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There have been teacher evaluations in place throughout the history of education, yet teacher quality continues to be an issue. With difficulty in determining what constitutes a qualified special education teacher, evaluations have been challenging to use in an efficient and effective manner.

The purpose of this research was to examine high school principals' perceptions of how the current 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards fit the various skills of special education teachers and how well prepared the principals were to evaluate special education teachers according to these standards. Ninety-six high school principals in North Carolina who were in the first phase of evaluating teachers using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Teaching Standards were surveyed.

Six skill areas were included on the survey: classroom management practices, teaching strategies, inclusion facilitation, IEP development/implementation, transition planning/implementation and content knowledge. Significant differences between the skill areas were found, especially in the area of transition planning which was consistently viewed as an area of least preparation not fully addressed by the standards. Such differences were mirrored in comments made in the open-ended questions that indicated the need to have more training related to instructing students with the most severe disabilities. Principals who did receive professional development were more

likely to feel prepared and indicate that the standards more adequately addressed the skill areas, although the differences were not statistically significant.

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ABILITY TO EVALUATE SPECIAL  
EDUCATION TEACHERS USING THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS

by

Megan Mimms

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Approved by

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Committee Chair

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of  
The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Members \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Acceptance by Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Final Oral Examination

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

**Background and Conceptual Framework**

Today, there is a significant achievement gap between the educational outcomes of students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers (Kauffman, 2004). Indeed, students with disabilities are not performing at the level necessary to meet the high standards set for all students. With students with disabilities being held to the same standards as students without disabilities, it is important to examine how teacher quality, as defined by knowing content and pedagogy (Educational Testing Services, 2004), is evaluated. The relationship between teacher effectiveness and student achievement is strong (Holdheide, Goe, Croft, & Reschly, 2010) and makes the issue of teacher evaluation important.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has contributed to a demand for highly qualified special education teachers in public schools (Boe, 2006). The definition of highly qualified varies from state to state in regard to the standards that must be met to teach students with disabilities. Beginning special education teachers also must meet these standards, and may be ill-prepared by their higher education institutions to implement current practices such as co-teaching, which are required of special education teachers today (McLeskey & Ross, 2004). Currently, standards-based systems do not include an empirically-based, well-organized and carefully implemented

evaluation process. As a result, it is difficult to judge their validity in regards to student achievement.

The recent alignment of the 2004 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and ESEA has focused additional attention on the qualities special education teachers bring to the teaching profession (Jameson & Huefner, 2006; Leko & Brownell, 2009). Previously, special education teachers were allowed to teach with an emergency license or temporary certification; today they must have obtained a bachelor's degree, hold a full teaching certificate or license, and be highly qualified in skill and content. While standards exist to ensure accountability on the part of the special educator, what is considered highly qualified varies from state to state. Such variations include differences in requirements regarding educational backgrounds. For example, teachers are required to obtain graduate degrees in some states while others require only a bachelor's degree (Jameson & Huefner, 2006), thus making highly qualified a subjective term, and difficult to assess via a general teacher evaluation.

Defining teacher quality as teacher knowledge of content and pedagogy directly relates to the new education reform, Race to the Top, which stresses the importance of teacher effectiveness. However, there are challenges to assessing and supporting the effectiveness of special education teachers. For example, current evaluation techniques do not distinguish between the various roles of the special education teacher (Holdheide, Goe, Croft, & Reschly, 2010).

Evaluation is meant to provide information in order to make decisions about the quality of whom or what is being evaluated (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004).

Theoretically, teacher evaluation can support and monitor instruction. The distributed theory of leadership practice, developed by Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001), describes how tools such as teacher evaluation instruments are “defining elements of the leadership practice” that are necessary in providing feedback to teachers. Typically, in the field of special education, classroom practice and knowledge are lacking such technical and theoretical measures (Sindelar, Brownell, & Billingsley, 2010.)

### **Need for the Study**

All of these factors point to the need for a system of evaluating special education teachers that is objective, valid, fair, and constructive. Unfortunately, the reality of how special education teachers are currently being evaluated is a far cry from what is needed (Cramer & Nevin, 2006). Special education teachers may be observed by administrators, peers, university faculty and consultants, many of whom lack sufficient background knowledge in special education (Lasky & Karge, 2006). While much of what special education teachers do overlaps with general education teachers, there are substantive differences too. As a result, administrators may be confused by the various roles special education teachers take on such as co-teacher, or they may be surprised by the community involvement necessary to implement separate curricula and transition programs. The complexity and variability of the job of being a special education teacher raises questions about how special education teachers are evaluated. For example, who should evaluate special education teachers and on what basis and to what extent can evaluation systems developed for general education teachers be applied? A recent, nationwide study conducted by The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality

reported half of respondents indicated a need for separate evaluation systems for general and special education teachers (Holdheide, Goe, Croft, & Reschly, 2010).

The conditions under which special education teacher evaluations are conducted continue to change. One area of significant change has resulted from the gradual entry of students with disabilities into general education settings at a time of high accountability with its emphasis on effecting student outcomes. The current variability of roles in special education and a lack of specificity in evaluation techniques have caused concern about the quality of expertise and knowledge special education teachers are bringing to the classroom (Kilgore, Griffin, Otis-Wilborn, & Winn, 2003). Currently, there is little special education research available to guide practice as to how special education teachers should be evaluated.

The lack of recent research available related to the evaluation of special education teachers is of concern, especially in this era of accountability. The general education evaluation may not be specific enough to address the various roles of a special education teacher including inclusion facilitator, IEP developer, and transition specialist. An empirically-based evaluation system that addressed these various roles would give administrators not well versed in special education a format to effectively evaluate special education teachers, and, by so doing, enhance educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

Currently, a new evaluation system developed by policymakers, business leaders, and educational leaders (including the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)), is being piloted and

implemented in several states. This evaluation system is based on the new, 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards and focuses on the important roles of teacher leadership, higher-order thinking, teamwork and collaboration, authentic assessment, and technology-infused learning in a 21st century education. States are developing evaluation instruments that directly tie these standards into their evaluation process. While at face value the importance of each of these areas is difficult to dispute, the extent to which they can be operationalized and applied to fit the varied roles of special educators is an important question that needs to be answered.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study is designed to investigate principals' perceptions of their level of preparation to evaluate special education teachers using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards. Also a focus is principals' perceptions of how well those standards address the special roles and skills of special education teachers.

### **Research Questions**

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How do high school principals perceive their level of preparation to evaluate the skills of special education teachers using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards?
2. How do high school principals perceive the appropriateness of the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards in evaluating high school special education teachers?

3. How does the professional development received affect principals' perceptions of their level of preparation to evaluate the skills of special education teachers using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards as well as the appropriateness of those standards?

### **List of Key Terms**

Terms related to this research are defined here and will be used throughout the study.

**21st Century Professional Teaching Standards.** These teaching standards focus on the important roles of teacher leadership, higher-order thinking, teamwork and collaboration, authentic assessment, and technology-infused learning in a 21st century education (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2007).

**Teacher Quality.** Teachers are knowledgeable in content and pedagogy (Educational Testing Services, 2004).

**Classroom management practices.** Special education teachers are able to develop a management plan, redirect and proactively addressing behavior, reinforce appropriate behavior, and create a supportive learning environment (Brownell et al., 2009).

**Teaching strategies.** Special education teachers (a) connect new material to prior knowledge, (b) incorporate student thoughts into the lesson, (c) allow students to respond to instruction, (d) support students who require assistance, (e) provide feedback, and (f) allow for practice of material taught (COPSSE, 2009).

**Content knowledge.** Special education teachers are knowledgeable in math, science, English, and/or history.

**Inclusion facilitation.** Special education teachers are qualified in the following areas: collaborative teaming and teaching; curricular and instructional modifications; assistive technology, positive behavioral support, personal supports, literacy, and content instruction (Fisher, Frey, & Thousand, 2003).

**IEP development/implementation.** Special education teachers complete well-written and implemented IEPs that reflect high quality individualization as evidenced by appropriately written key components including present levels of performance, annual goals, special education and related services, and transition plans.

**Transition planning.** Special education teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in the following areas to adequately support students: general assessment, occupational preparation, self-advocacy, occupational assessment, transition collaboration, IEP development, and systems change (Blanton et al, 2003).

### **Limitations**

This study is concerned with the perceptions of high school principals in North Carolina who were in the first phase of evaluating teachers using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Teaching Standards. The findings of this study are limited to that small and specific group of high school principals. Due to this small number of subjects, the reliability of the scale used was unable to be determined. The study is also limited by the self-reporting nature of the data collected for this on-line survey. For example, there is no way to validate the honesty of the respondent as well as their willingness and time available to respond. Further, on-line surveys typically have a low response-rate, making the attainment of enough data to say something meaningful a challenge. Also, since high

school principals are the only respondents, the results may not be generalizable to the middle and elementary schools involved in the first phase of using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Teaching Standards to evaluate special education teachers.

### **Summary**

Special education is lacking a comprehensive research base documenting its effectiveness as a whole and its effectiveness in assessing quality teachers. With students with disabilities being held to the same standards as students without disabilities and with teachers being the key variable in student learning, it is important to examine how teacher quality is evaluated.

Literature related to the evaluation of special education teachers will be presented in Chapter 2, followed by the methodology (Chapter 3), the results (Chapter 4), the discussion (Chapter 5), and related appendices. The appendix will include the survey instrument.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

#### **Introduction**

Chapter 1 presented the need for a more effective way to evaluate special education teachers in order to determine their knowledge of content and pedagogy. In this chapter the literature related to the evaluation of special education teachers is reviewed. First, teacher evaluation will be put into an historical perspective in order to relate current evaluation practices of special education teachers to past evaluation practices and describe their relevance for today. Second, the various dimensions of what constitutes an effective special education teacher will be described followed by a description of potential instruments and methods that could be used to evaluate special education teachers.

#### **Historical Context**

There has been little research conducted about the history of evaluating special education teachers. Much of the evaluation literature in special education has dealt with student teachers, rather than practicing special education teachers. The earliest information written about evaluation involved Elizabeth Farrell, the founder of special education as we know it today. In 1912, at the Brooklyn Training School, Farrell implemented an evaluation system when she trained teachers. “Ungraded class teachers were observed and evaluated, and observations were followed up with a conference. In

this 90 minute meeting, both strong and weak teaching areas were identified and means of improvement discussed (Kode, p. 81).” Sadly, no information was found suggesting follow-up observations and evaluations when Farrell’s special education teachers had completed their training and were no longer involved with the Brooklyn Training School. While little other historical information regarding the evaluation of special education teachers exists, the following historical information about the evaluation of general education teachers, which begins in the 1940s, is relevant to conversations about evaluation issues in special education today.

Although teacher evaluation and equal pay for both male and female teachers were of high importance during the 1940s and 1950s (McCartha, 1950), evaluation procedures were inconsistent. In McCartha’s study, only 170 out of 671 school administrators were evaluating their teachers at all. The reasons for conducting teacher evaluations among those administrators who were evaluating their teachers included the following: reappointment, promotions, student well-being, salaries, teacher protection, establishing tenure, and community protection. McCartha (1950) concluded that attending a teacher education program does not ensure success in teaching, the qualities of an effective teacher are difficult to determine, and teacher effectiveness should be related to student achievement, conclusions which resonate in today’s environment of accountability. He also suggested that, “a teacher’s work is one whose complexities defy exact measurement of efficiency (p. 123),” an issue today’s educators and policy makers are attempting to address.

Johnson (1955) developed an instrument that analyzed teacher effectiveness and competence based on teacher quality, teaching activity, and student achievement. Teachers were instructed to find problems in certain scenarios and to solve the problems; their ability to solve the problems was intended to reflect their knowledge of child development, behavior, and psychology. Johnson attempted to predict teacher effectiveness based on scores on this instrument and found it effective in predicting teacher effectiveness. Interestingly, Johnson's evaluation measure is similar in nature to the PRAXIS exam that special education teachers are required to take through the Educational Testing Service's (ETS) system. In these tests, teachers are given situations and they must make the best decision possible based on their knowledge of pedagogically appropriate practices for the student.

The issue of whether one teacher evaluation instrument can address the roles of all teachers was addressed over forty years ago. Gage (1963; cited in Jones, 1976) suggests the following:

Rather than seek criteria for overall effectiveness of teachers in the many, varied facets of their roles, we may have better success with criteria of effectiveness in small, specifically defined aspects of the role; if such laws could be developed, they might eventually be combined . . . to account for the actual behavior and effectiveness of teachers with pupils under genuine classroom conditions. (p.45)

This relates directly to the current issue regarding whether one evaluation instrument can address the numerous and diverse roles a special education teacher must fulfill.

The pluralist approach to teacher evaluation (Pfeffer, 1978) was an individualistic evaluation comparable to IEPs for students with disabilities. In this approach teachers are

evaluated based on their own personal teaching philosophy and character as defined in self-determined goals related to the individual teacher and the specific subject they teach. The assumption is that this individualistic approach allows teachers to grow into the profession over time. Although the pluralistic approach was not intended for special education teachers, it appears that its individualistic nature might be particularly relevant for the special education teachers of today who work in a variety of academic settings on many different outcomes with students having a range of abilities.

Scriven evaluated teachers' effectiveness (1967) vis-à-vis student learning using formative evaluations to improve practice and summative evaluations to determine the professional future of teachers in practice. Formative evaluations were used to adjust instructional techniques, while summative evaluations assessed how the adjustment affected student learning in regards to the original objectives being taught. This focus on student achievement is consistent with the emphasis in evaluation today. However, Peterson (2004) found deficiencies in Scriven's techniques; changes in teaching procedures, sample numbers, evaluator biases, evaluator style preferences, and time needed to observe teachers all affected the accuracy of the classroom evaluations (Scriven, 1981). With such a changing environment it was difficult to reliably evaluate teaching practices. Even with such challenges, however, the use of formative and summative evaluations was groundbreaking, and these methods continue to be used to evaluate teachers.

The conditions under which teacher evaluations are conducted continue to change. First, teacher evaluation has become a matter of public concern, incorporated

into public policy, such as Race to the Top and ESEA. Second, students with disabilities have gradually entered general education settings during this era of accountability with its emphasis on effecting student outcomes. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2007 56.8% of students with disabilities spent less than 21% of their class time outside of the general education class.

Although the pluralist approach and the individualistic nature of teacher evaluations have been discussed in the past, the current variability of roles in special education and the lack of specificity in currently used evaluation techniques have left the quality of expertise and knowledge special education teachers are bringing to the classroom largely unknown (Kilgore, Griffin, Otis-Wilborn, & Winn, 2003). In order to move the field forward, three areas related to the evaluation of special education teachers need to be considered. These include a careful study of: (a) what areas of expertise and knowledge constitute teacher quality in special education, (b) how these dimensions of quality can be reliably measured, and, and (c) how to ensure that these measures are given with fidelity. These three issues constitute the next three sections of this literature review.

### **Areas of Expertise and Knowledge**

The first step in evaluating special education teachers' knowledge of content and pedagogy is to identify what an effective special education teacher does. In this section three sources for such information are discussed: research-based practices for students with disabilities, specialized role demands of special education teachers, and standards set by states and professional accrediting agencies.

## **Research-Based Practices**

Special education teachers are required to teach students with disabilities at various grade-levels and in subject areas such as math, English, science, and social studies (The Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education (COPSSE), 2009; Blanton et al, 2003). While specific pedagogy uniquely related to these subject areas is relevant, to deal with each of these areas in depth is beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, this section will focus on more general research-based teaching strategies that cut across all subject areas; these strategies include behavior management and effective teaching skills.

**Effective classroom management strategies.** Classroom management techniques include developing a management plan, redirecting and proactively addressing behavior, reinforcing appropriate behavior, and creating a supportive learning environment (Brownell et al., 2009). Also, reward systems have been found to be motivating for students with disabilities, obtaining short-term, but positive outcomes (Witzel & Mercer, 2003). When applied appropriately such guidelines and reward systems may be useful in diverting and minimizing negative student behaviors, regardless of student age or the subject matter in which they are engaged.

**Effective teaching skills for students with disabilities.** All teachers need to be prepared to provide effective instruction. Specifically, special education teachers should be able to (a) connect new material to prior knowledge, (b) incorporate student thoughts into the lesson, (c) allow students to respond to instruction, (d) support students who require assistance, (e) provide feedback, and (f) allow for practice of material taught (COPSSE, 2009; Blanton et al, 2003). This instruction must take place in an

environment where students are engaged, motivated, and provided with systematic, explicit teaching strategies. Systematic explicit instruction is the most important aspect of teaching students with disabilities (Swanson & Deshler, 2003).

### **Role-Based Knowledge and Skills**

The roles special education teachers assume in the field are many. The roles that are particularly relevant for this paper are ones unique to special education that are not often considered when evaluating special education teachers. These include inclusion facilitator, IEP developer, and transition specialist, each of which encompasses many sub-skills. Unlike the areas of behavior management and effective instruction, in inclusive practices such as co-teaching and transition, there is less research to guide practice, and, in turn, evaluation. Nonetheless, since most special education teachers are involved in these roles in some way, in lieu of a better data base in the future, we must at the very least identify promising practices on which special education teachers can be evaluated. It is this role-related knowledge and skill that is described in this section. Of course it is assumed that special education teachers must also be able to incorporate general teaching practices previously discussed within each of these areas.

**Inclusion facilitator.** A general working definition for the practice of inclusion is including students with disabilities with their non-disabled peers to the fullest extent possible while meeting their individual needs. For inclusion to be implemented appropriately, special education teachers and general education teachers need to be qualified in the following areas: collaborative teaming and teaching; curricular and

instructional modifications; assistive technology, positive behavioral support, personal supports, literacy, and content instruction (Fisher, Frey, & Thousand, 2003).

Ultimately, the consistency and effectiveness of inclusion is related to successful collaboration between the general education and special education teachers. One critical aspect of that collaboration is the ability to engage in co-teaching. Co-teaching is becoming more prevalent as schools follow more inclusive practices with students with disabilities (Wilson, 2005; Holdheide, Goe, Croft, & Reschly, 2010). Shifting from operating in special education classrooms to general education classrooms has caused special educators to struggle with applying their expertise in co-teaching situations. Indeed, co-teaching role dilemmas such as role ambiguity, role conflict, role dissonance, and role overload are causing special educators to have increased stress and decreased job satisfaction, thus contributing to poor implementation of teaching methods and co-teaching practices (Billingsley, 2004). This role confusion can reduce teacher effort and expectations (Billingsley, 2004). Thus, co-teaching quality is an important variable to be assessed.

While the effectiveness of co-teaching as a way of delivering instruction to students with disabilities has yet to be validated (Fontana, 2005; Holdheide et al, 2010), Lamar-Dukes and Dukes (2005) have suggested 20 areas of skill needed when fulfilling the role as co-teacher, including curriculum knowledge, accommodations and modifications, collaborative consultation, shared responsibility, positive behavior support, and knowledge of effective teaching strategies. Special education teachers must be knowledgeable in each of the areas listed to be a competent co-teacher.

**IEP developer.** A large portion of a special education teacher's time is spent completing IEP paperwork, scheduling IEP meetings, and conducting IEP meetings (Billingsley, 2004). Although the completion of an IEP is a team responsibility, the special education teacher assumes the role of case manager and is thus responsible for its overall appropriateness.

While IEP development is a major responsibility of the special education teacher, there has been little research conducted which describes evaluative techniques regarding its appropriate completion and follow-through. Lack of evaluation procedures in this area appears to lead to inappropriate student services. Ketterlin-Geller, Alonzo, Braun-Monegan, and Tindal (2007) found inconsistencies in the decision-making process regarding the application of appropriate accommodations included in IEPs. For example, students who did not have a disability in reading were receiving the option to have assignments read aloud to them. Such inconsistencies validate the need for an evaluation instrument that can document the quality of IEPs.

IEPs could be evaluated to determine the appropriateness of students' programs in terms of quality of individualization as evidenced by key components including present levels of performance, annual goals, special education and related services, and transition plans. As required in the ESEA, the extent to which students make meaningful progress could also be evaluated.

**Transition specialist.** Blanton and colleagues (2003) suggest that transition support is a critical component of a special education teachers' role. Based on a survey of practitioners, special education teachers should be knowledgeable and skilled in the

following areas to adequately support transition plans: general assessment, occupational preparation, self-advocacy, occupational assessment, transition collaboration, IEP development, and systems change (Blanton et al., 2003; Test et al., 2009). IEP development for students with transition plans requires an additional set of competencies. For example, Grigal, Test, Beattie, and Wood (1997) found that transition plans of IEPs should include the following: (1) program evaluation, (2) staff development, (3) job placement, (4) business linkages, (5) community-based training, (6) integration focus, (7) individualized transition planning, (8) community-relevant curriculum, (9) interagency collaboration, and (10) early planning. Grigal and colleagues also found that transition goals must be specific and provide adequate timelines to be of any assistance to the student. All of these aspects of writing effective transition plans require skills in collaboration and communication with other educational professionals involved in the student's life which special education teachers often feel ill-prepared to do (Benitez, Morningstar, & Frey, 2009).

Transition components of IEPs and transition-related curricula relate to aspects of students' education that occur outside of the general education classroom, such as preparing students with disabilities to enter the workforce (Brooke, Revell, & Wehman, 2009). Nonetheless, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards appear to focus solely on the standard course of study as carried out exclusively in general education classrooms.

### **Standards-Based Expertise and Knowledge**

In addition to the research and role-based competencies just described, qualities of effective special education teachers are also set by states and accrediting agencies in the

form of standards. Teaching standards are set by professional organizations and developed by experts in the field as well as leading community members. It is important to point out that these standards represent the opinion of experts, not research, per se. Standards are helpful in identifying the skills needed to be an effective special education teacher, and, in turn, form the basis by which school districts can evaluate their teachers.

**CEC and 21<sup>st</sup> century standards.** In this section two sets of standards are described and compared: standards set forth by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards used by 10 states, including the state of North Carolina. Standards set by accrediting agencies for universities preparing special education teachers follow.

Institutions such as the Council for Exceptional Children developed standards in the early 1990s and again in 2001 in its *CEC Standards for the Preparation of Special Educators* in order to bring clarity and a sense of organization to the field of special education training. Experts in the field developed ten content standards including foundations, development and characteristics of learners, individual learning differences, instructional strategies, learning environments and social interactions, communication, instructional planning, assessment, professional and ethical practice, and lastly collaboration (Blanton et al., 2003). Each of these areas is further parsed into categories in terms of both knowledge and skill.

The 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards focus on the important roles of teacher leadership, higher-order thinking, teamwork and collaboration, authentic assessment, and technology-infused learning in a 21st century education. One way to

determine the validity of evaluating special education teachers using these standards is to examine how well these standards align with those of the CEC. Teacher quality and ultimately student achievement depend on an evaluation tool that measures the special responsibilities of special education teachers.

To accomplish this, the CEC Standards for beginning special education teachers and the Professional Teaching Standards for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools shown below in Table 1 are compared.

Table 1

*Standards*

CEC Content Standards for Beginning Special Education Teachers	North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards for 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools
1. Foundations	1. Teachers Demonstrate Leadership
2. Development and Characteristics of Learners	2. Teachers Establish a Respectful Environment for a Diverse Population of Students
3. Individual Learning Differences	3. Teachers Know the Content they Teach

Table 1 continued

CEC Content Standards for Beginning Special Education Teachers	North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards for 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools
4. Instructional Strategies	4. Teachers Facilitate Learning for their Students
5. Learning Environments and Social Interactions	5. Teachers Reflect on their Practice
6. Communication	
7. Instructional Planning	
8. Assessment	
9. Professional and Ethical Practice	
10. Collaboration	

When comparing the CEC and 21<sup>st</sup> Century standards a major difference becomes immediately apparent. The first 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standard states, “Teachers demonstrate leadership by taking responsibility for the progress of all students to ensure that they graduate from high school, are globally competitive for work and postsecondary education, and are prepared for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” Interestingly, there is no reference in the CEC standards to special education teachers taking responsibility for the progress of students with disabilities. Special education teachers appear as supporters rather than leaders. A possible consequence is that the special skills required of a special

educator may not be evaluated, and as a result, teachers may continue with ineffective practices, and student achievement may suffer.

However, when considering the question about the “special” responsibilities of special education teachers, it is also apparent that many are not special; the standards are the same responsibilities as listed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards that apply to all teachers. Still, those skills not included are skills that must be addressed and are important to the effectiveness and quality of special education teachers. Table 2 includes the specific CEC skill list as well as the few identified (with an X) special education teacher skills that are not specifically outlined in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards. Without specific reference to these skills there is the possibility that they may not be adequately evaluated or even evaluated at all.

Table 2

*Skills*

CEC Skills	The “Special” Skills of a Special Education Teacher
1. Use evidence-based instructional strategies to assist in the selection and adaptation of general and special curricula.	X
2. Foster cultural and individual understanding by using instructional and motivational interventions.	

Table 2 continued

CEC Skills	The “Special” Skills of a Special Education Teacher
3. Enhance language development and teach communication skills.	
4. Develop individualized education plans with goals and objectives.	X
5. Develop transition plans.	X
6. Use assessments to make educational decisions.	
7. Collaborate with families and colleagues.	
8. Monitor student progress in general and special curricula.	X
9. Participate in professional development opportunities.	
10. Reflect on and adjust practice.	

Included in the “special” skills that are not specifically mentioned in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century standards are IEP and transition plan development, two skills mentioned previously as role-based expertise and knowledge necessary for being a qualified special education teacher. Currently, there are agencies in place to assure such quality teacher preparation.

**Accrediting agencies.** Every state has its own standards on which to evaluate teachers in practice and those teachers completing teacher preparation. Accrediting

agencies have been established to assist in setting appropriate teaching standards for teacher preparation programs and to uphold those standards. Standards for The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and The Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) will be discussed here since these agencies accredit many pre-service special education teacher preparation programs. Therefore, teachers prepared in these programs are likely to exhibit these qualities and be evaluated based on them.

NCATE is the primary accrediting body for all teacher education programs, including special education. It began in 1954 to distinguish the characteristics of teacher qualification and accredit those universities that follow its standards, closely aligned with those of each state (Wise, 2005). NCATE has been viewed as an independent, unbiased accrediting agency that strengthens the need for educational standards in universities (Wise, 2005). However, others such as Varenne (2007) see it as a centralized authority which devalues the spirit of students and educators. With today's focus on teacher qualifications and its impact on the achievement of all students, including those with disabilities, NCATE's alignment with state standards are important and certainly need to be considered when preparing and evaluating special education teachers.

TEAC works closely with the standards set by the universities it accredits rather than standards set by individual states (Wise, 2005), whereas NCATE works closely with each state to develop appropriate standards for disciplines, including special education. Wise has serious misgivings about the effectiveness of TEAC in producing highly qualified teachers. Without following state standards, special education teacher practice

may be out of alignment with what is required to occur in public schools, thus affecting adversely the relationship between standards and the teacher evaluation process.

Both TEAC and NCATE are attempting to ensure the preparation of highly qualified special education teachers in the universities. NCATE's dedication to assessing specialized areas independently and collaborating with the states appears more attuned with the individualistic nature of special education practices. Without consistent standards and guidelines present in all special education teacher education programs, measuring teacher quality is difficult.

### **Measuring Teacher Quality**

In the previous section, research, role and standards- based expectations for what constitutes a highly qualified special education teacher were described. Once identified, these qualities need to be measured. In this section, various types and measures used to evaluate teacher competence are described including the advantages and disadvantages of each. These measures include the following: (a) surveys, (b) evaluation checklists, (c) standards, and (d) observation systems (Blanton, Sindelar, & Correa, 2006). Also mentioned, as reported by Holdheide, Goe, Croft, and Reschly (2010), are value-added models, classroom artifacts and portfolios, and goal-driven professional development measures. These measures are followed by a discussion of those who conduct evaluations using these measures.

#### **Surveys**

One of the most prevalent ways educational professionals evaluate teachers is through the implementation and interpretation of surveys. In survey measurement of

teacher quality teachers are asked questions related to strategies, such as co-teaching, in order to determine current practices and relate them to research-based practices. Surveys may be conducted via pencil/paper or through e-mail, usually in a confidential manner. Surveys are often conducted because they can cover broad topics and have the benefit of accessing a large sample group of educators.

Two widely used surveys, the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Study of Personnel Studies in Special Education (SPeNSE), have been considered valid tools for use in teacher evaluation (Blanton, Sindelar, & Correra, 2006). SASS provides a holistic evaluative mechanism by which educators rate various aspects of their jobs such as attitudes, job satisfaction, support, influence on school safety and behavior. The major focus of the SASS is to address ways in which administrators can address the retention of new teachers. The second survey is the SPeNSE. This survey asks educators to rate their pre service preparation and overall skill sets in 27 distinct preparation areas.

As previously discussed, surveys allow researchers access via questionnaires to the single most important variable in assessing student achievement: the teachers. These surveys are used with both general and special education teachers and across special education contexts, allowing teachers to reflect on their teaching practices. They are also relatively inexpensive ways to collect data. Another positive aspect of surveys, specifically SASS & SPeNSE, is that they have been validated by previous research (Blanton et al., 2003). Also, student/parent teacher evaluations provide insight into the experiences of parents and students, therefore yielding important information, although being used less often than other measures (Holdheide et al., 2010).

Even though surveys are generally effective, there are some aspects that limit their credibility. The self-reporting format creates the potential for inaccuracies and bias. For instance, the wording in the SPeNSE such as “I am skillful in planning effective lessons” is broad and open to subjective interpretation. Surveys that ask teachers to address topics such as first-year duties and mentoring could also be subject to bias in the sense that a new teacher may not be fully truthful for fear of consequences from administrators.

### **Evaluation Checklists**

Another less frequently used evaluation measure is the evaluation checklist. Like surveys, these evaluative measures are used to cover a wide range of educational dimensions such as classroom management and instructional techniques. It is possible to use checklists to determine if specific accommodations, modifications and other supports included on IEPs are implemented consistently in a classroom setting. The evaluator uses the checklist to observe the classroom teacher while looking for each specific teaching element as the lesson is being delivered. Much of the initial work involving the use of checklists was conducted by Englert, Tarrant, and Marriage (1992). The Englert checklist covered topics such as classroom management, time management, lesson presentation, effective teaching and seatwork management. Stankovich and Jordan (1998) extended Englert’s work to involve items on the degree of inclusion including how students with disabilities were included and what teaching practices were employed to make them successful.

There are recognizable strengths and weaknesses to checklists as an evaluation mechanism. Within the field of special education, checklists are readily available to assess special education teachers. They may also be tailored to evaluate any educational activity. Checklists also have drawbacks. With this type of measure, observers need to be carefully trained on what to specifically look for while in the classroom. Another major shortcoming is that technical adequacy is at times compromised as developers offer little to no guidance on how long and how often observations should be conducted. In summation, evaluators need to be aware of both the strengths and weaknesses of checklists.

### **Standards**

As indicated previously, standards are guidelines by which effective and quality teaching are judged. Besides the CEC standards previously discussed, another flagship example of standards developed in the field was created by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment & Support Consortium (INTASC). In its *Model Standards for Licensing General and Special Education Teachers of Students with Disabilities: A Resource for State Dialogue (2001)*, principles are categorized into standards for both general and special education teachers.

As with the other evaluations described, standards have both strengths and weaknesses. It is universally accepted that CEC and INTASC are the most qualified and organized institutions to create such important industry standards (Blanton et al., 2003). These agencies also were some of the first to recognize the need for differing knowledge bases and skills between general and special education teachers. Specifically, the

competencies of special and general educators are differentiated according to content, pedagogy, knowledge, and teaching contexts. For example, within the INTASC standards, there are an additional 49 standards for special education teachers. Another strength in standards is seen within the knowledge competencies developed by the CEC (2001). These standards are carefully defined using descriptive terms and clearly addressed within particular categorical areas, such as characteristics of learners and collaboration. This careful delineation and explication of competencies allows for a more practical and effective means by which a system of accountability can be implemented.

Although, the development of standards has brought clarity to the field of special education, it is not without flaws. A key problem is that standards at this time are limited to a detailed analysis of contemporary thought. They have yet to be fully operationalized and as a result their relation to student outcomes has not been validated. Thus, there is only one documented instance of standards being used as an outcome measure (Nevin, Thousand, Parsons, & Lily 2000). The failure to adequately operationalize standards has also limited their use in much needed longitudinal research.

### **Observation Systems**

Observational systems such as the PRAXIS exams, created by Educational Testing Services (ETS), are assessments designed to rate the teaching skills of beginning teachers. This test is categorized into 3 parts (PRAXIS I, II, and III). The 19 PRAXIS criteria are organized into 4 domains. The four domains within the PRAXIS test include the following: a) Organizing content knowledge for student learning, b) Creating an environment for student learning, c) Teaching for student learning, and d) Teacher

professionalism. Although the PRAXIS tests are used exclusively by states for teacher certification purposes, the tests possess both strengths and weaknesses.

The observational component of the test (PRAXIS III), which allows for a reviewer to rate the teacher on 19 criteria, is highly comprehensive and thorough. PRAXIS has also been characterized as useful in evaluating the quality of high- incidence special education teachers. However, there are significant limitations in observational systems such as the PRAXIS. Assessors must be highly trained, and this training is rather costly and time consuming. The observational nature of the test also makes it relatively labor intensive. PRAXIS III has also failed to make any special adaptations for the practice of special education with students with low-incidence disabilities (Blanton et al., 2003).

### **Value-Added Models**

Value-Added models allow for use of students' test scores (both standardized and curriculum-based) to compare student growth with predicted growth in order to measure teacher effectiveness in procuring student progress (Holdheide et al., 2010). Although value-added models are becoming popular due to Race to the Top priorities, almost all research on value-added models has related to general education students rather than special education students. This is partly due to the small samples of students with disabilities available and alternate assessments which apply to about 1% of students with disabilities that cannot be measured using value-added models. Also challenging is determining the effect of accommodations on value-added scores. It has yet to be determined how such accommodations affect student performance.

Special education administrators believe that student achievement should be used to determine the effectiveness of special education teachers (Holdheide et al., 2010). Growth in IEP goals may be one aspect that could be interpreted via the value-added model, but this measure would depend on the quality of the IEPs written, thus making it more challenging to make such high stakes decisions (Holdheide et al., 2010). More research is needed in order to determine positive outcomes of using value-added models to rate the effectiveness of special education teachers.

### **Classroom Artifacts and Portfolios**

In a study conducted by Holdheide and colleagues, 2010, classroom artifacts and portfolios involved collecting specific evidence that supported teachers' effectiveness in the classroom such as lesson plans, student work and achievement data. Although quite a few respondents reported using these measures, the processes were not systematic, and teachers often found them time-consuming. Therefore, using only classroom artifacts and portfolios to evaluate teachers is not recommended, but including such measures may support/supplement other observation methods mentioned.

### **Goal-Driven Professional Development Measures**

Goal-driven professional development measures incorporate teacher evaluation results into specified professional development activities that address observed teacher needs. Using the results of these measures to develop appropriate professional activities to address teacher needs was found to be an invaluable aspect of the evaluation process (Holdheide et al., 2010). There is a definite relationship between professional development and using each measure previously described to determine teacher growth.

With specifically outlined goals addressed by professional development activities geared toward the evaluators and those being evaluated, teacher effectiveness and student achievement are likely to emerge in the classroom.

In Holdheide and colleagues (2010) study involving 1,107 respondents from the CEC membership, they found that most commonly used measurement instruments were observation protocols (93.8%). Other measures included curriculum-based measures (20.2%), goal-driven professional development (62.1%), classroom artifacts (43.9%), teacher portfolios (26.8%), teacher survey/checklists (36.8%), student teacher evaluations (6.7%), and parent/family teacher evaluations (6.4%). Value-added models were being used/recommended by only 14.9% of district respondents.

### **The Evaluators**

Research suggests that the expertise of the principal is critical for effective teacher evaluation (Peterson, 2004). However, Lasky and Karge (2006) found a need for administrators to receive more training in the area of special education in order to accurately and meaningfully evaluate the quality of special education teachers. Unfortunately, such training appears to be absent from principals' training, as universities often fail to require future administrators to take a single course in special education (Garrison-Wade, Sobel, & Fulmer, 2007). This failure to provide principals with adequate training in special education creates situations where others more knowledgeable about special education practices may be called upon to conduct the evaluations of special education teachers. These educators may be department chairs or other supervisors in the special education department of local education agencies

(Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004; Voltz & Collins, 2010). Unfortunately, themes raised decades ago by Billingsley (1989) in relation to the evaluation of special education teachers still resonate today. Such themes include (a) administrators with little background in special education evaluating special education teachers; (b) general education teacher evaluation instruments being inappropriate for valuating special education teachers, and (c) the need for evaluation instruments specifically designed to evaluate special education teachers.

In order to ensure fidelity in using teacher evaluations to make educational decisions it is necessary to provide support systems such as professional development and training, and resource allocation (National Research Center on Learning Disabilities, 2006). Such support systems encourage follow-up observations, dialogues with teachers, and teacher logs/self-reports.

### **Summary**

Historically, there has been little literature available to distinguish the evaluation of special education teachers between that of general education teachers. Being a special education teacher involves carrying the weight of general education responsibilities as well as those areas of expertise and knowledge not specifically outlined in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Teaching Standards. Current evaluation methods may need to be amended to include unspecified areas in order to effectively evaluate the skills of special education teachers. To determine this, this study will look at the preparation high school principals receive in order to use the standards to evaluate special education teachers as well as the appropriateness of those standards in relation to the skills of special education

teachers. Without effective evaluation techniques teacher quality and student performance may suffer.

The methodology used in this study will be presented in Chapter 3, followed by the results (Chapter 4), the discussion (Chapter 5), and related appendices. The appendix will include the survey instrument.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Design**

This study was designed to investigate high school principals' perceptions of their preparedness to evaluate special education teachers using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards. An additional focus is principals' perceptions of how well those standards address the special roles and skills of special education teachers. This chapter outlines the methodology of the study, including the participants, instrumentation, survey administration, and data analysis techniques.

#### **Participants**

The participants of this study were high school principals and assistant principals in North Carolina who were involved in the first phase of implementing evaluation techniques using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards. These new 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards focus on the important roles of teacher leadership, higher-order thinking, teamwork and collaboration, authentic assessment, and technology-infused learning in a 21st century education.

The entire sample of 96 high school principals who evaluated special education teachers during Phase 1 of implementation of the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards in teacher evaluation was contacted and asked to complete a survey.

According to a representative from the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards

Commission, Phase 1 involved 13 counties who volunteered to participate. Each county sent a representative to a train-the-trainer session the summer before Phase 1 was to begin. These trainers went back to the schools and prepared the principals. Informal presentations were available throughout the school year for more in-depth information about the evaluation instrument. Feedback on the process and how training could be improved was collected at the end of the school, resulting in many changes being made for professional development opportunities in Phase 2.

Principals are responsible for evaluating special education teachers and their experience and knowledge of the skills of special education teachers and how those skills relate to the new standards were of interest to this study. High school principals were selected because it was felt they would be able to complete the transition planning section of the survey more adequately than principals in elementary or middle schools. Principals and assistant principals from a total of 13 counties and 36 high schools participated. These counties represented a range of rural, suburban, and urban communities as well as income levels and ethnicities.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument for this study was developed by the researcher for the purpose of investigating principals' perceptions of their preparedness in terms of evaluating special education teachers using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards as well as the perceived relevance of the standards for evaluating special education teachers. The following skill areas included in the survey were selected based on a review of the research on best teaching practices in special education.

**Classroom management practices.** The Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education (COPSSE) has developed a checklist describing research-based classroom management techniques in special education. Such techniques are based on prior studies on classroom management and include developing a management plan, redirecting and proactively addressing behavior, reinforcing appropriate behavior, and creating a supportive learning environment (Brownell et al., 2009; Witzel & Mercer, 2003; COPSSE, 2009).

**Teaching strategies.** All teachers need to be prepared to teach students effectively. Specifically, special education teachers should be able to (a) connect new material to prior knowledge, (b) incorporate student thoughts into the lesson, (c) allow students to respond to instruction, (d) support students who require assistance, (e) provide feedback, and (f) allow for practice of material taught (COPSSE, 2009). Systematic explicit instruction is the most important aspect of teaching students with disabilities (Swanson & Deshler, 2003).

**Inclusion facilitation.** For inclusion to be implemented appropriately, special education teachers and general education teachers need to be qualified in the following areas: collaborative teaming and teaching; curricular and instructional modifications; assistive technology, positive behavioral support, personal supports, literacy, and content instruction (Fisher, Frey, & Thousand, 2003; Billingsley, 2004). Co-teaching is becoming more prevalent as schools follow more inclusive practices with students with disabilities (Wilson, 2005).

**IEP development/implementation.** Well-written and implemented IEPs reflect high quality individualization as evidenced by appropriately written key components including present levels of performance, annual goals, special education and related services, and transition plans. As required in IDEA 2004, the extent to which students make meaningful progress is another feature of effective IEP writing and implementation..

**Transition planning.** Blanton and colleagues (2003) suggest that transition support is a critical component of a special education teachers' role. Based on their survey of practitioners, special education teachers should be knowledgeable and skilled in the following areas to adequately support transition plans: general assessment, occupational preparation, self-advocacy, occupational assessment, transition collaboration, IEP development, and systems change (Blanton et al, 2003).

Prior to addressing the areas of skill just identified, the survey instrument begins with a demographic section including current administrative role, years of experience in education, years of experience as an administrator, gender, teaching experience, teaching area, and professional development experience. The second part of the questionnaire is divided into the five areas in which special education teachers are evaluated: Classroom Management Practices, Teaching Strategies, Inclusion Facilitation, IEP Development/Implementation, and Transition Planning. A sixth area, Content Knowledge, was added due to the increased responsibility of special education teachers instructing content area classes in inclusive settings. Each area includes specific items representing skills as validated by the literature; items are responded to twice. First,

principals rated their level of preparation to evaluate special education teachers in that skill area. Second, principals rated how well each item could be evaluated using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards. A three-point Likert-type scale was used as a response mode. For ranking preparedness and perceptions respondents were given the options of “not at all”, “somewhat”, or “fully”. The last part of the survey included the following six open-ended questions:

1. What special education teacher skills are you best prepared to evaluate?
2. What special education teacher skills are you least prepared to evaluate?
3. What is the most positive aspect of using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards to evaluate special education teachers?
4. What is the most problematic aspect of using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards to evaluate special education teachers?
5. On what factors do you think special education teachers should be evaluated?
6. What support do principals need if they are to be able to evaluate special education teachers adequately?

**Instrument Development.** A draft of the instrument was first reviewed by six university faculty members with expertise in the principalship and/or special education and statistics, and then was sent to four high school principals for feedback; the principals were involved in the first phase of implementing the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards in teacher evaluation. The principals were asked to complete the survey, record the length of time it took them to complete it and provide suggestions for improving clarity of the questions as well as the design of the survey.

During the pilot, the high school involved experienced a principal change. Therefore, only two of four principals completed surveys; nonetheless, changes were made based on that feedback, as well as feedback received from the university faculty members. It was determined that the survey would take between 25 and 30 minutes to complete. Changes included adding relevant questions related to principals' knowledge of the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards as well as whether they were responsible for evaluating special education teachers. Specifically these questions asked, "Do you evaluate special education teachers?", "Are you familiar with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards?", and "Have you evaluated special education teachers using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards?" Administrators were asked to stop taking the survey if they answered no to any of these three questions to ensure that only principals experienced in evaluating special education teachers using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards participated. A copy of the final survey used in the study is in the Appendix.

### **Survey Administration**

The survey was administered using Survey Monkey. First, 96 participants' school e-mails were obtained on-line, through the specific county or high schools' website. In May, 2010, an introductory e-mail with a link to the survey was sent to the participants informing them of the survey. The introductory e-mail also informed the participants of a drawing they would be part of if they completed the survey (they had the option to e-mail their name with their choice of locations to receive a \$100 gift card if selected in the drawing). A total of 92 surveys were sent; four surveys were undeliverable. Another e-mail was sent a week after the initial survey encouraging those who had not yet

responded to do so. After receiving a small number of responses, 12 in all, with some principals only completing the demographic section, the survey was adjusted to direct the participants to the completion page if they selected no to one of the last three demographic questions, and another e-mail was sent. This was done to eliminate those principals who did not evaluate special education teachers and/or were unfamiliar with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Teaching Standards. After this e-mail, 10 more participants responded, but of those 10 only three completed the entire survey; seven completed only the demographic section. In June, 2010, the survey was adjusted further so that the questionnaire appeared first and the demographic section last. This was done to discourage principals from stopping survey completion after the demographic section. Each of the 92 principals was then called to encourage them to respond. Fifteen of the principals were spoken to directly, 25 messages were left with secretaries, and the rest were left voicemail messages of a specifically worded message requesting them to complete the survey. After the phone calls were completed and another e-mail was sent, a total of 29 surveys were returned, resulting in an overall response rate of 32% (29 out of 92).

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The results of the survey were reviewed and analyzed for each research question using descriptive statistics. A small item mean (e.g. 1.5) indicated a lack of preparedness of the principal or appropriateness of the standards; a larger item mean (above 2.5) indicated preparedness of the principal and appropriateness of the standards.

**Research question 1.** To determine the perceived preparedness of principals to evaluate special education teachers using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Teaching Standards, means and standard deviations were reported for each item individually, each area ( e.g. behavior management, inclusive practices, instruction) as well as overall (all six areas combined). A small item mean (e.g. 1.5) indicated a lack of preparedness of the principal or appropriateness of the standards; a larger item mean (above 2.5) indicated preparedness of the principal and appropriateness of the standards. A one-way Anova and a univariate analysis of variance were conducted to determine significant differences between the area means.

**Research question 2.** How principals perceive the appropriateness of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Teaching Standards for evaluating the skills of special education teachers was determined by reporting means and standard deviations for each item individually, each area (e.g. behavior management, inclusive practices, instruction) as well as overall (all six areas combined). A one-way Anova and a univariate analysis of variance were conducted to determine significant differences between the area means.

**Research question 3.** In order to determine how professional development received affected principals' perceptions of their level of preparation to evaluate special education teachers using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Teaching Standards as well as standard appropriateness, the following groups were created based on principals' responses in the demographic section of the survey: those who received any type of professional development and those who did not. The perceived level of preparation of

the two groups as well as standard appropriateness was compared separately using descriptive statistics and a series of independent t-tests.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

Survey Monkey provided responses from the six open-ended questions regarding level of preparation to evaluate special education teacher' skills, specific skills the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards specifically do and do not address, skills special education teachers should be evaluated on, and professional development necessary to evaluate special education teachers adequately. After printing out the responses, each question was looked at individually and coded by common themes. These themes were determined based on specific special education teacher skills, responsibilities, and standards as defined by the literature. After themes were identified, specific quotes were written out and categorized by theme (Miles & Huberman, 1994) in order to determine how many respondents agreed. In this case several themes emerged for each of the research questions. Themes were determined based on having three or more related comments. Responses that were irrelevant or did not fall into an identified category (of three or more responses) were not included. The responses were coded first by the researcher and then by a peer to an 85% agreement. After the answers were coded, differences were discussed and final coding decisions were agreed upon for each question. Quotes from the responses were used to add additional support to the issues and themes identified.

### **Summary**

This study incorporated an on-line survey in order to report both quantitative and qualitative data regarding principals' perceptions of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards when

evaluating special education teachers. The survey addressed six skill areas related to special education teachers, and it concluded with six open-ended questions. Data was collected and reported using SurveyMonkey.

The results of this study will be presented in Chapter 4, followed by the discussion (Chapter 5), and related appendices. The appendix will include the survey instrument.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to report the specific findings of this study. First, the purpose of the study and the research questions are reviewed. Next, a description of the return rate, and the demographics of the respondents are reported. Finally, the findings from the study are presented by research question.

#### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of high school principals regarding their level of preparation to evaluate special education teachers using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Teaching Standards as well as the appropriateness of those standards when evaluating special education teachers in general. The following research questions guided the investigation:

1. How do high school principals perceive their level of preparation to evaluate the skills of special education teachers using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards?
2. How do high school principals perceive the appropriateness of the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards for evaluating high school special education teachers?
3. How does the professional development received affect principals' perceptions of their level of preparation to evaluate the skills of special education teachers and

4. perceptions of appropriateness using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards?

### **Return Rate**

High school principals from the 13 North Carolina counties provided data for this study. E-mails were sent to 96 principals with a link to the survey beginning in April, 2010. Ninety-two of those e-mails were received. In May and June, follow-up e-mails were sent to encourage a higher response rate. Also in June, each principal was called to encourage completion. Of the original 92 requests to complete surveys, 29 principals' surveys were completed. This represents a return rate of 32%.

### **Demographics**

Of those who completed the survey, 59.3% were assistant principals and 40.7% were head principals. Of those, 59.3% were male and 40.7% were female. Experience as a principal included 37% with fewer than 5 years of experience and 37% with 11 or more years of experience (including 11.1% reporting more than 20 years experience). A majority (77.8%) of respondents reported teaching experience at the secondary level, followed by those having experience at both the elementary and secondary (18.5%) and elementary (3.7%) school levels. The most common subjects taught were history (33.3%), math (29.6%), and English (25.9%) The least common subjects taught were special education (11.1%), science (11.1%), and technology (14.8%). Art and music were not represented at all. The category "other subjects" was identified by 14.8% of respondents. Respondents were not directed to specify what "other" meant. A majority of respondents (77.8%) had not received professional development specifically geared

toward the evaluation of special education teachers, while 22.2% had. Of the 22.2%, all (100%) had received this professional development in the form of workshops; additional types of professional development included mentoring (42.9%), reading (28.6%), independent activities (14.3%), coursework (14.3%), and other types of activities (14.3%). Again, respondents were not directed to specify what “other” meant.

### **Findings**

This study was conducted using a framework that included both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The section is organized by research question. For research questions 1 and 2, means and standard deviations are reported for each item in the order that they appeared in the survey. Percentages and response rates are included as identified by Survey Monkey. A one-way Anova and a univariate analysis of variance were conducted to determine significant differences between the skill areas. For research question 3 overall and skill area means are reported as well as standard deviations and t-test results.

The responses to open-ended questions were coded, with major themes identified by the researcher. The themes were applied to each research question as appropriate. Responses that were irrelevant or did not fall into an identified category were not included. Quotes from the responses are used to add additional support to the issues and themes identified.

- 1. How do high school principals perceive their level of preparation to evaluate the skills of special education teachers?*

Table 3 shows the means, standard deviations, percentage distributions including the number of respondents for each scale item, and total number of responses for level of preparation to evaluate special education teachers. All 29 respondents were included in the analysis. Since several respondents left one or more questions blank, the number of persons responding to an item is not always 29.

Table 3

*Means, Standard Deviations, Percentage Distributions Including the Number of Respondents for Each Scale Item and Total Number of Responses for Level of Preparation to Evaluate Special Education Teachers Items*

Special Education Teacher Skill Area	Mean	SD	% not at all	% somewhat	% fully	N
<b>Implementing Research-Based Classroom Management Practices</b>	2.62	0.59	5.3	27.4	67.3	29
developing a classroom routine and management plan	2.62	0.56	3.4 (1)	31.0 (9)	65.5 (19)	29
effectively redirecting and proactively addressing behavior	2.61	0.63	7.1 (2)	25.0 (7)	67.9 (19)	28
effectively reinforcing positive behavior	2.57	0.63	7.1 (2)	28.6 (8)	64.3 (18)	28
creating a supportive learning environment	2.68	0.55	3.6 (1)	25.0 (7)	71.4 (20)	28
connecting new material to prior knowledge	2.46	0.58	3.6 (1)	46.4 (13)	50.0 (14)	28
incorporating student thoughts into the lesson	2.54	0.51	0.0 (0)	46.4 (13)	53.6 (15)	28
allowing most students to respond to instruction	2.71	0.46	0.0 (0)	28.6 (8)	71.4 (20)	28
supporting students who require assistance	2.71	0.53	3.6 (1)	21.4 (6)	75.0 (21)	28

Table 3 continued

Special Education Teacher Skill Area	Mean	SD	% not at all	% somewhat	% fully	N
providing feedback on academic performance	2.68	0.55	3.6 (1)	25.0 (7)	71.4 (20)	28
allowing for quality practice of material taught	2.64	0.49	0.0 (0)	35.7 (10)	64.3 (18)	28
<b>Content Knowledge</b>	2.45	0.50	0	54.8	45.2	26
English	2.58	0.50	0.0 (0)	42.3 (11)	57.7 (15)	26
Math	2.46	0.51	0.0 (0)	53.8 (14)	46.2 (12)	26
Science	2.31	0.47	0.0 (0)	69.2 (18)	30.8 (8)	26
History	2.46	0.51	0.0 (0)	53.8 (14)	46.2 (12)	26
<b>Inclusion Facilitation</b>	2.44	0.59	5.8	44.5	49.8	26
engaging in co teaching	2.42	0.64	7.7 (2)	42.3 (11)	50.0 (13)	26
engaging in collaborative problem-solving	2.54	0.58	3.8 (1)	38.5 (10)	57.7 (15)	26
communicating with parents	2.62	0.57	3.8 (1)	30.8 (8)	65.4 (17)	26
providing differentiated instruction	2.58	0.58	3.8 (1)	34.6 (9)	61.5 (16)	26
using assistive technology	2.12	0.59	11.5 (3)	65.4 (17)	23.1 (6)	26
implementing positive behavioral supports	2.38	0.64	7.7 (2)	46.2 (12)	46.2 (12)	26
supporting student literacy needs	2.38	0.57	3.8 (1)	53.8 (14)	42.3 (11)	26
implementing appropriate testing modifications and/or accommodations	2.43	0.63	7.1 (2)	42.9 (12)	50.0 (14)	28
identifying appropriate special education and related services	2.18	0.61	10.7 (3)	60.7 (17)	28.6 (8)	28
monitoring IEP implementation	2.56	0.58	3.7 (1)	37.0 (10)	59.3 (16)	27
<b>Transition Planning and Implementation</b>	2.14	0.68	16.7	52.5	30.8	27
completing career awareness assessments	2.07	0.68	18.5 (5)	55.6 (15)	25.9 (7)	27
supporting occupational preparation	2.15	0.66	14.8 (4)	55.6 (15)	29.6 (8)	27

Table 3 continued

Special Education Teacher Skill Area	Mean	SD	% not at all	% somewhat	% fully	N
promoting self-advocacy	2.22	0.70	14.8 (4)	48.1 (13)	37.0 (10)	27
evaluating on-site job performance	2.07	0.78	25.9 (7)	40.7 (11)	33.3 (9)	27
participating in transition planning in collaboration with community agencies	2.07	0.68	18.5 (5)	55.6 (15)	25.9 (7)	27
incorporating transition goals into the IEP	2.26	0.59	7.4 (2)	59.3 (16)	33.3 (9)	27

The grand mean over all 6 skill areas was 2.43, with means for each of the individual skill areas ranging from 2.14 to 2.63. These results show that principals felt somewhat to fully prepared to evaluate each area. Results for each individual skill area are presented next.

**Implementing research-based classroom management practices.** Most principals felt they were fully prepared to evaluate the implementation of research-based classroom management procedures, as the overall item mean for this skill area was 2.62, with individual item means ranging from 2.57-2.68. The frequency distributions for individual response items for this area were generally consistent, with about two-thirds of respondents rating themselves as fully prepared in these areas.

**Implementing research-based teaching strategies for students with disabilities.** Most principals perceived themselves as fully prepared in this skill area, as the overall mean was 2.63. Individual item means ranged from 2.46-2.71, with comparatively smaller majorities of 50 and 53.6% perceiving themselves as fully

prepared to evaluate connecting new material to prior knowledge and incorporating student thoughts into the lessons, respectively.

**Content knowledge.** Overall, principals did not feel fully prepared to evaluate the content area knowledge of special education teachers. Indeed, the overall mean for this area was 2.45 (range = 2.31-2.58), with a majority of principals (54.8%) feeling only somewhat prepared to evaluate special education teachers in this area. Particularly noteworthy is that only 30.8% of the principals felt fully prepared to evaluate special education teachers in science, and less than 50% felt fully prepared in math and history.

**Inclusion facilitation.** Principals also felt less than fully prepared to evaluate inclusion facilitation, as the overall item mean for this skill area was 2.44, with individual item means ranging from 2.12-2.62. The frequency distributions for individual response items for this area were variable. For example, 65.4% of principals felt fully prepared to evaluate communicating with parents, but only 23% felt fully prepared to evaluate teachers' use of assistive technology.

**IEP development/implementation.** Most principals perceived themselves as only somewhat prepared in this skill area, as the overall mean was 2.31, with individual item means ranging from 2.18-2.56. While a majority of principals perceived themselves as fully prepared to evaluate implementing appropriate instructional modifications and/or accommodations, implementing appropriate testing modifications, and/or accommodations, and monitoring IEP implementation, principals felt much less prepared to develop and monitor annual goals.

**Transition planning.** Overall, principals felt the least prepared to evaluate transition planning than all the other skill areas. Indeed, the overall mean for this item was 2.14 (range = 2.07-2.26) with a majority of principals (52.5%) feeling only somewhat prepared to evaluate special education teachers in this area. Particularly noteworthy is that 25.9% of the principals felt not at all prepared to evaluate on-site job performance, and 15-20% of principals felt ill-prepared to evaluate completing career awareness assessments, and participating in transition planning in collaboration with community agencies.

As indicated above, there were mean differences across the individual skill areas. Therefore, the data were further analyzed to determine whether these differences between the individual skill areas were significant. A one way ANOVA with follow-up tests was conducted for this purpose. The follow-up Tukey test was conducted to indicate particular significant differences between the 6 skill areas. The results of the ANOVA are shown in Tables 4 and 5. The results revealed a number of significant differences at the 0.05 level. First, principals rated IEP development/implementation and transition planning and implementation as significantly lower than classroom management and teaching strategies. Transition planning and implementation was rated significantly lower than content knowledge and inclusion facilitation. Principals rated classroom management and teaching strategies as significantly higher than IEP development/implementation. Overall, principals felt their preparation in transition planning and implementation was significantly lower than all of the other skill areas

except IEP development/implementation which was not significantly different than transition planning and implementation.

Table 4  
ANOVA results indicating significance

Mean	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.994	5	.199	13.490	.000
Within Groups	.457	31	.015		
Total	1.451	36			

Table 5  
Follow-up Tukey test of differences in perceived preparation to evaluate special education teachers between skill areas

Mean		Tukey HSD				
(I) Section	(J) Section	Mean			95% Confidence Interval	
		Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Classroom Management	2.000	-.003	.078	1.000	-.241	.235
	3.000	.165	.085	.408	-.096	.426
	4.000	.180	.074	.180	-.046	.406
	5.000	.311*	.072	.002	.090	.533
Teaching Strategies	6.000	.480*	.078	.000	.242	.718
	1.000	.003	.078	1.000	-.235	.241
	3.000	.168	.078	.290	-.070	.406
	4.000	.183	.066	.085	-.016	.382
Content Knowledge	5.000	.314*	.064	.000	.120	.509
	6.000	.483*	.070	.000	.271	.696
	1.000	-.165	.086	.408	-.426	.096
	2.000	-.168	.078	.290	-.406	.070
	4.000	.015	.074	1.000	-.211	.241
	5.000	.146	.073	.364	-.075	.368
	6.000	.315*	.078	.004	.077	.553

Table 5 continued

Mean						
Tukey HSD						
(I) Section	(J) Section	Mean			95% Confidence Interval	
		Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Inclusion	1.000	-.180	.074	.180	-.406	.046
Facilitation	2.000	-.183	.066	.085	-.382	.016
	3.000	-.015	.074	1.000	-.241	.211
	5.000	.131	.059	.257	-.048	.310
	6.000	.300*	.066	.001	.101	.499
IEP	1.000	-.311*	.073	.002	-.533	-.070
Development/ Implementation	2.000	-.314*	.064	.000	-.509	-.120
	3.000	-.146	.073	.364	-.368	.075
	4.000	-.131	.059	.257	-.310	.048
Transition Planning/ Implementation	6.000	.169	.064	.118	-.025	.363
	1.000	-.480*	.078	.000	-.718	-.242
	2.000	-.483*	.070	.000	-.696	-.271
Implementation	3.000	-.315*	.078	.004	-.553	-.077
	4.000	-.300*	.065	.001	-.499	-.101
	5.000	-.169	.064	.118	-.363	.025

Note. \*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

A follow-up univariate analysis of variance was also conducted to determine the effect size and power (Table 6). With an effect size of .685 and power of 1.000, the mean difference between skill areas was significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6

*Univariate Analysis of Variance Results*

Dependent Variable: Mean							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Section	.994	5	.199	13.490	.000	.685	1.000
Error	.457	31	.015				
Corrected Total	1.451	36					

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Responses from the open-ended questions indicated that principals felt they were best prepared to evaluate research-based teaching strategies (20 comments), IEP implementation (how a completed IEP is implemented) (8 comments), and classroom management (4 comments). One principal commented, “I understand differentiating instruction and know what it looks like in a classroom.” They were least prepared to evaluate IEP paperwork (completion and accuracy of paperwork) (7 comments), address the needs of students with low-incidence disabilities (9 comments), and develop and implement transition plans (3 comments). One principal specified that he was least prepared to evaluate “students with more special needs subgroups (low IQ, behavior issues, etc.)”.

The open-ended responses shed some light on what types of support principals feel they need if professional development opportunities in special education were offered. Principals overwhelmingly indicated the need for more staff development in special education (10 comments), especially in accommodations and modifications, and

understanding IEP goals. One principal responded that they need “more training in the entire special education process.”

2. *How do high school principals perceive the appropriateness of the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards in evaluating high school special education teachers?*

Table 7 shows the means, standard deviations, percentage distributions including the number of respondents for each scale item and total number of responses for the application of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards to special education teachers. All 29 respondents were included in the analysis. Since several respondents left one or more questions blank, the number of persons responding to an item is not always 29.

Table 7

*Means, Standard Deviations, Percentage Distributions including the Number of Respondents for Each Scale Item, and Total Number of Responses for Application of Standards to Special Education Teachers*

Special Education Teacher Skill Area	Mean	SD	% not at all	% somewhat	% fully	N
<b>Implementing Research-Based Classroom Management Practices</b>	2.17	0.53	7.2	68.4	24.4	28
developing a classroom routine and management plan	2.25	0.52	3.6 (1)	67.9 (19)	28.6 (8)	28
effectively redirecting and proactively addressing behavior	2.07	0.54	10.7 (3)	71.4 (20)	17.9 (5)	28
effectively reinforcing appropriate behavior	2.07	0.54	10.7 (3)	71.4 (20)	17.9 (5)	28
creating a supportive learning environment	2.30	0.54	3.7 (1)	63.0 (17)	33.3 (9)	27
<b>Implementing Research-Based Teaching Strategies for Students with Disabilities</b>	2.30	0.52	5.3	59.5	35.1	28
connecting new material to prior knowledge	2.32	0.56	0.0 (0)	67.9 (19)	32.1 (9)	28

Table 7 continued

Special Education Teacher Skill Area	Mean	SD	% not at all	% somewhat	% fully	N
incorporating student thoughts into the lesson	2.18	0.55	7.1 (2)	67.9 (19)	25.0 (7)	28
allowing most students to respond to instruction	2.36	0.62	7.1 (2)	50.0 (14)	42.9 (12)	28
supporting students who require assistance	2.29	0.66	10.7 (3)	50.0 (14)	39.3 (11)	28
providing feedback on academic performance	2.43	0.50	0.0 (0)	57.1 (16)	42.9 (12)	28
allowing for quality practice of material taught	2.21	0.57	7.1 (2)	64.3 (18)	28.6 (8)	28
<b>Content Knowledge</b>	1.96	0.72	26.9	50	23.1	26
English	1.96	0.72	26.9 (7)	50.0 (13)	23.1 (6)	26
Math	1.96	0.72	26.9 (7)	50.0 (13)	23.1 (6)	26
Science	1.96	0.72	26.9 (7)	50.0 (13)	23.1 (6)	26
History	1.96	0.72	26.9 (7)	50.0 (13)	23.1 (6)	26
<b>Inclusion Facilitation</b>	2.10	0.65	16.2	57.9	26	26
engaging in co teaching	1.96	0.72	26.9 (7)	50.0 (13)	23.1 (6)	26
engaging in collaborative problem-solving	2.15	0.54	7.7 (2)	69.2 (18)	23.1 (6)	26
communicating with parents	2.20	0.70	12.0 (3)	56.0 (14)	32.0 (8)	25
providing differentiated instruction	2.28	0.61	8.0 (2)	56.0 (14)	36.0 (9)	25
using assistive technology	2.08	0.74	23.1 (6)	46.2 (12)	30.8 (8)	26
implementing positive behavioral supports	1.96	0.68	24.0 (6)	56.0 (14)	20.0 (5)	25
supporting student literacy needs	2.12	0.59	11.5 (3)	65.4 (17)	23.1 (6)	26
supporting learning in subject matter classes	2.04	0.61	16.0 (4)	64.0 (16)	20.0 (5)	25
<b>IEP Development/Implementation</b>	2.01	0.72	25.1	49	25.9	28

Table 7 continued

Special Education Teacher Skill Area	Mean	SD	% not at all	% somewhat	% fully	N
determining present levels of performance	2.07	0.66	17.9 (5)	57.1 (16)	25.0 (7)	28
developing annual goals	1.96	0.74	28.6 (8)	46.4 (13)	25.0 (7)	28
monitoring progress on annual goals	1.96	0.76	29.6 (8)	44.4 (12)	25.9 (7)	27
determining appropriate instructional modifications and/or accommodations	2.04	0.69	21.4 (6)	53.6 (15)	25.0 (7)	28
implementing appropriate instructional modifications and/or accommodations	2.11	0.69	17.9 (5)	53.6 (15)	28.6 (8)	28
determining appropriate testing modifications and/or accommodations	2.00	0.77	28.6 (8)	42.9 (12)	28.6 (8)	28
implementing appropriate testing modifications and/or accommodations	1.96	0.74	28.6 (8)	46.4 (13)	25.0 (7)	28
identifying appropriate special education and related services	1.96	0.69	25.0 (7)	53.6 (15)	21.4 (6)	28
monitoring IEP implementation	2.00	0.77	28.6 (8)	42.9 (12)	28.6 (8)	28
<b>Transition Planning and Implementation</b>	1.81	0.71	35.3	47.9	16.8	27
completing career awareness assessments	1.81	0.68	33.3 (9)	51.9 (14)	14.8 (4)	27
supporting occupational preparation	1.74	0.71	40.7 (11)	44.4 (12)	14.8 (4)	27
promoting self-advocacy	1.78	0.70	37.0 (10)	48.1 (13)	14.8 (4)	27
evaluating on-site job performance	1.78	0.75	40.7 (11)	40.7 (11)	18.5 (5)	27
participating in transition planning in collaboration with community agencies	1.89	0.75	33.3 (9)	44.4 (12)	22.2 (6)	27
incorporating transition goals into the IEP	1.88	0.65	26.9 (7)	57.7 (15)	15.4 (4)	26

The grand mean over all 6 skill areas was 2.09, with means for each of the individual skill areas ranging from 1.81 to 2.33, indicating that, overall, the principals felt the 21<sup>st</sup> Century professional Teaching Standards addressed the evaluation of special

education teachers somewhat. Results for their appropriateness for evaluating each individual skill area are presented next.

**Implementing research-based classroom management practices.** Most principals felt the standards addressed the evaluation of special education teachers' implementation of research-based classroom management procedures at least somewhat, as the overall item mean for this skill area was 2.17, with individual item means ranging from 2.07-2.33. The frequency distributions for individual response items for this area were generally consistent, with about two-thirds of respondents indicating that the standards applied somewhat to these areas. Interestingly, only 17.9 percent of principals felt the standards fully addressed teachers' ability to effectively redirect and proactively address behavior as well as effectively reinforce appropriate behavior.

**Implementing research-based teaching strategies.** Overall, principals felt the standards somewhat addressed the evaluation of special education teachers' research-based teaching strategies. The overall mean for this area was 2.30 (range = 2.18-2.43), with a majority of principals (59.5%) feeling the standards somewhat addressed special education teachers' teaching strategies. Only 25% of the principals felt the standards fully addressed incorporating student thoughts into the lesson.

**Content knowledge.** Most principals felt the standards less adequately addressed this skill area. Indeed, the overall mean for this item was 1.96, with one-fourth of the principals feeling the standards do not address the content knowledge of special education teachers at all. This perception was generally consistent across all of the items.

**Inclusion facilitation.** Principals felt that special education teachers' inclusion facilitation was addressed by the NC professional Teaching Standards somewhat with an overall item mean of 2.10. The individual item means ranged from 1.96-2.28, with over half (57.9%) of the principals indicating that the standards addressed this skill somewhat. Particularly noteworthy is that 26.9% of the principals felt that engaging in co-teaching was not addressed at all.

**IEP development/implementation.** Overall, principals felt that the NC Professional Teaching Standards addressed the evaluation of special education teachers' IEP development/implementation somewhat, as the overall item mean for this skill area was 2.01 (range = 1.96-2.11). The frequency distributions for individual response items for this area were generally consistent, with about one-half of respondents rating the standards addressed in this skill area as somewhat appropriate and about one quarter feeling the 21<sup>st</sup> Century standards were not appropriate for evaluating this skill area.

**Transition plan implementation.** Most principals felt that the NC Professional Teaching Standards less adequately addressed this skill area as indicated by an overall mean of 1.81. Individual item means ranged from 1.74-1.89, with high percentages rating the standards as not at all appropriate in areas such as addressing supporting occupational preparation (40.7%) and evaluating on-site job performance (40.7%).

Mean differences for the appropriateness of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards were noted across the individual skill areas. Therefore, the data were further analyzed to determine whether differences between the individual skill areas were significant. A one way ANOVA with follow-up tests was conducted for this purpose. The follow-up Tukey test

was conducted to indicate significant differences between the 6 skill areas. The results of the ANOVA are shown in Tables 8 and 9. The results revealed a number of significant differences at the 0.05 level. First, principals rated the appropriateness of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards for content knowledge, IEP development/implementation, and transition planning as significantly lower than classroom management. Every skill area was rated significantly lower than teaching strategies except for classroom management which was not significantly different from teaching strategies. Overall, principals felt the applicability of the Twenty-First Century Standards for evaluating special education teachers was significantly higher than transition planning and implementation for every skill area except for content knowledge, which was not significantly different from transition planning and implementation.

Table 8

*ANOVA results indicating significance*

Mean	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.833	5	.167	23.725	.000
Within Groups	.218	31	.007		
Total	1.051	36			

Table 9  
*Follow-up Tukey test of differences in perceived appropriateness of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards between skill areas*

Mean						
Tukey HSD						
(I) Section	(J) Section	Mean			95% Confidence Interval	
		Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Classroom Management	2.00	-.126	.054	.214	-.290	.038
	3.00	.213*	.059	.013	.033	.392
	4.00	.074	.051	.705	-.082	.230
	5.00	.166*	.050	.027	.013	.319
Teaching Strategies	6.00	.359*	.054	.000	.195	.523
	1.00	.126	.054	.214	-.038	.290
	3.00	.338*	.054	.000	.174	.503
	4.00	.200*	.045	.001	.062	.337
Content Knowledge	5.00	.292*	.044	.000	.158	.426
	6.00	.485*	.048	.000	.338	.632
	1.00	-.213*	.059	.013	-.392	-.033
	2.00	-.338*	.054	.000	-.503	-.174
Inclusion Facilitation	4.00	-.139	.051	.103	-.295	.017
	5.00	-.047	.050	.937	-.200	.106
	6.00	.147	.054	.102	-.018	.311
	1.00	-.074	.051	.705	-.230	.082
IEP Development/Implementation	2.00	-2.000*	.045	.001	-.337	-.062
	3.00	.139	.051	.103	-.017	.295
	5.00	.092	.041	.240	-.032	.216
	6.00	.285*	.045	.000	.148	.423
Transition Plan Implementation	1.00	-.166*	.050	.027	-.319	-.013
	2.00	-.292*	.044	.000	-.426	-.158
	3.00	.047	.050	.937	-.106	.200
	4.00	-.092	.041	.240	-.216	.032
Transition Plan Implementation	6.00	.193*	.044	.002	.059	.327
	1.00	-.359*	.054	.000	-.523	-.195
	2.00	-.485*	.048	.000	-.632	-.338
	3.00	-.147	.054	.102	-.311	.018
Transition Plan Implementation	4.00	-.285*	.045	.000	-.423	-.148
	5.00	-.193*	.044	.002	-.327	-.059

Note. \*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

A follow-up univariate analysis of variance was also conducted to determine the effect size and power (Table 10). With an effect size of .793 and a power of 1.000 the mean difference between subjects was significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 10

*Univariate Analysis of Variance*

Dependent Variable: Mean							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Section	.833	5	.167	23.725	.000	.793	1.000
Error	.218	31	.007				
Corrected Total	1.051	36					

b. Computed using alpha = .05

The open-ended questions revealed that principals think special education teachers should be evaluated on instruction (9 comments), student growth in IEP goals (6 comments), and record accuracy, paperwork, and writing IEPs (7 comments). For example, one respondent stated that special education teachers should be evaluated on “teaching practices, IEP design and implementation, and keeping paperwork current and correct.” Responses also indicated that principals perceived the most positive aspects of using the NC Professional Teaching Standards to evaluate special education teachers as the broadness of the standards (7 comments) and their ability to hold all accountable (4 comments). One principal commented, “The standards apply to all teachers and are general enough that the use of documentation and artifacts provide evidence for adequate evaluation.” The “broad nature of the standards” was also determined to be one of the

most problematic aspects of evaluating special education teachers (10 comments). For example, principals described the standards as “cumbersome” with “irrelevant portions” that were “hard to use in a self-contained setting”, thus “requiring unique knowledge by the evaluator of special education”. Interestingly, one respondent who indicated the “open ended” nature of the standards as positive also described the standards as “cumbersome”.

*3. How does prior professional development received affect principals’ perceptions of their level of preparation to evaluate the skills of special education teachers and perceptions of the appropriateness of using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards to evaluate special education teachers?*

The majority of respondents (77.8%) indicated that they did not receive professional development specifically geared toward the evaluation of special education teachers. This question is addressed using descriptive statistics as well as independent t-tests to determine significant differences between those who did and did not receive professional development. The overall mean and skill area means as well as standard deviations are shown in both Table 11 and Table 13 for both principals who did receive professional development specifically geared towards the evaluation of special education teachers and those who did not. T-test results are represented in Tables 12 and 14.

Table 11

*Overall means and skill area means of perceptions of preparation to evaluate special education teachers for principals who did and did not receive professional development specifically geared towards the evaluation of special education teachers*

Skill Area	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Classroom Management	No PD Received	21	2.52	0.56
	PD Received	6	2.88	0.21
Teaching Strategies	No PD Received	21	2.57	0.44
	PD Received	6	2.78	0.40
Content Knowledge	No PD Received	19	2.45	0.33
	PD Received	6	2.50	0.39
Inclusion Facilitation	No PD Received	19	2.42	0.42
	PD Received	6	2.50	0.76
IEP Development	No PD Received	21	2.26	0.57
	PD Received	6	2.37	0.40
Transition Planning	No PD Received	20	2.06	0.63
	PD Received	6	2.50	0.41

Table 12

*T-test results comparing means of perceptions of preparation to evaluate special education teachers for principals who did and did not receive professional development specifically geared towards the evaluation of special education teachers*

Skill Area	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Classroom Management	-1.479	25	.152	-.351	.238	-.840	.138
Teaching Strategies	-1.057	25	.301	-.211	.199	-.621	.200
Content Knowledge	-.328	23	.746	-.053	.160	-.384	.280
Inclusion Facilitation	-.368	23	.716	-.088	.239	-.583	.408
IEP Development	-.451	25	.656	-.113	.250	-.629	.403
Transition Planning	-1.599	24	.123	-.440	.275	-1.009	.128

Looking at the results descriptively, there appeared to be some differences between those principals who did receive professional development and those who did not for both preparation (Table 11) and standard appropriateness (Table 12). The means were somewhat higher in each skill area for those who had received professional development as to rating both perceptions of preparation and standard appropriateness. However, independent t-tests did not reveal any significant differences between those who did and did not receive professional development.

Table 13

*Skill area means and standard deviations of perceptions of appropriateness of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards for evaluating special education teachers for principals who did and did not receive professional development specifically geared towards the evaluation of special education teachers*

Skill Area	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Classroom Management	No PD Received	21	2.10	0.35
	PD Received	6	2.46	0.48
Teaching Strategies	No PD Received	21	2.24	0.42
	PD Received	6	2.48	0.58
Content Knowledge	No PD Received	19	1.89	0.74
	PD Received	6	2.00	0.63
Inclusion Facilitation	No PD Received	19	2.03	0.53
	PD Received	6	2.31	0.58
IEP Development	No PD Received	21	1.78	0.62
	PD Received	6	2.45	0.61
Transition Planning	No PD Received	20	1.73	0.59
	PD Received	6	2.23	0.75

Table 14

*T-test results comparing means of perceptions of appropriateness of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards for evaluating special education teachers for principals who did and did not receive professional development specifically geared towards the evaluation of special education teachers*

Skill Area	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Classroom Management	-1.999	25	.057	-.350	.175	-.710	.011
Teaching Strategies	-1.102	25	.281	-.235	.213	-.673	.204
Content Knowledge	-.314	23	.756	-.105	.335	-.799	.589
Inclusion Facilitation	-1.134	23	.269	-.286	.252	-.808	.236
IEP Development	-2.307	25	.030	-.661	.287	-1.251	-.071
Transition Planning	-1.706	24	.101	-.500	.293	-1.105	.105

### Summary

Overall, principals rated their preparation to evaluate special education teachers as 6.6% not at all, 43.7% somewhat, and 49.7% fully. They reported that the NC professional Teaching Standards addressed the evaluation of special education teachers as 19.3% not at all, 55.4% somewhat, and 25.0% fully.

These results indicated significant differences between the skill areas when looked at statistically, especially in the area of transition planning which was consistently viewed as an area of least preparation not fully addressed by the standards. Such differences were mirrored in comments made in the open-ended questions that indicated the need to have more training related to instructing students with the most severe disabilities. Differences were also observed between those respondents who did and did

not receive professional development when looking at preparation and standard appropriateness. Those who did receive professional development were more likely to feel prepared and indicate that the standards more adequately addressed the skill areas, although the differences were not significant.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapter 4 presented the results of this study. This chapter will discuss the findings of the study in more detail. First, the purpose and guiding questions are reviewed. Next a summary of the methodology and results are presented, followed by a discussion of the key findings. Finally, limitations, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research are offered.

#### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of high school principals with respect to their level of preparation to evaluate special education teachers using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Teaching Standards and the perceptions of high school principals as to the appropriateness of those standards for evaluating special education teachers. In addition, the study explored how the professional development they received affected their level of preparation to evaluate special education teachers. The following research questions guided the investigation:

1. How do high school principals perceive their level of preparation to evaluate the skills of special education teachers using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards?

2. How do high school principals perceive the appropriateness of the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards for evaluating high school special education teachers?
3. How does the professional development received affect principals' perceptions of (a) their level of preparation to evaluate the skills of special education teachers using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards and (b) the appropriateness of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards for evaluating special education teachers?

### **Summary of Methodology and Results**

A 74 item questionnaire was developed by the researcher for the purpose of investigating principals' perceptions of their preparedness to evaluate special education teachers using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards. Also a focus was principals' perceptions of how well those standards address the special roles and skills of special education teachers. The 74 items were classified into six topic areas that were identified in the literature as important skills for special education teachers to incorporate into their teaching. A three-point Likert-type scale was used as the response mode. In addition a demographic section and a section of six short-answer questions were included.

Surveys were e-mailed to 96 principals and assistant principals who had participated in using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century NC Professional Teaching Standards to evaluate teachers were identified. Of the 96 on-line surveys initially e-mailed, 92 were received, and 29 were returned. This represented a response rate of 32%. The resulting data were

analyzed using descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVAS, univariate analysis of variances, and response counts to answer the research questions.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The results of this study indicate that the majority of high school principals involved in the first phase of using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century NC Professional Teaching Standards to evaluate special education teachers thought they were at least somewhat prepared to do so. Indeed, 93.4% of the principals surveyed indicated that they were either somewhat or fully prepared. Respondents also indicated that the NC Professional Teaching Standards appropriately addressed the evaluation of special education teachers at least somewhat as 79.7% rated the standards as either somewhat or fully appropriate.

### **Research Question 1**

Although the results show that principals felt somewhat to fully prepared to evaluate each skill area, there were mean differences across the individual skill areas. Overall, principals felt their preparation in transition planning and implementation was significantly lower than all of the other skill areas except IEP development/implementation which was not significantly different from transition planning and implementation, thus indicating a strong need for additional preparation in transition planning and implementation that may be addressed through professional development opportunities for principals.

Responses from the open-ended questions indicated that principals felt they were best prepared to evaluate research-based teaching strategies, IEP implementation, and classroom management. They felt least prepared to evaluate IEP paperwork, address the

needs of students with low-incidence disabilities, and develop and implement transition plans. These are skills that may also need to be addressed through further professional development opportunities or through a more specific evaluation tool.

Results indicated that a majority of the principals felt fully prepared to evaluate special education teachers in specific areas such as creating a supportive environment, supporting students who need assistance, communicating with parents, and monitoring IEP implementation. Although, it is a positive outcome that the principals indicate preparation in these areas, these results do echo the thoughts of many who consider the role of a special education teacher as a support person (Brownell, Sindelar, Kiely, & Danielson, 2010), leading to the assumption that principals are best prepared to evaluate special education teachers as such. They also may feel better prepared because they best understand this role as that is what special education teachers are doing in their schools.

A majority of the principals felt least prepared to evaluate special education teachers in areas such as using assistive technology and developing and monitoring IEP goals, as well as in areas of transition such as evaluating on-site job performance, completing career awareness assessments, and participating in transition collaboration with community agencies. Being more knowledgeable in community resources will enable principals to evaluate whether the students and their placement are being well-managed by special education teachers (Brooke, Revell, & Wehmen, 2009).

Transition is particularly relevant for students with the most severe disabilities, students whom principals reported having little knowledge of in the open-ended questions. For example, terms such as autistic, severe and profound, adaptive

curriculum, OCS course of study (the Occupational Course of Study is a separate course of study in North Carolina), transition services, and career planning were all mentioned as being unfamiliar to principals and represent areas in which it is clear that principals are least prepared to evaluate special education teachers. Unfortunately, there is little research to guide practice in this area, but it is clear that with such little administrative preparation in special education (Garrison-Wade, Sobel, & Fulmer, 2007), the evaluation of teachers of students with moderate to severe disabilities needs to be addressed. Teachers need to be evaluated in terms of using alternate assessments to evaluate students with moderate to severe disabilities, but there appears to be no system in place to give them the feedback they need.

### **Research Question 2**

High school principals' perception of the appropriateness of the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards for evaluating high school special education teachers was also surveyed. Particularly noteworthy is that 26.9% of the principals felt that engaging in co-teaching was not addressed by the standards at all. In addition, one-quarter of respondents felt the 21<sup>st</sup> Century standards were not appropriate for evaluating IEP development/implementation. These skills are crucial to the job of the special education teacher (Billingsley, 2004). Without specific guidelines incorporated by the standards, principals may find it challenging to evaluate special education teachers. With current trends leaning towards co-teaching (Wilson, 2005; Holdheide, Goe, Croft, & Reschly, 2010) it is imperative that an adequate means of evaluating co-teaching be identified.

Most principals felt that the NC Professional Teaching Standards less than adequately addressed transition plan implementation. High percentages of respondents rated the standards as not at all appropriate in areas such as addressing the support of occupational preparation and evaluating on-site job performance. Overall, principals felt the applicability of the Twenty-First Century Standards for evaluating special education teachers was significantly higher than transition planning and implementation for every skill area except for content knowledge, which was not significantly different from transition planning and implementation. Transition planning and implementation was a skill addressed by the literature as being necessary to the job of a special education teacher (Blanton et al, 2003). Principals were obviously less prepared and felt the standards less adequately addressed this skill. Therefore, it may be necessary to develop separate professional development opportunities for transition planning and implementation and possibly supplement the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards with specialized measures.

The open-ended questions revealed that principals felt special education teachers should be evaluated on instruction, student growth in IEP goals, record accuracy, paperwork, and writing IEPs. Unfortunately, these are all areas the principals felt were not evaluated well by the standards making evident the strong need that the standards and evaluation criteria be re-evaluated. The open-ended responses also indicated that principals perceived the most positive aspects of using the NC Professional Teaching Standards to evaluate special education teachers as their broadness and their ability to hold all accountable. Interestingly, the “broad nature of the standards” was also thought

to be one of the most problematic aspects of evaluating special education teachers. Therein lies the paradox of the standards here; their virtue is their weakness. Indeed, the broadness of the standards and evaluation tools must be addressed to ensure that all skills are being evaluated appropriately.

It is possible that providing more professional development in special education may eliminate the need to make the standards more specific. If principals know what to look for, the broadness of the standards may not be as relevant. However, without specific professional development opportunities and knowledge in special education practices it may be necessary to develop specific standards and evaluation tools to address the skills of special education teachers.

Principals indicated that the NC Professional Teaching Standards most fully addressed specific areas related to classroom management and teaching strategies for students with disabilities, and principals indicated they were generally prepared to evaluate such. The overall high rating for classroom management may be due to the current promise of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), but it is of concern that specific behavior management techniques were rated so low. Classroom management and teaching strategies may be most often addressed through professional development in order to procure student growth for both regular and special education teachers and where administrators may feel the most comfortable.

Respondents perceived that the standards less adequately addressed special education teachers' content knowledge, inclusion facilitation, IEP development/implementation, and transition plan implementation. These are skills that

special education teachers must have to be qualified. If principals do not perceive that the new standards address these skills then teachers may not be evaluated in an effective manner.

### **Research Question 3**

The professional development received was measured to determine the affect on principals' perceptions of (a) their level of preparation to evaluate the skills of special education teachers using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards and (b) the appropriateness of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards for evaluating special education teachers. There were no significant differences between those principals who had received professional development in evaluating special education teachers and those who had not in both level of training and perceptions of standards appropriateness. However, when looked at descriptively it was apparent that those who had received professional development rated each skill slightly higher in all areas. This could indicate that professional development does have some type of effect on principals' perceptions of their preparation to evaluate special education teachers as well as the appropriateness of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards. This possibility would support the need for more professional development for principals in the field of special education as previously indicated by the literature (Lasky & Karge, 2006; Garrison-Wade, Sobel, & Fulmer, 2007), though, again, the differences here were small and not statistically significant. Certainly the role of professional development for principals in the process of evaluating special education teachers is in need of more study.

## **Limitations**

There were several limitations to this study. First, survey research relies on self-reports from participants. Respondents may report only information that is socially desirable, possibly leading them to report higher levels of agreement than they actually perceived. With respect to this study, the majority of participants reported that they were at least somewhat prepared to evaluate special education teachers using 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards and that those standards at least somewhat addressed the skills of special education teachers, possibly indicating principals felt the need to rate skill areas higher than not at all. Second, given the lack of professional development in special education, principals may not have understood what some of the items were asking for. Third, while the qualitative data gave some indication of the types of skills that were evaluated successfully and those skills that were challenging to evaluate, no direct observations of the process or interviews/focus groups with principals were carried out to further verify and clarify respondents' reports. Fourth, the survey was administered entirely on-line. While this procedure was cost efficient, on-line surveys can lower the response rate (The Instructional Assessment Resources website at the University of Texas at Austin, 2010), affecting the generality of the results as well as the power to achieve statistical significance. Also, with such a small sample size, a reliability check on the instrument used in this study was unable to be completed. Fifth, the ability to generalize the results of this study, conducted with principals of high schools in North Carolina, to a national population is limited. Finally, the survey did not address the type of evaluation tool principals were using to evaluate special education teachers in their schools. This

information could have been beneficial in determining an effective instrument to evaluate special education teachers.

### **Implications for Practice**

The results of this study show that although special education teachers are now being prepared to work in a variety of educational environments, principals may not be knowledgeable enough about certain job roles and skills to effectively evaluate them. The NC Professional Teaching Standards are general enough for all teachers, but if principals do not understand what the role of the special education teacher is, they will have a challenging time evaluating certain skills necessary to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Providing preparation for principals in special education as part of their training, and developing a more specific evaluation tool as well as providing professional development opportunities related to this tool may be necessary to address the special education teacher skills that principals are not currently comfortable evaluating. This tool will need to be more in tune with the responsibilities of special education teachers, including such key areas as working with students with moderate to severe disabilities, supporting students in inclusive settings, and providing for the successful transition of students to work and post-secondary education. For teachers of students with moderate to severe disabilities, the tool should include skills and responsibilities special education teachers perform in separate settings such as special classes or community settings in addition to general education classrooms and the goals of separate and/or modified curriculums. Since students with moderate to severe disabilities are held to meeting the same standards, albeit at a more functional level, it is important that the principal be

aware of how and what these students are learning in order to meet their educational goals.

For special education teachers in inclusive settings it is imperative that the tool outlines responsibilities of co-teaching and other ways teachers are able to differentiate instruction for students with disabilities in the general education setting. The tool must also address evaluating transition needs and opportunities that are available in post-secondary education, the world of work, and independent living/community life. Such skills are also necessary for general education teachers. In order to lessen the separation of roles between the special education teacher and the general education teacher it may be necessary to evaluate general education teachers in these areas as well. Indeed, they are integral participants of co-teaching and IEP teams.

The findings of this study also have implications in the areas of preparation and professional development. Indeed, both preparation and professional development must be provided in the areas of moderate to severe disabilities, inclusive settings, and transition of students as well as in supporting areas such IEP goal monitoring and implementation and paperwork completion, job responsibilities that continue to be major functions of a special education teacher and for which principals indicated a lack of preparation to evaluate. Such professional development activities may be provided by those in special education administration positions or by special education teachers who have experience in these areas and who have been trained in how to use the evaluation tool. Certainly, an option is to have a co-evaluation done by principals in collaboration with an evaluator with special education skills.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of this study point to the need for additional research in a number of areas. First, findings from the open-ended parts of the survey indicated that high school principals did not receive professional development in addressing the needs of students with moderate to severe disabilities or paperwork completion. These findings indicated a strong need for increased principal preparation and/or professional development in these areas. It would be of interest to replicate and extend findings from the open-ended portion of the study to determine how elementary and middle school principals perceive their preparation in those areas.

Second, findings indicated that principals did not think that the NC Professional Teaching Standards addressed transition planning. These findings should be replicated in other states using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards to determine how they develop teacher evaluation tools and how they perceive the standards address transition planning.

Third, determine what states not using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards to evaluate special education teachers are doing. For example, what standards are they using and what type of evaluation tool are they using to evaluate those standards?

Fourth, this survey focused on principals' perceptions of special education teachers' skills as determined by the literature. In order to develop a more functional evaluation tool it may be necessary to involve the special education and general education teachers. They may have other perceptions of what skills they should be evaluated. It would be of great interest to conduct a survey of what special education teachers think they should be evaluated on and why.

Fifth, it was of great concern that there were few principals who had received professional development specifically geared toward the evaluation of special education teachers. To look at this issue further it may be beneficial to replicate and extend findings to determine how principals would respond if they had received such training and if training alone would eradicate the need for a separate evaluation tool.

Finally, a major limitation of the survey was that it did not address specific evaluation tools the principals used to evaluate special education teachers. It would be helpful to replicate and extend the findings to determine what required and possibly supplemental evaluation tools high school principals use to evaluate special education teachers as well their perceptions of those instruments in order to develop an effective evaluation tool.

### **Conclusion**

In this age of educational accountability, the evaluation of teachers is an important part of determining teacher quality and tying teacher effectiveness to student outcomes. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Teaching Standards have been developed to address the skills necessary to be an effective teacher. The findings from this study provide an initial understanding of how well high school principals have been prepared to evaluate special education teachers using the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards as well as how well the 21st Century Professional Teaching Standards address the skills of special education teachers.

Results indicate a need for high school principals to be more knowledgeable in areas such as working with students with moderate to severe disabilities, supporting

students in inclusive settings, and providing for the successful transition of students to work and post-secondary education. While the results are in need of replication, this knowledge can be used to assist in refining preparation and professional development opportunities for principals as well as refining the instruments used to evaluate special education teachers, in order to secure greater educational achievement for students with disabilities.

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*Appendix A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT*

**SURVEY**

**Demographics**

**Please CIRCLE your responses to the following demographic inquiries:**

**Current role :** Principal Assistant Principal Other\_\_\_\_\_

**Total years experience in education:** 0-2 3-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 More than 20

**Total years experience as an administrator:** 0-2 3-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 More than 20

**Gender:** Male Female

**Teaching Experience:** Elementary Secondary Both None

**Teaching Area:** Reading Science English History Math  
Technology Music Art Special Education  
Other\_\_\_\_\_

**I have received professional development specifically geared toward the evaluation of special education teachers:**

Yes No

**If answer is yes, please specify the professional development received:**

Coursework Workshops Mentoring  
Independent Reading Other\_\_\_\_\_

Do you evaluate special education teachers?

Yes No

Are you familiar with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards?

Yes No

Have you evaluated special education teachers using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards?

Yes No

## Questionnaire

Please circle your response.

Rate your preparation to evaluate teachers' use of these research-based classroom management practices.			Area 1: Implementing Research-Based Classroom Management Practices	How well do the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Standards address the evaluation of special education teachers' use of research-based classroom management practices?		
Not at all	Somewhat	Fully		Not at all	Somewhat	Fully
1	2	3	Item 1.developing a classroom routine and management plan	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 2.effectively redirecting and proactively addressing behavior	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 3.effectively reinforcing appropriate behavior	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 4.creating a supportive learning environment	1	2	3

Rate your preparation to evaluate teachers' use of research-based teaching strategies for students with disabilities.			Area 2: Implementing Research-Based Teaching Strategies for Students with Disabilities	How well do the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Standards address the evaluation of special education teachers' use of research-based teaching strategies for students with disabilities?		
Not at all	Somewhat	Fully		Not at all	Somewhat	Fully
1	2	3	Item 1.connecting new material to prior knowledge	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 2.incorporating student thoughts into the lesson	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 3.allowing most students to respond to instruction	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 4.supporting students who require assistance	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 5.providing feedback on academic performance	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 6.allowing for quality practice of material taught	1	2	3

Rate your preparation to evaluate teachers' content knowledge.			Area 3: Content Knowledge	How well do the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Standards address the evaluation of special education teachers' content knowledge?		
Not at all	Somewhat	Fully		Not at all	Somewhat	Fully
1	2	3	Item 1.English	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 2.Math	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 3.Science	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 4.History	1	2	3

Rate your preparation to evaluate inclusion facilitation.			Area 4: Inclusion Facilitation	How well do the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Standards address the evaluation of special education teachers' inclusion facilitation?		
Not at all	Somewhat	Fully		Not at all	Somewhat	Fully
1	2	3	Item 1. engaging in co teaching	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 2. engaging in collaborative problem-solving	1	2	3
			Item 3. communicating with parents			
1	2	3	Item 4. providing differentiated instruction	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 5. using assistive technology	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 6. implementing positive behavioral supports	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 7. supporting student literacy needs	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 8. supporting learning in subject matter classes	1	2	3

Rate your preparation to evaluate IEP development/implementation.			Area 5: IEP Development/Implementation	How well do the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Standards address the evaluation of special education teachers' IEP development/implementation?		
Not at all	Somewhat	Fully		Not at all	Somewhat	Fully
1	2	3	Item 1. determining present levels of performance	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 2. developing annual goals	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 3. monitoring progress on annual goals	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 4. determining appropriate instructional modifications and/or accommodations	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 5. implementing appropriate instructional modifications and/or accommodations	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 6. determining appropriate testing modifications and/or accommodations	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 7. implementing appropriate testing modifications and/or accommodations	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 8. identifying appropriate special education and related services	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 9. monitoring IEP implementation	1	2	3

Rate your preparation to evaluate transition planning and implementation.			Area 6: Transition Planning and Implementation	How well do the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Standards address the evaluation of special education teachers' transition planning and implementation?		
Not at all	Somewhat	Fully		Not at all	Somewhat	Fully
1	2	3	Item 1. completing career awareness	1	2	3

			assessments			
1	2	3	Item 2.supporting occupational preparation	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 3.promoting self-advocacy	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 4.evaluating on-site job performance	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 5.participating in transition planning in collaboration with community agencies	1	2	3
1	2	3	Item 6.incorporating transition goals into the IEP	1	2	3

### Open-Ended Questions

1. What special education teacher skills are you best prepared to evaluate?

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2. What special education teacher skills are you least prepared to evaluate?

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3. What is the most positive aspect of using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards to evaluate special education teachers?

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4. What is the most problematic aspect of using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards to evaluate special education teachers?

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5. On what factors do you think special education teachers should be evaluated?

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6. What support do principals need if they are to be able to evaluate special education teachers adequately?

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Thank you for your time!