

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS:
PATHS OF PREPARATION AND
MODELS OF PRACTICE**

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MODELS OF PRACTICE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of a qualitative research study of special education administrators in Oklahoma. The background section provides a historical view of changes in administering educational programs for children with disabilities. The conceptual framework focuses on the paths of preparation and administrative practices of special education administrators leading to the problem statement. The research problem targets special education administration and what factors influence special education administrators' practices. Long interviewing was utilized to seek in-depth descriptive information regarding practices in special education administration from the perspective of participants. The conclusion of this chapter discusses the significance of this study, namely, increasing the knowledge base regarding the practice of special education administration.

The special education administrator's role has become more complex as special education moves from categorical-program supervision to supervision in regular education settings. The ways in which administrators choose to meet the challenges in special education vary. This variation may be influenced by the training and experience the administrator brings into special education administration (Finkenbinder, 1981) and the influence of organization models on practice (Bolman & Deal, 1984).

Background of the Study

Since the passage of P.L. 94-142 (The Education for All Handicapped Children's Act) in 1975 and P.L. 101-476 (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in 1990, school administrators have been faced with regulatory stipulations which require the provision of education and related services to children with disabilities. Requirements for

the administration and supervision of special education have grown rapidly since special education services have been federally mandated (Finkenbinder, 1981). Landmark laws have made it essential that special education administrative personnel take on a more extensive role in working with children and staff (Finkenbinder, 1981).

Prior to federal mandates, school administrators assumed the administration of special education along with other responsibilities. The preparation of special education administrators was limited to on-the-job training. Connor (1961, p.22) stated that “special education programs are but a part of the larger administrative field of instruction, different from, yet part of the elementary and secondary schools”. Yet, following the implementation of mandated services, Finkenbinder (1981) reported, “We currently have a host of administrators and supervisors nationwide who received their training and experience on the job. This has led to wide variance in the roles and functions of administrative professionals”(p. 463).

The mandate for educating children with disabilities brought about significant changes in the number of children referred for evaluations and the number of students identified for special education services. These increases triggered the growth in special education programs as well as the need for acquiring and supervising specialized personnel. The need for additional administration and supervision resulted in the development of special education administration as a separate entity (Finkenbinder, 1981).

Federal mandates for special education include a system of personnel development to meet certification standards. Thirteen categories of identification for children with disabilities are aligned with certification standards and training regulations for specialized personnel. The Oklahoma State Department of Education is responsible for delineating the certification standards for educators for Oklahoma’s public schools. Certification is required for teaching in all areas of special education. However, the Oklahoma State Department of Education does not require administrative certification for special education administrators. Administrative certification requirements are provided only for principal and superintendent positions. Forgnone and Collings (1975) reported in their study of state certification endorsement in special education administration that “as special education grows and becomes more complex in its demands on professional roles, the need for

specially trained administrators to direct special education programs becomes imperative” (p.7). Though the need for special education administrators has increased, the nature and characteristics of the position remain unclear.

Early studies of special education directors/administrators and supervisor/consultant personnel identified the functions performed and competences needed to fulfill these positions. Mackie and Engel (1955, p.3) identified the following 11 areas of competence:

- Personnel
- Administration and leadership
- Evaluation and development of programs
- Teacher recruitment and selection
- Professional development
- Supervision
- Budget and finance
- Research
- Coordination with community agencies
- Legislative procedures
- Public relations

Over the past four decades these competences have remained essential and have intensified in special education administration (Voelker, 1966; Marro & Kohl, 1972; Finkenbinder, 1981). Due to the changes in federal mandates and the necessary restructuring of schools to provide services to children in the least restrictive environment (LRE), special education administrators are faced with challenges including: (1) implementation of federal regulations regarding procedural safeguards, (2) shortage of specialized personnel, (3) acquisition of funding resources and, (4) provision of a continuum of educational placement alternatives (Johnson & Burrello, 1988). The roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator have changed but a review of the literature indicates a lack of understanding about practices in administering special education today and how these practices are influenced.

Conceptual Framework

Special education administrators experience different paths of preparation and models of practice. The paths of preparation differ in educational, professional and practical experiences. The models of practice range from autocratic to participatory styles of administration.

Paths

The paths of professional preparation for special education administrators can vary on three dimensions. Variations in professional preparation appear in the combination of pre-service (undergraduate studies), service (professional education work experience), and graduate study. Some special education administrators enter into practice with backgrounds in special education or non-special education preparation. Others may have initial preparation in one area and acquire experience or training in another as they prepare for practice in special education administration.

Practices and Models

An individual's professional knowledge and foundation of experience influence their choices of organizational and administrative behaviors (Skrtic, 1995). Further, practice in special education administration can be viewed from four organizational models proposed by Wimpelberg, Abroms, and Catardi (1985). These four organizational approaches, adapted from Bolman and Deal (1984), are identified as the (1) technical, (2) human relations, (3) political and (4) symbolic models.

The framework represents four models for understanding administrative behavior. Bolman & Deal (1984) assert that while organizations are "complex, surprising, deceptive, and ambiguous," people want them to be "understandable, predictable, and manageable" (p.13). If organizational activity is, in fact, complex, surprising, deceptive, and ambiguous, as Bolman and Deal claim, then administrators need to understand any

predispositions they may have in viewing organizational activity and they need to be sensitive about multiple models of organizational behavior if their actions are to prove effective (Wimpelberg, et.al. 1985).

The framework presents four predominant paths of preparation for special education administrators. The paths focus on three areas of professional preparation including pre-service, service (experience), and graduate study. The four paths are identified as follows:

SSS - Special education pre-service, special education service, special education graduate study;

SSN - Special education pre-service, service special education, non-special education graduate study;

NNS - Non-special education pre-service, non-special education service, special education graduate study;

NNN - Non-special education pre-service, non-special education service, non-special education graduate study.

This framework (Figure 1.1) will serve as a lens to examine special education administration practices, the influence of paths of professional preparation, and dominant models of administrative behaviors of special education administrators.

Insert Figure 1.1 About Here

Technical Model

The technical model (Bolman & Deal, 1984) is fundamentally task oriented. Assumptions are that the goals of an organization are known and that tasks can be identified to meet each goal. The technical model relies on decision-making processes that are sequential and linear such as the assessment/diagnosis/treatment/evaluation process found in special education.

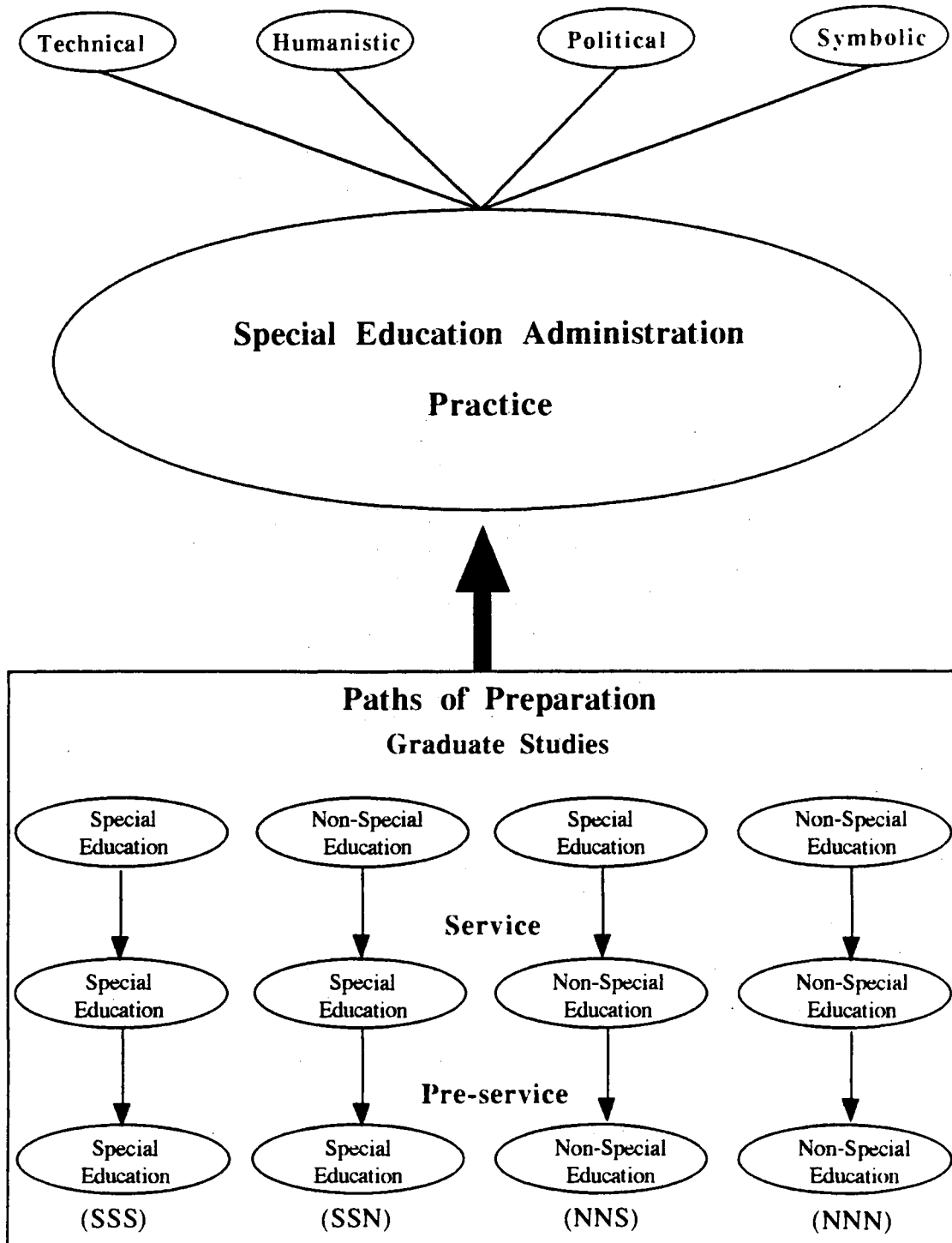


Figure 1.1 Paths of Preparation and Models of Practice in Special Education Administration.

Bolman and Deal (1984) identify the following assumptions underlying the technical or structural approach.

1. Organizations exist primarily to accomplish established goals.
2. For any organization, there is a structure appropriate to the goals, the environment, the technology, and the participants.
3. Organizations work most effectively when environmental turbulence and the personal preferences of participants are constrained by norms of rationality.
4. Specialization permits higher levels of individual expertise and performance.
5. Coordination and control are accomplished best through the exercise of authority and impersonal rules.
6. Structures can be systematically designed and implemented.
7. Organizational problems usually reflect an inappropriate structure and can be resolved through redesign and reorganization. (pp. 31-32)

Certain aspects of the technical approach are evident in special education. Federal mandates prescribe a system of accountability and monitoring for assuring the provision of services and adherence to procedural safeguards. The documentation process required in special education and the prescribed format for individualized education plans (IEP) reflect a technical approach to educational planning for children with disabilities (Wimpelburg, et al., 1985).

Human Relations Model

The human relations approach emphasizes participation. Issues of motivation to work, emotional conditions, and the needs of employees are addressed. It is essential for special education administrators to recognize and acknowledge the strong psychological stress of teachers and parents working with children with disabilities.

The administrator who is prepared to give only technical assistance to teachers and information to parents--however accurate and current that assistance may be--will miss the real administrative responsibility in a situation calling for listening skills (rather than "telling" skills) and

counseling interactions (rather than coordinating interactions).

(Wimpelburg, et.al.,1985, p.5)

The human relations approach is characterized by the following assumptions (Bolman & Deal ,1984):

1. Organizations exist to serve human needs, and humans do not exist, to serve organizational needs.
 2. Organizations and people need each other. Organizations need the ideas, energy and talent that people provide, while people need the careers, salaries, and work opportunities that organizations provide.
 3. When the fit between the individual and the organization is poor, one or both will suffer: The individual will be exploited or will seek to exploit the organization, or both.
 4. When the fit is good between the individual and the organization, both benefit: Humans are able to do meaningful and satisfying work while providing the resources the organization needs to accomplish its mission.
- (p.65)

Special education is susceptible to change. P.L. 94-142 Education for All Handicapped Children's Act (EAHCA) is reauthorized by Congress every three years (Skrtic, 1995). This process often triggers changes in regulations and results in restructuring of programs. Teachers' and parents' morale are often effected by program changes and instability (Wimpelberg, et.al., 1985). Administrators utilizing a humanistic approach demonstrate sensitivity and the skills necessary to address the needs of parents, teachers, and children.

Political Model

The third model of organization and administrative behavior is identified as the political model. This model focuses on the role of power and conflict. One of the primary assumptions revolves around the scarcity of resources to meet the needs of constituents. In

special education this often occurs because of the competitiveness of funding sources and the excessive cost of the provision of services for some children with severe disabilities.

Special education administrators face the dilemma of placing programs for children with disabilities in someone else's territory. This requires finding space and resources in buildings which are under the control of the building administrator. This practice of running interference can become an issue of political control within a school district. Conflict between special education programs and non-special education is common when competing for resources, physical as well as fiscal.

Bolman and Deal (1984) identify an elaborate set of assumptions behind the political model. These propositions include:

1. Most of the important decisions in organizations involve the allocation of scarce resources.
2. Organizations are coalitions composed of a number of individuals and interest groups (for example, hierarchical levels, departments, professional groups, ethnic groups).
3. Individuals and interest groups differ in their values, preferences, beliefs, information, and perceptions of reality. Such differences are usually enduring and change slowly if at all.
4. Organizational goals and decisions emerge from ongoing processes of bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position among individuals and groups.
5. Because of scarce resources and enduring differences, power and conflict are central features of organizational life. (p.109)

The technical model lends administrators a solid knowledge base of regulations but the political model offers the insight to resources to accomplish the goals for the administration of programs. Special education administration often presents a case of "who you know" being as relevant as "what you know".

Symbolic Model

The symbolic approach to the study of organizations and administration is founded on interpretations based on symbols and perceived images of the organization.

Administrators who understand the power of symbols can increase the effectiveness and viability of their programs and agencies (Wimpelberg, et.al.,1985). Frequently, agencies receive funding based upon the perceived images of the work they provide to their clients or students rather than their technical, human relations, or political expertise. When administrators can tap into the resources or images of larger well known organizations which promote favorable public images regarding services for individuals with disabilities, the benefits of this relationship can be favorable for their programs. This awareness is part of the symbolic approach to administration.

Bolman and Deal (1984) outline the following assumptions of the symbolic model. These assumptions are based on anthropological studies of primitive cultures and research on modern organizations.

1. What is most important about any event is not what happened but the meaning of the what happened.
2. The meaning of an event is determined not simply by what happened but by the ways that humans interpret what happened.
3. Many of the most significant events and processes in organizations are substantially ambiguous or uncertain--it is often difficult or impossible to know what happened, why it happened, or what will happen next.
4. Ambiguity and uncertainty, resolve confusion, increase predictability, and provide direction. Events themselves may remain illogical, random, fluid, and meaningless, but human symbols make them seem otherwise. (p. 150)

Special education administrators can rely on the internal and external symbolic model in recognizing the importance of meaning. To enhance the perceptions about new programs, administrators may engage in activities which are seen as favorable to the education of children with disabilities, such as fund raisers for nationally recognized advocacy agencies and hosting Special Olympics. Meaning can be distinguished from

reality and is encompassed in myths, ceremonies, and rituals that bring people together around a common set of beliefs or purposes. When understood in their passive sense, “culture and symbolic aspects of substantive leadership forces are essential to excellence” (Sergiovanni, 1984, p.13).

The four models of organization and administrative behavior presented provide a framework for analyzing administrative approaches to special education administration. In studying the influence of paths of preparation and practice of special education administrators the importance of recognizing the essential components of each of models is clear. The four models of administration and organization provide a lens for analyzing preparation and administrative practices in special education from multiple perspectives.

Statement of the Problem

The model(s) of organization and administration utilized in practice may be influenced by the path of preparation of the special education administrator. To what extent does the educational background and experience influence special education administrators practice? This study will examine if there is an influence of paths of preparation in the dominant models of organization and administration in special education administration.

In order to develop an understanding of special education administration and the preparation necessary to meet those challenges the following research questions will be addressed:

1. How do special education administrators describe their practice?
2. Do differing paths toward special education administration influence practice?
3. If paths of preparation influence practice, what model of organization and administrative behavior is dominate in practice within each path?

Research Design

The purpose of this study of special education administrators in Oklahoma was to determine how special education administrators describe their world and how the path of preparation influences their organization or administrative behavior. A qualitative study allowed the researcher to develop a description of special education administrators' perceptions about their practice (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). The descriptions led to determining variations that exist in paths of preparation and provides information for better preparation of administrators in special education.

A long interview study was conducted to gain access to the cultural categories and assumptions about how special education administrators construe their world (McCracken, 1988). Following the development of a memo and extensive review of literature regarding current practices in special education administration, an open-ended questionnaire was developed. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews using the research question as a guide for acquiring information during the long interview process.

The study involved interviewing 12 special education administrators in Oklahoma. Since Oklahoma has only two urban school districts and special education is often provided through cooperatives or intermediate units in rural Oklahoma, administrators were selected from suburban school districts. Each school district selected provided direct special education services to students with disabilities residing in their district. The purpose of selecting administrators from school districts with similar special education service delivery (homogeneous sample) was to seek an understanding of this particular group with plans for further study of smaller and larger school districts (Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

The researcher's 16 years of practice in the field of special education includes teaching special education in public school and higher education, as well as four years experience in special education administration. Because of the extent of this experience, it was necessary to guard against personal perceptions that might influence the data as it was gathered and analyzed. During the interviews and data collection, it was kept in mind that the respondent was the teacher and the researcher the learner (McCracken, 1988). The researcher focused the interviews on the experiences of the participants and maintained

distance by not discussing personal experiences. This assisted in establishing trustworthiness. Peer debriefing was utilized to assist the researcher in assuring the credibility of the study. The researcher selected two professionals with experience in the field of special education. A local school district assistant superintendent of state and federal programs and a professor in special education were selected to review the research study and the long interview process. Peer debriefing allowed the researcher to be removed from the study to review data and insights with professionals in the field. This practice provided the researcher the opportunity to receive feedback and to refine or possibly redirect the inquiry process (Erlandson, et.al. 1993).

Administrators were selected based on their paths of professional preparation and experience leading to the position of special education administrator. Three administrators were selected with undergraduate degrees in special education, service experience in special education, and graduate study in special education (SSS). Three administrators were selected with under-graduate degrees in special education, service experience in special education, and graduate study in administration (SSN). Three administrators were selected with undergraduate degrees in regular education, service experience in regular education, and graduate study in special education (NNS). Three administrators were selected with undergraduate degrees in regular education, service experience in regular education, and graduate study in regular education (NNN). The purpose of selecting interviewees based on their paths of preparation was to obtain information regarding selection of administrative activities or models of practice and determine if the difference in their professional paths influence these choices.

Interviews were audiotape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Analysis of data were conducted following each interview in order to determine if any changes were to be made in the questions. The researcher analyzed each transcript by developing common categories and themes. McCracken's long interview (1988) editing type of analysis was used to allow the researcher to search for meaningful segments, cut and paste, and rearrange data until the reduced summary revealed the interpretive truth in the text (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). A detailed audit trail was maintained throughout the study to assist in systemizing the research. In order to establish dependability and confirmability of

the study, the audit trail included a step by step description of the inquiry process as well as a portfolio of documentation. The interview transcripts were analyzed with the Wimpleberg, et.al.(1985), framework of the four models of organization and administrative behaviors.

Significance of the Study

Individuals moving into special education administration today need a variety of skills and a broad knowledge base regarding general and special education. This study provides information which can assist in the development of effective preparation of special education administrators. Special education practitioners can benefit from this study by gaining knowledge of varying models of organization and administrative behavior in special education. Because special education serves children at all levels and degrees of handicaps, special education is a humanistic profession (Finkenbinder, 1981). The awareness of differing models may enhance administrators' practices in providing special education services to children with disabilities.

This study of special education administration can benefit university professors in educational administration through providing information about the roles and responsibilities of special education administrators and their perceptions. This information will be helpful in designing preparation programs for administrators to better meet the challenges faced today regarding provisions of special education. This includes not only personnel who are primarily responsible for special education but building level administrators who are responsible for special education programs in their schools.

Recognizing the four models of organization and administration in special education administration will assist higher education professors in developing appropriate preparation programs which emphasize the importance of a multiple model approach in the delivery of educational services to children with disabilities. Through surveys and other quantitative measures previous research has shown us the roles and responsibilities of special education administrators following the passage of the federal mandate for special education (Finkenbinder, 1981; Marro & Kohl, 1972). Though the laws and regulations

have changed over the past three decades we do not know the impact of these changes on administrative practices in special education today. This qualitative study will assist in developing a knowledge base of current practices and insights to the multiple models of organization and administration which will enhance the preparation of special education administrators.

Summary

The practice of special education administration has been impacted by increased federal mandates over the past two decades. The increase in the number of students identified with disabilities who require special services has changes the role and functions of special education administrators. Previous studies indicate a lack of understanding about the practices of administering special education today and how these practices are influenced.

This qualitative study explores the practice of special education administration by interviewing 12 special education administrators from suburban school districts in Oklahoma. The long interview method of inquiry was used to gain insight into the practice of special education administration from the participants' perspectives. The research focuses on examining the influence of the professional paths of preparation and organizational models of administration (Bolman & Deal, 1984) on the practice of special education administration.

The results of the study will be beneficial in preparing special education administrators. Current information regarding the practice of special education will assist special education practitioners in seeking the skills and knowledge base required for effective practice. University professors can benefit from the study by utilizing the results to redesign preparation programs for administrators to better meet the challenges in the practice of administering special programs.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The previous chapter provided an overview of this research study focusing on special education administration. One of the initial steps in qualitative research is conducting a literature review (McCracken, 1988). The literature review allows the researcher to begin the inquiry process by determining specific areas of concern and establishing a broader perspective of the research topic. According to Merriam (1988), a literature review “interprets and synthesizes what has been researched and published in the area of interest” (p. 61). This literature review reveals the significance for this study and provides a foundation for how it contributes to the knowledge base in the field of special education administration.

Areas of related literature which guided this study are: (1) the practice of administering special education, (2) the professional preparation of administrative personnel in special education, and (3) models of organization and administrative behaviors in special education administration.

The Practice of Special Education Administration

Early in the twentieth century, Ayer and Barr (1928) reported on the employment of special education administrators. At that time 16 major cities employed 29 supervisors and six directors of special education. According to Connor (1963), most administrative services for special education were conducted by other education administrators. The administration of special education programs proposed complex challenges to traditional theories of administrations. Connors identified the need to develop a theory of special

education administration to assist the profession in attempting to answer the oft-repeated question, "Where shall we go next?" (p. 432).

Mackie and Engel (1955) conducted a survey of 103 director/ administrators and 50 supervisor/consultant personnel. The purpose of the study was to examine the functions performed, types of students served, as well as the competences needed in administering special education programs. Respondents were asked to complete a checklist of items identifying the types of students they served and administrative and programmatic duties required in their practice. The researchers identified the following 11 competences necessary to perform the administrative functions specified in the results of the survey: personnel competences; administration and leadership; evaluation and development of programs; teacher recruitment and selection; motivating professional development of staffs; supervision; budget and finance; research; coordination with community agencies; legal procedures; and public relations.

During the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, special education administration grew as a result of the increase in programs for children with disabilities. Marshman (1965) conducted a study to gather, synthesize, and reorganize information relative to the job of director of special education. The intent of the study was to establish a description of the job which encompassed both the supervisory and administrative areas. The description was as follows:

The Director of Special Education is an educational leader with many and varied responsibilities. The basis for this professional behavior is a body of specialized knowledge which he uses to create a general education program for specialized clientele. To do this, he interacts with the entire spectrum of the school system. This responsibility is not confined to academic areas, to curriculum, to instruction, or even to administration. He must coordinate a variety of services--psychological, vocational, transportation, etc.

Expenditure of funds to be properly coordinated requires his specialized knowledge. Organizing this job into a meaningful description is no small task. (p. 3)

Many of these tasks reappeared in the first national study of special education administrators by Marro and Kohl in 1972. Using a postcard questionnaire the researchers surveyed special education administrators from across the nation. They examined the roles and functions of special educators who dealt directly with the superintendent or assistant superintendent in administering school programs. Of the 1,146 responses, 80 were rejected, leaving a total of 1,066 usable forms, for a 61 percent return. The findings of the study indicated that three out of four special education administrators were men and over one-half of the respondents were in the 39 - 49 age bracket. They also found their titles fell into four groupings: directors of special education; coordinators of special education; superintendents of special education; and directors of pupil personnel services.

These studies helped to establish the roles of administrators of programs for exceptional children and the need for professional training. It was, however, the passage of PL 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, that brought special education administration to its current state. This legislation, and others that followed, together with numerous lawsuits, created a demand for administrators who were specifically trained to manage special education programs (Finkenbinder, 1981).

Public Law 94-142 requires that all school districts have available a complete range of service delivery options. This includes self-contained classes, resource rooms, and other options. Before PL 94-142 it was possible for local education agencies to offer only one service-delivery option (most often self-contained classes). This change and the variability of placement options brought new problems to the forefront of special education administration. These problems include teamwork with regular educators; appropriate placement; coordination with general education administrators and increased parental involvement (Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Allen, 1982; Mingo & Burrello, 1985).

In 1988, Johnson and Burrello conducted a study to determine what administrators of special education programs considered to be the most critical factors which must be attended to regularly to have a successful or quality program. Fifteen directors of special education were selected to be interviewed to facilitate the development of the survey instrument. Following independent sorting and identification processes the researchers selected 27 items to be included in the survey instrument. The critical success factor

(C.S.F.) statements were grouped into two categories (personal and organizational) and sorted into seven general themes. The themes include: (a) Consultative/ Support, (b) Program Effectiveness, (c) Problem Solving, (d) Community Relations, (e) Personnel, (f) Planning/Decision making, and (g) Leadership. Fifty-one local directors of special education in Indiana were surveyed with a 61 percent return rate recorded. Each respondent was asked to rank the importance of each critical success factor to program success using a five point likert-type scale. The number one response indicated the most important C.S.F. was “providing instructionally effective programs”. This indicates that student progress is perceived as a key measure of program success and accountability. The number two response was “identifying special education as a part of regular education”. The researcher suggests that this indicates a growing need for local administrators to build bridges and alliances with regular education rather than walls. “Since the leader (director) plays such a significant role in the direction of the organization the selection of C.S.F. signals a renewed interest in programs that emphasize collaboration” (Johnson & Burrello, 1988, p. 7).

The studies over the past three decades indicate a shift in focus of the issues faced by special education administrators. In the 1960's and 1970's more concerns revolved around access and availability of special education programs for school age children. Since the beginning of the 1980's special education leaders are required to show evidence of program quality and student achievement gains (Sage & Burrello, 1986). Special education administrators were previously hired for their technical skills and over time this has changed to accommodate the impact of decentralization of services.

Professional Preparation in Special

Education Administration

In 1957, the Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Teacher Education established a committee to focus on the problems of advanced graduate training in special education (Gallagher, 1959). James Gallagher was the appointed committee chair and was assisted by the following directors of doctoral programs in special education: William M.

Cruickshank, Syracuse University; Lloyd M. Dunn, George Peabody College for Teachers; Maurice H. Fouracre, Columbia University; Samuel A. Kirk, University of Illinois; William C. Kvaraceus, Boston University; John J. Lee, Wayne State University; and Margaret Meuben, Pennsylvania State University. Each of the committee members was asked to write freely on topics which they considered to be the pertinent issues in advanced graduate training in special education. The chairman extracted the information from these documents and placed it on a rating scale. The rating scale was then submitted to the committee membership who were requested to rate the various issues. This early study of graduate training in special education determined four areas of concentration which should be required beyond the basic courses: (a) knowledge of skills and supervision of elementary or secondary schools, (b) understanding of theory and practice of American educational administration, (c) legal basis of school administration, and (d) school finance and business management.

In the mid 1960's the U. S. Office of Education awarded grants to universities for the purpose of developing training programs (Burrello & Sage, 1979). Meisgeier and Sloat (1970) conducted a review of the literature on special education administration and supervision and suggested a "need for flexibility in meeting the individual needs of administrators in the preparation programs at the college level" (p.393). This flexibility and individualization needed in designing preparation programs was also identified by researchers who recognized the diversity of the special education administration trainees. Although training programs existed, many persons in special education leadership positions had not come through such programs but rather had progressed through the ranks as teachers or as general education administrators (Marro & Kohl, 1972; Burrello & Sage, 1979).

Marro and Kohl (1972) also examined the past professional experiences of the respondents. They suggest that "some understanding of professional groups can be derived by examining the experiential background of the incumbents" (p. 7). The special education administrators presented a diverse background of professional experiences. The highest percentage (16.9 percent) were school psychologists. The researchers concluded "it has been a natural development to select the psychologist for the administrative position

since in the early development of programs he did most of the testing and evaluation and, as the program grew, his psychological background was an asset for administration” (p.7).

Marro and Kohl’s (1972) study of 1,066 special education administrators revealed findings about structuring university programs for administration. The respondents to the questionnaire identified experiences that have contributed most to their success as special education administrators. Self-directed study was ranked first, classroom or therapy experience ranked second, and inservice study and education programs ranked third. These types of experiences totaled 89 percent of the responses for both men and women. The order in which college courses were regarded most important in the preparation of special education administration, as determined by the practitioners, was (a) child growth and development, (b) special education, and (c) special education administration. Courses in methods of research, cultural foundations of education and social sciences received the lowest scores.

Vance and Howe (1974) conducted a nationwide study comparing special education administrative trainees with normative data on special education administration. The purpose of the study was to determine the status of the former special education administrative trainees who had received scholarships from the U.S. Office of Education and to review the relevancy of components of their university training program. This study included students who had received a fellowship from federal funds between 1965 to 1971 to prepare themselves in the area of special education administration. The questionnaire was designed to gather data pertaining to each subject’s background of training and experience, present employment status, special education administrative training program, and their opinions regarding related issues. Of the 208 responses (91.6 percent return rate), 120 held administrative leadership position in special education. Fifty-six (28.9 percent) of the former students were employed in college or university teaching positions. The results of the questionnaire presented other significant implications for the preparation of special education administrators including:

1. Universities must intensify efforts to forecast manpower needs in special education administration. Most administrators were trained at the doctoral level; there apparently was a need for more training at the sub doctoral level.
2. Internship was a valuable experience.
3. The special education administrator's role was becoming more complex as special education moved from categorical-program supervision to more of a supervision responsibility in mainstreaming settings. Full certification in general school administration was a desirable component of training.
4. Colleges and universities need to better understand the due-process concern.
(p.121)

The status of individual state requirements prior to PL 94-142 is well documented. Immediately prior to PL 94-142, Forgone and Collings (1975) conducted a questionnaire study to determine the status of the state certification-endorsement requirements of special education administrators. A letter requesting information on current and proposed certification requirements for special education administrators was sent to state certification officers in each of the 50 states. Follow-up letters were also sent and all 50 states ultimately replied. Data regarding certification were categorized into three areas: No Certification, or only General Education Administration or Supervision Certification; Approved Programs; and Special Education Administration Certification. It was found that for special education administrators: (a) 23 states required no certification-endorsement at all, (b) 18 states required a general education administration certificate, (c) three states required completion of an approved program and (d) six states required specify certification-endorsement in special education administration.

Prillaman and Richardson conducted a study in 1985 to assess the extent of which state certification-endorsement requirements for special education administrators had changed in the ten-year period since PL 94-142 became law. A questionnaire was sent to all 50 states state certification offices. A 100 percent response rate was received. The most significant finding was that only four states (Alabama, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Washington) and the District of Columbia reported requiring neither special education nor general education administration certification-endorsement for special education

administrators. This contrasted markedly with the 23 states requiring no state certification in 1975. According to Prillaman and Richardson (1985, p. 232), "individual state certification endorsement requirements can provide an important mechanism for ensuring that potential special education administrators receive adequate preparation".

Prillaman and Richardson (1985) suggested certain minimal requirements for state certification-endorsement to meet the competences needed by an administrator of special education programs. Those minimum requirements are:

1. A post-master's degree in administration which would include appropriate course work in educational administration;
2. Three to five years of teaching in at least two areas of exceptionality;
3. An internship in special education administration and;
4. Cognate or support course work in such related areas as personnel management, sociology, psychology, and organizational theory. (p.235)

Stile, Abernathy, and Pettibone (1986) conducted a five year follow-up study by surveying all 50 states and the District of Columbia's state certification offices to update information on the national status of special education administrator training and certification. The greatest change occurred in the number of offices reporting a special education requirement for a general administration credential. The researchers suggested that this may reflect an increased awareness of the need for special education training by general administrators or an increased emphasis on special education training in teacher preparation programs. This study also revealed that all respondents except three states (Hawaii, Oklahoma, and Wyoming) offer course work in special education administration. The results of this study encouraged the researchers to admonish that "all educational administrators need to become special" (p. 212). They caution this should not be done necessarily through a separate special education administration training program but throughout general administration course work. This is supported by the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) in the 1992 report *Winners All: A Call for Inclusive Schools*. As states begin restructuring for a unified educational system, NASBE provides recommendations for state board policies and actions to promote teacher

and administrator development for a inclusive system. These recommendations include the following:

State board should review current certification and teacher and administrator training program approval guidelines to ensure that they do not encourage a separate, splintered system, particularly through hyper-specializing teacher licenses.

State boards should ensure that the theme of inclusion is strongly represented in administrator training programs throughout the state, such as principal academies and other state-supported training activities. (p. 29)

The trend toward greater accountability for special education by general school administrators is supported by what has become known as the Regular Education Initiative. Madeline Will, former Assistant Secretary for Special Education at the U.S. Department of Education in a report entitled, *Educating Students with Learning Problems: A Shared Responsibility* (1986), outlined a partnership between regular and special education. One of Will's (1986) recommendations is that principals be empowered to control all programs and resources at the building level. As a consequence, regular school administrators must possess a knowledge of special education and special education law.

Valesky and Hirth (1992) surveyed all state directors of special education to examine state requirements for certification endorsements of school administrators to determine whether they required a knowledge of special education law specifically, and special education in general. This study found that only 33 percent of all regular administrator endorsements are required to have a knowledge of special education law and that no state requirement for a general knowledge of special education exists for 45 percent of the regular administrator endorsements. In order to determine what the university requirements for special education and special education law knowledge for administrative endorsements are and how this information is acquired, Valesky and Hirth (1993) surveyed 123 randomly selected colleges and universities offering graduate degrees in school administration. A total of 66 usable responses were obtained. The most common method reported for obtaining knowledge of special education law is through a general school law course. It must be pointed out though that over 74 percent of the universities devote 10

percent for less of class content to special education and that 57 percent of the universities have no state requirement for even a general knowledge of special education. The researchers concluded that “principals and other regular administrators will have a great deal of difficulty assuming leadership and responsibility for special education programs with little or no knowledge of the legal requirements of P.L. and significant court cases that affect implementation” (p. 171).

Arick and Krug (1993) conducted a descriptive study of special education administrators’s policies/practices to help identify priorities for training and to improve current practice. Of the 2,900 randomly selected special education directors, 1,468 completed surveys were received. The results of the study were organized into four areas: (a) current and projected administrative personnel needs, (b) preparation quality of special education administrative personnel, (c) training needs of special education administrative personnel, and (d) description and analysis of the administrative policies/practices regarding mainstreaming of student with disabilities. A projected shortage of special education administrative personnel in the next four years was found to affect 789 of the 1,444 school districts responding to this item. The results of this survey found the majority of special education directors to have training and experience in the field, certification in teaching special education (64 percent), certification in administration of special education (58.3), and or two years or more experience teaching special education (65 percent). It must be noted that over one third of the respondents did not have certification, nor did they have experience in teaching special education.

The three highest-rated general administrative training needs were developing grant proposals, planning information systems for program management, and creating strategies for facilitating collaboration. The three-highest special education-training needs were collaboration of special/general educators and other, evaluation of program effectiveness/quality, and adaptation of curricula and instruction for students. The policy/practice with the highest rating was the item titled *Regular Classroom Staff Need to Receive Training to Collaborate with Special Education in Order to Adapt Instruction*. Another significant finding regarding professional preparation of special education administrators was identified in relationship to service delivery to students with disabilities.

Special education directors who lacked college preparation and experience in special education had significantly higher in-service training needs and had significantly lower levels of mainstreaming occurring in their school districts.

The research studies focusing on the professional preparation of administrators of special education reveals confusion and lack of continuity. Some of the most significant concerns include the knowledge base and experience in the field of special education, knowledge base of general education administrators, certification credentials, and university course content in administration preparation programs. Past research has been solely based on quantitative measures. The traditional method of research has been the use of structured questionnaires to survey the status of issues surrounding special education administration (Mackie & Engel, 1955; Marshman, 1965; Marro & Kohl, 1972; Prillaman & Richardson, 1985; Stile, Abernathy & Pettibone, 1986; Burrello & Johnson, 1988). There are numerous studies citing findings from surveys and questionnaires and statistical reports from states.

The review of the literature indicates the need for further study in determining current preparation of special education administrators today. Though numerous studies were conducted prior to 1975, the role of the administrator in special education has changed significantly due to the passage of P.L. 94-142 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Burrello & Sage, 1979). Research also indicates that the professional preparation of special education administrators varies greatly (Marro & Kohl, 1972) and directly impacts the provision of services to students with disabilities (Arick & Krug, 1993).

Models of Organization and Administrative Behaviors in Special Education

Recognizing the growing practice of special education administration and the variance in the preparation of these professionals leads to reviewing research regarding models of organization and administrative behaviors. One of the initial studies focused on special education administration and organization from a social-system dimension

(Willower, 1970). Following an extensive review of the past decades of the Review of Education Research in 1963, 1966, and 1969, Willower (1970) concluded:

Special Education was something of a virgin--untouched by the concerns of organizational theory, social systems, bureaucratization, and the like that have become so salient in the literature in such areas as educational administration, business administration, public administration, and several social sciences. (p. 593)

Willower presents a picture of special education as a separate segregated entity which is not part of the education system and is seemingly uninfluenced by its bureaucracy. It seems likely that these concerns have now caught up with special education, for since the 1960's it has become an enormous program. Due to federal mandates schools systems have operationalized plans and more formalized sets of organizational structures are in effect (Finkenbinder, 1981).

Swan (1985) identifies two intertwined sets of skills--technical and administrative--used by administrators of special education programs. Leaders in special education face challenges in initiating, sustaining, and improving programs for children with disabilities. Program growth due to mandated legislation has caused special education administration to stretch its organizational structures and the effectiveness of its leaders. Swan identifies the organizational structure of administration by synthesizing the work of Burrello and Sage (1979) and Linder (1983). The following roles are generally interdependent and inclusive of all special education administrative activities: program manager, policy planner, advocate, monitor-evaluator, and trainer-facilitator.

The program manager role requires action to facilitate the placement of children with disabilities in integrated settings which requires extensive restructuring and intimate contact and communication with families and regular education personnel. There is a major emphasis of current research on mainstreaming and integrated settings. Several significant variables appear to affect the results of mainstreaming: type of activity (Fenwick, Pearson & Pepelnjak, 1984; Kohl & Bekman, 1984), ecological context (Peterson, 1982), location of the social skills training (Greshman, 1982; Strain & Shores, 1983), amount of child directed and teacher directed activities (Field, Roseman, De Stefano & Knewler, 1982),

and teacher perceptions of success based on task behavior, independent working task performance and social interaction skills (Walter & Vincent, 1982) (Swan, 1985). Each of these variables are related directly or indirectly to the special education administrators role of program manager.

The emphasis on monitoring and program evaluation is so often overpowering and most time-consuming of the special education administrator. Administrators monitor and evaluate their programs for many target audiences. The increased sophistication of target audiences has increased the expectations for program impact. Casto and White (1984) identified 42 possible outcomes of early intervention for children and families through surveying different target audiences. One of the primary reasons cited for the over indulgence of this role in the model of administrative behaviors in special education is the relationship between program evaluation and funding (Swan, 1985). The ability to sustain or increase support of a program is too often tied to the outcome of program evaluations.

The role within the organization of administrative behaviors that receives the least amount of attention is that of the trainer-facilitator. Certification requirements, teacher burnout, and on-going staff development are just a few of the issues which must be addressed by special education administration. Johnson, Gold, Williams, and Fisius (1981) found that a primary reason for burnout of teachers of the emotionally disturbed was insufficient and inappropriate supervision. It is essential that staff members are recognized as individuals and that training and staff development are structured to meet their individual needs. Swan (1985) suggested that "administrators must link direct service programs in the public schools with university programs to produce the highest quality training and highest quality of services" (p. 92). Swan calls for a change in administration preparation programs and the creation of consortium involving university programs and direct service providers to provide new learning experiences for administrators to enhance their knowledge, skills and effectiveness.

Special education administrators are faced with the responsibilities of arranging conditions to further both short-term and long-term development of children. Administrator effectiveness, as a manager and a leader, often depends on selected model of practice. Lay-Dopyera and Dopyera (1985) propose the concept of increasing

administrative effectiveness through the repertoire model. “Although leadership has more frequently been viewed as a style or as a set of competences, the model of leadership as a function of repertoire has the advantage of providing a more adequate basis for selecting and preparing effective leaders for early childhood special education program” (p.15). Though Lay-Dopyera and Dopyera (1985) targeted early childhood special education administration, the organizational challenges parallel special education administration as indicated in the previous review of the practices of special education.

Repertoire refers to all the actions a leader is prepared to perform and all the responses a leader is prepared to make in a specific situation. “The more lines of action or strategies a leader possesses, the greater the flexibility in responding and the greater the likelihood of effectiveness in administration leadership and organizational management” (Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera, 1985, p. 20).

When determining effective leadership by a set of competences, characteristics of successful leaders are often examined. Bennis (1984) conducted a qualitative study utilizing interviews and observations to research highly successful leaders. Sixty were corporate executives; thirty were in the public sector. Bennis defined four competences evident for all 90 leaders. These were (1) management of attention, (2) management of meaning, (3) management of trust, and (4) management of self. When applying these competences to effective leadership in special education they may be helpful in guiding training and or selection for special education administrators (Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera, 1985, p.18).

The task of preparation of administrative leaders and managers is outlined by Lay-Dopyera and Dopyera (1985) as follows:

1. identify areas through concepts of competence;
2. build a repertoire within each area of competence;
3. develop a sense for predicting the effects of various alternative actions or responses with particular contexts, which enables the administrator to become more and more effective in consciously matching repertoire to situation. (pp. 22-23)

Previous studies indicate special education administrators have great variation in their professional preparation including education and experiences (Marro & Kohl, 1972;

Finkenbinder, 1981, & Arick & Krug, 1993). The implementation of the repertoire model of administrative behavior will depend highly on the education and experiences of the administrator. The repertoire model facilitates both pre-service preparation for administration and also continued development throughout the individual's professional career (Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera, 1985).

As discussed earlier, a multiple model approach to the administration of special education is proposed by Wimpelberg, et.al. (1985). By adapting a four-model conception from Bolman and Deal (1984) many of the issues in other proposed models are accommodated such as, technical and administrative skills (Swan, 1985) and repertoire models (Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera, 1985). Bolman and Deal (1984) identify four models of administration--technical, human relations, political, and symbolic.

Wimpelberg, et.al.(1985) identify specific tasks in special education administration in each of the four models. The technical model is clearly the most common avenue for organizational and administrative behavior in special education. This is due to the federal mandates and the scrutiny of required monitoring and documentation of procedural safeguards. Special education administrative practices align with accountability and compliance requirements of federal mandates. Though these technical tasks are steadfast, the human relations approach may influence how a special education administrator approaches meeting the needs of the individual students and their families while attending to the technical requirements of the practice. The human relations approach relies on the participation of the individual within the organization. This approach acknowledges the emotional involvement of each participant such as teachers, parents, and other professionals. "It is in the human relations "frame" that we can talk about involvement in work, feelings of ownership related to the mission and tasks of the organization, and principles of participatory and democratic leadership applied by administrators to decision-making processes within organizations" (p. 5).

The political model of organization and administrative behavior is prominent due to the increasing lack of resources which creates an atmosphere of power and conflict. The competition between regular education and other educational entity often requires administrators to engage in political tactics to to gain access to the resources to sustain or

create change in their programs. This coincides with the importance of the symbolic model which focuses on how the special education programs are perceived. This is also closely tied to the lack of resources. It is important for an administrator to develop and maintain a positive image of the overall program in order to seek additional support and resources.

The implication of utilizing a multiple-model approach in special education lends itself to addressing concerns in the preparation and practice of special education administrators. Research has shown inconsistencies in what is known about the daily practices of special education since the passage of P.L. 94-142 EAHCA (1975) and P.L. 101-476 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990. Studies have indicated the professional preparation of special education administrators vary greatly and may influence their daily practices and decision-making. All of the research found has been quantitative and has focus on the statistical nature of educational findings. This information is valuable in determining the status of what is available and where. A qualitative study of special education administrators will provide a descriptive picture of the professional preparation of administrators and their daily practices. By viewing this information from a multiple-models perspective of organization and administrative behaviors, insights regarding preparation and practice can be gained to enhance the field of special education administration.

Summary

The review of the literature reveals the practice of special education administration has changed over the past decades. The focus has shifted from accessibility and availability of programs to program accountability. The impact of federal mandates has resulted in changes in the responsibilities of special education administrators (Burrello & Johnson, 1988). The role of special education administrators has broadened to meet the challenges brought about by the changes in educating children with disabilities but little is known about current practices.

Due to the changes in the practice of special education administration there is a need for further study in determining current preparation of special education administrators today. Though there were numerous studies conducted prior to the passage of P.L. 94-142

Education for All Handicapped Children Act regarding the responsibilities in administrating special programs, the role of the administrator in special education has changed. Research indicates that special education administrators have varying professional paths of preparation. Further research regarding the influence of the paths of preparation on the practice and organizational behaviors (Bolman & Deal, 1984) is needed to better prepare administrators to meet today's challenges in special education administration.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with a discussion of qualitative methodology. The long interview method of qualitative research and the rationale for selecting this method of inquiry is explained. Participants in the study, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness criteria, and ethical considerations are discussed.

The purpose of this study of special education administrators in Oklahoma was to determine how special education administrators view their work and how paths of preparation influence organization or administrative behavior. The study was also designed to describe and analyze the practice of special education administration and the preparation of special education administrators. The aim of the research was to provide a descriptive analysis of the practice of special education administration based on the perceptions of the practicing administrators. This inquiry is best accommodated by qualitative methods. Qualitative description, using qualitative methods, explores the meanings, variations, and perceptual experiences of phenomena. "Phenomenology seeks to understand the lived experience of individuals and their intentions within their 'life world'" (Crabtree & Miller, p. 24).

Qualitative research allows for the researcher to gain insight through the development of thick, rich description in understanding the meaning of the world others live in and we observe. McCracken (1988) suggests that "qualitative research methods may have the power to take the investigator into the minds and lives of the respondents, to capture them warts and all" (p.10).

The long interview method of qualitative research was selected due to the nature of the research question. According to McCracken (1988), the purpose of the qualitative interview is not to discover how many, and what kind of, people share a certain

characteristic. "It is to gain access to the cultural categories and assumptions according to which one culture construes the world" (p.17). The long interview method allowed the researcher to gain insight into the practice of special education administrators perspectives of practice. The conceptual framework develop by Wimpelburg, et.al. (1985) outlines four organizational models of practice. The four organizational approaches, adapted from Bolman and Deal (1984) include the (1) technical, (2) human relations, (3) political and (4) symbolic models. The researcher was most concerned with determining how special education administrators viewed their practices and what influenced their decisions in meeting the challenges of their profession. The use of long interviews allowed for a more intensive focus on the day to day practices and perceptions of special education administrators.

Qualitative research allows the investigator to serve as an instrument in the collection and analysis of the data (McCracken, 1988). The researcher's experiences and knowledge in the area of investigation can be utilized to assist in sorting and searching out patterns of associations and assumptions to make meaning of the research process. The researcher has 16 years of experience in special education including teaching children with disabilities, special education administration, and teaching special education course work in higher education. This background provided the researcher a strong knowledge base and understanding of the field of special education. This allowed the researcher to reflect on past experiences which enhanced the meaning of the interview process.

The emphasis of the qualitative research method of long interviewing is on the research process rather than a predetermined product (Merriam, 1988). In considering the purpose of this study, the decision was made to use the qualitative research method of long interviews since the researcher wanted to know more about the process of special education administration and the special education administrators' perceptions of the process. McCracken (1988) outlines a four stage method of inquiry for qualitative research. This study of special education administration encompassed each of these stages into the long interview process. The stages are identified as follows:

Step 1: Review of Analytic Categories

Step 2: Review of Cultural Categories

Step 3: Discovery of Cultural Categories

Step 4: Discovery of Analytic Categories

The four-part method of inquiry encompasses a circular approach to qualitative research. The review processes included an extensive review of the literature and the researcher's knowledge and experiences in the field of special education. This led the researcher to the development of an inventory of the categories and relationships that the interview investigated. The discovery processes aided in the construction and implementation of the interview itself and the analysis of the data. Following each interview the researcher reviewed transcripts and made necessary adjustments. This included restructuring prompts and conducting additional reviews of the literature to further investigate cultural categories which surfaced through the interview process. The final phase of the inquiry process incorporated the conclusions from the other steps and focused on the development of analytical categories. The purpose of undertaking the steps of inquiry was to develop analytic categories which describe the life of special education administration from the participants' perspectives.

Participants in the Study

The researcher employed purposive sampling in this qualitative study. According to Erlandson, et.al. (1993), "Purposive and directed sampling through human instrumentation increases the range of data exposed and maximizes the researcher's ability to identify emerging themes that take adequate account of contextual conditions and cultural norms" (p.82). Voluntary participation in the study was solicited from the membership of the Oklahoma Directors of Special Services (ODSS) at their summer conference. The researcher briefly presented an overview of the research and provided participation data sheets for volunteers to complete and return by mail. Twenty-seven data sheets were returned. Twelve administrators of special education programs were selected. Participant selection was guided by the individual's path of preparation and the size and location of the school district represented. Three participants were selected from each of the following paths of professional preparation:

SSS - Special education pre-service, special education service, special education graduate study;

SSN - Special education pre-service, special education service, non-special education graduate study ;

NNS - Non-special education pre-service, non-special education service, special education graduate study;

NNN - Non-special education pre-service, non-special education service, non-special education graduate study.

Twelve administrators were selected from suburban districts of Oklahoma.

Oklahoma consists of two large urban school districts, suburban schools, and rural school districts. Many of the rural school districts in Oklahoma participate in special education cooperatives which provide services to children with disabilities from varying school districts. For the purpose of this study participants were selected from suburban school districts which provide special education services within their own districts. The purpose of selecting special education administrators from districts with similar service delivery systems was to assist in establishing trustworthiness and the transferability of the study (Crabtree & Miller, 1992, p. 40).

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process initially began with McCracken's (1988) Step 1, Review of Analytic Categories. An extensive review of the literature was required to assist in defining problems and to aid in the construction of the interview questionnaire. The review consisted of initially identifying broad terms related to special education administration and which lead to the search for key research studies in the literature. The focus was narrowed to studies which provided historical and global perspectives of the practice and preparation of special education administrators. Each study was reviewed to determine the research problem, targeted population, methods of inquiry, and results of the study. This information assisted in determining the cultural categories utilized for this study of special education administration.

Step 2, Review of Cultural Categories, required the researcher to create a memo, an accounting of personal experiences regarding the research topic (Appendix A). The object of this step was to give the investigator a more detailed and systematic appreciation of his or her personal experience with the topic of interest (McCracken, 1988). The purpose of this review was not only to prepare for the questionnaire construction but also to establish a clearer understanding of one's own experiences so that distance is created between these and experiences related by others. Creating distance between the investigator and the respondent is essential in qualitative research. One of the strategies proposed by McCracken to create distance is to develop prompts. Prompting procedures invite the respondent to articulate what he or she otherwise takes for granted. The development of the memo allowed the researcher to create prompts which enhanced the process of the long interview in gaining valuable insight into the perceptions held by the special education administrators.

The creation and implementation of the interview process occurred in Step: 3 Discovery of Cultural Categories. Semi-structured interviews were conducted which were guided by a set of basic questions and issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of questions were predetermined (Merriam, 1988). The researcher developed a set of biographical questions to open the interview process. These included name, educational background (locations and date of early schooling, high school, undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate studies), professional experiences, and areas of interests. These questions provided descriptive details of the participant's life and allowed the researcher to gain information which served as the foundation for the participant's subsequent responses. These questions were followed by a set of "grand tour" questions which focused on the research problem (McCracken, 1988, p. 35). Keeping in mind that the first objective of the qualitative interview is to allow respondents to tell their own story in their own terms, the following questions served as springboards for the interview:

1. What do you do as a special education administrator?
2. How did you get to be a special education administrator?
3. What influences your practice as a special education administrator?
4. Where did you learn to do what you do?

5. What goes through your mind as you face challenges on a day to day basis?
6. What else do I need to know about being a special education administrator?

The long interview questionnaire was designed so that the questions were phrased in a general and nondirective manner. Because the focus of the research is on a particular topic, the practice and preparation of special education administrators, semi-structured or depth interviews were conducted. In-depth interviews intensively plumb a particular topic (McCracken, 1988).

The location of each interview was determined by the participant. The interviews were conducted in quiet private offices or conference rooms on-site at each school district. The amount of time of each interview ranged from 15 minutes to one hour and 25 minutes. The 12 interviews were conducted over a three month period of time. Each interview was tape recorded in addition to brief notes or prompts written by the researcher during the interview. Each interview was transcribed verbatim by an independent transcriber. An independent transcriber was employed to ensure the objectivity of the data analysis. McCracken (1988) warns, "Investigators who transcribe their own interviews invite not only frustration but also a familiarity with the data that does not serve the later process of analysis" (p.42).

McCracken's final phase of the long qualitative interview method of research is Step 4, Discovery of Analytic Categories. It is during this phase the data collection took on new meanings and developed from an individuals' perception to cultural categories. Data were collected from the participant's information forms, biographical questionnaire, and interview transcripts. The data were compiled, organized and analyzed concurrently as it was being collected. According to Merriam (1988, p. 119), "data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research". This is essential in conducting the long interview process. In order to assure the process of addressing the cultural categories in the broadest sense, each interview was reviewed to determine the appropriateness of the grand tour questions. Adjustments were made in the interviewing process to accommodate any changes deemed necessary.

McCracken's (1988) long interview editing style was used to analyze the data in this study. "The object of analysis is to determine the categories, relationships, and

assumptions that informs the respondent's view of the world in general and the topic in particular" (p.42). When reviewing the analysis continuum this style is more subjective and interpretive. The researcher/interpreter enters into the text naively and searches for meaningful units or segments of text that both stand on their own and relate to the purpose of the study (Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

During the first stage of analysis the researcher focused on each response in the transcripts in isolation. Each response could be identified as an observation. In the second phase the observations were expanded and reviewed keeping in mind the previous literature and cultural review. In the third phase the researcher began to connect the observations. The focus of the data analysis shifted from the transcripts themselves to the identified observations. The object of stage four of analysis was to identify themes of consistency and possible contradictions. The final stage of data analysis required the researcher to review all of the themes from the interview transcripts to develop interview theses (McCracken, 1988). This allowed for a shift from focusing on the particulars of each transcript to a general determination of cultural categories. Following the five stages of the analysis process, the focus moved from being deeply embedded in minute details of the transcript to reaching the goal of the study by developing more general observations of the culture of special education administration.

Researcher/Subject Relationship

The researcher maintained the position as a doctoral candidate throughout communication with the participants. Since the researcher has experience in special education administration and teaching in higher education, there was a conscious effort to assure these experiences were not the focus of communication. This effort was made in order to reduce bias and to not influence responses of the participants. The researcher secured voluntary consent to interview the participants (Appendix B). Assurance of confidentiality was maintained for all participants though the use of pseudonyms. Pseudonyms were used for the individual special education administrators and their school districts.

Trustworthiness Criteria

Qualitative researchers must be concerned about the issues surrounding the trustworthiness of their studies. According to Erlandson, et. al. (1993):

If intellectual inquiry is to have an impact on human knowledge, either by adding to an overall body of knowledge or by solving a particular problem, it must guarantee some measure of credibility about what it has inquired, must communicate in a manner that will enable application by its intended audience, and must enable its audience to check on its findings and the inquiry process by which findings were obtained. (p.28)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) target four primary concerns of trustworthiness in establishing confidence in qualitative or naturalistic research. These concerns focus on (1) establishing truth value in the findings; (2) the applicability of the findings to other contexts; (3) consistency of the findings if they were to be duplicated in a similar context and; (4) the neutrality of the findings from researcher biases. In quantitative research methods there is a great concern regarding the reliability and validity of the inquiries. The equivalent terms for reliability and validity for qualitative data are credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

Credibility

In order to establish truth value or credibility in qualitative or naturalistic research there must be a measure for determining the compatibility of the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the inquiry's respondents with those that are attributed to them. Peer debriefing and member checks are two strategies proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1989) which were utilized in this study to establish credibility.

The researcher employed peer debriefing to in order to step out of the research process to analyze the project with professionals experienced in the field of study. The researcher chose a professional colleague from higher education and a local school district assistant superintendent of state and federal programs to assist with the debriefing process.

These efforts resulted in minor changes in the questioning format as well as providing the researcher confidence in the direction of the study.

To assist in establishing the credibility of the data collected member checks were conducted. Following each interview, the researcher mailed each participant a copy of the interview transcript to review and correct. Two participants responded with minor correction and deletions. The purpose of this activity was to provide the participants an opportunity to verify the translation of the interview. Erlandson, et. al., (1993, p. 31) warns, "No data obtained through the study should be included in it if they cannot be verified through member checks".

Transferability

An inquiry is judged in terms of the extent to which its findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In qualitative research the focus is not on duplicating the study to achieve exact results due to the emphasis on different contexts and constructed realities. The focus is on the applicability of the study to other settings. It is important to note that the transferability of a naturalistic study depends on shared characteristics of the sending and receiving contexts. In order to enhance the opportunity for transferability the researcher relied on the provision of thick descriptions of the interview process. "Thick description provides for transferability by describing in multiple low-level abstractions the data base from which transferability judgments may be made by potential appliers" (Erlandson, et.al., 1993, p. 145).

The researcher also used purposive sampling to enhance the foundation for transferability of this qualitative study. Purposive sampling provides clear descriptive information regarding the selection of participants. The process of participant selection is concerned with the ability of the participants in providing quality information to benefit the study not the quantity of the information provided. The aim is to illuminate the study question, and the concerns with information richness, not representativeness (Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

Dependability

“The value of qualitative research also lies on how the researcher provides evidence that if the study was replicated with the same or similar respondents in the same or similar context, its finding would be repeated” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). This quality is referred to as the consistency of the study or reliability in quantitative inquiry’s. By maintaining documentation of critical components and interview notes the researcher created an audit trail for checking the dependability of the study. This documentation serves to provide for an external audit of the processes by which the study was conducted.

Confirmability

Qualitative research is judged in terms of the degree to which its findings are the product of the focus of its inquiry and not of the biases of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative researchers who are seen as instruments in their studies, do not attempt to eliminate all biases for they are unable to separate themselves completely from the studies they create. Just as traditional researchers must ensure internal validity in order to have external validity, qualitative researchers must establish credibility or there can be no transferability. In order to develop trust in the data a confirmability audit was established. The purpose of the audit trail was to enable the auditor to determine if the conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations could be traced to their sources. The process of reviewing the interview transcripts for correct translations not only enhanced the credibility of the study but also served as an essential component of the confirmability audit trail.

Ethical Considerations

“Ethical issues surrounding interviews include the researcher’s motives and intentions as well as the study’s purpose, the protection of respondents through the use of pseudonyms, establishing beforehand who has the final say over the study’s content, and sensitivity to time and the number of interviews involved in the study” (Erlandson, et. al., 1993, p. 48). The researcher’s motives and intentions for selecting to research special

education administration were discussed in conjunction with the purpose of the study during the process of participant selection. The member of the Oklahoma Directors of Special Services (ODSS) were provided a brief presentation and written documentation of these issues. The use of pseudonyms for all participants and their respective schools provided essential ethical protection of confidential matters. Prior to the interview process the researcher provided each participant a written overview of the study which identified the time and commitment requirements for participation. All participants signed voluntary consent forms following an explanation of their role in the research study. Each participant was notified of the member check process before each interview. The importance of this effort was not only to validate the data but was also to insure that participants knew they had the final say over the information they provided during the interview.

Summary

Since the purpose of this study of special education administrators in Oklahoma was to determine how special education administrators view their work and how does the path of preparation influence their organization or administrative behavior and to describe current practices and preparation of special education administrators, the long interview method of qualitative research meets the requirements and purpose of this study.

The researcher determined that qualitative research methods would be used due to the nature of the research questions focusing on the perceptions of special education administrators. Twelve special education administrators were interviewed from suburban and rural school districts which independently provided services to their students with disabilities. This chapter discussed data collection and analysis techniques of the long interview process. Strategies for developing trustworthiness were identified through the discussion of establishment of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study. The researcher focused on the maintenance of ethical practices throughout the research process.

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Due to federal mandates, the field of special education has changed immensely over the past decades. The roles, functions, and practices of special education administrators have expanded to meet the challenges faced in educating children with disabilities. The importance of preparing special education administrators is directly related to the provision of services for children with disabilities. This study focuses on the research problem of determining to what extent the educational background and experience influence the practice of special education administration. This study examined the influence of paths of preparation and dominant models of organization and administration in special education administration.

In order to develop an understanding of the challenges of special education administration and the preparation necessary to meet those challenges the following research questions were addressed:

1. How do special education administrators describe their practice?
2. Do differing paths toward special education administration influence practice?
3. If paths of preparation influence practice, what model of organization and administrative is dominant in practice within each path?

This chapter presents the categories and themes describing the practice of special education administration and factors which influence special education administration practices. The analysis of the influence of the path of preparation on administrative behaviors follows the descriptions of each theme and participant responses. A description of each participants' path of preparation, professional status, and administrative setting is provided in Table 4.1.

Insert Table 4.1 About Here

The analysis of the participants responses revealed the culture of the practice of special education administration. The practice of special education administration is dominated by compliance issues. Two primary directions were identified from the participants descriptions of their practices including (1) What do special education administrators comply with? and (2) How do special education administrators ‘get’ others to comply? (See Figure 4.1).

Special education administrators must monitor procedures for evaluation, service delivery and educational programming and comply with state and federal legal mandates. They must assure the provision of procedural safeguards and adherence to parental rights and personnel standards. Special education administrators also comply to mandated due process procedures to protect the rights of parents and children with disabilities. Special education administrators employ varied strategies to assure their district maintains compliance. These strategies are revealed in the subcategories and themes of rules and regulations, staff development, facilitation, and decision making.

Insert Figure 4.1 About Here

Compliance

The research focused on determining how special education administrators view their practices. When asked to describe their practices, a multitude of activities were detailed. The primary response dealt with compliance with state and federal mandates for providing special education services. Special education administrators must adhere to the state and federal regulations for assuring procedural safeguards and personnel standards in

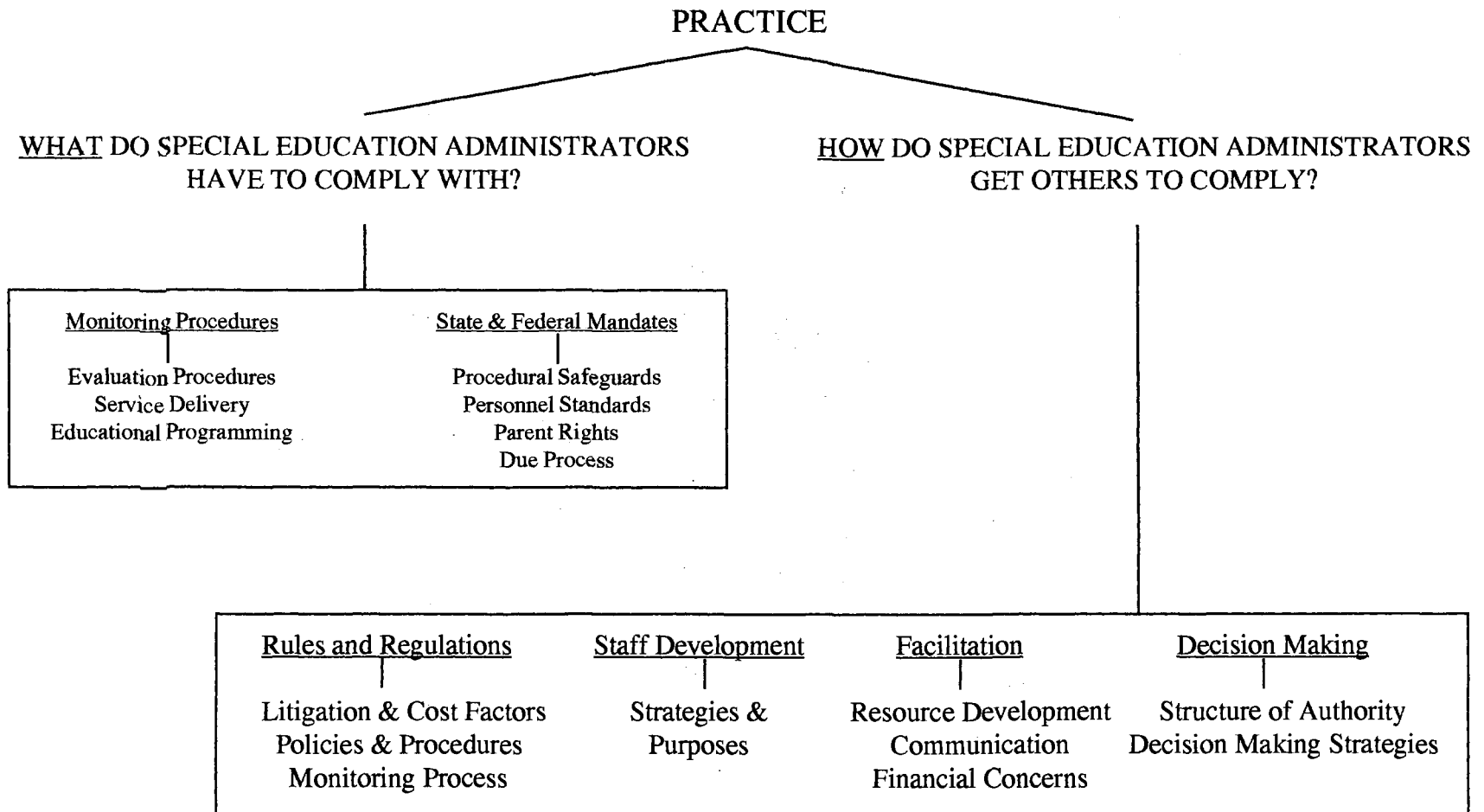


Figure 4.1 Cultural Categories in the Practice of Special Education Administration

providing special education services. In order to assure their districts' compliance with state and federal mandates administrators of special programs must adhere to all parental rights and procedures of due process.

Though the special education directors were all concerned with maintaining compliance, they focused on different issues. Compliance issues are embedded within the sub-categories of rules and regulations, staff development, facilitation, and decision making. Participants identified their primary role in assuring their districts are in compliance with state and federal mandates. Meg S. identified compliance as her primary charge in administering special education programs.

My primary role is to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations, internally in our district. It involves recruitment, selection and evaluation of staff, and it involves communicating, developing procedures, and training staff in those procedures. (Meg S.,10-17-95)

Deb M. also included compliance and legal issues as part of her primary responsibilities.

My superintendent is paying me a consultative supplement to my principal salary as an advisor to the district for anything legal or an issue of compliance that really comes up. (Deb M., 10-9-95)

Rules and Regulations

The practice of special education administration is founded in addressing compliance issues by meeting state and federal rules and regulations. The process of litigation and the impact of the cost are targeted areas of concerns regarding compliance. The implementation of policies and procedures to maintain compliance as well as the monitoring of the documentation are all priorities in practicing special education administration. Special education administrators are continuously challenged with threats of litigation and the financial impact of litigation for school districts. They maintain the responsibility for assuring the rights of parents and other procedural safeguards are within compliance of the state and federal regulations.

Marge D. described her position as a compliance officer. Her utmost goal encompasses following state and federal rules and regulations.

I think of myself as a compliance officer as far as IDEA is concerned and just following the federal and state laws. That is my utmost goal. I try to keep our district as much in compliance as I can. (Marge D., 10-13-95)

Litigation and Cost Factors

The process and cost of litigation in adhering to state and federal mandates are areas of compliance which concern special education administrators. Administrators' focused on the effect of litigation on the district and the provision of services for children. Conflict arises when services, which are often costly, are mandated to meet the students needs and the district finances are limited and must be used resourcefully. Weighing the needs of the students and the cost of litigation is burdensome for administrators of special programs.

When asked about his practice as a special education administrator Mark H. responded:

A lot of my job centers around compliance issues, essentially keeping the school district legal. Litigation is just part of it. We try to work with people but by the same token resources are not unlimited, we draw the line somewhere. You have to understand it and it takes a lot of work, it takes a lot of time but it's like litigation is a fact of life. (Mark H., 10-6-95)

Marge D. links her responsibility of maintaining compliance with cost factors and legal considerations. With the scarcity of resources in education, the cost of litigation can be extremely burdensome to the districts' financial budget. She expressed her concern about litigation and its impact on the district.

It is trying to keep up with litigation and decisions. Decisions that you are making can cost your district thousands and thousands of dollars and that is just a real burden..and so you are weighing what needs to be done for the child as well as what is it going to do to your system--as well as what is the legal precedence of this case. (Marge D., 10-23-95)

Due to the intense regulations and emphasis on compliance the administrators display a strong technical approach in their practices. The threat of litigation and the cost of

due process procedures on local education agencies steer special education administrators to focus on preventative measures. These measures are typified by bureaucratic methods of organizational control to assure compliance is maintained by all members of the organization. Meg S. and Mark H. have differing professional education and work experience yet both address compliance from a technical approach. Meg S.'s response indicates compliance is the controlling factor or primary focus for all of the other roles in her practice. The other roles exist to primarily assist in accomplishing the goal of maintaining compliance. Mark H. reflects the same technical approach in stating his job centers around compliance issues. His reference to "drawing the line" regarding resources indicates an exercise of authority, which is also found in the technical or structural model of Bolman and Deal (1984).

Marge D. addresses compliance from both technical and political aspects of the organizational models developed by Bolman and Deal (1984). Her "utmost goal" is following the federal and state regulations. She indicates a strong technical approach since she has set the primarily goal of her practice and her other roles to meet this goal. Her administrative behavior is indicative of one of the primary principles of the technical or structural model. Bolman and Deal (1984) identify the practice of organizations existing primarily to accomplish established goals as part of the structural approach. Her concern regarding the impact of the cost of litigation on the district indicates a political approach. With the scarcity of resources in education, the cost of litigation can force different educational entities to negotiate or jockey for position to receive financial allocations. This political power struggle is part of the political model of organizational administrative behaviors identified by Bolman and Deal (1984).

Special education administrators engage in efforts to comply with state and federal regulations which will assist in avoiding litigation. The development of policies and procedures to systematically meet the mandates is a significant role in the practice of special education administration.

Policies and Procedures

The development and implementation of policies and procedures to assist in

maintaining compliance is also a major part of the practice of special education administrators.

Gail P. and Paul K. addressed the importance of adhering to the policies and procedures of special education. Their focus was clearly on regulations and documentation. Gail P. addressed the issue of compliance through her replies regarding the importance of appropriate documentation of special education procedures.

I keep that Policies and Procedures Manual in a drawer and it is dog eared, underlined, hi-lited in my desk and that's the main thing I do, is to make sure that we follow the proper procedures. I would like to say that the student's needs are number 1, but realistically it is to make sure that you follow the state guidelines. That P&P manual is the Bible as far as special education is concerned. (Gail P., 9-12-95)

Problems in meeting the regulations of the state and federal mandates were identified by Paul K. He expressed his frustrations with the difficulties in maintaining compliance in an ever changing arena. He detailed the importance of developing procedures for the district to enhance the efforts to comply with mandated regulations.

The thing that is the most difficult is that we are in such a dynamic area. By that I mean it is changing all the time. And so any time a policy change is made in Washington the ripple effect is pretty great. If they would ever determine what the rules are then we could write policies and procedures to implement them. I spend a fair amount of time, I would say about 20% of my time trying to develop strategies, policies, written procedures that will reduce the number of problems and misunderstandings that result. That is a good way to spend a day a week. (Paul K., 10-12-95)

The process of adhering to stringent policies and implementing procedures to assure compliance is often technical. Gail P. and Paul K., though their paths of preparation differ, they display strong technical approaches regarding compliance issues as indicated by their responses. Gail P. demonstrates a technical approach through her reliance on the Policies and Procedures Manual. The manual allows for impersonal control and strict authority through the use of impersonal rules which is a primary assumption of the

technical or structural model of Bolman and Deal (1984). Paul K. dedicates 20 percent of his time to writing policies for regulations. This also implies Bolman and Deal's (1984) technical approach by using a systematic structure to address the goals of the organization.

Compliance with regulations also involves monitoring documentation of the special education procedures. Special education administrators implement various strategies to conduct internal monitoring.

Monitoring Process

As noted, special education administrators develop and implement policies and procedures for their districts. Though this practice appears very common, administrators approach these tasks in unique ways. Monitoring documentation is conducted using numerous methods reflecting the diverse perspectives of the administrators. Gail P. utilized the task of evaluating teachers to monitor the "paperwork" required in educating students with disabilities. She also discussed ways she pursued monitoring efforts compliance and procedural safeguards required for special education.

I evaluate all of the special education teachers in our district, just technical aspects. I go through and I just pick out some of their paperwork folders you know with the I.E.P. of the students and I sit in and observe to see if they are actually following the I.E.P. Our monitoring went very well this year, there were very few citations. (Gail P., 9-12-95)

The issues surrounding evaluation procedures appear to be problematic. In order to assure compliance in meeting the regulations regarding student evaluations Carrie M. developed and implements strategies for monitoring the documentation process.

I try to make sure that they (teachers) are aware of any reviews that are due. I keep a master list. They get a monthly report from me and that way they know exactly all that is due and they are all channeled through me. After the evaluation I look over the report and the report goes back to the teacher. I try to send it within that day, the day I receive the evaluation report. That way I kind of have my finger on what's going on out there and I want to be sure we are in compliance. (Carrie M., 10-30-95)

Rather than a technical approach to the monitoring process, participants also focused on assisting teachers to manage the paperwork and presented more participatory perspectives. Deb M. and Chuck S. addressed strategies of assisting teachers with on going documentation. Deb M. from Lane Public Schools seeks to support the teachers by assisting with the “paperwork” so they may focus on teaching.

I can help with the policies and procedures and I can make that paperwork right and I can do the paperwork that will free the teachers up to teach.

(Deb M., 10-9-95)

Chuck S. addressed the issues of accountability and paperwork and how he implemented strategies to assist teachers with compliance issues in his district.

We monitor all of the paperwork. When it comes to the things that are really going to nail you, like the compliance issues. I mean, I put together a book at the start of the year and it is just basic information about being a special education teacher. And very little in here about anything that has to do with content, it all has to do with procedures and filling the forms out and how to make it work. I give it to all my special education teachers, all the principals, all the assistant principals. (Chuck S., 10-26-95)

Mark H. also addresses the technical aspects of monitoring the “paperwork” required in special education.

We have a manual that provides examples of forms and that type of thing. We try to make the bureaucracy manageable. If people are spending all their time managing the bureaucracy as opposed to teaching class or managing the school then we think things should be changed. (Mark H., 10-6-95)

Carrie M. approached monitoring procedures for evaluating students from a technical perspective. Carrie M. engages in a technical approach of coordinating and controlling the process through systematic rules which is one of the assumptions from the technical model of Bolman and Deal (1984).

By considering the needs of the teachers, Deb M. demonstrates a human relations approach to administration. Valuing people’s needs within the organization is a primary

principle identified by Bolman and Deal (1984) in the human relations approach.

Chuck S. and Mark H. both focus on the implementation of rules and regulations for completing the necessary forms for compliance. Documentation of compliance procedures for mandated regulations requires a technical system. They have developed structures to provide technical assistance in managing the documentation process. These efforts of coordinating and controlling are found among the assumptions of the technical or structural model of Bolman and Deal (1984). Though the task of documenting is technical the administrators approach the task from a humanistic model through their attempts to address the needs of teachers.

As previously noted, the primary category common to the practice of special education administration is assuring districts are in compliance with federal and state mandates. The impact and cost of litigation, the development and implementation of policies and procedures, and the monitoring of “paperwork” are themes which emerged regarding participants’ practices. Each of these themes identify tasks which are focused on complying with rules and regulations.

Staff Development

Special education administrators provide professional development and training opportunities for their staff. As administrators of special education programs, participants identified numerous strategies and purposes for engaging their staff in efforts to assist the organization in maintaining compliance with state and federal regulations regarding the provision of educating students with disabilities.

Strategies and Purposes

In addition to addressing rules and regulations for compliance special education administrators engaged in providing staff development. The purposes and strategies for providing staff development are the primary themes which emerged from participant’s responses. The purposes for providing staff development range from updating staff regarding current regulations and practices to providing information regarding resources and services required to meet the mandates for educating children with disabilities. Staff

development often focuses on compliance as well as curricular issues. Special education administrators identified various strategies for implementing staff development including conducting inservice and specific skills training. How these special education administrators approached staff development differed. Some emphasized the importance of targeting the needs of the participants while others viewed staff development as an avenue for disseminating information.

Mark H. described the inservicing process as a key to disseminating information regarding policies and procedures to principals and teachers.

We do some intense inservice training and try to prepare people, if not, give them all the information they need, give them a reference source. We try to keep teachers awake and alert and give them kind of a positive feeling about special education. You must recognize every time you try to train a teacher you are talking to somebody who has put in a full day and who has a kid at home you know waiting for them and you need to accept that reality and operate within it. Sometimes I think refreshments are more significant.

(Mark H., 10-6-95)

Gail P. utilizes monthly meetings to provide continuing education for teachers. She also focuses on making the experience fun and inviting for the teachers.

I have a meeting every month with the teachers and the teacher assistants, paraprofessionals and I keep them up on the laws of the regulations that have come out from the state department at those meetings. We make it a fun time. Someone is assigned to be hostess so we always have goodies to eat and we enjoy that. (Gail P., 9-12-95)

Sandy H. identifies providing resources and information for teachers and principals as part of her responsibilities as a special education administrator. The focus of the staff development is for dissemination of new information and regulations.

I feel like I have to find out any new information for all the categories for special education and work with teachers and the parents and administrators on those concerns. We try to every nine weeks have a categorical meeting to

visit with the teachers about any new concerns in special education. (Sandy H., 9-22-95)

Disseminating information through inservice was a responsibility targeted by Carrie M. Topics for special education inservice training are dependent upon the self identified needs of the faculty.

We inservice a lot of different ways because what works in one situation may not work in another. So sometimes I'll be the secondary inservice presenter or I might do it by site or we might do it all as a faculty, total school faculty. It just depends. A lot of it depends on time and a lot of it depends of availability of resources and speakers and also a lot depends of their need or their requests. We have a needs assessment that we follow. (Carrie M., 10-30-95)

Neil D. reported on the importance of providing inservice to teachers and administrators. The purpose of inservicing was not only to provide training and information but he also targeted staff development as a means of impacting the acceptance of special education at the building level. He revealed some significant changes in the manner in which inservice is delivered to maximize its effectiveness in addition to special education being viewed in a positive light.

I hit on the notion that if we are going to really have inservice that makes sense and get the teacher included in the schools then they've got to do it. So we had some training, kind of a trainer of trainers to teach teachers how to do inservices, how to work with adult learners and so on. Well as you do those kinds of things you have a captive audience in the school, the principal is there too, you're doing inservice. It's the principal's teacher talking to the other principal's teachers so they begin to support that teacher, what do you need to do this and they want it to go well you see. So they are there supporting in that inservice because they want it to look good and go well. (Neil D., 10-2-95)

Special education administrators provide staff development opportunities to assist in the overall goal of maintaining compliance. They provide inservice and training

opportunities to update staff members on current regulations and policy changes. Training is also provided to address specific needs of teachers to better serve students with disabilities.

Special education administrators approach staff development through a variety of administrative behaviors. Mark H. focuses on the needs of the teachers and the importance of providing an atmosphere which is conducive for participation. He approaches staff development from a humanistic and symbolic point of view. According to the administrative models described by Bolman and Deal (1984), the provision of training for teachers is symbolic. Keeping teachers and administrators informed increases the chances of avoiding litigation and staying within compliance of the state and federal mandates. The most important aspect of the activity is not what actually occurs, the staff development activity itself; the important issue is that teachers feel good about special education and knowledgeable and confident about the process. Mark H. accomplishes this mission by providing training activities while remaining focused on the personal and professional needs of the teachers. He values the training and knowledge to be shared but most importantly cares about the teachers needs and perceptions which indicates a human relations approach according to Bolman and Deal (1984).

Gail P. focuses on the teachers perceptions and feelings which indicates a human relations and symbolic approach to staff development. Her relaxed format for the monthly meeting and the provision of refreshments indicates that the teachers perceptions and needs are important which are key principles of the human relations and symbolic models of administration of Bolman and Deal (1984).

Sandy H. approaches staff development from a technical perspective as evident in the organizational structure of the activities. She provides an example in her discussion of how the meetings are conducted by categories of certification which indicates a coordinated controlled manner in which to provide applicable rules and regulations. The technical model of Bolman and Deal (1984) relies on the assumption the organization is best coordinated and controlled through measures of authority and structured rules.

Carrie M. approaches staff development from a human relations and symbolic approach. The presentation and topic of the staff development activity is controlled by the

needs of the teachers which is characteristic of the human relations model of Bolman and Deal (1984). Utilizing a needs assessment encourages teachers to participate because they have provided input. Using teachers ideas for staff development training leads to a positive perception of the activity which is part of the symbolic approach to administrative behaviors (Bolman & Deal, 1984).

Neil D. described a political and symbolic approach to staff development. He uses staff development as a means to increase awareness and acceptance of special education at the building level. Part of the symbolic approach to administrative behaviors by Bolman and Deal (1984) is the assumption that what is most important about any event is not what happened but the meaning of what happened. Providing the special education teacher the skills and opportunity to conduct inservice training for other teachers and administrators represents a symbolic approach. The presence of the special education teacher engaged in teaching other professionals provides the perception of valuing and including this person into the group. The importance of the principal's participation and support is representative of the political approach. The principal is placed in a position to appear interested and engaged because the presenter is representative of her/his staff. These actions are indicative of the political approach presented by Bolman and Deal (1984). What becomes important is how her/his staff appears compared to others in the district. It becomes a power issue.

In addition to providing staff development opportunities to address issues of compliance special education administrators facilitate seeking and developing resources to meet the mandated requirements in providing educational services to children with disabilities.

Facilitation

The role as a facilitator is common in the practice of special education administration. In particular, special education administrators facilitate seeking resources and developing services to meet the educational mandates for students with disabilities. Administrators spend time facilitating the development of relationships with community agencies. They also spend a large part of their time in facilitating communication with

teachers, administrators and parents. Their role as a facilitator also extends to acquiring and managing financial resources to meet the costly needs of students with disabilities.

Special education administrators view their role as a facilitator from varying perspectives. Deb M. detailed her desire to be seen in a supportive role for teachers.

So you know I can be a “procedural guru” if you will, yet more than anything be a facilitator and just help people who need to have problems solved. (Deb M., 10-7-95)

In order to facilitate compliance the special education administrator may rely on areas of expertise in related fields. Experience in school psychology is utilized by some special education administrators to facilitate the process of evaluating and identifying students with disabilities. Gail P. reflects on the evaluation procedures in Dennis Public Schools.

I facilitate all the testing for the district as far as individual testing for special education. I go through and get an idea of what the testing shows and then write notes to the teachers. I am not making the decision about the eligibility but I am looking at it from a school psychologist point of view. (Gail P., 9-12-95)

Marge D. from Dell Public Schools fulfills the role of school psychologist when necessary to meet compliance issues.

I am also a school psychologist and I function in this district somewhat in that capacity as well. We do not have a school psychologist or psychometrist, I can't believe that, it is a goal of mine, to get them in this district. So a lot of times I'll come in on meetings and so forth to fill that school psychologist role in our district. (Marge D., 10-23-95)

Special education administrators are supportive of their teachers in seeking resources and services to assist them in meeting the needs of educational needs of their students. Special education administrators also facilitate maintaining compliance by utilizing their professional expertise in school psychology to assist in meeting the regulations regarding the evaluation process. How special education administrators approach these issues of compliance differs among the participants.

Deb M.'s desire to be in a supportive role for teachers indicates a human relations approach rather than bureaucratic-technical perspective. According to Bolman and Deal (1984), she demonstrates a human relations approach in that the focus of her actions are on the needs of the people within the organization.

Gail P.'s strategy for facilitating the evaluation process utilizes her specialization in school psychology which indicates a technical approach. Using her higher level of expertise to facilitate the evaluation process, she presents a structure of control and hierarchy which is an assumption of the technical or structural model by Bolman and Deal (1984). Marge D. also demonstrate a technical approach to facilitating the evaluation process. She utilizes her expertise in school psychology to fulfill a specialized role required in the process. This distinct role division is characteristic of a bureaucratic-technical model (Bolman & Deal, 1984).

Resource Development

Special education administrators are responsible for facilitating resources and services from community based agencies and service providers. They serve as liaisons with community agencies and provide support for teachers and principals to meet the needs of students. Although the provision of services is mandated by federal regulation this practice is often reflected in a manner which emphasizes the needs of students.

Nancy T. identified the importance of finding community resources to assist teachers and principals to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities.

I seek resources for the school district to help principals and teachers.

Work with social agencies to find resources for students. My role is supportive as well as consultive (Nancy T., 10-18-95).

Meg S. from Marsh Public Schools indicated an increase in her responsibilities including the development of resources and contacts with community agencies.

I am doing more now including resource development and grant writing and serving more as a liaison with other community agencies for coordination of services that relate to the special education students. (Meg S., 10-17-95)

Meg S. describes her role in facilitating resources as a liaison with outside agencies. This indicates she is an advocate and communicator between agencies to coordinate services.

Serving as a liaison with other community agencies assists special education administrators in developing the interagency communication. Some administrators view this hands on approach as positive yet vulnerable in terms of administrative layers. Others view the development of relationships with community agencies as an aide to the team decision making process. Chuck S. expounded on the positive aspects of developing relationships with outside agencies to meet the need of the students with disabilities.

Really another thing that's really neat about this office is that we manage to get relationships with people in the community like the pediatricians.

Like last week I went and visited with all the pediatricians in the town and I brought the Sooner Start people with me. The relationship with Sooner Start is real good. It is more of team kind of a deal. I feel like I've got a better handle on the pulse of what's going on. I'm in a much more vulnerable position this way because I'm right out there, without having layers of administration. (Chuck S., 10-26-95)

Sandy H. emphasized the importance of working with community and state agencies to facilitate services for students with disabilities.

I work with a lot of agencies. If it is a situation with assessing and wanting more assessment but don't have the financial resources I look at calling an agency. If it is a decision that I've made and I feel like I'm not sure, I might call another resource. Sometimes you really do know, but you need to see about other opinions and what others think about the situation.

(Sandy H., 9-22-95)

Sandy H. indicated working with agencies on technical issues such as assessment and financing to seek services. She expressed concern about others opinions of her decisions.

Neil D. targeted a significant responsibility as a special education administrator is his work with the special facilities in Pine which provide services for students with

disabilities. He emphasizes the importance of the relationship between the school district and the community service providers. His primary concern is establishing a team approach for developing education plans to address the needs of the students. He focuses on educating the clinicians to become part of the team. The team approach values individuals opinions.

I now negotiate and write all the contracts for the district with special facilities. The reason I need to build a good relationship with them is that they need to begin to understand the value of education in and of itself and how we need to meld education with a clinical operation, getting teachers on clinical teams, involve them in the decision making process about kids.

(Neil D., 10-2-95)

Special education administrators facilitate developing resources and acquiring services to meet the state and federal mandates for educating children with disabilities. These efforts support teachers and administrators by assisting them in complying with the requirements for providing services mandated in students' educational programs. Special education administrators facilitate relationships with community agencies to assist in meeting the educational requirements for students with disabilities.

Administrators differ in their administrative approaches to facilitating resource development. As previously indicated, Nancy T. is primarily concerned with meeting the needs of her students. Her administrative behavior indicates a human relations approach (Bolman & Deal, 1984). Not only is she concerned about finding resources for students she expresses concern for helping the teachers and principals. She described her role in facilitating resources as supportive.

Meg S. also demonstrates a human relations approach to resource development. She focuses on developing contacts with community agencies based on the needs of the students. Facilitating services to meet the needs of the child is congruent with the assumptions of the human relations approach to organization and administrative behaviors as described by Bolman and Deal (1984).

Chuck S.'s actions reflect the human relations and symbolic approaches of Bolman and Deal (1984) in efforts of seeking relationships with community agencies. Bolman and

Deal (1984) identify the importance of relationships among individuals as a key principle of the human relations approach to administrative behaviors. Chuck S. values the relationships he has with people in the community and strives to maintain a team approach when facilitating services. The team approach relies on input from all parties which emphasizes participation, a key to the human relations approach. Chuck S. recognizes his vulnerability when stepping out of the traditional administrative role. He expresses a positive feeling about being an administrator and being seen in the community. He views his visibility as a means of influencing the perceptions of the public regarding his position. This concern regarding the perceptions of others is indicative of the symbolic approach to administrative behaviors (Bolman & Deal, 1984).

Sandy H.'s actions emphasize the importance of seeking outside assistance rather than creating an authoritative perspective of herself. Sandy's administrative behaviors are characteristic of the symbolic approach identified by Bolman and Deal (1984). She is concerned with the image she projects to the teachers. The assistance she seeks is not as important as the image she projects as an administrator.

The team approach described by Neil D. values individuals opinions and participation. The organization of the team exists to serve the needs of the students which is characteristic of the human relations approach (Bolman & Deal, 1984).

Special education administrators approach working with community agencies and developing resources and relationships to assist in meeting the needs of students from primarily a human relations approach. As indicated in the responses there are also actions which appear symbolic in seeking services for students. These approaches appear to address educative purposes for resource development even though the facilitation of acquiring resources is a technical aspects in maintaining compliance in assuring students needs all met.

Communication

Facilitating communication with teachers, principals, and parents is significant in the practice of special education administrators. The styles of communication range from

formal more linear approaches to informal more open approaches. Melanie T. identified formal layers of communication in the following statement:

We have three levels of communication. We have the teacher level, the principal level and the central office level, which is the special services administrator. I am also part of the administrative staff in the district and meet regularly with the other central office administrators. (Melanie T., 11-1-95)

Sandy H. described a distant, role distinctive relationship with teachers she works with.

I can't become their best friend because they have to respect you and look at you as someone with that base of knowledge. There must be that trust level also but for some reason there is that breakdown that there's just a feeling that, they don't feel open to say I would like to do this or I would like to do that. (Sandy H., 9-22-95)

Melanie T. and Sandy H. describe maintaining layered and linear structures of communication. Communication will remain impersonal and distant through these structures.

Other special education administrators reported facilitating communication among staff members with an open style and more participatory approach. Neil D. describes an informal relationship with the teachers and principals of Pine Public Schools.

Teachers and I work very closely together, we trust one another, we are friends and we have developed a relationship over years. I don't think they see me as an administrator. I don't want to be seen that way, I can play that role if I have to but it's not what I try to do. We try to work collaboratively together. Before you work with principals you have to work with teachers. (Neil D., 10-2-95)

The image projected by Neil D. is significant to facilitating communication with teachers and principals. His desire to not be seen as an 'administrator' is key in his perception of the collaborative relationships. Paul K. reflected on how his personal philosophies impact his relationships with teachers and principals.

I listen real closely to classroom teachers. I try to support my teachers, I'll stick with them when I am embarrassed to do so. I feel a little like a father to the them. This tells you a whole lot about me coming up and the way I was raised. I have some real strong stereotypes that I was raised with.

(Paul K., 10-12-95)

In order to establish a positive open relationship with teachers and principals, Chuck S. has created opportunities to enhance his exposure to the day to day activities of the classroom.

I probably spend half my time visiting classes and visiting teachers and seeing the problems up close and in person. It is just more of a hands on kind of an environment. I think the teachers and principals expect to see the director out there talking to them about things. I'm kind of keying in on different kinds of things to try to develop a strong rapport. Also principals are in on the front end of things here. They have a problem they call me and we talk about it. (Chuck S., 10-26-95)

Chuck S. describes the importance of the image of spending time in the schools with teachers. He stressed the results of these efforts were apparent in resulting in more open communication among teachers and administrators.

Marge D. described an informal more intimate system of communication. The approach is very direct without layers of administration. The teacher is viewed as a key participant.

If I have a problem with a teacher I immediately go to the teacher and try and work it out. If that doesn't go I usually get some feedback to the principal about, I want you to know I am involved in this and this is what I'm trying to do and I may need your help at some point. (Marge D., 10-23-95)

Facilitating communication by use of the telephone is a common practice of special education administrators. The majority of the special education administrators reported spending their time answering telephone calls on a day to day basis. Putting out fires, troubleshooting and soothing ruffled feathers are common practices identified in special

education administration. Some administrators utilized a systematic approach while others use a more supportive approach in working with teachers and principals. Gail P. discussed the number of phone calls she receives each day and how she attempts to address each issue. She utilizes an authoritative process which relies on strict written regulations. The Policy and Procedures Manual and student files provide documentation to assist her in communicating with parents, teachers, and other agencies in assuring the maintenance of compliance.

My phone rings off the wall constantly from the time I get here until I leave. And the questions are so varied that the background I usually can answer and if not, as I say that Policy and Procedures Manual is right there, and of course I have all student files and I never leave anything to my memory. I have my secretary get the files for me and I go through whatever question the teacher is asking. (Gail P., 9-12-95)

Melanie T. also identified answering the daily telephone calls as a primary responsibility. Her approach appears to be supervisory and directed towards clarifying technical compliance issues. She explains her role as a supervisor of special education teachers. This indicates a hierarchical organizational structure. She also addresses her position of clarifying regulations.

The beginning of the year for the first two or three weeks I spend all day on the telephones. Calls from administrators, from parents, from teachers regarding students. I somewhat supervise special education teacher because I assist building principals. I get a lot of calls asking for clarification, etc. (Melanie T., 11-1-95)

Marge D. identified problems with answering the daily telephone calls and the importance of providing supportive guided responses for teachers. She describes the need for reassuring teachers of their actions which indicates her concern about how they feel.

It seems like hundreds of phone calls a day, I know it's not that many but pretty much every call gets answered by the end of the day. With the teachers a lot of putting out fires. And alot of times it's just soothing

ruffled feathers or just reassuring them that they are doing really what they should. (Marge D., 10-13-95)

When asked to talk about the challenges they faced in special education administration, facilitating communication with parents and families of children with disabilities was identified as a primary concern. Some of the problems targeted by the special education administrators included being sensitive to parents' needs, educating parents regarding regulations, and the importance of listening when communicating.

Facilitating communication with parents and families of seriously emotionally disturbed children (SED) was identified by some participants as their primary challenge. Sandy H. identified parent concerns as the primary challenge of her practice. Her approach is technical and impersonal in that she focuses on the tasks of seeking services rather than the parents perceptions or feelings.

I don't think there is a day that goes by that I don't have a telephone call from a parent. If it is not from transportation to maybe a resource, or someplace that they can have other assessments or they are looking for information to make sure I might be there to observe a teacher, or to talk about on a concern with their student. (Sandy H., 9-22-95)

Gail P. from Dennis Public Schools described the difficulty and the importance of being sensitive to the needs of parents.

Well, the teachers don't call me unless it is something really important and or it is an irate parent. It is very difficult and it is hard to be sensitive. Something needs to be done with having to label kids and categorize them. We need to just say they are disabled period and that could do. (Gail P.9-12-95)

The task of labeling and categorizing children with disabilities is a technical bureaucratic process. Gail P. recognizes this as a source of frustration because it makes being sensitive to parents very difficult.

Melanie T. from Sand Public Schools addressed the importance of communicating with parents. She charges that listening skills are essential in meeting the challenges in working with parents.

The biggest problem is angry parents. One of the things I have observed with teachers and administrators. We tend not to listen. We don't tend to really hear what goes on. But my experience has been if you really listen to what a parent wants and not their anger without talking about it you can accomplish a lot more. You really have to listen. (Melanie T., 11-1-95)

Melanie T. demonstrates a genuine concern in her approach to working with parents. She honors their right to participate in the educational process of their children.

The need for communicating and educating parents about the procedures of special education are seen as great challenges according to Marge D. She identified working with parents as a source of frustration.

I'm trying to think where the frustration comes from. I try and make each IEP meeting that I am involved in a mini inservice for parents. You give the parents their rights, you talk about the process and yet when you end up having a parent cross sided with you it seems a lot of times to be never ending. I don't know what you can do to educate parents about the restrictions schools must work under. (Marge D., 10-23-95)

Marge D. is concerned with communicating with parents to educate them about their rights and the process of special education. Her concern is focused on assuring parents are aware of the rules and regulations and that they understand the restrictions that schools must operate under.

Working with families of children with emotional disabilities appears to be challenging for special education administrators. Sandy H. outlined the significance of working with these parents and the impact on her practice. She discussed the structural aspects of her responsibilities and the amount of time they consumed.

I would have to say at this point that 50% of my time is working with concerns of parents with SED children. I go to all of their IEP meetings, all reviews. A lot of parent mediation, parent concerns on the telephone, with parents wanting to know information about their

child and how something is going with their child. (Sandy H.,9-22-95)

Carrie M. from Larson Public School responded similarly in depicting her greatest challenges in meeting her responsibilities as a special education administrator.

Probably just dealing with families that have children with ED problems. I think that is my biggest challenge. I don't have an ED background and have to rely very heavily on the experiences I have had as an administrator. Everything an ED child does is a concern so it is very difficult to come up with a good compromise and what is good for them and good for other students and a workable situation for all. That's probably out biggest challenge, our SED kids and their families. (Carrie M., 10-30-95)

Though Carrie M. identified working with families of SED children as a primary concern she approached the challenge differently. Carrie M. maintains the focus of addressing the needs of the students. She is concerned with not only the needs of the special education students but also the needs of all students.

Special education administrators facilitate communication from varies organizational structures. The styles of communication range from formal more linear approaches to informal more open approaches. Special education administrators communicate with parents and teachers through collaborative relationships as well as more layered role distinctive relationships. Communication is primarily focused on compliance issues. Exchanging information regarding rules and regulations, answering an abundance of telephone calls to clarify procedures and assuring teachers of their actions are all required in the practice of special education administration. Communicating with parents requires special education administrators to be effective listeners. Special education administrators must educate parents regarding the mandates procedures for providing special education services.

The goal of maintaining compliance drives the need for special education administrators to facilitate communication with teachers, parents, and community agencies. The provision of services and the rights of parents to participate in the process of providing special education are manifested in the procedural safeguards of the federal mandates.

Though communication is essential to assure compliance, special education administrators demonstrate differing administrative approaches in facilitating communication.

Melanie T. and Sandy H. demonstrate structural approaches to facilitating communication. Melanie T.'s leveled approach to communication indicates a linear structure of authority. This is characteristic of Bolman and Deal's (1984) technical model which relies on sequential, linear processes for decision-making. As indicated by her responses, Sandy H. maintains a distant impersonal relationship which constrains the teachers' influence and personal perspectives. This structured hierarchical approach to facilitating communication delineates a technical model of organizational behaviors as indicated by Bolman and Deal (1984).

Neil D. demonstrates a symbolic approach when communicating with teachers. He expresses concern about their perspective of him as an administrator. According to Bolman and Deal (1984), the symbolic approach emphasizes the perception of an action or event rather than the event itself. The communication with teachers is not the most important aspect of his relationship with teachers, their perception of him as an administrator appears most important. Neil D. express concern regarding the teachers' image of him as an administrator. He wants to be seen as a friend or colleague rather than an administrator. This image is symbolic in developing friendships and trust with teachers.

According to the assumptions presented by Bolman and Deal (1984) Paul K. describes a human relations approach to communicating and supporting teachers. His strong commitment to his teachers indicates his value of their participation within the system. His father like image is also symbolic and protective in assuring teachers that their actions will be supported wholeheartedly.

Chuck S. emphasized the importance of the projected image of spending time in the schools with the teachers which describes a symbolic approach of administrative behaviors (Bolman & Deal, 1984). The emphasis is on how teachers and principals perceive the actions of the special education administrator rather than the results of his actions. This enhances the openness in establishing strong communication.

Marge D.'s direct style of communication is indicative of a human relations approach. The informal structure of direct communication between teachers and

administrators allows for input from varying parties which is more democratic. Marge D. described her role in reassuring teachers of their actions and providing ongoing support through continuous telephone contact. She approaches the task of answering the tremendous number of phone calls in a more humanistic manner.

Gail P.'s authoritative approach of utilizing strict written regulations aligns with the assumptions of the technical approach of administrative behaviors by Bolman and Deal (1984). Melanie T. also described facilitating communication through a technical model. She described a hierarchical organizational structure in addressing numerous telephone calls regarding questions about rules and regulations of compliance. This implies a technical approach of differing levels of knowledge and expertise (Bolman & Deal, 1984). Though the task of facilitating communication focuses on issues of compliance, Gail P. and Melanie T. indicated they communicate with parents from a human relations approach. Gail P. expressed concern about the emotional impact of labeling on parents. Melanie T. is very much concerned about the importance of listening to parents. She values their input and desires for their children. These are characteristics which are congruent with the assumptions from the human relations approach (Bolman & Deal, 1984).

Sandy H. and Marge D. approached communicating with parents from a technical approach. Sandy H.'s approach to communicating with families of students with emotional disabilities is technical and impersonal. She focused primarily on seeking the mandated services rather than the parents perceptions or feelings. Bolman and Deal (1984) identified principles of the technical approach including the use of impersonal strategies for communicating and the importance of meeting the goals of the organization. Her primary concerns involved providing mandated services for students with emotional disabilities rather than the personal aspect of working with parents of SED children. This indicates a more technical approach which maintains the focus on the goals of the organization rather than the needs of the parties involved (Bolman & Deal, 1984). Marge D. expressed concern about the need to educate parents about the rules and regulations of the special education process. She is primarily concerned about their lack of understanding regarding the burdens placed on school districts. This technical impersonal approach is not concerned with the parents' rights of participation or their perceptions of the process but more

importantly on the organizational structure of control and coordination (Bolman & Deal, 1984).

Carrie M. approaches working with families of students with emotional disabilities from a more humanistic approach as determined by Bolman and Deal (1984). While Sandy H. and Marge D. described the tasks from technical approaches, Carrie M. maintains the focus of addressing the needs of the students. She is concerned with not only the needs of the special education student but also the needs of all students.

Facilitating communication is a significant part of the practice of special education administration. Communicating with agencies, teachers, principals, and parents requires establishing relationships to facilitate services and best practices for students with disabilities. The data indicates special education administrators approach the practice of facilitating communication from various perspectives including technical, human relations, and symbolic. The participants expressed great concern for parents and identified listening as the utmost important skill. As indicated in the analysis, Paul K., Gail P., Carrie M., and Marge D. expressed concerns which correspond with the human relations approach.

Facilitating communication also took on a technical perspective by administrators who communicate with in a linear more bureaucratic structure as indicated in Sandy H. and Melanie T.'s responses.

Financial Concerns

Facilitating the educational needs of students effectively while meeting the challenges of financial restraints is burdensome for special education administrators. Administrators experience challenges in meeting the regulations for compliance and the needs of students due to the restrictions of available finances. While administrators expressed concerns about advocating for students they also must consider the wise use of resources, the effect of financing special education on general education and the public's perceptions of special education.

Mark H. discusses his toughest administrative challenge. He focuses on the wise use of limited resources.

I think that probably the toughest part of my job is when you sit there and say hey this is where we are going to draw the line. We will spend money up to this point but this is where we're going to draw the line. I try to make the best use of my resources at the same time being a a wise steward of those resources. You know I don't want to throw money at problems. I don't think it does any good. (Mark H., 10-6-95)

He discusses his power in 'drawing the line' and his responsibility of being a wise steward and adhering to the district's budget.

Meg S. from Marsh also noted the financial burden of providing services without adequate resources as a challenge to maintain compliance within budget constraints.

Compliance with regulations and budget constraints, that's always an issue because it is sometimes very difficult to appropriately meet the regulations and stay within a budget. (Meg S., 10-17-95)

Paul K. expressed his concern regarding the impact of financing the requirements for special education on regular education.

I had a student this morning we were dealing with that costs a little over \$18,000 a year for this young man. Don't lie to me or ask me to lie to the public and say spending \$18,000 a year on this kid is right. I don't think taxpayers envision paying for these kinds of services out of public school funds. Money isn't everything but we don't have enough to do our job. We steal it from children who aren't disabled and take it out of the general fund. (Paul K., 10-12-95)

The analysis of the data showed maintaining a budget and facilitating limited finances to be approached differently by administrators. The lack of financial resources limits the advocacy efforts of administrators to meet the needs of students. This limitation was identified as a primary challenge by Chuck S.

I think that my biggest problem is not being able to advocate for a child what I think might be the best that I could do with this particular kid because if I do, I might wind up paying for it and in excessive of what this district can pay, \$100,000 a year kind of thing. (Chuck S., 10-26-95)

The technical system of meeting the mandates of the law are burdensome for special educational administrators. The lack of resources and funding prevents administrators for advocating for the best practices and services for students with disabilities. Special education administrators approach meeting the legal requirements of providing services while working under restricted financial limitations from different model of administrative behaviors.

The administrative tasks required in meeting financial obligations under budget restraints are primarily approached from a technical model. Mark H. addresses the challenges of facilitating finances from an authoritative perspective. According to Bolman and Deal, the principles of the technical approach to administrative behaviors include the use of authoritative structures. Meg S. demonstrates a technical model of organization and administrative behavior. Her approach to maintain compliance within budget constraints is exemplified by the actions of coordination and control by authority which is found in the technical model (Bolman & Deal, 1984).

Paul K.'s concern regarding the taxpayer's perspective of the school district spending enormous amounts of money on the needs of special education students is implicative of the political administrative approach. He describes a political struggle within the organization. The struggle for the use of limited resources depicts special education stealing from general education. His concern regarding the image of the school district and special education in the public's eye is characteristic of the symbolic approach. Chuck S. identified the challenge of advocating for the best possible educational services with limited financial resources. His concern reflects humanistic approach. Limited finances prevent his advocacy efforts of focusing on the needs of the student. There is a direct conflict between the imposed technical legal system which provides inadequate resources and the humanistic efforts in focusing on the needs of the student. Limited budgets and lack of resources prevent Chuck S. from advocating for the best possible programs for the students. This concern regarding the needs of the students is reflective of a humanistic model of administrative behaviors (Bolman & Deal, 1984). The needs of the students are valued and are seen as a priority even though the financial resources are limited.

Special education administrators face intense challenges in facilitating the needs of students within limited budgets. The concerns expressed were approached from different perspectives. Mark H. and Meg S. focused on the technical aspects of staying within a budget while Chuck S. was more concerned with how the lack of financial resources limited the ability to advocate for what was best for the student. A more symbolic or political approach was expressed by Paul K. in his discussion about the public's expectations and the effect of the financial burden of special education on general education.

Decision Making

The discussions of the daily practices and challenges in special education administration led to analyzing the decision making process of each participant. The predominant themes of this category include the structure of authority, primary goals and strategies of making decisions, and factors which influence special education administrators when making decisions.

Structure of Authority

The structure of authority appears to be different among the larger and smaller school districts. The use of school psychologists as administrative outreach personnel often impacts the decision making process for special education administrators in larger school districts. The responsibility of supervising school psychologists is prevalent among the larger school districts represented in the study. Melanie T. identified the supervision of the psychological staff as one of her primary responsibilities as a special education administrator. They serve in an outreach capacity and provide a layer of administration for special services.

I am directly responsible for the psychological staff. Our psychological staff, school psychometrist and school psychologists are all assigned to specific schools. They have the basis of direct communication, they look at case loads, the number of students in each program, look at transportation.

Each psychometrist and school psychologist handles these issues at their sites. (Melanie T., 11-1-95)

Paul K. also designated the supervision of the school psychologist as part of his responsibilities and described their administrative position. The impact of the school psychologists on the structure of the organization provides a buffer for special education administrators in decision-making.

I supervise the school psychologists and use them in this district as administrative outreach people. So each school psychologist is assigned and supervised if you will, with special education, as well as doing the psychological evaluations in their schools and they are my spokespersons out there and that is how I cover 27 different buildings. I deal with teachers and I deal with parents but typically they have been through or made contact with the school psychologist prior to coming to me. (Paul K., 10-12-95)

Special education administrators predominantly utilize a participatory model or team approach to decision making. The data indicates a shift from a more autocratic approach in decision making to a more participatory model for administrators in larger schools. Administrators from the three largest school districts represented in the study reported changes in their decision making structure of authority. The shift from an authoritative style of decision making to a more participatory style indicates special education administrators value other professionals' opinions and experiences. By including key personnel in the decision process, special education administrators also increase the likeliness of maintaining compliance and avoiding litigation.

Neil D. describes his original administrative focus and how his administrative behaviors have shifted.

I came to this job, really not knowing anything about it. We rolled over staff, I unloaded secretaries, I hired new psychologist, fired some people, and in the first year, we worked 7 days a week 10 and 12 and 14 hours a day with the idea we are going to clean this mess up, we are going to organize it. As we cleaned up the organization I finally reached that point where you get down to curriculum and instruction because we got the

organizational part cleaned up. That's when the notion of advisory boards, now program development committees, came to me. The whole system is set up for teachers to decide and for teachers to set the direction. (Neil P., 10-2-95)

Paul K. reflected on the struggles of making changes in his decision making style. I have had to change. One of the hardest things I had to do is learn to implement participatory management. I have teacher teams and I now have an administrative team instead of just being the guy at the chop shop. So I am less and less autocratic. (Paul K., 10-12-95)

Paul K. initiated teacher and administrative teams as part of his change to participatory management. He is striving to change his image of the "guy at the chop shop".

Mark H. also indicated a change in his decision making process over the past seven years as a special education administrator.

I came in here with lots of ideas and I ran on those for a long long time but I really need a lot of input. Not only because people have ideas but different perspectives. I am working on becoming a better listener, to be a better facilitator, to collect input from people and to put it to work better and make sure they get credit for their ideas. I don't try to outline the decision. I really avoid ever making a power play, never making a situation where I just over power somebody. I try to let them be a part of the decision. (Mark H., 10-6-95)

Chuck S. reflected on the decision making structure of his organization. He describes the participatory model he has implemented since he began this position just three months ago. The model is a democratic approach which encourages teachers' input in decisions which define special education throughout the district.

I have advisory boards of special education teachers. What we're doing is we are aligning our curriculum and they are basically deciding what special education procedures are going to be about down the road, trying to get them to buy in on it. What I am trying to do is I am trying to get the teacher

involved, I want a bottom up approach on 99% of what we are doing.

(Chuck S., 10-26-95)

Deb M.(SSS) from Lane Public Schools also identified the importance of the team approach in administration and the difficulties in making changes.

I see a real team approach here. The style of my predecessor had been very different and it was a while before I could really feel comfortable with the relationship that I had with the special teachers. Because the thing I kept getting back from them was that their opinion had never mattered before.

They were very suspicious. And it took me a little while to realize that.

That it was just going to take some time to build up trust. I was used to a team approach and they weren't. So it wasn't an overnight process. (Deb

M., 10-9-95)

When Deb M. began working at Lane Public Schools she had to develop trust in the relationship with the teachers. She initiated the change from a bureaucratic approach to a human relations approach. She developed the notion of team decision-making which valued the teachers opinions and participation in problem solving.

Decision Making Strategies

The participants described varying strategies for decision making including step by step processes to more fact finding reflective processes. Paul K. identified a four step process which addresses the political, financial and educational aspects of decision making.

I have a little plan that I work through if we are looking at a curriculum decision or anything that is going to be far reaching or anything that is going to cost say 300-400 bucks or up I ask myself #1- Is what we are contemplating going to be politically expedient? By that I mean can I market it? #2- Will it be administratively sound? #3- Will it be financially sound? #4- Is it educationally sound? (Paul K., 10-12-95)

A technical approach to decision making was also described by Carrie M. She focuses systematically on the coordination and control of the fact finding process in making decisions.

The first thing we do is gather all the facts and documentation. That includes using any information teachers might have. Meanwhile I look at all the options available. You have to decide and narrow it down to which ones are the best for that particular individual case. The fact finding process is very important. I can't come and make a very valid administrative decision without talking and discussing with them and having them make recommendations. (Carrie M., 10-30-95)

The decision making process for Chuck S. begins with focusing on the student's needs and he also stresses the importance of using empathic listening skills in acquiring information to make decisions.

I try to separate the personalities from the situation and try to key in on what's best for the kid and then, sometimes what's best for the student and what I am capable of providing. So under the circumstances if I were the parent what would I expect and I try to kind of go on that kind of a path. So I try to stay open and listen. A lot of times, I would say 99% of the cases where I had a request that was crazy all I needed to do was listen to it first. (Chuck S., 10-26-95)

Meg S. also exhibits a humanistic decision making process. She describes the general guidelines reflecting on the importance of listening during the process of decision making.

We look at the individual student or group of students that you are responsible for making a decision about, and you put yourself in the place if that were you or your child. What decision would you make? And kind of let that be a general guide as far as how to do that. You know you've got to learn to listen. (Meg S., 10-17-95)

Special education administrators primarily employ participatory strategies to make decisions. They appear to seek input from all possible resources and value the insights of parents, teachers, and administrators. These actions align with the assumptions presented by Bolman and Deal (1984) in the human relations approach to administrative behaviors. The decision making process is also reflective of the administrative organizational structure.

Melanie T. reported the use of school psychologists as the initial layer of administration indicates a linear structure of authority. According to Bolman and Deal (1984), the systematic structure emphasizes a hierarchy of levels of expertise and in decision-making found in the technical model of administrative behaviors.

Special education administrators show efforts in changing from technical models of administration to more humanistic approaches. The administrative approach initially used by Neil P. was characteristic of the technical model. His administrative behaviors were authoritarian and focused on the organization's goal of cleaning up the special education department. Once the department was reorganized the focus became more student oriented through the task of developing appropriate curriculum and instruction. Neil P. moved to a more humanistic approach through the implementation of program development committees. The new organizational structure emphasized participations and the value of teachers perceptions and opinions which is reflective of the human relations approach identified by Bolman and Deal (1984).

Paul K. changed from a technical autocratic model of administrative behavior to a more humanistic and symbolic approach (Bolman & Deal, 1984). He initiated teacher and administrative teams as part of his change to participatory management. He is striving to change his image of the "guy at the chop shop". This indicates a symbolic approach because what is important is how the teachers perceive Paul K. as an administrator.

Mark H. also seeks to change his autocratic technical approach to a humanistic model of administrative behaviors. His focus has changed to a participatory model which values the opinions and perspectives of others. He is attempting to change the linear structure of authority he had previously employed.

Data indicates the primary organizational structure for decision-making in special education administration is a humanistic approach as indicated by the principles identified by Bolman and Deal (1984). A participatory or team approach is common in special education administration.

The decision making process described by Paul K. is reflective of the technical model of administrative behaviors. The step-by-step approach exhibits a structured approach to meeting the school districts goals. The structure is systematically designed and

implemented through authoritative channels which are characteristics of the technical or structural approach of Bolman and Deal (1984).

Though the participants reflected technical strategies for decision making, the symbolic and humanistic approaches were also employed. Carrie M. alluded to seeking information for decision making in a symbolic way. It appears as if the teachers are essential in the fact finding process but ultimately the decision is made in authoritative manner. According to Bolman and Deal's (1984) model of administrative behaviors, Chuck S. demonstrates a humanistic approach in prioritizing the student's needs as most important. The importance of listening to parents indicates the value of their participation in the decision making process.

Special education administrators engage in varying processes for decision making which include systematic questioning and fact finding. The importance of being a good listener is stressed as a primary component for decision making. Taking into account the administrators from larger districts reported undergoing changes, special education administrators utilize varying forms of participatory decision making. According to the administrative models outlined by Bolman and Deal (1984) the participatory process implies a human relations approach which values meeting the needs of all parties. The analysis of the decision making process led to determining the factors which influence the practices of the special education administrators.

Factors That Influence Practice

The discussion of decision making and other primary responsibilities in special education administration led to determining what factors influenced the administrators in their day to day practices. The emphasis on maintaining compliance was clearly revealed as the primary focus in the practice of special education administration. The analysis of the data also revealed specific factors which special education administrators relied on in their practice. During the interview the influence of the participants' paths of preparation were inquired. The responses revealed many factors which influence the practice of special education administrators. Mentors, internship experiences, knowledge of the law,

common sense, university course work, and most commonly, practical experiences were among the responses received by the participants.

Mentors from various walks of life provide a strong influence on special education administrative practices. Personal and professional mentors were acknowledged as providing guidance and teaching to the participants. Paul K. expressed how his grandfather had taught him the basic philosophy he utilizes in guiding his everyday practice. .

When I get serious and I am trying to make hard decisions my own personal upbringing and my childhood all get involved. I was greatly influenced by my grandfather. One thing he taught me was to always do what was right.
(Paul K., 10-12-95)

Paul K. also discussed the importance of the relationship he had with a university professor who mentored him. He relies on his former professor's teachings to provide direction in his practice.

A university professor had convinced me of the philosophy that the building principal must be the educational leader in the building. As I began to learn that, then my approach to principals changed drastically. It became important that we just visited, not about special education problems, just visited. (Paul K., 10-12-95)

The university professor provided Paul K. with key information which assisted him in developing a closer relationship with the principals in the district.

Nancy T. and Meg S. identified the importance of their internship and mentors having influence on their practices.

I often rely on the experience and knowledge I gained from the special education administrator where I did my administrative internship. (Nancy T., 10-18-95)

As far as the daily operation and how I function in my job I would have to say that I had a couple of mentors in administration that I patterned after in the early years that gave me some real advantages. (Meg S., 10-17-95)

Nancy T. and Meg S. rely on their experiences from their internships and mentors in administration. They value the information gained regarding the daily operations of special education. Procedures for maintain compliance were acquired from participation in internship experiences. The mentor relationship provided first hand knowledge and expertise in working through the technical aspects of special education.

The importance of professional involvement and the reliance on professional organizations as support groups is common among special education administrators. Support groups provide members resources and professional mentors for a profession which is often learned on the job as indicated by Mark H.

I try to be resourceful, I try to be professionally involved and what that gives me, is I know what is available out there. What's available out there by the way changes continuously. But you have to be out there and you have to be engaged to be involved and know what's out there. You are only going to learn this while on the job. (Mark H. 10-6-95)

Other participants rely on professional organizations for similar reasons. Special education administrators seek mentors within their professional organizations to provide insight into practice. Nancy T. and Sandy H. indicated professional organizations were a primary source for gaining information related to their practices.

I belong to the Oklahoma Directors of Special Services (ODSS) and a regional special services organization which are professional groups. I gain information about resources from other members who are special education administrators. (Nancy T., 10-18-95)

There is also a group called ODSS, that work together that meet once a month. They look at every concern in special education from the legalities to inclusion to whatever. It is not meant to be a gripe session but it would be information and coming together to learn from each other. (Sandy H., 9-22-95)

Administrators emphasized the importance of remaining current in their field. They acknowledge the ever changing regulations and legal precedence and practices in the field of special education. They reported subscribing to research journals, legal sources, and

using technology as means to stay current in their profession. In order to remain up to date on new laws and changes in policies and procedures special education administrators strive to develop avenues to receive on-going resources and information.

I subscribe to a monthly journal on what's happening, I also subscribe to audio tapes. Daily things are happening in the courts that are changing what you thought you understood about special education just is not the case anymore at all now. (Marge D.,10-23-95)

I try to stay up, I read a lot, I like to read anyway, I use the computer, I use Special Net, I pull what I can off of Internet, I try to stay current, I keep up with legislation, I read drafts, I write letters by the way from time to time, I try to go to as many meetings as I can and stay informed. (Paul K., 10-12-95)

Special education administrators strive to remain current and up to date on the latest practices and information in the field of special education. Professional organizations provide mentorships for those practicing special education administration. They also employ a range of technical strategies including reading current research and law reporters and using various methods of technology.

Experience appears to be the key factor which influences the practice of special education administrators. The participants most commonly reported their practical experiences provided them with the knowledge and background in which they relied on most in their administrative practice. The experiences included general and special education teaching experiences, university course work, professional experiences, and experiences in working with families.

Special education administrators identified their classroom teaching experience as the setting in which they learned the skills they utilize in their practices. Some administrators expounded on the necessity of having teaching experiences to validate decisions and to establish credibility when working with school personnel. The importance of regular education experience was reported by Meg S. as a great benefit which enhances communication in the school setting due to the movement towards inclusion.

My experience in the regular education realm gives me a perspective that I have drawn on heavily in communicating with and working to unite regular and special education departments. (Meg S., 10-17-95)

Gail P. identifies her experience in general education as an essential component which influences her administrative behaviors. She also deems her experience as a special educator as crucial to her practice as a special education administrator.

I think that having taught is the most important thing. I think that experience in general education class has helped me because I have that perspective.

But the experience in the special education class, I just don't see how anyone could be a special education director without having had a background in special education. I don't see how you could do an adequate job. The most important thing is being a teacher of special education students. (Gail P., 9-12-95)

Melanie T. also draws from her personal experience in teaching special education to assist her in making decisions. This experience validates her decisions and provides credibility in the eyes of the teachers.

Most of the decisions that are made, you have to have had some experience so you can make good choices. So you have to have a pretty solid background and I would think you would need to have experience in teaching special education. I think in this district that has helped me the most. Because when I come in they ask me something. They know that my decision is based on experience and that is going to be relevant to their experience. (Melanie T. 11-1-95)

Melanie T. expressed the importance of her professional experience from a symbolic approach. Her experience in teaching validates her decisions when assisting teachers. The decisions which are made are credible because the teachers perceive Melanie T. as making valid decisions based on her own like experiences.

Neil D. from Pine Public Schools has regular education and elementary principal administration experience. He strongly stated the importance of having an administrative background to be effective in administering special education programs.

All of my training has been in administration and that truly does make a difference. The previous director had never had any administrative experience. I had to admit and think this is an advantage. I am not a special education trained person to this day. So I recognize that I, at that time and today, am not an expert in curriculum and instruction for special kids. (Neil D., 10-2-95)

Neil D. relies on his extensive administrative experience and relies on his teachers to direct issues regarding curriculum and instruction for students. He perceives his lack of experience and knowledge in special education as an advantage which has influenced how he administers his programs with professional development committees.

Carrie M. describes the importance of seeking information from personal experiences and experience of other professionals and parents.

I rely very heavily on my own experiences and even more on the experiences of my teachers, because they deal with these students on a day to day basis. They can give me a lot of insight that I may or may not see on paper. Not just the special education teachers, but the regular education teachers, counselors, administrators, and all the other people. You can get a lot of information from your parents and their experiences. It may or may not be the same as what we have at school but it is important. (Carrie M., 10-30-95)

Carrie M. values the experiences and knowledge of others in assisting her in meeting the challenges of the practice of special education administration. Realizing technical documents may not provide the personal insights of parents and teachers, she relies on their experiences in guiding her practice.

Practical experiences and knowledge acquired through university course work influence the practices of special education administrators also. The quality of the experience and the hands of approach appeared to be significant to those who relied on their course work to guide their practices. Sandy H. described the impact of her educational background on her practice. Though she relies on the Policy and Procedures Manual to

address certain technical issues she primarily uses her prior experiences and the knowledge base acquired through university course work in her practice.

Of course I look at the Policy and Procedures Manual as far as any specific information that I need dealing with a certain category, and I have a few good textbooks on exceptionalities I have had to refer to, but I would say my main source is just practical experience. I think when I was taking my course work, I just remember working with some professionals that gave us hands on experience with all kinds of kids. I just remember some techniques they used, how warm they were, how caring they were, how open they were and how approachable they were. So I think that base course work I had in college is very very helpful. (Sandy H., 9-22-95)

Her description focuses on the humanistic characteristics of her professors and the direct experiences she had with students with disabilities.

Meg S.'s professional preparation is in general education and administration. She describes how she incorporates her knowledge base into her practice.

I really did get a lot of practical help on how to work my administrative role in my course work that I took in administration. I took it seriously and I actually have applied alot of the theories. (Meg S., 10-17-95)

Others factors which influence the practice of special education administrators are knowledge of the legal aspects of special education and the use of common sense. Both Deb M. and Neil D. identified the importance of a legal background and elements of common sense as key factors which influence their practices. The use of common sense and intuition indicate a personal or practical approach to administration.

I think a lot of it is an understanding of the law and common sense. There's no magic in special education you know. It's just good teaching and most teachers are good teachers and they just don't know that they can teach special education. Most of my decisions are made because of past experiences, knowledge of the law, common sense and the ability to just say this is the way we are going to do it. (Neil D., 10-2-95)

I draw a lot from the procedural facet and I draw a tremendous amount from my previous experiences. But from the other dimension that there's not always a procedure for everything and you know your intuition is right . Common sense type of thing and just good judgment skills. It is a combination of what you know from formal experiences, yet what you just know from working with families over the years. I think a lot of that personal type of approach that I try to put at the forefront of everything I do comes again from a lot of my experience as a clinician and working with families. (Deb M., 10-9-95)

Responses regarding what special education administrators relied on to meet the challenges within their practices and where did they learn to do what they do, revealed varying perspectives. Data revealed personal experience was by far the greatest factor of influence. Gail P., Melanie T. and Neil D. have general education teaching experience, special education teaching experience, or administrative backgrounds and felt their professional experiences were most valuable in guiding their practices. Nancy T., Meg S., Paul K. and Sandy H. relied on mentors, internships and university course work which indicated their value of other's experiences. Mark H., Paul K., Marge D., Nancy T. and Sandy H. emphasized the importance of remaining current and seeking support and information from professional organizations. Both Neil D. and Deb M. rely on a combination of technical and humanistic approaches to defining the factors which influence their practices. They identified relying on their technical legal knowledge base and their own common sense. Administrators from similar professional paths of preparation approached special education administration practices from different models of organizational and administrative behaviors (Table 4.2). Data revealed special education administrators utilize multiple models of administrative behaviors to address the technical challenges encompassing the practice of special education administration.

 Insert Table 4.2 About Here

Table 4.2 Identification of Models of Administrative Behaviors Created from Participants Responses Regarding Practice in Special Education Administration

Paths of Preparation	Participant	Compliance			Staff Development	Facilitation						Decision-making	
		Litigation Costs	Policies and Procedures	Monitoring		Complicance	Resource Development	Communication Structure	Teachers	Parents	Finance	Structure	Strategies
*SSS	Marge D.	T	T			T		H	H	T	T	H	H
	Mark H.	T	T	H	S/H	T	H	H	H		T	T/H	H
	Paul K.	T	T	T		T		H	H	H	P/S	T/H	T
SSN	Carrie M.		T	T	H/S	T	H	T	H	H		T	T
	Deb M.	T	T	H		H		H	H	H		H	H
	Melanie T.	T		T		T		T	T	H		T	H
NNS	Sandy H.		T		T	T	T/S	T		T		T	
	Gail P.	T	T	T	H	T		T	T	H		T	T
	Chuck S.	T	T	H		T	H/S	S	H	H	H	H	H
NNN	Neil D.		T		P/S		H/S	S	H			H	H
	Meg S.	T	T	T	H	T	H	H	H	H	T	H	H
	Nancy T.		T		H	T	H		H		T		H

Note: T = Technical (Structural) P = Political * = Abbreviation Order
 S = Non-Special Education H = Human Relations Undergraduate Degree - Professional Experience - Graduate Study

During the discussions of influencing factors and determining how the participants learned what they knew, administrators identified several areas in which they desired more knowledge and experience in to assist them in performing their duties and making decision in their day to day practice. Recognizing the overall emphasis on maintaining compliance special education administrators identified areas which they perceive would assist them in meeting the technical system imposed by legal mandates on special education administration. These areas ranged from specific course work targeted for special education administration to specific skills necessary to enhance their communication efforts with parents. Chuck S. and Meg S. expressed concern about the lack of specialized training and certification for special education administrators.

The development and education of administration in special education is lacking. I'm upset that the program is set up so that there is no program for directors of special education or administration programs to kind of tell you what it is you need to know about being a director. What I really needed was I needed information about school finance from somebody who knows what they are talking about. We need to have a little background in accounting with some classes specifically lined up on how special education works. (Chuck S. 10-26-95)

Something should be designed that incorporates some of the district wide administrative things that you get in superintendent certification and the unique things that we apply just to the special education field. When you consider how many students are effected by the decisions that people in this field make, and when you consider the amount of money that is involved in our state for this and then also the legal implications. It is pretty amazing that certification is not a requirement for our state. (Meg S., 10-17-95)

Another targeted area of content identified as a need for special education administrators is an increase in the knowledge of methods and experiences in working with adults. Deb M. and Sandy H. discussed the need for training in communication skills to enhance their abilities to work with people, specifically adults.

I think it would be great to have more of a background than what I've got working with people and working with adults and facilitating with other people. I hate to call that personnel, it really doesn't capture what it is. I think really if we had some training, beyond just book knowledge, in areas such as the sociological aspects of working with adults in various settings. (Deb M., 10-9-95)

I think I needed more people skills more than anything, as far as directing anything, directed to special education. I don't remember really receiving any information. I think classes that might be taught about that I probably got some information but as far as any of the objectives in the classroom pertaining to special education, I don't remember anything. Not in administration. Not even in counseling. (Sandy H., 9-12-95)

Melanie T. also revealed the need for training in working people. She discussed the issue in light of enhancing communication skills with parents.

I think a lot of problems with parents is because we aren't trained to deal with people. I think that is necessary because we've had some very angry parents. (Melanie T., 11-1-95)

Additional skills training in mediation and how to work with community agencies were two areas suggested to be included in the preparation programs of special education administration. These issues were targeted by Marge D. and Nancy T.

I think arbitration skills, mediation skills should be taught at the college level because this is something you use all the time, I mean you just use all the time and so you know courses in mediation would be very valuable. (Marge D., 10-23-95)

I would like to have more information about social services and how they can be integrated into schools; how to access these resources. Teachers and principals could be better informed and trained to work with outside agencies. (Nancy T., 10-18-95)

As indicated by the participants responses there are many targeted areas of preparation necessary for special education administrators to experience in order to meet

the challenges of their practices. The special education administrators called for further preparation in the following areas: (1) specialized training leading to certification in special education administration; (2) increased knowledge and experience in working with adults; (3) mediation and arbitration skills; and (4) increased awareness of community resources. All of the areas identified by the participants address technical skills or knowledge necessary for meeting compliance issues in special education.

Summary

Special education administration is encompassed in a technical system laden with responsibilities for maintaining compliance with federal and state mandates. To primary directions were identified from the participants descriptions of their practices including (1) What do special education administrators comply with? and (2) How do special education administrators 'get' others to comply? The following sub-categories and themes emerged from the participants responses regarding their practice of special education administration: (1) rules and regulations (policies and procedures, litigation and costs, monitoring processes); (2) staff development (strategies and barriers); (3) facilitator (resource development, communication, finance); and (4) decision making (structure of authority and strategies). The participant responses indicated a great variance in organizational and administrative behaviors in meeting the challenges in practicing special education administration.

The participants revealed a wide range of factors which influence the practice of special education administrators. The following factors were identified as key influences in which the participants rely on in their practices: (1) mentors; (2) internships; (3) professional organizations; (4) research journals; (5) technology; (6) professional work experience; (7) experience with families; (8) professional education; (9) legal background; and (10) common sense. The predominant response among the participants was the influence of past professional experiences.

The analysis of the participants' responses revealed administrators from similar professional paths of preparation approach similar tasks in different fashions. Special

education administration is a technical practice of maintaining compliance. Though the tasks required in administering special education are technical and bureaucratic, special education administrators approach their administrative functions utilizing multiple models of organizational and administrative behaviors. They employed technical, humanistic, symbolic, political and personal/practical approaches independent of their preparation (Figure 4.2). The analysis indicates that the tasks required for maintaining compliance are technical due to the systematic controls and authoritative structure designed within the federal mandates. These organizational and administrative behaviors are found in the technical or structural model of Bolman and Deal (1984).

Insert Figure 4.2 About Here

Mark H. (SSS), Meg S. (NNN), Gail P. (NNS), Paul K. (SSS), and Carrie M. (NNS) reported using technical approaches of administrative behaviors when addressing compliance. They expressed the primary goal of their practice to be centered around compliance. They employed systematic coordination and control by structuring rules and strict guidelines to adhere to. They reported spending time developing policies and monitoring processes to assure conformity to the state and federal mandates. These efforts indicate a strong technical approach to organizational and administrative behaviors as described in the structural model of Bolman and Deal (1984).

Deb M. (SSN) and Chuck S. (NNS) both engaged in human relations approaches by focusing on the needs of their teachers and students. Chuck S. emphasized the importance of developing positive relationships with community resources to provide services for children with disabilities. The human relations approach assumes administrators demonstrate behaviors which show consideration of the needs of the people within the organization (Bolman and Deal, 1984). The participants expressed great concern for parents and identified listening as the utmost important skill. As indicated in the data, Paul K. (SSS), Gail P. (NNS), Carrie M. (SSN) and Marge D. (SSS) expressed concerns

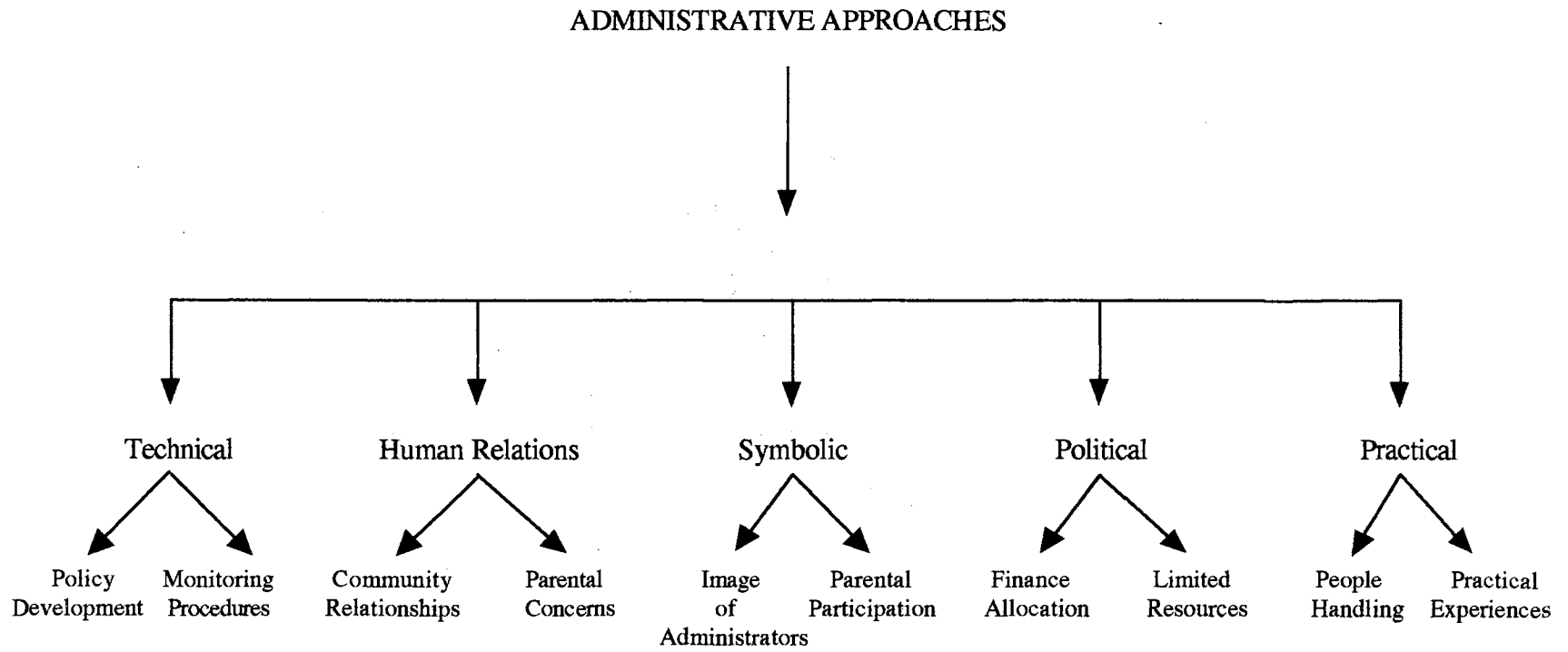


Figure 4.2 Administrative Approaches in the Practice of Special Education Administration

which correspond with the human relations approach. The professional education and experiences of the administrators encompass all different paths of preparation. Data showed that the administrators engaged in similar approaches though they were from differing paths of preparation.

Staff development is designed and implemented from all administrative approaches as outlined by Bolman and Deal (1984). Mark H. (SSS), Gail P. (NNS), Carrie M. (SSN), Sandy H. (NNS), and Neil D. (NNN) have different paths of preparations and demonstrated a combination of technical, political, symbolic, and human relations approaches to staff development. Though Gail P. (NNS) and Sandy H. (NNS) share the same path of preparations their responses indicated Gail P. demonstrated a human relations approach in considering her teachers needs and Sandy H. demonstrated a technical approach in disseminating changes in regulations in categorical meetings.

Sandy H. (NNS) and Neil D. (NNN) both expressed concern about teachers perceptions of them as administrators. Their concern about their image as an administrator influenced how they conducted staff development and their relationship with teachers. These efforts indicate a symbolic approach to administration.

Facilitating communication is a significant part of the practice of special education administration. Communicating with agencies, teachers, principals, and parents requires establishing relationships to facilitate services and best practices for students with disabilities. The data indicate special education administrators approach the practice of facilitating communication from various perspectives including technical, human relations, and symbolic. Facilitating communication also took on a technical perspective by administrators who communicate with in a linear more bureaucratic structure as indicated in Sandy H. (NNS) and Melanie T.'s (SSN) responses.

The political approach was demonstrated by Paul K. (SSS) and Neil D. (NNN). Paul K. expressed concern about the excessive cost of special education services and the impact of costly financial allocations for special education on general education. Neil D. demonstrated a political approach to staff development in providing teachers the opportunity to provide inservice to other teachers and principals. Neil D. noted that these efforts enhanced the position of special education among principals, resulting in positive

attitudes towards special education at the building level.

Neil D. (NNN) and Deb M. both indicated they utilize a common sense or intuitive approach when addressing challenges in their daily practices. They emphasized the importance of relying on practical knowledge and experience to enhance their people handling skills. This indicates special education administrators employ not only technical, human relations, symbolic and political approaches to administration but they also demonstrate a personal/practical model of administration.

The study revealed special education administration is predominantly shaped by legal mandates. Special education administrators rely on a variety of factors in meeting the challenges of their practices including practical experiences. The results of the analysis revealed special education administrators approach their practices independent of their paths of professional preparation.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Requirements for the administration and supervision of special education have grown rapidly since special education services have been federally mandated. Landmark federal laws have made it essential that special education administrators take on differing responsibilities in working with students and staff. The mandate for educating children with disabilities has brought about an increase in the number of referrals for evaluations and the number of students served in special education. These increases triggered the growth in special education programs and increased the need for additional administration.

In the past administrators of special programs received their training and experiences on the job. This has led to a wide variation in the roles, functions, and practice of administrative professionals. The importance of preparing special education administrators is directly related to the provision of services for children with disabilities. The models(s) of organization and administration utilized in practice are possibly influenced by the path of preparation of the special education administrator.

The research problem was to determine to what extent does the educational background and experience influence special education administrators practice. This study focused on examining the influence of paths of preparation and dominant models of organization and administrative behaviors in special education administration.

The research questions were:

1. How do special education administrators describe their practice?
2. Do differing paths toward special education administration influence practice?
3. If paths do influence practice, what model of organization and administrative behavior is dominant in practice within each path?

A qualitative study allowed the researcher to develop a description of special education administrator's perceptions about their practice. The qualitative method of long interviewing was used to address the research problem. Following the development of a memo and extensive review of literature regarding current practices in special education, an open-ended questionnaire was developed. The researcher conducted twelve long interviews with special education administrators from suburban areas of Oklahoma. The administrators were selected based on their paths of professional preparation and experience leading to the position of special education administration. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Participants were provided complete anonymity by using pseudonyms for participants and their school districts.

The transcripts were analyzed using McCracken's editing style of analysis. The analysis led to determining categories and themes of special education administration. Factors which influence the practice of special education administration were also identified and analyzed to determine dominant models of organization and administrative behaviors.

Special education administrators viewed their primary responsibility in assuring compliance with state and federal regulations for educating children with disabilities. The analysis of the data revealed the following sub-categories and themes in practice of special education administration: (1) rules and regulations (litigation and cost, policies and procedures, monitoring processes); (2) staff development (strategies, content, barriers); (3) facilitation (resource development, communication, finance); and (4) decision-making (structure of authority and processes). They spend time developing and implementing policies for teachers and administrators to assure procedural safeguards are followed. Special education administrators are concerned about the ongoing threat and impact of litigation on the school district. The excessive cost of litigation is burdensome for special education administrators.

The administrators approach issues of compliance through various models of administrative behaviors. According to the models of administrative behaviors presented by Bolman and Deal (1984), special education administrators rely on the technical model using authoritative, systematic controls to monitor compliance. Bolman and Deal's (1984)

humanistic model was also utilized by the participants in attempting to remain focused on students and their needs while meeting compliance regulations.

Special education administrators spend time in staff development. The purpose for staff development is frequently to educate staff about new regulations for special education to address the primary goal of maintaining compliance. Administrators engage in staff development from political, symbolic and humanistic approaches as outlined by Bolman and Deal (1984). They expressed concern about the needs of teachers and the importance of tailoring staff development in a personalized approach which reflect a human relations model of administration. The symbolic approach is demonstrated through the administrators concern regarding the perception of special education by general educators and principals. They often conducted staff development to enhance the visibility of special education.

Special education administrators facilitate resource development to fulfill mandated services for children with disabilities. Resource development encompasses seeking services as well as establishing relationships with outside agencies. According to Bolman and Deal's (1984) model of administrative behaviors, special education administrators approach resource development from an educative perspective of the human relations model. The administrators' primary focus is on meeting the educational needs of the students. They engage in the process of seeking participation of outside agencies to provide services and support which are mandated by federal regulations.

Special education administrators facilitate communication with teachers, administrators, and parents. They use technical, symbolic and human relations approaches to enhance the communication process. Linear communication structures reflect the technical approach outlined by Bolman and Deal (1984). Special education administrators also engage in direct communication to address the needs of teachers and parents. These efforts indicate the human relations approach from Bolman and Deal's administrative model.

Special education administrators identified communicating with parents as their primary challenge in practice. They value the input of parents and listen intently to what

parents say and how they feel about their child's educational program. Special education administrators also focused on the process or activities which required the participation of parents such as the number of meetings required and how often they had to meet with parents. At times the process appears more important than the content of the meeting.

Special education administrators facilitate the use of limited financial resources to meet the costly needs of students with disabilities. Though they are concerned about the needs of the students they are also concerned with the impact of the financial burden of special education on general education. Special education administrators demonstrate an authoritative manner in 'drawing the line' when faced with costly expenditures.

Special education administrators employ participatory or team approaches to decision making. Their primary goal is to assure the needs of the students are met. Three administrators reported changing from an authoritarian model to a more human relations approach. The change included abandoning a top down approach for a more participatory model. Special education administrators value the input of teachers, parents, and other administrators when faced with making decisions. The administrators identified the importance of listening. Special education administrators used step by step processes and intense fact finding strategies when faced with making decisions.

The practice of special education administration is influenced by varying factors. Professional and personal mentors, internship experiences, knowledge of the law, common sense, university course work, and most commonly, practical experiences were among the responses received by the participants. The analysis of the participant's responses indicates special education administrators rely on professional experiences and knowledge in their daily practices. Administrators from similar paths of preparation reported different factors of influence in their practices. Data indicates special education administrators from similar paths of preparation do not practice from a dominate model of administration (Table 4.1).

Based on the research findings, the answer to the research problem is that the educational background and experience of special education administrators influence their practice but paths of preparation do not result in administrators engaging in a predominant

models of administration. Special education administrators rely on their experiences and knowledge when making decisions necessary in their practice. Though they may rely on previous experiences the administrators demonstrate multiple administrative approaches to meeting the challenges of the technical system imbued in the practice of special education administration. Special education administrators from similar paths of preparation approach specific tasks through different administrative models. Depending on the task, which is primarily driven from a technical legalistic system, administrators demonstrate behaviors from the technical, political, symbolic and the human relations models. The research revealed special education administrators also practice from a personal approach which encompasses practical experiences, common sense and intuition.

The results of the research are dependent on the strengths and weaknesses of the research questions, method of inquiry, and technique of analysis. The research question focusing on the practice of special education was the foundation of this study. The question led to discovering current information regarding the practice of special education. The question encompassed the total practice of special education administrators and did not lead the participants to talk narrowly about predetermined roles reported in previous research. Through the discussions regarding practice the special education administrators revealed using various models of administrative behaviors. Their responses were often detailed and full of emotion. Their excitement led to more in depth responses about their practices.

The research question regarding the influence of the differing paths of preparation on special education administration was more difficult to approach in the study. In asking the participants to discuss factors which influenced their practice and how they learned to do what they do, the responses varied greatly. Their responses appeared random. Some addressed their path of preparation directly while others alluded to ways they gained new information and experiences on the job. Perhaps more information regarding the influence of their professional paths of preparation could have been determined by redirecting the participants based on their responses.

The long interview method of qualitative research allowed the researcher to gain

insight into the practice of special education administration from the participants' perspectives. The open ended style of questioning provided the researcher the opportunity to acquire information about the practice of special education administration without limiting the responses. The participants appeared at ease in discussing their practices. The researcher was able to develop a good rapport with the participants as indicated by their willingness to openly discuss personal and professional issues. Since the focus of the study was primarily on the practice of special education administration the documentation gathered was limited to the total number of students, number of students with disabilities and the number of sites in each school district. The purpose of limiting the site description was originally to remain focused on the administrator. Possibly other documentation regarding categories of students served or number of special education faculty would have been beneficial in providing a more descriptive account of factors which might influence practice.

Due to the openness of the interview process the interviews were often lengthy. Many of their responses provided overlapping issues which led to difficulties in the analysis. Due to the enormous amount of data from the twelve transcripts the analysis was quite tedious in sorting out useful information in response to the research questions. Though the data revealed common cultural categories in practicing special education administration, the categories were overlapping rather than distinct isolated roles in the profession.

It was important for the researcher to remain distant and consistent in the process of creating categories and themes. The researcher focused on identifying common verbs, actions, and relationships within the responses of the participants. By analyzing the transcript shortly after each interview was conducted the researcher was able to make slight adjustments in the questioning to maintain the focus on answering the research questions.

The research results support earlier studies and also suggest a new direction regarding the practice of special education administration. Over the past four decades, key roles and functions of special education administrators continue to be part of the practice. Earlier studies by Mackie and Engel (1955), Marro and Kohl (1972) and Johnson and

Burrello (1988) identified common practices in special education. The common roles and functions in the practice of special education administration found in the previous research which are supported by results of the current study are: (1) coordination with community agencies; (2) budget and financial issues; (3) legal procedures; (4) staff development; and (5) public relations. Each of these areas can be found to be prevalent in addressing issues of compliance and are entangled within the cultural categories and themes of the current study.

The results of the current study also indicate changes in the law have influenced the practice of special education administration to focus on compliance issues. In the 1960's and 1970's the concerns in special education administration revolved around access and availability of special education programs for school age children. The practice of special education administration was more child focused. During the 1980's more programs were available and special education leaders were accountable for program quality and student achievement (Sage & Burrello, 1986). In 1985 Prillaman and Richardson reported on the major roles and functions of special education administrators in their nationwide study. Prillaman and Richardson (1985) found the responsibilities of an administrator of special education had become more demanding and more diverse during the decade following the passage of PL 94-142. The following major roles and functions were identified: Program planning for the varied exceptionalities; Program implementation for individual students and the entire local education agency; Program operation and maintenance; Working with parents; Personnel selection; Interpretation of legislation; Consultation; Compliance monitoring; and Program advocacy. They identified nine roles which primarily focused on issues regarding program development.

The results of this study indicate the primary focus of the practice of special education administration is maintaining compliance with state and federal regulations. The culture of the practice of special education can be defined through two channels. One focuses on what do special education administrators have to comply with and the other channel focuses on how do special education administrators 'get others to comply. The

focus on maintaining compliance impacts the total practice of special education administrators. In 1985 Swan reported on the increase in the role of policy planning in special education administration due to the continuous change in regulations. “While administrators have generally been proactive planners in terms of direct services, their skills in policy analysis and planning—including the tax structure, legislation, funding and interagency relationships— must be enhanced if they are to maintain and improve their programs” (Swan, 1985, p. 88).

According to the results of this study, the emphasis on compliance has increased over the past four decades and remains prevalent in special education administration. The remaining three broad cultural categories, staff development, facilitation, and decision making, are all impacted by the overall focus on compliance issues. Significant challenges identified by the participants include working with parents and families including those of students with serious emotional disturbance and meeting the needs of the students when efforts are restricted by limited resources and finances.

The results of this study indicate special education administrators rely on their previous professional education and experiences in their practices. They also seek to remain current in a field that changes rapidly due to new policies and procedures. These efforts emphasize the importance of keeping up to date in order to assure compliance in meeting mandates. This indicates special education administrators rely on current information and experiences to guide their practices while learning on the job. This notion was also found true in previous studies (Connors, 1963; Marro & Kohl, 1972; Stile, Abernathy, & Pettibone, 1986).

The results of the research also support previous studies regarding the multi-model approach to administration. As discussed in Chapter I, Wimpelburg, Abrams, and Catardi (1985) proposed a multiple model to the administration of early childhood special education. They analyzed the practice of early childhood special education administration according to an adapted model of administrative behaviors by Bolman and Deal (1984). They determined that a multi-model administrative approach was essential in successfully addressing the diverse roles and functions unique to early childhood special education

administration. Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera (1985) developed the notion of the repertoire model of administrative leadership in early childhood special education. The repertoire model relies on the administrators pre-service preparation and continued professional development throughout the individual's professional career. The results of this research imply special education administrators demonstrate administrative practices which reflect characteristics from the multi-model approach (Wimpelburg, et. al., 1985), the identified personal/practical experience approach and the repertoire model (Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera, 1985) as shown in Figure 5.1.

Insert Figure 5.1 About Here

The results of the research show participants approach the technical practice of special education administration from multi-models of administrative behaviors. They demonstrate characteristics of the technical, political, symbolic and humanistic approaches as well as the identified personal/practical experience model. The results also note the participants combine the multi-model approach with the repertoire model indicating their practices are influenced by their professional education and experiences as well as relying on a variety of sources to gain current information.

Implications

These findings and conclusions suggest that special education administrators must make constant efforts in keeping current regarding new regulations and practices in special education. Special education administrators are 'fundamentalist' by the nature of the tasks they must undertake in the legalistic system of federal mandates. The primary focus on compliance issues requires special education administrators to practice 'by the book'. The field of special education is constantly changing due to the reauthorization of the federal mandates. The constant impact of regulatory changes forces special education

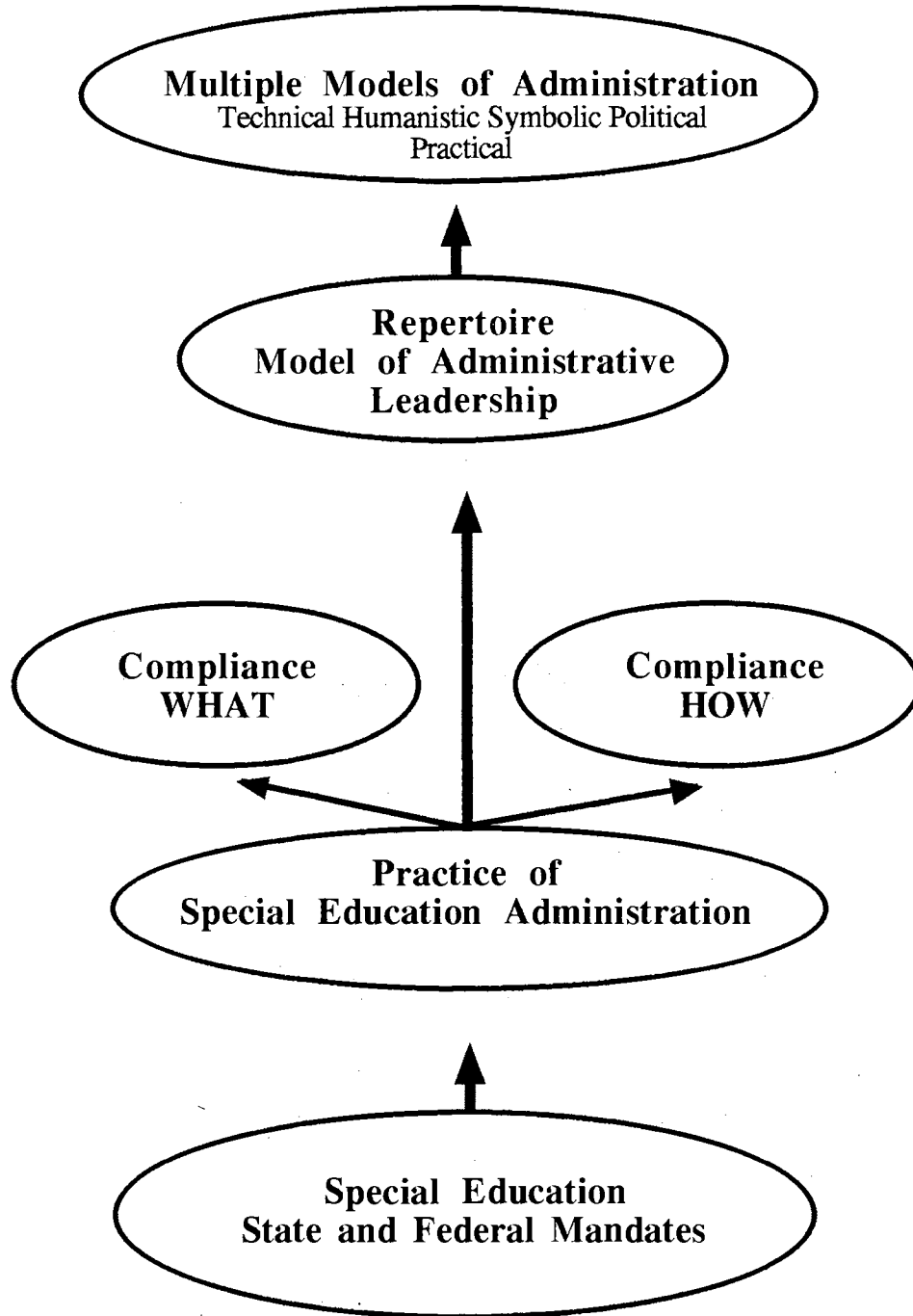


Figure 5.1 The Impact of Legal Mandates on the Practice of Special Education Administration and Models of Administrative Behaviors.

administrators to engage in technical tasks. Regardless of the professional path of preparation, special education administrators are responsible for keeping their school districts in compliance and must educate themselves with the most current information available. Mark H., Paul K., Marge D., and Melanie T. all identified the importance of remaining current regarding new laws and regulations and available resources in their practice. The ability to access information through technology such as World Wide Web, Internet, Special Net, and other electronic bulletin boards is crucial in acquiring new knowledge to educate the staffs and parents of students with disabilities. Special education administrators should maintain active membership in professional organizations. The results of this study indicate professional organizations provide mentors for new administrators as well as resources for obtaining the most current information in the field of special education.

Special education administrators should also be prepared to address compliance issues through technical tasks. Special education administrators must be prepared to give technical assistance but also be prepared to work with people. If we want administrators to be more like Deb M. and Mark H. in their personal human relations approach to working with their staffs in addressing compliance issues then we need to prepare administrators to communicate and collaborate. While the nature of the special education process emphasizes the technical perspective in evaluating and labeling children, traditions in the teaching of administration itself also have a strong bias in that direction. To be prepared to address the complex issues in special education the technical model is necessary but not sufficient.

Mark H. reflected on his administrative approaches over the past six years and reported various attempts in making changes in how he communicates with parents and teachers and how he approaches decision making. If we want special education administrators to reflect about their decision making and the impact of their decisions on others we must provide special education administrators the opportunity to gain training and experiences which required reflection.

The research indicates special education administrators have different paths of preparation. One of the primary influences on administrative practices was professional

knowledge and experiences gained from university course work. Higher education course work should be reviewed to assure administrators are provided current information regarding special education regulations in addition to skills which will allow them to seek information regarding on going regulatory changes. Gail P., Sandy H. and Melanie T. reflected on the importance of the knowledge base and practical experiences they gained in their courses regarding students with disabilities. Higher education faculty should review and update courses in administration, general and special education to assure the provision of a strong knowledge base regarding students with disabilities. The results of this study provide current information regarding the practice of special education administrators. The skills required to address the challenges in special education administration should be incorporated into the university course work. An integrative approach to training is called for to enhance the preparation of special education administrators. Collaborative teaching among disciplines in higher education would provide model training in collaboration among professionals as well as integrating relevant information and skills. Integrative training among disciplines provides opportunities to problem solve and communicate which are essential in practicing special education administration. Integrative training will assist administrators to learn to work with other professionals which was identified as components of practice by Nancy T. and Deb M.

Institutes of higher education and state boards of certifications should employ strategies for developing professional mentors and internship experiences in special education administration. Nancy T. and Meg S. identified the value of practical experiences in addressing the competences required in their administrative practices.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research should examine the impact of special education administration on the education of students with disabilities. This study has provided information regarding the practice of special education administration from the participants perspective. A case study approach would allow the researcher to spend extended time in the setting to develop

a descriptive account of the practice of special education administration and how it impacts students with disabilities. A case study approach would allow for thick description which would include gaining the perceptions of teachers, administrators, parents, and students. This information would be important in determining the impact of practice of special education administration on the provision of services for students with disabilities. The extended amount of time in the setting would also enhance the relationship of the researcher with members of the school settings. Participant-observation would be valuable in documenting day to day activities from a first hand perspective.

The results of the current study indicate special education administrators are influenced by certain factors in their practices. It is also known that their practices reflect multiple administrative approaches to similar technical tasks. A case study approach would allow the researcher to spend more time in the setting and witness the process of what factors special education administrators rely on in making decisions. The researcher could examine specific administrative behaviors which impact the services for students with disabilities.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

MEMO REGARDING EXPERIENCES IN SPECIAL
EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

Categories- Parallel of what situations are similar to the topic.

Draw analogies from experiences.

administrator observes teacher's performance

administrator evaluates teacher's paperwork

administrator plans inservice training for teachers, parents, principals

administrator collaborates with service providers

administrator develops contact with resources to provide services

administrator trains principals regarding policies and procedures of special education

administrator develops budget for special programs

administrator writes grants for funding

administrator communicates with regular teachers regarding modifications for students with
disabilities

administrator problem solves with teachers and parents

administrator seeks assistance from the state department of education to clarify regulations

administrator monitors district wide documentation of special education services

APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

I understand that participation in this interview is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project director/dissertation adviser.

I understand that the interview will be conducted according to commonly accepted research procedures and that information taken from the interview will be recorded in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed verbatim. All data collected, including the interview tapes, will be kept under lock and key. The tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study and the data will be kept by the researcher for a minimum of two years following the study.

I understand the purpose of this study is to determine current practices in special education administration and how practice is influenced by the paths of preparation. I understand the interview will not cover topics that could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or deal with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior, or use of alcohol.

I may contact the project director (dissertation adviser) class instructor, L. Nan Restine, Ph.D., Department of EAHED, College of Education, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Ok; Telephone: (405)744-7244 should I wish further information about the research. I may also contact Jennifer Moore, University Research Services, 001 Life Science East, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Ok 74078; Telephone: (405) 744-5700.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ (A.M./P.M.)

SIGNED: _____
(Signature of Subject)

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject before requesting the subject to sign it and provided the subject with a copy of this form.

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ (A.M./P.M.)

SIGNED: _____
(Signature of student)

I agree to abide by the language and the intent of this consent form.

DATE: _____

SIGNED: _____
(Signature of Project Director/ Dissertation Adviser)

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPROVAL FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 08-10-95

IRB#: ED-96-011

Proposal Title: SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS: PATHS OF
PREPARATION AND MODELS OF PRACTICE

Principal Investigator(s): L.N. Restine, Gay Washington

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
AT NEXT MEETING.

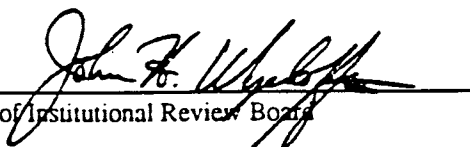
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A
CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD
APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR
APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval
are as follows:

Provisions received and approved.

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: September 8, 1995

VITA 

Nancy Gay Washington

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS: PATHS OF PREPARATION
AND MODELS OF PRACTICE

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Nathan Hale High School, Tulsa, Oklahoma in May 1974; received Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Behavioral Sciences in Education from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December 1977; received Master of Science degree with a major in Special Education from Oklahoma State University in July 1981; completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education at Oklahoma State University in May 1996.

Experience: Stillwater Public Schools, Stillwater Oklahoma, Special Education teacher and administrator, 1978 to 1990; University of Central Oklahoma, College of Education, Assistant Professor in Special Education, 1990 to present.

Professional Membership: Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Learning Disabilities Association, Teacher Education Division (CEC), Division of Career Development and Transition (CEC), University Affiliated Program Faculty Associate.