EVALUATING THE PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF THREE WEB BASED COURSES

by

NICOLE YOUNT MCLAUGHLIN

(Under the direction of WILLIAM W. SWAN)

ABSTRACT

Increasing emphasis on inclusion and effective special education, paired with increasing the general education leader's responsibilities regarding special education, have created and increased the need for training. General education leaders must have the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain, and continually improve their special education program. This study examined if participation in web based components of collaborative leadership training resulted in the facilitation of increased inclusive practices by general and special education teachers and leaders. This study examined what web based components of the collaborative leadership training activities were effective and determine if any activities were not effective. The findings of this study will contribute to the growing body of research concerning the use and effectiveness of the web based components of collaborative leadership training for general and special education leaders and to the improvement of Web CT courses.

INDEX WORDS: Web based courses, WebCT, Collaborative Leadership Development, Special Education, Administration, Educational Leadership

EVALUATING THE PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF THREE WEB BASED COURSES

by

NICOLE YOUNT MCLAUGHLIN

B.S.Ed., The University of Georgia, 1990

M.Ed., The University of Georgia, 1991

Ed.S., The University of Georgia, 1998

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment

of the

DOCTORAL OF EDUCATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2004

EVALUATING THE PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS

OF THREE WEB BASED COURSES

by

NICOLE YOUNT MCLAUGHLIN

Major Professor:	William W. Swain
Committee:	C. Thomas Holmes
	C. Kenneth Tanner

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December, 2004

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Bill Swan, my major professor, who provided invaluable assistance to me. I would also like to thank Dr. Tom Holmes, who held writing retreats without which I may never have finished.

Thank you Phillip McLaughlin, words are not sufficient to describe how thankful I am.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother, Wanda Anders and to my father, Fre Ficquett. Knowing how proud they would be kept me going.

I have been a UGA student almost continuously since 1986. Now, finally an alumni...

I remain,

Nicole Yount McLaughlin

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The A Plus Education Reform Act (2000), the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997) (IDEA) emphasize the education of all students including those with disabilities. The emphasis on academic accountability for all students is focused at the classroom, building, and system levels and requires leadership in the differentiation/individualization of instruction to assure effective learning for all students disaggregating the student population in five ways – sex, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, English as a Second Language, and disability.

While the history of providing special education services has focused on "pull-out" programs (e.g., resource classes, self-contained settings), the requirement of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) (IDEA,1997) for students with disabilities is to serve the student in the regular education classroom with appropriate assistance whenever possible. The expectation of many general educators is that students with disabilities should be served by special education teachers in relatively isolated settings; this expectation has been created by their experiences of having students with disabilities primarily served in pull-out settings since 1975.

Based on the emphases in IDEA (1997) and the anticipated changes required in the reauthorization of IDEA which is anticipated before the end of 2004, students with disabilities will spend more time in general education classes with appropriate supports to maximize their participation in the general education curriculum. To respond effectively to this paradigm shift, both general education leaders and special education leaders must work collaboratively at the building and system levels in order to lead general education

teachers, special education teachers, and support personnel in serving students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.

DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) conducted a study examining the working conditions and concerns of building level leaders in Virginia. They noted that the demands of the building level leader have increased to include making sure the needs of students with disabilities are met. Research by the authors estimated that 12% of a principal's daily activities concern special education. A legal memorandum issued by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2003) advised educational administrators to consider students with disabilities first as part of the general education community. The memorandum went further to state that general and special education share responsibility for the education for all students, including students with disabilities.

Research exists that answers some of the important questions relating to this study. For example, do building level leaders have the skills and competencies they need to exhibit effective special education leadership? Wiggle and Wilcox (1999) found that general education administrators make important decisions regarding special education in areas that include planning, budgeting, recruiting and hiring personnel, supervision of personnel, staff development, and strategic planning. The authors pointed out that if administrators do not have knowledge and skills in special education and are not able to encourage both special and general educators to focus on student needs, their interventions will rarely work in effective collaboration.

Also, Wiggle and Wilcox (1999) pointed out that when the building level leader has knowledge and skills in special education, then the special education programs within the building tend to do well, if the knowledge and skills are not present, then the special education programs tend to perform poorly. More than 85% of all principals think that formal training in special education is needed to be a successful building leader (Wiggle & Wilcox, 1999). Principals need to understand special education

in order to effectively meet procedural requirements, provide appropriate services, and monitor the implementation of individual education programs.

Building level leaders are expected to respond to special education as well as other types of initiatives by acting as change agents (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). A survey by Goodwin, Cunningham, and Childress (2003) found that principals recognized the importance of their role as visionaries in facilitating changes. If the trend to include the majority of students with disabilities into general education classrooms continues, general education administrators will need more knowledge and skills in special education than they currently have (Wiggle & Wilcox, 1999).

Questions

There is another set of questions which need additional research in order to be answered. Those questions include: Is there a need for specific training in special education leadership and on facilitating inclusion for current and future school administrators? If this need exists, what types of training are most effective and what method of implementation will maximize its positive impact? What are the specific benefits to be derived from participating in this type of training?

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to determine the perceived effectiveness of three web based courses used as part of a collaborative leadership development program on the behaviors of regular and special education leaders regarding implementation of inclusive educational strategies. The specific research questions examined by this study are:

1a. What is the perceived effectiveness as measured by knowledge gained, skills gained, and actual value in the work setting of EDUL 6023 and 6024 (two Web T courses) in terms of four general factors of web based instructional environments? These four general factors are format, quality of printed materials, access to web sites, and feedback on assignments.

1b. What is the perceived effectiveness as measured by knowledge gained, skills gained, actual value in the work setting of the three content modules in EDUL 6023 and 6024 ? These three content modules are accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities (EDUL 6023), inclusion – access to the regular curriculum (EDUL 6023), and behavior management and discipline for students with disabilities (EDUL 6024).

1c. What is the difference in the perceived value of courses among five demographic factors? These five factors are people who work in special education versus regular education, teachers versus administrators, educational professionals in elementary settings versus educational professionals in grades six through twelve, professionals with less than 15 years experience versus professionals with 16 or more years of experience, and professionals who have been in their current position for less than five years versus professional who have been in their current position for more than five years.

2a. What is the perceived effectiveness as measured by knowledge gained, skills gained, and actual value in the work setting of EDUL 8130 in terms of four general factors of web based instructional environments? These factors are format, quality of printed materials, access to web sites, and feedback on assignments.

2b. What is the perceived effectiveness as measured by knowledge gained, skills gained, actual value in the work setting of six content area Modules in EDUL 8130? These content modules are the individualized education program, evaluation and assessment, accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities, behavior management and discipline for students with disabilities, legal issues in special education, and inclusion – access to the regular curriculum.

2c. What is the difference in the perceived value of courses among five demographic factors. These factors are people who work in special education versus regular education, teachers versus administrators, educational professionals in elementary settings versus educational professionals in grades six through twelve, professionals with less than 15 years experience versus professionals with 16 or more years of experience, and professionals who have been in their current position for less than five years versus professional who have been in their current position for more than five years.

Definition of Terms

1. Behavior Management: Strategies used to positively prevent occurrences of inappropriate or maladaptive behaviors and promote appropriate adaptive behaviors.
2. Discipline: Strategies used to reduce the occurrence of inappropriate or maladaptive behaviors.
3. Collaborative Leadership Development: This training is an array of simulation tasks that provide experiences in realistic situations related to the administration and supervision of special education (Swan, 1995).
4. Inclusion: On the continuum of student placements used when determining the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for a student, inclusion describes a setting in which a student with an identified disability is receiving instruction from a regular education teacher in a general education classroom with the necessary supports, modifications and accommodations provided.
5. Simulation Training: Simulation training is the duplication of conditions that would exist in a real life situation which may include role-playing practices, standardized video presentations, and in-basket exercises (Burrello, 1990).

6. WEB CT - A web course authoring program developed by WebCT, Inc., (2002).

Justification for the Study

Increasing emphasis on inclusion and effective special education, paired with increasing the general education leader's responsibilities regarding special education, have created and increased the need for training. Special education students are expected to receive instruction in the regular classroom whenever possible. These students are increasingly expected to meet high learning standards. General education teachers struggle with a diverse population and heightened accountability.

General education leaders must have the knowledge and skills necessary to create, maintain, and continually improve their special education program. The special education skills of the building level leader are crucial to the success of the special education program. The building level leader must also facilitate change among stakeholders regarding inclusive practices.

This study is designed to determine if participation in web based components of collaborative leadership training result in the facilitation of increased inclusive practices by general and special education leaders and teachers. In addition this study will examine what web based components of the collaborative leadership training activities were effective and determine if any activities were not effective. The findings of this study will contribute to the growing body of research concerning the use and effectiveness of the web based components of collaborative leadership training for general and special education leaders and to the improvement of Web CT courses.

Assumption

This study assumes that participant's responses accurately reflect their knowledge, skills, and behaviors regarding special education and regular education decisions.

Constraints of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to general and special education leaders and aspiring leaders who participated in EDUL 8130 and/or EDUL 6023 and 6024 in a web based format from The University of Georgia. Survey responses were anonymous and voluntary.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

The remainder of this study is organized into three chapters. Chapter II provides a review of related literature and research. Chapter III describes the research methodology and data collection procedures. Chapter IV present the analyses of the results as well as conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the research on the following related topics: Special education training for building level leaders, collaborative leadership development, web-based support for professional development, and the case study approach. There are a limited number of studies concerning this topic in the literature.

Special Education Training for Building Level Leaders

This section examines research studies regarding special education training for regular education building level leaders. Research in this area has focused on both an overview and background knowledge in special education and related services as well as specific issues such as inclusion, discipline, program improvement and monitoring, and change agentry. Research results largely support the need for increasing principals' knowledge and skills for effective special education management and leadership.

Swan and Petersen (1996) examined middle school principals and their uses of tasks and strategies for facilitating inclusion. One of the research questions explored differences between middle school principals who had been special education teachers versus those principals who had not. The data indicated that perhaps the former special education teacher principals had increased knowledge and skills about students with disabilities, which would benefit the principals as well as other leadership personnel. Recommendations for further research included investigating leadership preparation activities focusing on leading special education programs (Swan & Petersen, 1996).

A study by Wigle and Wilcox (1997) surveyed general education administrators in order to investigate each group's self-reported levels of competence in knowledge and

skills related to the management of special education programs. This survey covered 35 skills identified by the Council for Administrators of Special Education and the Council for Exceptional Children as important for leadership in special education. General education leader responses varied between inadequate and adequate on the 35 competencies. By comparison, special education leader's responses varied between skilled and adequate. The authors stated that general education leaders play very important roles in the management of special education programs. These roles included planning and budgeting, recruiting and hiring personnel, supervising personnel, staff development, and strategic planning. If general education leaders are not knowledgeable about special education, supportive of its mission, and skillful in getting both regular and special educators to focus on the needs of students, their attempts at intervention or program improvement will not be successful (Wigle & Wilcox, 1997).

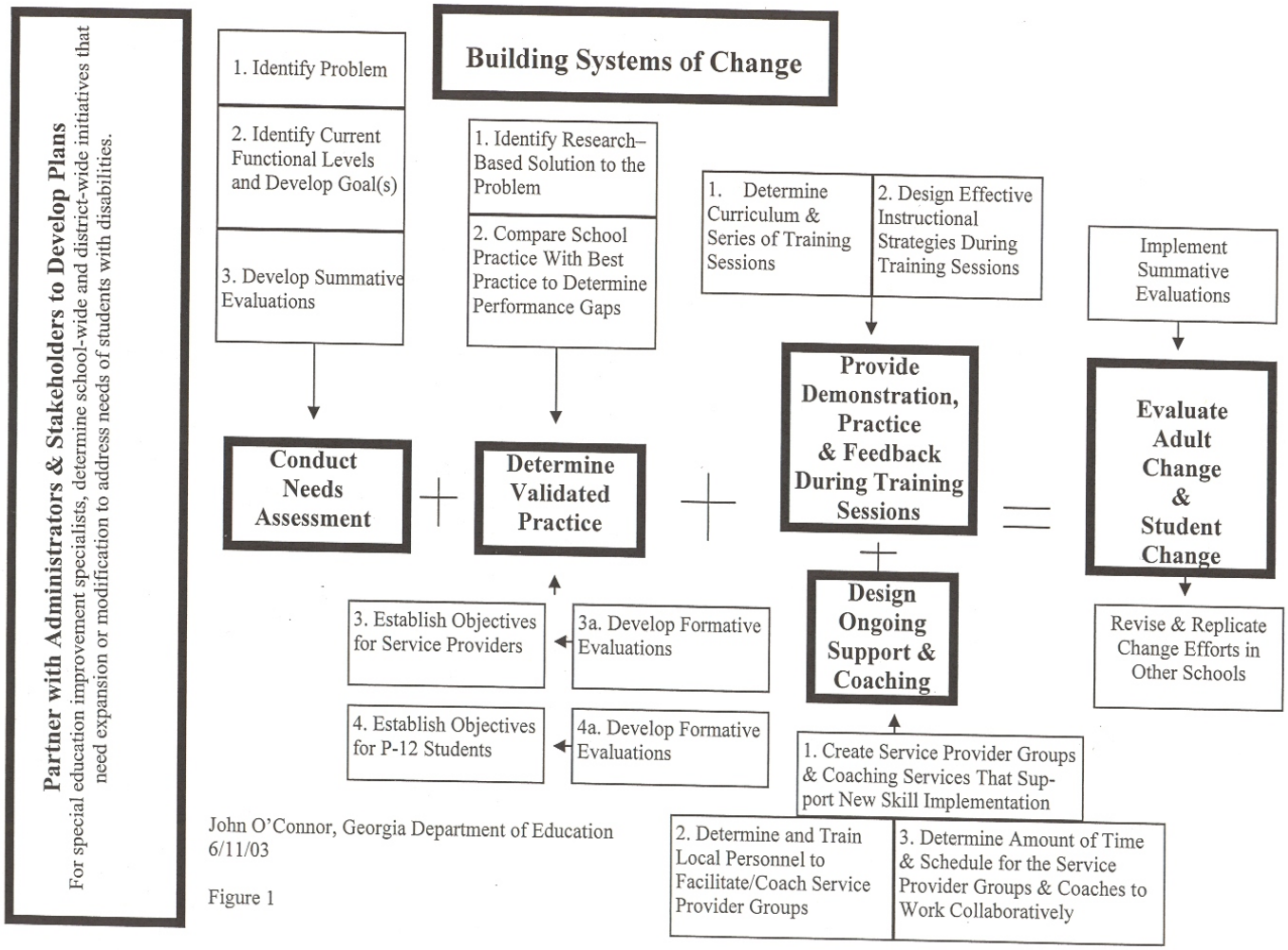
Burrello (1997) recommended that future research in this area focus on the most effective ways to increase the special education knowledge and skills of general education leaders. Efficient and effective approaches such as mentorships, seminars, institutes, and in service courses are necessary for continuous improvement. Regarding special education, Burrello found that principals should strive to focus the attention of staff and community members on the importance of educating students with disabilities. Burrello conducted two parallel research studies-- one in high schools and one in elementary schools. Research subjects for interviews included the principal, the special education department head, parents, and other stakeholders as recommended by the principal. Examining data that was gathered by interview, observation, and document analysis Burrello found that the following were true: The attitudes demonstrated by the principal

> were a key factor in influencing the behavior of others toward the student with disabilities. The most important role that the principal plays regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities is that of symbolic leader. Principals should strive to be proactive regarding the delivery of special education services. Rather than relying on central office special education support, principals should be directly involved with special education programs.

In a summary conclusion, Burrello recommended that the principal assume ownership of the special education program as a key to the effective education of all students. A diagram of the Framework for the Principal as the Instructional Leader in Special Education presents the context/input, the process/throughput, and the results/output (Figure 2).

O'Conner (2003) described an investigative special education improvement plan for the building level general and special education leader (see Figure 1). First a needs assessment is conducted, a problem is identified, and goals and evaluation criteria are developed. Second, research based solutions are examined and school practices are compared to best practices. Next, opportunities are created for training, practice and feedback. The fourth step involves ongoing support and coaching with scheduled collaboration activities. Each identified problem would be evaluated in a summative format as well. In keeping with recent educational reforms, schools with a building level special education leader are able to be responsive to and demonstrate a sense of ownership of their students with special needs, and with increased opportunities for collaboration they are able to make decisions and evaluate programs more effectively.

In his work with Lowndes County Public Schools, (Georgia), Swan (1997) identified the perceived advantages of a trained building level leader trained in special education. They included an enhanced opportunity for team building, increased communication between general and special education, streamlined record keeping, and increased teacher retention. Training consisted of an intensive five day initial staff development as well as continuing staff development, networking, and mentoring. This training covered the following knowledge and skills: special education in general, due process, legal issues, discipline, conflict resolution, mediation, role clarification, time management, communication skills, paperwork processing, scheduling, parent services,



John O'Connor, Georgia Department of Education
6/11/03

Figure 1

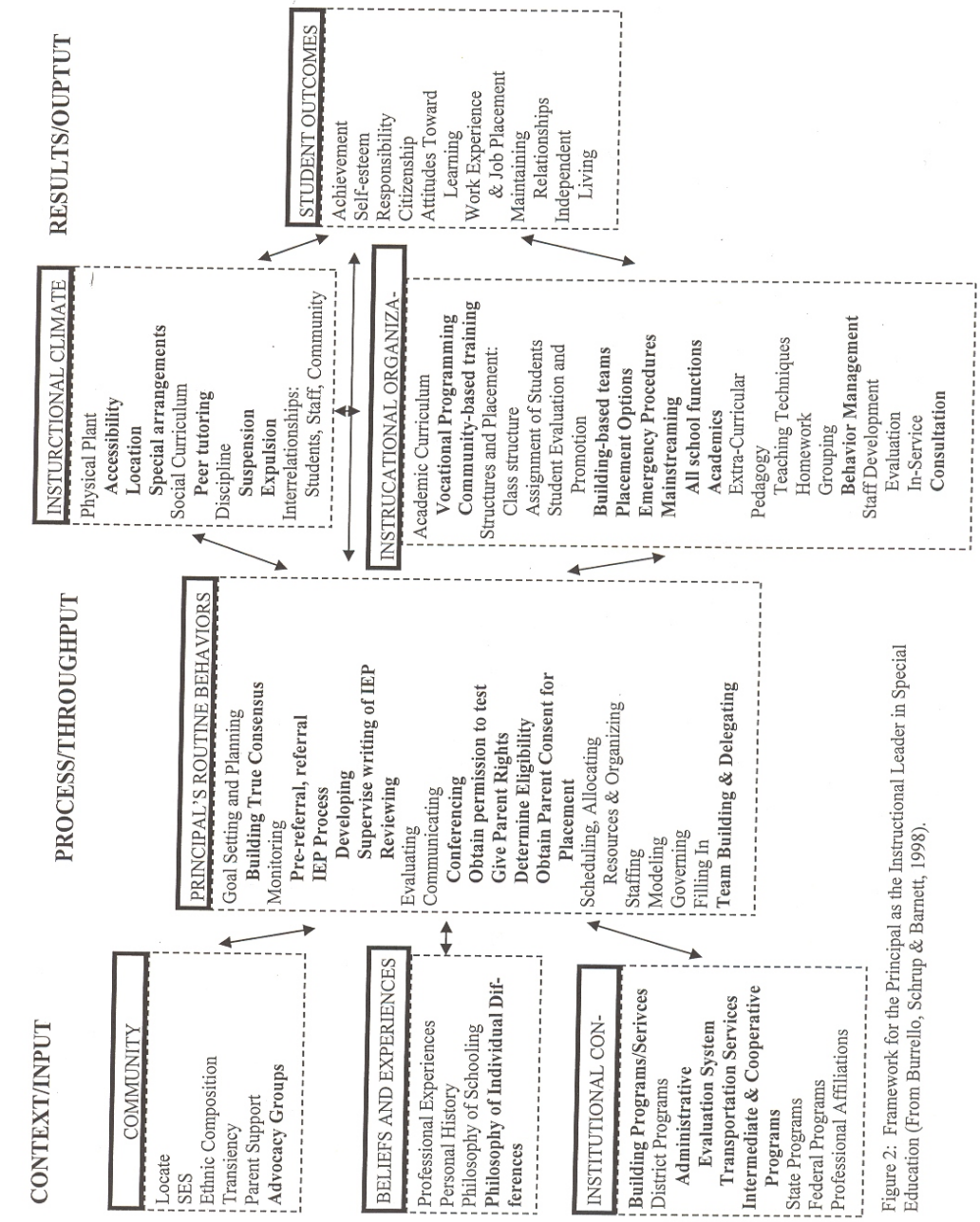


Figure 2: Framework for the Principal as the Instructional Leader in Special Education (From Burrello, Schrup & Barnett, 1998).

collaboration and technology, both for administrative tasks and assistive technology for students with disabilities.

Doyle (2002) completed an auto-ethnography in order to examine his own special education experience. His experience was in an urban setting, in a large school district of approximately 100,000 students. He found that although formal role structures were defined as inclusive -- meaning they welcomed input, they functioned as exclusive systems, which functioned as a disincentive toward collaboration. Doyle concluded that IDEA (1997), in spirit, wanted its legal responsibilities to empower teams of committee members to be creative in an atmosphere of shared decision making, consensus, and non-adversity. Doyle favored shifting power to the IEP committee members and away from the cumbersome procedures created by people interpreting the legislation.

Although not part of the special education law, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973) does affect students with disabilities. In some cases Section 504 provides access to services in addition to those provided by special education. In addition, Section 504 affects populations that are perceived as disabled. In an analysis of what knowledge and skills the building level leader need regarding Section 504 and students with disabilities, Katsiyannis (1994) found that Section 504 provided for additional modifications to the regular education setting to include: providing a structured learning environment, ensuring directions are simple and repeated, use of visual material, use of specific behavior management techniques, modifying test delivery, and allowing for computerized instruction. Katsiyannis also listed several procedural areas which were likely to require the involvement of the principal. They included: identifying students with disabilities, placement decisions regarding educational setting, providing comparable facilities, implementation of procedural safeguards, and access to physical education and non-academic settings and services.

Research by Ubben and Hughes (1997) found that although schools may have a large number of students with special needs and it is impractical to expect that the

principal can personally meet the needs of these children, the principal sets the tone, establishes a network for the contacts, and facilitates the coordination of resources that leads to student success. The symbolic leadership of the principal tells all personnel within the school community about the significance and importance of special education efforts. These authors also suggested that the principal participate in IEP teams. This provides the principal with direct feedback regarding the effectiveness of the special education program as well as providing an opportunity for leadership in continuous program improvement.

This section reviewed the broad areas of special education requiring the involvement of the building level leader. Several articles focused on the symbolic leadership of the principal. Others focused on the general special education knowledge base that the principal should possess. However, the authors of these articles found that additional studies are needed to explore relevant issues. The next two subsections examine inclusion and discipline, these are both pockets of special education expertise which are increasingly important to the building level leader.

Increased Requirements for Inclusive Practices

IDEA (1997) increased the emphasis of the school's responsibility to provide services within the regular education environment whenever possible. Most schools had some level of inclusive practices prior to the 1997 IDEA. However, few schools had the level of access to the regular education curriculum described in IDEA 1997. Many administrators, teachers, and schools have operated with an unwritten belief that special education is a place and not a service.

Many regular education teachers believe that providing direct instruction for a student identified with a disability should be provided by a special educator. Some professionals in the field of education behave as if inclusion is damaging to the non identified students in the regular education classroom. They contend that the regular

educator providing accommodations and modifications for identified students cheats the regular education students out of a full educational experience (McConnell, 2003).

Increasing inclusive practices within a school requires staff development, collaboration, and an ability to facilitate change. A school leader must model the beliefs that all children can learn and that all children deserve access the regular education curriculum. A school leader must have knowledge about what teacher behaviors and strategies, facilitate successful inclusion, provide effective training in these behaviors and strategies and provide multiple opportunities for participants to practice these new behaviors and strategies. Most importantly, a school leader must initiate change, replace fear with capabilities, provide opportunities for exploring attitudes, beliefs and new ways of operating, and promote consensus on what comprises an inclusive school. Finally, a leader creating an inclusive school should use a process of continuous training and reflection to monitor, examine, or improve the level of programming (McConnell, 2003).

Servatius, Fellows, and Kelly (1993) identified six content themes for preparing full inclusion school leaders. They included creating a vision, gathering knowledge regarding effective instruction, promoting self direction, building collaboration, facilitating ongoing learning, and dealing with change. The authors also recommended five processes for preparing inclusive school leaders. These processes are clarifying one's own beliefs, engaging in critical self reflection, exploring alterative perspectives, engaging in field exercises at inclusive schools, and practice facilitating effective group communication (Servatius, et al., 1993).

McConnell (2003), a building level leader in Stockbridge, Georgia, effectively implemented inclusion at the school level. When describing what a school needs to make inclusion work she listed the following: Vision, torchbearers, an action plan with a realistic timeline, meaningful professional development opportunities, creation of opportunities and resources for collaboration, some supportive faculty members who can serve as facilitators and cheerleaders, a climate that fosters collaboration and creativity,

teacher leaders, opportunities for story telling and sharing successes, and a process of continuous improvement.

Research on the facilitation of inclusive practices done by Swan and Petersen, (1996) focused on middle school principals. Research questions included:

1. What tasks and strategies do middle school principals report using to facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes?
2. Are there differences between middle school principals in their reported use of tasks and strategies for facilitating inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms considering the principal's age, gender, highest educational degree, or years of experience?
3. Are there differences between middle school principals in their reported use of tasks and strategies for facilitating inclusion for those middle school principals who have been special education teachers and those who had not?

Data were generated from a survey with four dimensions including the following: demographic characteristics of the respondents, tasks for facilitating inclusions, open ended questions to provide specific examples of inclusion efforts, and strategies for facilitating inclusion. Analysis of the data suggested that there may be a difference on some tasks and strategies between those principals who had been special education teachers and those who had not. Principals who had been special education teachers may have knowledge and skills about students with disabilities which will benefit other school leaders. The authors recommended a variety of training opportunities in special education and related services for all school leaders such as role plays, job shadowing, and specific training on IEP development and legal issues in special education.

Special Education and Discipline

Discipline and IDEA (1997) is often a confusing area for regular education leaders. However, before considering special education, school discipline represents a daunting leadership challenge (Hartzell & Petrie, 1993). In an article on the principal and school wide discipline these authors pointed out that discipline issues can impair organizational stability and consume large amounts of time and resources which were to be dedicated to improving instruction. The authors believed that successful school-level discipline is necessary for maximizing student achievement, and that it depends upon the principal's effective skills in three dimensions of school life:

1. The organizational structure
2. The behavior of teachers
3. The behavior of students

The principal must demonstrate to the members of the school community that student academic growth is dependent on a variety of student, administrative and teacher behavior patterns. Student achievement involves two main components: The alignment

> of the school community with the appropriate philosophy and purpose which cherishes appropriate behavior and celebrates learning. Teachers leading productive classrooms and striving to continuously improve lesson quality and delivery (Hartzell & Petrie, 1993, p. 17).

Effective school wide discipline is crucial for overall school success. In addition to effective school wide discipline, school leaders must have knowledge and skills relating specifically to discipline and students with disabilities.

Conroy, Clark, Gable and Fox (1999) described the implications of IDEA (1997) on student discipline. IDEA requires that teachers and leaders are trained in and practice 'best practice' discipline strategies. IDEA also requires collaborative expertise among regular and special education teachers and leaders. Under IDEA (1997) school leaders may use any discipline practice with a student with disabilities if they would take the

same action with non-disabled students. However, if a student is removed for ten or more days in a given school year, or if the IEP committee anticipates the possibility of ten or more days of removal, then a manifestation determination hearing must be held and a behavior intervention plan must be developed. If the behavior of concern is determined to be related to the disability IDEA prohibits suspensions of ten or more days. If the behavior is determined to be unrelated to the disability the student with disabilities can be suspended for the same length of time as a non-disabled student, however, educational services may not cease (Conroy, et al., 1999). Expulsion of a student with a disability can only occur when the behavior of concern is determined to be unrelated to the disability. IDEA (1997) also delineated when placement in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) is appropriate. Placement in an IAES for up to 45 days is appropriate when a disability is substantially likely to cause injury to the student of others.

IDEA (1997) also requires school leaders and personnel to develop skills regarding functional assessment of behavior (determining what antecedents make a behavior more likely and what consequences may reinforce the inappropriate behavior) and designing effective behavior intervention plans. A behavior intervention plan describes strategies to reduce the occurrence of behaviors of concern as well as strategies to increase occurrence of targeted replacement behaviors.

Conroy, et al. (1999) caution school personnel to avoid an expert approach regarding behavior assessments and plans. The expert approach would separate those who conduct behavioral assessments and develop behavior plans from those charged with their implementation. The key to implementation is a collaborative, school wide approach to discipline that provides the supports that teachers need to implement successful disciplinary strategies that meet the needs of individual students.

Ochoa (2002) examined and reviewed a problem based learning CD-ROM that taught the components of manifestation determination and behavior intervention planning for students with disabilities. The CD-ROM and related materials used the problem

based learning format. Problem based learning was selected for use in this study because it allowed participants to learn and practice skills that would be needed at the building level. Participants were exposed to a narrative regarding a student with a disability involved in a criminal activity. Next, participants explored the different roles of the multidisciplinary team members involved in determining the student's future. These simulated opportunities to explore the roles of a group of professionals with a different knowledge base and opinions about disciplining students with disabilities, provided practice in the complex process of determining the relationship between misconduct and disability as well as practice working in groups to achieve a satisfactory resolution (Ochoa, 2002).

Wood (2003) developed an interactive software program called Practice in Effective Guidance Strategies (PEGS) which used simulations to assist teachers and leaders in learning how to promote appropriate behavior. The software is designed for students from pre-school to high school. Within the PEGS, program participants engage in a variety of simulated classroom activities. Different behavioral strategies can be selected and the results of using those strategies can be examined. PEGS assists teachers and leaders with selecting appropriate, effective strategies based on individual needs and a variety of problem behaviors.

Collaborative Leadership Development

Collaborative Leadership Development grew out of a program called Principal Training Simulator in Special Education which was designed and developed by Burrello and DeClue (1990), adapted from the original work of Sage (1980). The University of Georgia purchased this package and broadened its focus to include assistant principals and other educational leaders. Collaborative Leadership Development (CLD) is training designed for teams of general and special education leaders at the building or system level. CLD focuses on the education of students with disabilities through the roles of

several stakeholders including: the special education director, the principal, other school administrators, faculty, and staff.

Goals addressed through CLD training include preparing school leaders to more effectively and efficiently improve the quality of instruction of all students including students with disabilities. Objectives include:

1. Increasing the communication between regular and special education leaders regarding the educational needs of all children.
2. Increase the use of an analytical problem solving strategy to analyze and solve educational problems.
3. To increase the use of problem solving strategies regarding the education of students with disabilities.
4. To redefine the roles of general and special education leaders at the building level (Swan, p. 455).

CLD training emphasizes simulation of real life situations regarding special education. In these simulation activities participants must make decisions and take action based upon a role they have been assigned for the simulation. Through the training simulations, CLD enhances the collaborative behavior of educational leaders. CLD also provides an educational experience through role playing activities, assigned roles in simulations provide an exploration of different leadership roles (Swan, 1997).

Two methods used in CLD include role play activities and simulation activities. Simulation has become a component of many professional development programs. Simulations are used to model some aspect of a system, set of processes or environments (Burrello, 1997). Burrello, (1990) cited six advantages of simulation training for school leaders:

1. Providing an opportunity for participants to try a new or different role, setting aside their actual position, “get a fresh look at a situation that is

like real life, but does not have all the elements of the person's real life which limit his behavioral responses" (Burrello, 1990 p. 8);

2. Simulation activities allow participants to experiment in new roles and with new situations in a non-threatening atmosphere;
3. Simulation training provides an active learning experience;
4. Simulation Training takes each participant and places them in a new role, and participants work together to solve a simulated educational problem. This common lack of background knowledge and issues creates an equal knowledge base on the situation for all participants;
5. Feedback is non judgmental, and finally,
6. CLD simulation and role activities focus on process and system behavior (Burrello, 1990, p.8-9).

Web-based Support for Professional Development

This section reviews information on web-based courses and web-based components of courses. Web-based courses or course components are used extensively in educational settings. Web-based components can range from the typical, such as: presentation of syllabus, schedule, reading lists, and announcements on the web or can be as involved as: online testing, discussion groups, video presentations real time (synchronous) interaction, or communication that does not depend on both participants accessing the web at the same time (asynchronous). Web interactivity helps engage students in active application of knowledge, principles and values, and provides feedback that allows for greater understanding (Hazari & Schnorr, 1999). Web based courses can provide interaction with content, other students, instructors, access to discussion groups, simulation programs, conferencing and chat rooms.

Web-based support can evaluate student understanding, provide feedback and contribute to an effective learning process. With educators designing and customizing web-based learning environments, it is necessary to assess whether these environments

are meeting the needs of students. By gaining feedback information from participants designers can improve the effectiveness of web-based courses (Hazari & Schnorr, 1999).

Watson and Rossett (1999) described five strategies to draw learners into the web-based learning format and promote successful outcomes. These five strategies were:

1. Provide a series of qualifying questions or statements that enable the potential user to match his or her reasons with the scope of the course.
2. Give a pretest to determine if learners possess the prerequisite skills to enjoy success with the web based activities.
3. List necessary and related learning experiences and skill sets with which the learner can compare.
4. Offer short tales about successful users of the program.
5. Detail exactly what participants will learn, emphasize types of situations participants will better be able to handle.

Watson and Rossett (1999) advocated for learner control. Web users are presented with options and they can make meaningful choices about which learning elements to participate in and select the most relevant method of feedback. Other learner control options may include test out options, selecting the order of study, types of examples or the ability to skip some topics altogether. In order to control learner autonomy and prevent learner control from negatively impacting effectiveness program authority strategies can be used. Four suggestions include the following:

1. Establish boundaries and standards for use.
2. Provide model routes through the program.
3. Use performance to guide recommendations.
4. Allow learners to compare their performance against others (Watson & Rossett, 1999)

Recently, Gill (2003) outlined several benefits of web-based instruction including: the ability to meet the needs of many students at one time while allowing students to

access the information at any time, other benefits included savings in supporting professional development, the ability to present a limitless menu of content areas, the ability to replicate the presentation of content across learners and the convenience this type of instructional support offers participants. In examining how to maximize the benefits of web based instruction, Gill (2003), suggested that course developers understand the goals and mission of the organization, carefully determine what knowledge and skills participants need to reach those goals, set reasonable expectations, create appropriate cognitive dissonance, determine how the technology options you have can best facilitate learning, focus on continuous improvement, and provide skills just-in-time, so that the participant can immediately apply the knowledge and skills they acquire.

To be most effective in improving performance, learning should be just-in-time, occurring when, where, and how employees need it. Some examples of just-in-time learning include tutorial help windows, computer conferencing, and software that allows for collaborative work on a document (Gill, 2003).

A quasi-experimental study conducted by Oliver, Omari, and Harrington (1998) investigated differences in learner behaviors and outcomes across two independent variables. This study investigated the impact of various implementation strategies on learner behaviors and engagement in a classroom based web learning activity. Controlled variables in this study included the use of a printed guide and student pairings.
The results supported contentions that the use of collaborative groups and support materials are useful implementation strategies in learning environments that are open ended in the nature and scope and support high levels of learner autonomy. The use of a printed guide as a scaffold tended to limit the amount of browsing, assist students in pacing themselves, increase student assignment completion and encourage student reflection. This research provided evidence that implementing classroom based web activities as collaborative exercises with printed guides provided a number of instructional advantages over individual or unguided use. Oliver, et al. (1998) concluded

that the web is a powerful and flexible learning resource. Continued research on implementation strategies is needed to ensure that its maximum learning potential can be gained.

Swan and Holmes (1999) presented a paper describing their use of web based courses at The University of Georgia. Action research was used to assess the development, implementation, and evaluation of four web-based courses within the Department of Educational Leadership. The paper detailed the recommendations for continued improvements for four web courses which the department has developed as well as plans for expansion with additional courses. The web-based courses focused on leadership knowledge and skills for students in graduate level programs. These courses were not designed for courses taken for initial certification in the area of educational leadership. The content of the courses was primarily elective and emphasized trends, issues, applied projects, and special problems. Course topics included: Wage and salary administration, grant writing, special education administration for general education leaders, and personnel administration.

Swan and Holmes (1999) evaluated courses in both formative and summative formats. Formative and summative evaluation data were gathered by using the WebCT student survey and individual student comments as they completed the courses. Based on a review of these evaluations, the authors concluded that improvements could be made to maximize the effectiveness of the web-based training. First, faculty members should redesign courses and their instructional strategies based on student demand. Second, a consistent format for communication between and among students and faculty should be established. For WebCT courses, an orientation meeting was recommended as well as establishing methods through which student questions can be answered quickly. Third, a sample successful route through the course should be presented to students, and this should include a time line. Fourth, testing features should be examined and altered to prevent participants from unwittingly being administered the test when they were not

prepared to take it and receiving failing grades. Fifth, faculty should make sure links provided in courses are continuously updated and non working links are quickly removed. Sixth, continuous update of web courses through ongoing technical support is necessary. Finally, course designers should consider increased use of scanned materials as a method of providing information.

Trends and Issues in Educational Leadership: EDUL 8130 is a web course on special education information for general education leaders offered by The University of Georgia. This course has two face-to-face meetings, one at the beginning of the semester and one at the end. This course covers IDEA (1997), Individual Education Programs (IEPs), evaluation and assessment of students with disabilities, discipline, and Section 504. In addition this course presents learning opportunities in use of technology as well as application of learning to the participant's school or setting, writing, and multi-cultural issues. This course earns three semester hours of credit. A shorter version of special education information for general education leaders – EDUL 6023 is also offered at The University of Georgia for one semester hour of credit. EDUL 6023 covered accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities. EDUL 6024 covered inclusion and behavior management. Accommodation, inclusion and behavior management comprised the three modules examined in the survey. Specific activities examined in the sruvey regarding 6023 and 6024 - Modul I - Accommodations 1. Strategies for including all students (generating list of 15 general inclusion strategies), 2. Staff Development activity – Testing and evaluation tips, 3. Creating a checklist of modifications in the classroom, 4. Determination of prioritized efficient and effective learning strategies, 5. Selecting most useful information from articles about learning disabilities, 6. Activity adapting higher level content for students with disabilities, 7. Description of staff development activity on determining appropriate instructional strategies, 8. Behavioral strategies to improve school/classroom behavior management / discipline plan. Module II -- Inclusion 1. Description of three behavior management

models, 2. readiness for implementing inclusive efforts, 3. strategies for effective inclusive efforts, 4. responding to parent concerns, 5. collaborative teaching, 6. collaborative teaching and effective inclusive practices. Module III – Behavior Management 1. Characteristics of positive behavior management plan, 2. Improvements to current plan, 3. process to keep staff informed about IDEA changes, 4. In-service plan for Behavior Intervention Plan development, 5. Action plan to help teacher in crisis, 6. List of informational resources.

Student behavior management / discipline in the schools – EDUL 6024 is the focus of another one semester hour web-based course offered at The University of Georgia. The purpose of this course is to: stimulate thinking about student behavior and behavior management, explore resources for effective behavior management, increase the participant's knowledge of IDEA (1997) discipline provisions, provide knowledge and application skills necessary for the implementation of an effective school wide discipline plan, and, to address skills in individual student behavior management.

This section reviewed articles and studies on web-based learning materials. All mentioned the powerful potential of web-based instruction. As a component of a program to train educational leaders in special education and facilitating inclusion web-based support could provide valuable access to information, activities and evaluation material.

Case Study Approach

Referencing Campbell and Stanley (1963), a one shot case study approach was selected for this study. The case study approach has been used in fields such as medicine, law, anthropology, psychology, sociology, and political science (Merriam, 1985). According to Merriam (1997), educators have recognized the advantage of using case study as a method for understanding educational phenomena. One advantage is that the case study "…allows for a level of understanding and explanation not possible through conventional experimental or survey designs" (p. 204). Merriam also stated that "…a

case study can test theory or build theory, incorporate random or purposive sampling, and include qualitative and quantitative data" (p. 2).

A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research. Case studies are differentiated from other types of qualitative research in that they are intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system (Merriam, 1997).

The case study is generally considered a type of qualitative research strategy using naturalistic inquiry (Merriam, 1985, 1988; Miles, 1990; Moon, 1991). It reveals facts about the people under study and how these facts relate to some phase of human behavior. Merriam (1988) noted that the naturalistic or qualitative research design provides for the greatest opportunity to add to the knowledge base and practice of education. She further stated that "…most case studies in education are qualitative and hypothesis-generating, rather than quantitative and hypothesis-testing, studies" (p. 3).

Yin (1989) described a case study as: "An empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used " (p. 23). She also mentioned that case studies do not have to be qualitative and may be based partially or totally on quantitative evidence.

Methods commonly used in case study research include interviewing, observation, and document analysis, and related measures. Borg and Gall (1989) wrote: "Although data collected through these methods do not enable one to provide descriptions and interpretations of phenomena that can lead to new understandings, questions, hypotheses, or theoretical postures" (p. 218).

Situational analysis is a type of case study which can be used effectively to study the impact of educational change and to study the outcomes of educational innovations.

Borg and Gall (1989) wrote that in this method the researcher examines a particular event from the viewpoint of all the major participants. The purpose of this situational method is to better understand the impact of the event and the effects of the event on people and institutions.

Miles (1990) presented two methods for data collection called vignettes and pre-structured cases. The vignette is an account of a professional's reflections on a recent event, describing it, and then offering judgments and explanations of the event. This method can be used for program evaluation, in-service training, explanatory research, problem-solving, and policy planning. The author's outline for this method is: "The context, your expectations, who was involved, what you did, what happened as a result, what the impact was, why this happened, other thoughts' future predictions, etc." (p. 39). The result of using this method is a collection of reactions to actual events using an approach that is time-saving. Miles indicated that vignettes are useful for in-service training: "…experienced employees can see more clearly what actually happened after a particular intervention and assess why things worked out as they did" (p. 41). He also stated that vignettes have research potential by producing rich data that "…goes considerably beyond the 'critical incident' technique…..because a chain of events is described in context, it is possible to infer causal influences: (p.41).

The pre-structured case method uses a conceptual framework and a set of research questions. The primary source of data is the interview, although document analysis and observations may also be used. Miles (1990) cautioned that when using the pre-structured case method the researcher should "…employ other tactics to guard against…bias and shallow conclusions, such as collecting data from a range of informants an triangulating with different data collection methods" (p. 48).

Moon (1991) developed a taxonomy of types of case studies that have appeared in the social science literature and related to gifted education. These case studies are classified as clinical, developmental, observational, situational, and task analysis. Moon

(1991) also stated that: "The recent upsurge of interest in the qualitative research paradigm has revived interest in case study research and given such research renewed respectability" (p. 158).

Issues of reliability and validity arise when using a case study or modified case study research approach. Moon (1991) wrote that the most important kind of validity in case study research is construct validity. This "refers to the extent to which abstract terms, concepts, and meanings are shared across lines, settings, and populations" (p. 173). Construct validity can be enhanced if the investigator has taken time to leave a "chain of evidence" (Yin, 1989 p. 91) and by using a variety of data sources called triangulation. However, internal validity, or the ability to control extraneous variables, is a wekness when inferences are made from events that have not been directly observed (Moon, 1991).

Reliability, or replication of results, poses a problem in case study research. Moon (1991) cited Goetz and LeCompte (1984) who stated "External reliability can be enhanced in case study research by such techniques as careful documentation of data collection and analysis methods, detailed reporting of research methods, and clear identification of the research role and status" (p.174). Also, they stated that internal reliability can be improved through the use of "…multiple researchers, direct quotations, peer input, and reliance on mechanically recorded data" (p. 174). Merriam (1985), however, made an interesting point stating that "…most writers suggest that qualitative research should be judged as credible and confirmable rather than using traditional canons of validity and reliability" (p. 212).

The literature reveals the use of case studies as a common approach for studying educational practices. Types of case studies include clinical, developmental, observational, situational, and task analysis; vignettes; and pre-structured cases. The strengths of the case study approach are the opportunity to study a situation within its real-life context, more comprehensive descriptions of the behavior under study, and a

greater understanding of the interpersonal dynamics within a situation. Validity and reliability weaknesses have been noted using the case study approach. The researcher can minimize these through use of multiple data sources, careful documentation of research methods and use of multiple researchers. (Lenher, 1993)

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to review the related literature to the principal's need for training in special education, especially in the areas of discipline and inclusion, information on web support for professional development, information on Collaborative Leadership Development and information on the case study approach.

For the purposes of this study information on special education training for building level leaders contributed to the evaluation of the web courses before the survey was developed. The courses surveyed covered the competencies needed by building level leaders.

The information reviewed on Collaborative Leadership Development provided an overview of the larger framework that the web courses are a component of. Web-based courses support a larger educational process that provides experience in reality based situations, giving prospective leaders practice in applying knowledge and skills.

Literature reviewed on web-based support of professional development activities was used to identify general factors that were surveyed. This literature demonstrated the importance of feedback and interaction as well as areas of potential difficulty such as accessing web sites and general format issues.

The literature reviewed on the case study approach provided a structure for the research design. This information was used in the design of the survey and the workding of survey items. Information in both web-based support for professional development and the case study sections provided guidance to evaluate survey items in three domains; the knowledge gained, the skills gained, and the actual value in the work setting.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The research procedures used in this study are described in this chapter. This chapter is structured with the following sections: Restatement of the problem, research approach, the selection of subjects, instrumentation, content validity, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

Restatement of the Problem

This research study was designed to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of three web-based courses: EDUL 8130 – Trends and Issues in Educational Leadership (3 semester credit hours), EDUL 6023 – Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (1 semester credit hour), and EDUL 6024 – Behavior Management and Discipline for Students with Disabilities (1 semester credit hour). EDUL 6023 and 6024 were taught as a sequence. The topics (modules) covered in these two courses comprised three of the six topics (modules) covered in EDUL 8130. These are three of the first web courses to be offered by The University of Georgia Program for Educational Leadership.

Research questions to be examined included:

1a. What was the perceived effectiveness as measured by knowledge gained, skills gained, and actual value in the work setting of EDUL 6023 and 6024 in terms of four general factors of web based instructional environments? These four general factors were format, quality of printed materials, access to web sites, and feedback on assignments.

1b. What was the perceived effectiveness as measured by knowledge gained, skills gained, actual value in the work setting of the three content modules in EDUL

6023 and 6024? These three content modules are accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities, inclusion – access to the regular curriculum, and behavior management and discipline for students with disabilities.

1c. What is the difference in the perceived value of courses among five demographic factors? These five factors were as follows: people who work in special education versus regular education, teachers versus administrators, educational professionals in elementary settings versus educational professionals in grades 6 through 12, professionals with less than 15 years experience versus professionals with 16 or more years of experience, and professionals who have been in their current position for less than five years versus professionals who have been in their current position for more than five years.

2a. What was the perceived effectiveness as measured by knowledge gained, skills gained, and actual value in the work setting of EDUL 8130 in terms of four general factors of web-based instructional environments? These factors were format, quality of printed materials, access to web sites, and feedback on assignments.

2b. What was the perceived effectiveness as measured by knowledge gained, skills gained, actual value in the work setting of six content area Modules in EDUL 8130? These content modules are the individualized education program, evaluation and assessment, accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities, behavior management and discipline for students with disabilities, legal issues in special education, and inclusion – access to the regular curriculum.

2c. What was the difference in the perceived value of courses among five demographic factors. These factors were as follows: people who work in special education versus regular education, teachers versus administrators, educational professionals in elementary settings versus educational professionals in grades 6

through 12, professionals with less than 15 years experience versus professionals with 16 or more years of experience, and professionals who have been in their current position for less than five years versus professionals who have been in their current position for more than five years.

Research Approach

This case study analyzed the results of two descriptive surveys. Specific data collected included demographic data, data on perceived effectiveness, and a comments section.

Selection of Subjects

Subjects were selected from past course rosters for EDUL 8130 and EDUL 6023 and 6024. Participants voluntarily and anonymously participated in the survey.

Instrumentation

A three section survey was developed (see Appendix A). Section I gathered demographic information, section II addressed the perceived effectiveness of aspects of the web-based course and section III (see Appendix B) provided an opportunity for written responses.

Section I

Section I examined demographic factors including the respondent's current position, level of education, and years of experience in field of education and in the respondent's current position. Respondents were also asked to indicate if they had participated in web based instruction prior to or since their participation in EDUL 6023 and 6024 or EDUL 8130. A final yes or no question asked whether the respondent's felt isolated in the web course format versus a traditional course

Section II

Section II asked respondents to rate the perceived effectiveness of the web-based course. Participants ranked the perceived effectiveness from one (very low) to five (very high) on general course factors and perceived effectiveness relating to course content

modules. Effectiveness for both general factors and content modules was measured in three dimensions which included knowledge gained, the skills gained, and the actual value in work setting.

The first four items in section II of both surveys regarded general factors of web-based courses including: format, quality of printed materials, access to web sites, and feedback on assignments. The remaining items in section II concerned the content modules that each course covered.

The survey for EDUL 6023 and 6024 had three content area modules. They were: accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities, inclusive practices, and behavior management. Respondents rated the perceived effectiveness of educational activities completed within these modules. Within the module accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities eight educational activities were rated. For inclusive practices there were six survey items and behavior management there were also six survey items.

The survey for EDUL 8130 had six items including: individualized education program, accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities, behavior management and discipline for students with disabilities, legal issues in special education, and inclusion – access to the regular curriculum.

Section III

Section III provided an opportunity for written responses. Three items were included in section III of both surveys. These items requested information on which activity or activities the participants found most beneficial, the activity or activities that the participants found least beneficial, and other suggestions or comments.

Content Validity

This section examines why survey response items were chosen. Item selection is described by survey section. The three sections were demographic information, perceived effectiveness, and written comments

Demographic Information

The demographic items provided information crucial to the research questions. Participants indicated what type of position they held, their highest degree earned, what age students they work with, how long they had been in education, and how long they had been in their current position. The next six demographic items were yes or no questions. They covered prior participation in web-based courses, participation in web -based courses since the course of interest, use of course materials, and whether or not participants felt isolated during the web course experience.

Perceived effectiveness of general factors.

These items concerned general factors of web-based courses. These items were selected because they were factors crucial to a successful educational experience. They were also factors which were very different in a web-based course format as opposed to a traditional course format. The general format of a web-based course was different than a traditional course. The quality of printed materials may be similar, but determining the educational consumer's satisfaction with the quality of the printed materials is more difficult in the web-based environment. The item regarding access to web sites was included to determine the effectiveness of web links within the course. Difficulty with web links was explored as an area of possible difficulty in web-based educational settings. Feedback is a critical issue in any educational environment, but especially in a course environment where you have extremely limited face to face interaction.

Perceived effectiveness of course content.

Questions related directly to the content of the web courses were selected to determine respondent's perception of the effectiveness of the educational experience. Items were selected based on an outline of the topics covered within each course. Within EDUL 8130 there were six topics or modules and this corresponded to six survey items.

The survey for EDUL 6023 and 6024 has items that address three modules, but survey items address the specific educational activities within each module.

Written response.

Three items were included in the section for written responses. They were selected to provide respondent's with an opportunity to comment on the most and or least beneficial aspects of the course. A third item prompted respondents to provide suggestions for improvement and comments.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected using a survey (see Appendix A). A cover letter (see Appendix E) described the survey as well as the purpose of the research project. The cover letter also assured respondents that their participation was voluntary and that their responses were anonymous. Participants were also able to request a copy of the compiled results of the survey. A brochure for a professional development opportunity where the authors major professor would be speaking was included as an incentive. The brochure offered respondents a 50% discount on registration for the conference. The survey consisted of three sheets of paper. The demographic section was comprised of 10 questions (sSee Appendix C). On items one through six participants were asked to indicate by checking which of the response choice best described them. Questions 6 through 10 were yes or no questions. Section II of the survey asked respondents to circle on a scale from one (very low) to five (very high) the effectiveness of aspects of the courses. Section III provided an opportunity for written responses.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data were analyzed to answer the research questions. Demographic data were compiled to provide an overview of the survey respondents. For questions 1A and 2A data were analyzed to determine which general factors were most effective and which were least effective for both courses. For questions 1B and 2B effectiveness of course content modules data were analyzed across knowledge gained, skills gained, and actual

value in work setting. Research questions 1C and 2C compared the data across five demographic variables. These factors are people who work in special education versus regular education, teachers versus administrators, educational professionals in elementary settings versus educational professionals in grades 6 through 12, professionals with less than 15 years experience versus professionals with 16 or more years of experience, and professionals who have been in their current position for less than five years versus professionals who have been in their current position for more than five years. These data sets were analyzed using independent t tests. Written response data were analyzed for feedback which could be beneficial in improving these courses.

Summary

This chapter has included a description of the research methods and procedures used in this study. The following areas were addressed: Restatement of the problem, research approach, selection of subjects, instrumentation, content validity, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of three web-based courses. This chapter reports the data collected in this study, the results of the analyses of the data, and specific conclusions and recommendations. This chapter is structured with the following sections: Demographic data, data analysis by research question, summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

Demographic Data

The survey respondents were past participants in the web courses. All respondents completed a demographic survey. First there were 20 respondents who had participated in the EDUL 8130 web course, second 4 respondents who had participated in the EDUL 6023 and 6024 web course sequence.

Answers to Research Questions 1A and 1B.

1A. The perceived effectiveness measured by knowledge gained, skills gained, and actual value in the work setting of EDUL 6023 and 6024 in terms of four general factors of web based instructional environments was examined. These four general factors were format, quality of printed materials, access to web sites, and feedback on assignments. Table 1 provides the average of ratings on these four factors. The final column provides the overall average of the effectiveness rating for that factor.

Feedback was the highest rated factor (4.08). All general factors received a score of three (Adequate) or more. Format and quality of print materials received the lowest overall average score (3.58).

Table 1

Average Ratings on General Factors for EDUL 6023 and 6024

n=4

	Knowledge Gained Average Rating	Skills Gained Average Rating	Actual Value Average Rating	Overall Average
Format	3.50	3.25	4.00	3.58
Quality of Print Material	3.25	3.50	4.00	3.58
Access to Web Sites	3.50	3.75	4.00	3.75
Feedback	4.25	3.75	4.25	4.08

1B. The perceived effectiveness measured by knowledge gained, skills gained, actual value in the work setting of the three content modules in EDUL 6023 and 6024. These three content modules are accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities, inclusion – access to the regular curriculum, and behavior management and discipline for students with disabilities. Table 2 presents the average perceived effectiveness on each module activity. Within the first module activities on behavioral strategies and creation of a discipline plan were rated most effective (4.42). Activities relating to adapting grade level tasks for students with academic difficulties were rated least effective (3.17). Within the second module activities relating to readiness for inclusion were rated most effective (4.17). Two activities received a 3.75 rating which was the lowest overall average for the module. They were the description of three behavior management models and responding to parent concerns. Within the behavior management for students with disabilities module the development of an action plan for teachers in crisis received the highest overall rating (4.17). The activity concerning keeping staff informed about IDEA changes received the lowest rating (3.92).

Table 2

Average Ratings of Course Activities for EDUL 6023 and 6024

n = 4

	Knowledge Gaines	Skills Gained	Actual Value in Work Setting	Overall
EDUL 6023 Module 1 Accommodations and Modifications				
Strategies for inclusion	3.50	3.50	4.25	3.75
Staff Development Activity	3.75	3.50	4.25	3.83
Checklist of Modifications	3.75	4.00	4.25	4.00
Determination of Strategies	3.75	3.50	3.75	3.67
Analysis of Articles	3.00	3.25	3.75	3.33
Adapting Grade Level Tasks	2.75	3.00	3.75	3.17
Description of SD Activity	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.58
Behavioral Strategies/Disc. Plan	4.00	4.25	5.00	4.42
EDUL 6023 Module 2 Inclusive Practices				
Description of three management models	3.75	3.25	4.25	3.75
Readiness for inclusion	4.00	3.75	4.75	4.17
Strategies for effective inclusion	3.50	3.50	4.75	3.92
Responding to parent concerns	3.50	3.75	4.00	3.75
Collaborative teaching	4.00	3.50	4.50	4.00
Collaborative teaching and effective inclusion practices	3.75	3.50	4.25	3.83
EDUL 6024 Module 2 Behavior Management for Students with Disabilities				
Characteristics of positive behavior management plans	3.75	3.75	4.75	4.08
Improvements to current plan	4.00	3.75	4.25	4.00
Process to keep staff infomed about IDEA changes	3.75	4.25	3.75	3.92
In-service plan for Behavior Intervention Plan Development	4.00	3.75	4.25	4.00
Action plan to help teacher in crisis	4.25	4.00	4.25	4.17

Research Questions 1C.

1C. What is the difference in the perceived value of courses between five demographic factors? These five factors are people who work in special education versus regular education, teachers versus administrators, educational

professionals in elementary settings versus educational professionals in grades 6 through 12, professionals with less than 15 years experience versus professionals with 16 or more years of experience, and professionals who have been in their current position for less than five years versus professional who have been in their current position for more than five years.

The rate of response did not yield sufficient data for analysis. There were only four respondents for this course.

Research Questions 2A and 2B.

2A. What was the perceived effectiveness as measured by knowledge gained, skills gained, and actual value in the work setting of EDUL 8130 in terms of four general factors of web-based instructional environments? These factors are format, quality of printed materials, access to web sites, and feedback on assignments.

Table 3

Average Ratings on General Factors for EDUL 8130

	Knowledge Gained Average Rating	Skills Gained Average Rating	Actual Value Average Rating	Overall Average
Format	4.20	3.95	3.90	4.02
Quantity of printed materials	4.20	3.95	3.95	4.05
Access to web sites	4.20	4.00	4.05	4.10
Feedback on Assignments	4.25	4.05	4.15	4.18

2B. What was the perceived effectiveness as measured by knowledge gained, skills gained, actual value in the work setting of six content area Modules in EDUL 8130? These content modules were the individualized education program, evaluation and assessment, accommodations and modifications for students with

disabilities, behavior management and discipline for students with disabilities, legal issues in special education, and inclusion – access to the regular curriculum.

Table 4

Average Ratings of Course Modules for EDUL 8130

	Knowledge Gained	Skills Gained	Actual Value	Overall
Individualized Education Program	4.15	3.85	4.00	4.00
Evaluation and Assessment	4.00	3.80	3.95	3.92
Accommodations and Modifications	4.15	4.10	3.95	4.07
Behavior Management and Discipline	3.90	3.85	3.90	3.88
Legal Issues in Special Educaiton	4.05	3.95	4.05	4.02
Inclusion - Access to the Regular Curriculum	3.75	3.75	3.70	3.73

Data Analysis by Research Question 2C

What was the difference in the perceived value of courses among five demographic factors. These factors were people who work in special education versus regular education, teachers versus administrators, educational professionals in elementary settings versus educational professionals in grades 6 through 12, professionals with less than 15 years experience versus professionals with 16 or more years of experience, and professionals who have been in their current position for less than five years versus professional who have been in their current position for more than five years. Tables five through nine presents the data by survey item and report the mean, standard deviation, the t score, the degrees of freedom and the p value. Abbreviations used in Tables 5 through 9 include KG for knowledge gained, SG for skills gained, and AV for the actual value of the survey item. Mod. Was also used as an abbreviation for Modifications and Accommodations for students with disabilities.

Table 5

Comparison of Means of Survey Items for Teachers and Administrators

Survey Item	Teachers (N=7) Mean (SD)	Administrators (N=13) Mean (SD)	t	df	p
Format KG	4.43 (.79)	4.08 (.95)	.83	18	.42
Format SG	4.00 (1.16)	3.92 (.64)	.19	18	.85
Format AV	4.14 (1.22)	3.77 (.83)	.82	18	.42
Print Mat. KG	4.29 (.95)	4.15 (.69)	.36	18	.72
Print Mat. SG	4.14 (1.22)	3.85 (.56)	.61	7.4	.56
Print Mat. AV	4.14 (1.22)	3.85 (.69)	.71	18	.49
Web Sites KG	4.14 (1.07)	4.23 (.93)	-.19	18	.85
Web Sites SG	4.14 (1.22)	3.92 (.76)	.50	18	.62
Web Sites AV	4.14 (1.22)	4.00 (.71)	.34	18	.74
Feedback KG	4.29 (.95)	4.23 (1.01)	.12	18	.91
Feedback SG	4.14 (1.22)	4.08 (.76)	.15	18	.88
Feedback AV	4.14 (1.22)	4.15 (.80)	-.02	18	.98
IEP KG	4.43 (.79)	3.92 (.86)	1.29	18	.21
IEP SG	4.00 (1.16)	3.92 (.76)	.18	18	.86
IEP AV	4.00 (1.16)	3.92 (.76)	.18	18	.86
Assessment KG	4.14 (1.22)	3.77 (.83)	.82	18	.42
Assessment SG	4.00 (1.29)	3.77 (.72)	.44	8.09	.67
Assessment AV	4.00 (1.16)	3.85 (.69)	.38	18	.71
Mod. KG	4.43 (1.13)	3.92 (.86)	1.12	18	.28
Mod. SG	4.43 (1.13)	4.00 (.71)	1.05	18	.31
Mod. AV	4.29 (1.25)	4.00 (.71)	.56	8.11	.59
Beh. Man. KG	4.14 (1.22)	3.69 (.86)	.97	18	.34
Beh. Man. SG	4.14 (1.22)	3.77 (.73)	.87	18	.40
Beh. Man. AV	4.00 (1.16)	3.77 (.72)	.55	18	.59
Legal KG	4.14 (1.07)	3.92 (.95)	.47	18	.64
Legal SG	4.00 (1.00)	4.00 (.82)	.0	18	1.0
Legal AV	4.14 (1.07)	3.92 (.76)	.54	18	.60
Inclusion KG	4.14 (.90)	3.54 (.78)	1.57	18	.13
Inclusion SG	4.14 (.90)	3.54 (.66)	1.72	18	.10*
Inclusion AV	4.14 (1.22)	3.46 (.78)	1.54	18	.14

*was significant at the $p \leq .10$

Table 6

Comparison of Means of Survey Items for Special and Regular Education Professionals

Survey Item	Special (N=8) Mean (SD)	Regular (N=12) Mean (SD)	t	df	p
Format KG	4.5 (.54)	4.00 (1.04)	1.24	18	.23
Format SG	4.25 (.46)	3.75 (.96)	1.55	16.76	.14
Format AV	4.13 (.64)	3.75 (1.14)	.94	17.67	.36
Print Mat. KG	4.50 (.54)	4.00 (.85)	1.47	18	.16
Print Mat. SG	4.25 (.46)	3.75 (.96)	1.55	16.76	.14
Print Mat. AV	4.25 (.71)	3.75 (.96)	1.25	18	.23
Web Sites KG	4.75 (.46)	3.83 (1.03)	2.70	16.32	.02**
Web Sites SG	4.38 (.52)	3.75 (1.06)	1.76	16.91	.10*
Web Sites AV	4.38 (.52)	3.83 (1.03)	1.55	17.06	.14
Feedback KG	4.75 (.46)	3.92 (1.08)	2.36	15.97	.03**
Feedback SG	4.50 (.54)	3.83 (1.03)	1.68	18	.11
Feedback AV	4.63 (.52)	3.83 (1.03)	2.27	17.06	.04**
IEP KG	4.25 (.71)	4.00 (.95)	.63	18	.54
IEP SG	4.25 (.71)	3.75 (.96)	1.25	18	.23
IEP AV	4.25 (.71)	3.75 (.96)	1.25	18	.23
Assessment KG	4.13 (.64)	3.75 (1.14)	.94	17.67	.36
Assessment SG	4.13 (.64)	3.67 (1.07)	1.19	17.88	.25
Assessment AV	4.13 (.64)	3.75 (.96)	.96	18	.35
Mod. KG	4.25 (.71)	4.00 (1.13)	.56	18	.58
Mod. SG	4.38 (.52)	4.00 (1.04)	.94	18	.36
Mod. AV	4.25 (.71)	4.00 (1.04)	.59	18	.56
Beh. Man. KG	3.88 (.64)	3.83 (1.19)	.10	17.44	.92
Beh. Man. SG	4.00 (.54)	3.83 (1.12)	.45	16.76	.66
Beh. Man. AV	3.88 (.64)	3.83 (1.03)	.10	18	.92
Legal KG	4.25 (.71)	3.83 (1.12)	.94	18	.36
Legal SG	4.25 (.46)	3.83 (1.03)	1.23	16.32	.24
Legal AV	4.00 (.54)	4.00 (1.04)	0	17.18	1.00
Inclusion KG	3.88 (.64)	3.67 (.98)	.53	18	.6
Inclusion SG	3.88 (.64)	3.67 (.89)	.57	18	.58
Inclusion AV	3.63 (.92)	3.75 (1.06)	-.27	18	.79

*was significant at the $p \leq .10$

**was significant at the $p \leq .05$

Table 7

Comparison of Means of Survey Items for Professionals by Grade Levels Taught

Survey Item	Pre K - 5th (N = 7) Mean (SD)	6th - 12th (N = 13) Mean (SD)	t	df	p
Format KG	4.14 (1.22)	4.23 (.73)	-.20	18	.84
Format SG	4.00 (.82)	3.92 (.86)	.19	18	.85
Format AV	3.86 (1.07)	3.92 (.95)	-.14	18	.89
Print Mat. KG	4.29 (.95)	4.15 (.69)	.36	18	.75
Print Mat. SG	4.00 (.82)	3.92 (.86)	.19	18	.85
Print Mat. AV	4.14 (.90)	3.85 (.90)	.70	18	.49
Web Sites KG	4.43 (.98)	4.08 (.95)	.78	18	.44
Web Sites SG	4.14 (.90)	3.92 (.95)	.50	18	.62
Web Sites AV	4.29 (.76)	3.92 (.95)	.87	18	.40
Feedback KG	4.14 (1.22)	4.31 (.86)	-.36	18	.73
Feedback SG	4.14 (.90)	4.08 (.95)	.15	18	.88
Feedback AV	4.14 (.90)	4.15 (.95)	-.02	18	.98
IEP KG	4.14 (1.07)	4.08 (.76)	.16	18	.87
IEP SG	4.29 (.76)	3.77 (.93)	1.26	18	.22
IEP AV	4.29 (.76)	3.77 (.93)	1.26	18	.22
Assessment KG	3.86 (1.07)	3.92 (.95)	-.14	18	.89
Assessment SG	4.00 (.82)	3.77 (1.01)	.52	18	.61
Assessment AV	4.14 (.69)	3.77 (.93)	.93	18	.36
Mod. KG	4.00 (1.16)	4.15 (.90)	-.33	18	.74
Mod. SG	4.14 (.90)	4.15 (.90)	-.03	18	.98
Mod. AV	4.29 (.76)	4.00 (1.00)	.66	18	.52
Beh. Man. KG	3.71 (.95)	3.92 (1.04)	-.44	18	.66
Beh. Man. SG	3.86 (.69)	3.92 (1.04)	-.15	18	.88
Beh. Man. AV	4.00 (.58)	3.77 (1.01)	.65	17.85	.52
Legal KG	4.00 (1.16)	4.00 (.91)	.00	18	1.00
Legal SG	4.00 (.82)	4.00 (.91)	.00	18	1.00
Legal AV	4.00 (.58)	4.00 (1.00)	.00	18	1.00
Inclusion KG	3.57 (.98)	3.85 (.80)	-.68	18	.51
Inclusion SG	3.71 (.76)	3.77 (.83)	-.14	18	.89
Inclusion AV	3.57 (.98)	3.77 (1.01)	-.42	18	.68

Table 8

Comparison of Means of Survey Items for Professionals by Experience

Survey Item	0 to 15 years (N = 11) Mean (SD)	16 years (N = 9) Mean (SD)	t	df	p
Format KG	4.09 (1.04)	4.33 (.71)	-.59	18	.56
Format SG	3.82 (.98)	4.11 (.60)	-.78	18	.44
Format AV	3.91 (1.14)	3.89 (.78)	.04	18	.96
Print Mat. KG	4.18 (.87)	4.22 (.67)	-.11	18	.91
Print Mat. SG	4.00 (1.00)	3.89 (.60)	.29	18	.77
Print Mat. AV	4.00 (1.00)	3.89 (.78)	.27	18	.79
Web Sites KG	4.00 (1.00)	4.44 (.88)	-1.04	18	.31
Web Sites SG	3.91 (1.04)	4.11 (.78)	-.48	18	.64
Web Sites AV	4.00 (1.00)	4.11 (.78)	-.27	18	.79
Feedback KG	4.09 (1.04)	4.44 (.88)	-.81	18	.43
Feedback SG	4.00 (1.00)	4.22 (.83)	-.53	18	.60
Feedback AV	4.00 (1.00)	4.33 (.87)	-.79	18	.44
IEP KG	4.00 (1.00)	4.22 (.67)	.57	18	.58
IEP SG	3.91 (.94)	4.00 (.87)	-.22	18	.83
IEP AV	3.91 (.94)	4.00 (.87)	-.22	18	.83
Assessment KG	3.82 (1.17)	4.00 (.71)	-.41	18	.69
Assessment SG	3.82 (1.08)	3.89 (.78)	-.16	18	.87
Assessment AV	3.91 (.94)	3.89 (.78)	.05	18	.96
Mod. KG	3.91 (1.22)	4.33 (.50)	-1.05	13.80	.31
Mod. SG	4.09 (1.04)	4.22 (.67)	-.33	18	.75
Mod. AV	4.09 (1.04)	4.11 (.78)	-.05	18	.96
Beh. Man. KG	3.82 (1.17)	3.89 (.78)	-.16	18	.88
Beh. Man. SG	4.00 (1.00)	3.78 (.83)	.53	18	.60
Beh. Man. AV	3.91 (.94)	3.78 (.83)	.33	18	.75
Legal KG	3.82 (1.17)	4.22 (.67)	-.92	18	.37
Legal SG	3.91 (.94)	4.11 (.78)	-.51	18	.61
Legal AV	4.00 (1.00)	4.00 (.71)	0	18	1
Inclusion KG	3.64 (1.03)	3.89 (.60)	-.68	16.51	.50
Inclusion SG	3.73 (.90)	3.78 (.67)	-.14	18	.89
Inclusion AV	3.73 (1.19)	3.67 (.71)	.14	16.62	.89

Table 9

Comparison of Means of Survey Items for Professionals by Years in Present Position

Survey Item	0 to 5 (N = 15) Mean (SD)	Over 5 (N = 5) Mean (SD)	t	df	p
Format KG	4.13 (.92)	4.40	-.57	18	.58
Format SG	3.87 (.83)	4.20	-.77	18	.45
Format AV	3.87 (.99)	4.00	-.26	18	.80
Print Mat. KG	4.07 (.80)	4.60	-1.38	18	.19
Print Mat. SG	3.87 (.83)	4.20	-.77	18	.45
Print Mat. AV	3.93 (.88)	4.00	-.14	18	.89
Web Sites KG	4.07 (.96)	4.60	-1.09	18	.29
Web Sites SG	3.93 (.96)	4.20	-.55	18	.59
Web Sites AV	4.00 (.93)	4.20	-.43	18	.67
Feedback KG	4.13 (.99)	4.60	-.93	18	.36
Feedback SG	4.07 (.96)	4.20	-.28	18	.79
Feedback AV	4.07 (.96)	4.40	-.68	18	.54
IEP KG	4.13 (.92)	4.00	.30	18	.77
IEP SG	4.00 (.93)	3.80	.43	18	.67
IEP AV	4.00 (.93)	3.80	.43	18	.67
Assessment KG	3.80 (1.01)	4.20	-.79	18	.44
Assessment SG	3.80 (.94)	4.00	-.41	18	.69
Assessment AV	3.93 (.88)	3.80	.30	18	.77
Mod. KG	4.00 (1.07)	4.40	-.79	18	.44
Mod. SG	4.13 (.92)	4.20	-.14	18	.89
Mod. AV	4.07 (.96)	4.20	-.28	18	.79
Beh. Man. KG	3.73 (1.03)	4.20	-.991	18	.38
Beh. Man. SG	3.87 (.92)	4.00	-.28	18	.79
Beh. Man. AV	3.87 (.92)	3.80	.14	18	.89
Legal KG	3.93 (1.03)	4.20	-.52	18	.61
Legal SG	4.00 (.85)	4.00	0	18	1
Legal AV	4.00 (.85)	4.00	0	18	1
Inclusion KG	3.60 (.83)	4.20	-1.40	18	.18
Inclusion SG	3.67 (.72)	4.00	-.81	18	.43
Inclusion AV	3.60 (.99)	4.00	-.78	18	.44

The perceived effectiveness of the skills gained in the area of inclusion yielded a significant difference between teachers and administrators at the .10 level (see Table 5). Four survey items yielded a significant difference when comparing the perceived effectiveness of special education professionals and regular education professionals (see Table 6). At the .10 level a significant difference was found the skills gained from accessing web sites. At the .05 level significant differences were found on three items. A p value of .02 was reported for the knowledge gained from accessing web sites. A p value of .03 was reported for the knowledge gained from feedback. Finally, a p value of .04 was reported for the actual value of feedback.

Analysis of Written Comments

6023 and 6024 Short Answer Responses.

What activity was most valuable / beneficial? Why?

- Creating behavior management plan. This activity was most valuable because it helped me to become a more effective teacher for my low level students.
- Comparing the system used in my county for generating IEPs to the due process requirements; ensured that we are in compliance with federal law
- Creating behavior notebook – I now have an automatic resource tool with research included
- Inclusive strategies / CR management / FBA development – good for teachers to review, study in their certification and as a leader – importance [of these things] needs to be stressed.

Analysis

Respondents identified several activities that they found especially valuable. Three of the responses concerned information relating to analysis and management of student behavior. Two responses addressed the value of information regarding IEP development.

What activity was least valuable / beneficial? Why?

- Internet source activity – many of the websites only served as advertisements
- Composing a positive behavioral plan; this duplicated the work done in my undergraduate program in behavior management
- Review of some of the articles – other articles would have been more beneficial

Analysis

One written comment addressed the activity regarding the behavior plan. One comment described how the internet sources were not as informational as they were advertisement oriented. The final comment spoke to the value and relevance of the articles reviewed in the course. Fewer comments addressed least beneficial activities than most beneficial activities.

Suggestions for improvement / comments:

- the links to websites need to be improved. I had a lot of trouble accessing many of the websites
- Offer this course during spring/fall when access to special education forms/files more readily acceptable. Taking these courses during the summer session posed difficulties as the school building was often closed.
- Include this coursework in general education certification programs!!!!

Analysis

The suggestions for improvement section had three written responses. One response was extremely positive and recommended this course for general education programs. Another response described difficulties in obtaining special education forms during the summer months. Finally, similar to the least beneficial activities question one comment described difficulty in accessing the web sites.

8130 Short Answer Responses

What activity was most valuable / beneficial? Why?

- The differentiation between Sp. Ed. And 504. I often use these in my classroom and with colleagues.
- I don't even recall what was done in this course beyond the modules you listed. Even those I don't remember.
- Putting notebooks together – I use these every week
- The development of strategies (instructional and behavioral) assists me daily because I have an easy suggestion list to use that is equally easy to implement. Taking a sanitized IEP and critiquing it has been beyond useful. I have over 130 SPED students and 10 SPED teachers. I am equally knowledgeable in writing IEPs as my teachers as a result of this course
- Legal Issues – for better or worse, the law is all that matters in the real world
- For general education specialists, I think the sections on IEPs were most valuable; for administrators the legal section was very valuable
- Behavior intervention plan because it could be used for any student
- The most valuable activity was reading the laws related to the various topics

Analysis

Three comments to this question concerned the legal issues. Two comments described the benefits of the behavior management / student discipline activities. There were three comments describing the value of the information on IEPs and 504 plans.

What activity was least valuable / beneficial? Why?

- Cannot remember one!
- Not applicable - all valuable
- I did not find any module lacking in value or benefit. It was my most useful and applicable coursework
- Inclusion – theory is ok, but nothing takes the place of practice
- All activities were valuable
- None
- The most difficult thing about this and other web based courses was the lack of support and human interaction. It is my personal belief that a person does not learn as much information using this method

Analysis

Four out of six of the comments in this section identified no activity as lacking value. One comment regarded the connection between inclusion in theory and practice. Another comment described difficulty with the web based course environment.

Suggestions for improvement / comments:

- I have none. I took this class when there was a crisis within Dr. Swan's family. He was very helpful to me even during this time.
- It has been several years since I took the course. I recall printing lots of stuff I never used. Reflecting on the experience, I think that matters pertaining to SPED are best presented in a face to face setting by a practicing educator who has several years of recent SPED experience in a public school setting
- none for improvement; suggest additional time on behavior management and discipline for students with special needs

- for those students who tend to procrastinate, a timeline would be most benefical. I did not require one, but I recall others who struggled because they waited until the 11th hour and found the work overwhelming
- none – super class and very useful in the classroom
- develop and include scoring rubric, include a method to submit modules electronically
- less isolation, more contact w/ professor
- This was a difficult survey to complete because although I felt that the subject matter was extremely important, I did not acquire much knowledge. There is not enough support provided in a web based course. I took three web based courses while at UGA and I will never take another one. The professors at UGA are wonderful, but I question the validity of a web based class.

Analysis

Three comments in this section describe frustration and difficulty with the web based format. Two of the comments describe feelings of isolation and a lack of valuable interaction. One of these comments went on to say that the lack of interaction negatively impacted the respondent's ability to acquire knowledge. One respondent felt that increased interaction was necessary for a course with content relating to special education. This respondent also recommended that content be delivered by an experienced classroom teacher. Another comment described the difficulty students who procrastinate may have in a web based course and suggested a time line to address this potential problem. Utility was addressed in the comment that requested a scoring rubric and a reliable method to submit assignments electronically. In a possible advantage to web based instruction one student described that although her teacher was dealing with a personal crisis, he/she was still able to participate in the educational experience.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of 2 web-based courses and compare the effectiveness ratings by demographic variables. Information gathered will help improve web-based instruction. Twenty-four respondents participated by completing a three part written survey that collected data on demographics, perceived effectiveness and solicited written comments. Findings reveal that respondents perceived benefit from the web-based courses in the areas of knowledge gained, skills gained and the actual value of course content in the work setting.

Discussion

There was no statistical or practically significant difference found in the ratings of perceived effectiveness among professionals who worked with students in Kindergarten through 5th grade and professionals who worked in 6th through 12th grade. There was no significant difference found in the ratings of perceived effectiveness among professionals who have up to 15 years of experience and professionals who have sixteen or more years of experience. There was no significant difference found in the ratings of perceived effectiveness among professionals with up to five years in their present position and professionals with six or more years in their present position. All rating averages were above three (Adequate). This indicates that respondents found the web courses valuable.

A significant difference at the .10 level was found between teachers and administrators on one factor, skills gained in implementation of inclusive practices (see Table 5). A higher rate of effectiveness was reported by teachers. This seems accurate due to the fact that teachers are more involved in the direct implementation of inclusive practices than administrators.

Four significant differences were found between regular education professionals and special education professionals (see Table 6). Two significant differences were found in the general factor of web site accessibility. Special education professionals rated the knowledge gained from web site access higher than regular educators. This may

indicate that special education teachers found the web sites more valuable. This may also indicate that regular educators had more difficulty gaining knowledge from the web sites accessible from the web-based course. However, ratings were above average for both special and regular education professionals. Significant differences were also found in two aspects of feedback effectiveness. Special education professionals rated the skills gained from feedback and the actual value of feedback higher than regular education professionals. This may indicate that the methods of providing feedback were more beneficial to the special education professionals.

There was a small response rate for 6023 and 6024. Only four responses were received. These courses were used for prospective leaders pursuing certification only rather than enrolling in a degree program. The structure of the certification only on-line program includes 18 one-hour courses and a practicum. The courses surveyed in this study were two of those eighteen courses. It is possible that respondents had difficulty responding to an evaluation of two segments of an eighteen segment program.

Recommendations

Overall results showed that courses were perceived as adequate or more than adequate in all aspects surveyed. The benefits of these courses were demonstrated through the results of this study. Written comments also served to document the value perceived by survey respondents.

Data indicate that some aspects of the course feedback and web access be modified to provide a higher level of effectiveness for regular educators. Because prospective leaders with regular education backgrounds may not be familiar with special education topics and competencies they may benefit from a higher level of feedback and more directed activities in using the world-wide-web in searching for additional resources.

Responses demonstrated that regular education professional found course activities focusing on legal aspects of special education especially valuable. It might be

beneficial to expand and emphasize these aspects of the courses for participants with regular education backgrounds. In addition comments indicated that some special education professionals found material presented to be a review of prior course work. It might also be beneficial to provide an optional set of activities for special education professionals who have prior expertise in this area.

This survey may have gotten a better response rate if an abstract of the courses had been included with the cover letter and survey. Depending on the length of time between participation and evaluation an abstract might be crucial information to help respondents re-familiarize themselves with course content.

Overall, results indicate that all three of these web-based courses were regarded as valuable in terms of knowledge gained, skills gained, and the actual value of the information presented in the work setting. Various educational initiatives and the review of the literature demonstrate the importance of training in special education for educational leaders. These courses provide a means to provide this important information.

REFERENCES

Burrello, L.C., & DeClue, L. (1990). Collaborative Leadership Development Materials.

Burrelo, LC (1997). The principal as leader. *Leadership in Educational Reform, Publisher:City ,*223-246.

Burrelo, LC (1997). Specialized areas of supervision. *Supervision in Special Education, Publisher: City,* 530-541.

Conroy, M., Clark, D., Gable, R.A., & Fox, J.J. (1999). A look at IDEA 1997 discipline provisions: Implications for change in the roles and responsibilities of school personnel. *Preventing School Failure, 43(2),* 64-70.

DiPaola, M., & Tschannen-Morgan, M. (2003). The principalship at a crossroads: A study of the concerns and conditions of principals. *NASSP Bulletin, 87(634),*42-46.

Doyle, L.H. (2002). Leadership and special education: A study of power shifts. *Journal of School Leadership, 12,* 23-53.

Gill, S.J. (2003). Myths and Reality of e-Learning. *Educational Technology, Jan. Feb.* 20-24

Goodwin, R.H., Cunningham, M.L., & Childress, R. (2003). The changing role of the secondary principal. *NASSP Bulletin, 87(634),*28-40.

Hartzell, G.N., & Petrie, T.A. (1993). The principal and discipline: Working with school structures, teachers, and students. *Principal and Discipline, 65(6),* 375-380.

Hazari, S., & Schnorr, D. (1999). Leveraging student feedback to improve teaching in web-based courses. *T.H.E. Journal, 6,* 31-39.

Katsiyannis, A. (1994). Individuals with disabilities: The school principal and section 504. *NASSP Bulletin, Nov.,* 6-10.

Katsiyannis, A. (1995). Disciplining students with disabilities: What principals should know. *Bulletin, Dec.,* 2-6.

Kaufman, R., Watkins, R., & Guerra, I. (2001). The future of distance learning: Defining and sustaining useful results. *Educational Technology, 41(3),* 19-25.

McConnell, Maggie (2003). What it takes for a school to have a successful inclusion program – from project WINS presentation. February 2003, Kennesaw State University.

Merriam, S.B. (1985). The case study in educational research: A review of selected literature. *The Journal of Educational Thought, 19(3),* 204-217.

Miles, M.D. (1990). New methods for qualitative data collection and analysis: Vignettes and pre-structured cases. *Qualitative Studies on Education, 3(1)*, 37-51.

NASSP legal memorandum regarding special education discipline, January, 2003.

Ochoa, T.A. (2002). An interactive multimedia problem-based learning CD-ROM for teacher preparation: IDEA-97 guidelines for disciplining students with disabilities. *Journal of Special Education Technology, 17(2),* 39-45.

O'Connor, J. (2003). Building systems of change. *GLRS training model, Georgia Department of Education,* 1-17.

Oliver, R., Omari, A, & Harrington, J. (1998). Investigating implementation strategies for WWW based learning environments. *International Journal of Instructional Media, 25(2),* 121-137.

Petersen, M.D., & Swan, W.W. (1996). Middle school principals' tasks and strategies to facilitate inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes. *Research in Middle Level Education Quarterly, 14,* 65-89.

Phelps, J., & Reynolds, R. (1999). Formative evaluation of a web-based course in meterology. *Computers & Education, 32*, 181-193.

Pierce, T.B., Smith, D.D., & Clarke, J. (1992). Special education leadership: Supply and demand revisited. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 15(3),* 175-182.

Servatius, J.D., Fellows, M., & Kelly, D. (1993). Preparing leaders for inclusive schools. *Leadership, 34(3)* 267-282,

Sherry, A.C., Fulford, C.P., & Zhang, S. (1999). Assessing distance learners' satisfaction with instruction: A quantitative and a qualitative measure. *The American Journal of Distance Education, 14(3),* 4-23.

Sirotnik, K.A., Kimball, K. (1994). The unspecial place of special education in programs that prepare school administrators. *Journal of School Leadership, 4,* 599-627.

Smith, D.D. (1995). The state of special education leadership training and college and university faculty: What we know and what we don't. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 18(3),* 156-165.

Strong, R.W., & Harmon, E.G. (2000). Online graduate degrees: A review of three internet-based master's degree offerings. *The American Journal of Distance Education, 34,* 59-70.

Swan, W.W. (1999). What is discipline? *EDUL 8130 Course Materials,* Athens: The University of Georgia.

Swan, W.W., & Holmes, C.T. (1999). Web based courses – An effective strategy for leadership instruction. *Presentation to the annual conference of the national council of professors of educational administration, Jackson Hole.* 1-13.

Ubben, G.C., & Hughes, L.W. (1997). *The Principal: creative leadership for effective schools,* Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon.

Watson, J.B., & Rossett, A. (1999). Guiding the independent learner in web training. *Educational Technology, 39(3),* 27-37.

Web CT Campus Edition Version 3.8 (2002), WebCT, Inc., Lynnefield, MA

Wigle, S.E., & Wilcox, D.J. (1997). The special education competencies of general education administrators. *Reading Improvement, 36,* 4-14.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY DATA

Section II – Factors and Modules

Directions- Please circle the number that best represents your response

EDUL 6023 and 6024	Knowledge Gained					Skills Gained					Actual Value in Work Setting				
Please rate the effectiveness of each general factor:	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High
Format	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of printed materials	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Access to web sites	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Feedback on assignments	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

EDUL 6023 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Please rate the effectiveness of each module:	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High
1. Strategies for including all students (generating list of 15 general inclusion strategies)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Staff Development activity – Testing and evaluation tips	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Creating a checklist of modifications in the classroom activity	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. Determination of prioritized efficient and effective learning strategies	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. Selecting most useful information from articles about learning disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. Activity adapting higher level content for students with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. Description of staff development activity on determining appropriate instructional strategies	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. Behavioral strategies to improve school / classroom behavior management / discipline plan	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Section II – Factors and Modules (cont…)
EDUL 6023 Inclusive Practices

Please rate the effectiveness of each module:	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High
1. Description of three behavior management models	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Readiness for implementing inclusive efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Strategies for effective inclusive efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. Responding to parent concerns	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. Collaborative teaching	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. Collaborative teaching and effective inclusive practices	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

EDUL 6024 – Behavior Management for Students with Disabilities

Please rate the effectiveness of each module:	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High
1. Characteristics of positive behavior management plan	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Improvements to current plan	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Process to keep staff informed about IDEA changes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. In-service plan for Behavior Intervention Plan development	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. Action plan to help teacher in crisis	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. List of informational resources	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Section II – Factors regarding course

Directions: Please circle the number that indicates your best answer

EDUL 8130	Knowledge Gained					Skills Gained					Actual Value in Work Setting				
Please rate the effectiveness of each general factor:	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High
Format	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of printed materials	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Access to web sites	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Feedback on assignments	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Please rate the effectiveness of each module:	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Adequate	High	Very High
Individualized Education Program	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluation and Assessment	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Accommodations and Modifications for Students with Disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Behavior Management and Discipline for Students with Disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Legal Issues in Special Education	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Inclusion – Access to the Regular Curriculum	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

APPENDIX B

EDUL 6023 and 6024

Section III - Short Answer Questions

1. What activity was most valuable/beneficial? Why?

2. What activity was least valuable/beneficial? Why?

3. Suggestions for improvements/comments?

EDUL 8130

Section III - Short Answer Questions

1. What activity was most valuable/beneficial? Why?

2. What activity was least valuable/beneficial? Why?

3. Suggestions for improvements/comments?

APPENDIX C

FOLLOW UP SURVEY - DEMOGRAPHICS

Follow Up Survey for EDUL 6023 and 6024

Section I - Demographics

Directions: Read each item and check to indicate the best answer.

1. Please check to indicate your current position.
   a.____ Regular education teacher
   b.____ Special education teacher
   c.____ Regular education administrator
   d.____ Special Education Administrator
   e.____ Other (please specify) _____
   _____

2. Please check to indicate your highest degree earned.
   a.____ bachelors
   b.____ masters
   c.____ specialists
   d.____ doctorate
   e.____ post doctorate

3. Please check to indicate the student population you serve.
   a.____ pre-school
   b.____ kindergarten through 2nd grade.
   c.____ 3rd through 5th grade
   d.____ middle grades
   e.____ high school

4. Please check to indicate your years of experience in education.
   a.____ 0-5 years
   b.____ 6-10 years
   c.____ 11-15 years
   d.____ 16-20 years
   e.____ 21-25 years
   f.____ 26+ years

5. Please check to indicate your years of experience in your present position
   a.____ 0-2 years
   b.____ 3-5 years
   c.____ 6-10 years
   d.____ 11-15 years
   e.____ 16-20 years
   f.____ 20+ years

6. Did you take a web based coursed prior to EDUL 6023 and 6024?

   a.____ YES b.____ NO

7. Have you taken a web based coursed since your participation in EDUL 6023 and 6024?

   a.____ YES b.____ NO

8. Do you use the knowledge and skills you gained from this course?

   a.____ YES b.____ NO

9. Do you use the materials that you printed from this course?

   a.____ YES b.____ NO

10. Did you feel isolated in this web course as compared to a traditional course?

    a.____ YES b.____ NO

Follow Up Survey for EDUL 8130
Section I - Demographics

Directions: Read each item and check to indicate the best answer.

1. Please check to indicate your current position.
   a.____ Regular education teacher
   b.____ Special education teacher
   c.____ Regular education administrator
   d.____ Special Education Administrator
   e.____ Other (please specify) _____
   _____

2. Please check to indicate your highest degree earned.
   a.____ bachelors
   b.____ masters
   c.____ specialists
   d.____ doctorate
   e.____ post doctorate

3. Please check to indicate the student population you serve.
   a.____ pre-school
   b.____ kindergarten through 2nd grade.
   c.____ 3rd through 5th grade
   d.____ middle grades
   e.____ high school

4. Please check to indicate your years of experience in education.
   a.____ 0-5 years
   b.____ 6-10 years
   c.____ 11-15 years
   d.____ 16-20 years
   e.____ 21-25 years
   f.____ 26+ years

5. Please check to indicate your years of experience in your present position
   a.____ 0-2 years
   b.____ 3-5 years
   c.____ 6-10 years
   d.____ 11-15 years
   e.____ 16-20 years
   f.____ 20+ years

6. Did you take a web based coursed prior to EDUL 6023 and 6024?

   a.____ YES b.____ NO

7. Have you taken a web based coursed since your participation in EDUL 6023 and 6024?

   a.____ YES b.____ NO

8. Do you use the knowledge and skills you gained from this course?

   a.____ YES b.____ NO

9. Do you use the materials that you printed from this course?

   a.____ YES b.____ NO

10. Did you feel isolated in this web course as compared to a traditional course?

    a.____ YES b.____ NO

APPENDIX D

EXCEL CODE EXPLANATIONS

Excel Code explanations

A	Respondent Number
B	Format Knowledge Gained
C	Format Skills Gained
D	Format Actual Value in the Work Setting
E	Quality of Print Materials Knowledge Gained
F	Quality of Print Materials Skills Gained
G	Quality of Print Materials Actual Value in the Work Setting
H	Access to Web Sites Knowledge Gained
I	Access to Web Sites Skills Gained
J	Access to Web Sites Actual Value in the Work Setting
K	Feedback on Assignments Knowledge Gained
L	Feedback on Assignments Skills Gained
M	Feedback on Assignments Actual Value in the Work Setting
N	M Individualized Education Program Knowledge Gained
O	M Individualized Education Program Skills Gained
P	M Individualized Education Program Actual Value in the Work Setting
Q	M Evaluation and Assessment Knowledge Gained
R	M Evaluation and Assessment Skills Gained
S	M Evaluation and Assessment Actual Value in the Work Setting
T	M Accommodations and Modifications Knowledge Gained
U	M Accommodations and Modifications Skills Gained
V	M Accommodations and Modifications Actual Value in the Work Setting
W	M Behavior Management and Discipline Knowledge Gained
X	M Behavior Management and Discipline Skills Gained
Y	M Behavior Management and Discipline Actual Value in the Work Setting
Z	M Legal Issues in Special Education Knowledge Gained
AA	M Legal Issues in Special Education Skills Gained
AB	M Legal Issues in Special Education Actual Value in the Work Setting
AC	M Inclusion – Access to the Regular Curriculum Knowledge Gained
AD	M Inclusion – Access to the Regular Curriculum Skills Gained
AE	M Inclusion – Access to the Regular Curriculum Actual Value in the Work Setting
AF	Teacher or Administrator
AG	Special or Regular
AH	Preschool thru 5th or 6th thru 12th
AI	1 to 15 years or 16+ years in education
AJ	Under 5 years in present position or over 5 years in present position
AK	Web course prior to 8130
AL	Web course since 8130
AM	Do you use knowledge and skills gained from this course?
AN	Do you use the materials that you printed from this course?
AO	Did you feel isolated in this course as compared to traditional?
AP	Written comments yes or no

APPENDIX E

SURVEY LETTER

Former EDUL 8130 student,

The course listed above was one of the first WebCT courses offered by the Department of Educational Leadership. For my doctoral dissertation, I am conducting a study under the direction of Dr. William Swan, Department of Educational Leadership, The University of Georgia, 372 Rivers Crossing, Athens, Georgia.

The purpose of this study is to collect and analyze data which will allow this course to be improved. The activities related to this research may be published. The title of this research is Evaluation of Three WebCT Classes.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Feel free to skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering.

In order to evaluate the impact of this course and to gain recommendations for its improvement for other students, please complete the attached survey. **Your responses are anonymous.** When you have completed the survey, please insert it in one of the self- addressed, stamped envelopes and return it no later than _____ 2004. If you would like a complete summary of the results, please complete the bottom portion of this letter and return it in the other self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Your committing time to share your perceptions concerning the impact of the course and recommendations for improvement is greatly appreciated. With your guidance, the course can be enhanced to make it even more valuable to future students.

Enclosed is a brochure for the Harborside Institute which will be held this summer in St. Petersburg, Florida. As a reward for completing this survey, I am pleased to offer you a 50% discount off of the full registration fee. Please feel free to use this yourself, or to extend this offer to a teacher of your choice. Please note that Dr. Swan will be presenting at this institute.

Should you have questions or concerns regarding this survey, please contact me at 706.714.1173 or nicolemclaughlin@mail.charter.net. Again, thank you for your time and effort in evaluating and improving this course.

Sincerely,

Nicole McLaughlin
Doctoral Candidate

DISCLAIMER: Research at The University of Georgia which involves human participants is overseen by the Institutional Review Board. Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be to Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D., Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

Please send me a complete summary of the survey responses:

Name:_____
Street Address / P.O. :_____
City:_____
State:_____
Zip Code:_____

April 10, 2004

Former EDUL 6023 and 6024 student,

The courses listed above were two of the first WebCT courses offered by the Department of Educational Leadership. For my doctoral dissertation, I am conducting a study under the direction of Dr. William Swan, Department of Educational Leadership, The University of Georgia, 372 Rivers Crossing, Athens, Georgia.

The purpose of this study is to collect and analyze data which will allow this course to be improved. The activities related to this research may be published. The title of this research is Survey on the Effectiveness of Three WebCT Courses.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Feel free to skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering.

In order to evaluate the impact of this course and to gain recommendations for its improvement for other students, please complete the attached survey. **Your responses are anonymous.** When you have completed the survey, please insert it in one of the self- addressed, stamped envelopes and return it no later than May 1, 2004. If you would like a complete summary of the results, please complete the bottom portion of this letter and return it in the other self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Your committing time to share your perceptions concerning the impact of the course and recommendations for improvement is greatly appreciated. With your guidance, the course can be enhanced to make it even more valuable to future students.

Enclosed is a brochure for the Harborside Institute which will be held this summer in St. Petersburg, Florida. As a reward for completing this survey, I am pleased to offer you a 50% discount off of the full registration fee. Please feel free to use this yourself, or to extend this offer to a teacher of your choice. Please note that Dr. Swan will be presenting at this institute.

Should you have questions or concerns regarding this survey, please contact me Again, thank you for your time and effort in evaluating and improving this course.

Sincerely,

Nicole McLaughlin
Doctoral Candidate
706.714.1173 or nicolemclaughlin@mail.charter.net.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D., Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

Please send me a complete summary of the survey responses:

Name:_____
Street Address / P.O. :_____
City:_____
State:_____
Zip Code:_____