for professional development and mentoring programs for school districts as well as included in the criteria for career evaluations. A system of mentoring of new staff with a specific focus on collaborative efforts allows for the establishment of a more collaborative culture.

Professional development trainings on collaboration are crucial. After a model for collaboration is written, professional development trainings would be essential for promoting and providing for the skill development needed to support the collaboration. This professional development should include district and state staff at all levels starting with the directors of migrant education, special education, and ELL programs, superintendent, district level administrators, and ending with school level staff. Furthermore, roles and responsibilities descriptions must include statements related to the practice of collaboration increasing professional accountability that would be part of the performance evaluation at each level. It is also important that leaders develop a reward and evaluative programs focused on intra and interagency collaboration. Leaders should serve as a role model for collaboration and establish the policies necessary for collaborative practices to be established. As one participant stated

> if they went to one place, and then there was this looking at, at the district from, from a holistic point of view, to say well some of here and some of this, and some of you know,

it's not like that here, everybody just kinds comes and ask everybody for things, but if, if leadership set up the system and then that's the way it was, I think it would be different.

In these instances, leaders could establish a vision and mission for the school district and should have statements related to collaboration. The result of these efforts could be shared with all levels of personnel in the district through the development of a procedures manual that combines all three programs as well as written agreements among the persons to collaborate on a regular basis.

Knowledge of professional roles across programs, through interagency professional training and activities that allow for networking, increases the potential of establishing positive professional relationships built on mutual respect, which in turn may result in a willingness to engage in collaborative efforts. Since much of the data revealed that federal program supervisors spend large amounts of time with compliance activities, it makes sense that professional development activities include federal collaboration requirements of all programs and that these be the subject of supervisors' joint trainings. Much of the federal and state technical assistance provided to school districts is accomplished through technical assistance papers. At the local level, these technical assistance papers could be reviewed, discussed, and then incorporated into one procedural document with a focus on streamlining educational services for migrant students with disabilities.

Efforts at reduction of time of work related tasks have resulted in technology becoming more prevalent in the workplace. Technology-related communication such as SKYPE, apple chat, Go to Meeting, webinars, and video conferencing, that is personal and not related to a simple note or written message, is conducive to personal interaction for ongoing meetings and communication. These types of interaction could provide an incentive for people to work

together on a more regular basis. These are also methods that prevent working in “silos” while decreasing traveling time in large districts. Social media is used daily in all day- to- day activities including on the job and incorporating it into daily work responsibilities of federal program supervisors’ roles could minimize the time constraints mentioned in this study. A joint technology-oriented online system in which all supervisors could share their service provision to individual migrant students would assist with lessening duplication of services and wasteful spending. Through the online system, supervisors could view migrant student services continuously and view and add additional services provided or necessary clearly documenting which program was responsible for the provision. Through these efforts duplication of effort would be minimized while unmet needs would be emphasized.

Limitations

The aim of this study was exploratory, specifically investigating and exploring collaboration among migrant education, special education, and ELL programs. A study of other federal programs may result in alternative findings. Further, the data findings of this exploratory study were specific to educational systems in enhancing or developing collaborative practices for programs serving migrant students with disabilities so including other student populations could yield alternate conclusions. The participants were restricted to district-level supervisors and did not include school-based staff that are the “hands on” contributors to service delivery and may enhance knowledge of service delivery. Another limitation is related to the participant roles. All nine of the participants were in leadership roles and held offices at their district level.

Other limitations were that all of the participants were from Florida and from districts, with different student enrollment and program procedures. Most of the participants had different titles which carried with them different roles and consequently lead to interfacing with different

situations. Although the assumption was that all three districts' program structures were similar, this was not the case. The way districts interpreted rules and regulations for their respective programs, varies and therefore this could have implications in their perceptions.

Conclusion

The findings for this study suggest that collaboration benefits students and programs as well as overall school systems. However, instilling a spirit and developing a culture of collaboration is challenging and requires direct deliberate and explicit work by the districts. The inconsistent and at times contradictory responses provided by supervisors regarding collaborative practices support the notion that not enough is known about this specific topic. The work required to achieve a clearer understanding in this field must be proceeded by in depth studies and possibly changes on systemic features that disallow or limit collaboration. It is important to note at this juncture that any work directed to migrant student with disabilities which is void of collaboration will continue to result in fragmented services and will not meet its full potential of effective service delivery. Ultimately the focus of all efforts should be the students; therefore, the desire to establish collaboration should be based on our goal to educate every child, regardless of migrant status, disability, or language difficulties. Efforts should be based on a student's unique characteristics and educational needs and conducive to student success within a system that provides for cross program collaboration for students who intercept more than one federal program so fragmentation or duplication of services is circumvented.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

1. At the district level departments in your school system, who is primarily responsible for coordinating federal educational services for students identified as migrant children with disabilities? Are there other people within or outside your department who could provide information about collaboration with regard to migrant students with disabilities?
    a. How are the federal educational services of migrant children with disabilities documented?
2. When working on behalf of migrant children with disabilities, what role do you play in coordinating federal educational services in your school district?
    a. When working on behalf of migrant children with disabilities, what types of interactions do you have with other federal departments that also coordinate federal educational services for these students?
    b. When and where do these interactions usually take place?
3. When working on behalf of students identified as migrant children with disabilities what is the purpose of your interactions with other departments?
    a. When working on behalf of students identified as migrant, ESE, and/or ELL, how do you interact with individuals from the departments you do not represent?

Appendix A (continued)

4. When working on behalf of students identified as migrant, ESE, and/or ELL, what are some factors that currently help you collaborate with other federal programs?
5. When working on behalf of students identified as migrant, ESE, and/or ELL, what are some factors that present challenges to your collaboration with other federal programs?
6. What are some examples that you can describe in which you collaborated with other departments or were prevented from collaborating with regard to services to migrant children with disabilities?
7. What overall comments or suggestions can you provide regarding collaborative practices for school systems working on behalf of students receiving services from migrant education, special education, and/or English language learner programs?