THE PERCEPTIONS OF INTERVENTION ASSISTANCE TEAM MEMBERS ON THE IMPACT OF THE INTERVENTION ASSISTANCE TEAMS (IATs) IN REDUCING SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRALS IN URBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A Dissertation

by

CHERRYE S. VASQUEZ

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2005

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

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ABSTRACT

The Perceptions of Intervention Assistance Team Members on the Impact of the Intervention Assistance Teams (IATs) in Reducing Special Education Referrals in Urban Elementary Schools. (December 2005)

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This was a quantitative study of 100 educators from various job codes within the intervention assistance teams (IATs) of 16 schools. This study examined the perceptions of IAT members of factors impacting referrals to special education.

The results of this study yielded the following as it related to the perceptions and self-reported behaviors of IAT members in an urban school district:

1. Intervention assistance team members perceived that four factors impacted referrals: intervention strategies, team contribution, teacher efficacy, and coping strategies.
2. Analyses of data did not support differences by position among IAT members in their perceptions of factors impacting referrals as being dependent on schools. The teachers, administrators, and other (support staff) in all of the 16 sample schools perceived each factor similarly.

3. IAT members exhibited mixed perceptions concerning their job code duties as relative to team efficacy.
4. Behaviors of IAT members were inconsistent in making routine visits to the classroom to observe candidates and inspecting samples of student work prior to meeting with the IAT and graphing progress and results of IAT.

DEDICATION

In memory of my father, Charles T. Calhoun

To my mother, Leola W. Calhoun
To my husband, Juan A. Vasquez
To my daughter, Kelly A. Vasquez

To my siblings, Charlsie, Craig, and Cande…

THANK YOU!!!!

I LOVE YOU!!!!!

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Fundamentally, I have the expressed desire to give reverence to God for his goodness and mercy throughout my life, during the writing of this research manuscript, and forever more. Thank you God for your son, for your wisdom, and writings (and the writings of your apostles). What you have provided in script has allowed me to read and gain strength. Just a few of my favorite readings from the "good book" that have led me through: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed" (Matthew 17:20). "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17). The strength gained from these two passages has given me the power to "just keep on keeping on" and to lean on his promises.

To those 16 school administrators who willingly agreed to be a part of this research study, I give thanks and appreciation. I could not have reached the completion of this journey without your support and input of your IAT staff.

In memory of my father, Charles T. Calhoun, I memorialize you and dedicate this work to you for a great beginning in higher education. In your memory, I have pressed on. To my dearest mother, Leola W. Calhoun, you have been the best mother that anyone could have ever been blessed with; thanks for those famous words, "not *if* you go to college, but *when* you go to college." I thank you for your encouragement and willingness to give me time alone to work on my paper, whether it was at your residence or mine. I am also grateful to my siblings, Charlsie, Craig, and Cande, for your words of support and comfort. When you often asked me, "When are you going to finish?" it encouraged me to strike up the "midnight oil."

I grant my genuine and heartfelt love and gratitude to my husband, Juan (Roy) A. Vasquez, as you have made ultimate sacrifices for me to "just complete" the task. You have been a great husband, an outstanding provider, and a good daddy. Thanks for taking off a full week to keep our daughter so that I could travel. Your patience and giving through this period in my life have not gone unnoticed. I love you!! To my simply beautiful, loving, and high-spirited daughter, Kelly A. Vasquez, I love, cherish, and admire you so, so very much. You have made my newfound life angelically happy and full of being. Whenever you need to, just hum or sing out loud: "Sing a Song of Six Pence." Continue to make beautiful melodies with your fingers. This is the gift that mommy wanted you to have so that you would be equipped with unlimited and bountiful bliss throughout your life. Repeat after mommy, "I can do it." Keep playing the piano and making music, Kelly.

To Dr. Norvella Carter, who was so full of immeasurable encouragement, "I thank you." It was due to your goodness and personable character that employed me to push forward and keep my eye on the mark.

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I want to thank all of my dear friends who constantly asked how I was doing in the process and encouraged me to reach my objective.

Lastly, *“Everything is going to be all right,”* warmly mine.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nationally, the numbers of students with academic and behavioral challenges in the educational setting are growing each year (Sindelar, Griffin, Smith, & Watanabe, 1992). Teachers and parents are looking for assistance and resources within the schools and need professionals who will take the initiative to intervene in the progression of students' schooling, when needed. Teachers need the necessary skills to aid their students, but often are not prepared with effective and innovative ways to reach their students.

According to Safran and Safran (1996), for the last 25 years, Congress has responded to inequalities of students with disabilities through compelling federal statutory language that governs the identification and assessment of students with disabilities. School districts must include screening and referral procedures that abide by these requirements. According to Region IV Education Service Center (1999), since 1979 when Chafant, Pysh, and Moultrie first published a report on teacher teams, many types of collaborative assistance teams have been documented including mainstream assistance teams (MATs), teacher assistance teams (TATs), instructional consultation, and school-wide intervention assistance teams. Intervention assistance teams (IATs) were designed to assist teachers with ideas of how to help children progress in the

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The style and format for this dissertation follow that of *The Journal of Educational Research*.

classroom setting while decreasing referrals to special education (School Campus Partnership, 2002).

Region IV Education Service Center (1999) defines intervention assistance teams as a school-based, problem-solving group whose purpose is to assist one another in developing intervention strategies for meeting the needs of students who are not succeeding in school. Teams meet on a regular basis to consider new referrals, follow-up on previous referrals, and to revise intervention strategies for students who are possible referrals (Region IV Education Service Center, 1999).

According to Advantage Press (2001), intervention assistance teams meet regularly to discuss students, who for a variety of reasons, are behind socially, emotionally, and/or academically. These teams were created to slow the number of unfounded referrals for special education services and to provide general education teachers with suggestions and new methods in how they respond to students needing intervention (Logan, Hansen, Nieminen, & Wright, 2001).

In order to reduce over-representation of students in special education, IATs are used as a means to assist general education teachers with the necessary intervention strategies needed to guide struggling students, thereby, putting an end to the rise of over-represented students in special education.

Over-Representation of Students in Special Education

Research has found that the number of students classified as needing special education has more than doubled in the last 26 years, and now represents 14.5% of the state's public school population (Sindelar et al., 1992). Nearly half of this group is

classified as learning disabled. Special education was used as a means to place students who exhibited increased academic and behavioral concerns in the classroom setting; and as a result, referrals to special education escalated tremendously (Hetzner, 2002).

The research on over-representation of students of color in special education has increased in the last 20 years. There is an indication that referrals to special education are not limited to solely one ethnicity group; students of color are disproportionately represented in special education classrooms throughout the nation (Peterz, 1999). Peterz (1999) stated that there is an increasing number of African American students being placed into special education classes. The method of determining how students are placed is also disturbing. In disability categories, placement is dependent upon tests that have been reported as biased against students of color (Patton, 1998a). According to Peterz (1999), African American students are over-represented and misplaced in special education, as a result of current testing and placement practices, insufficient parental knowledge of special education rights and responsibilities, and the need for more cultural diversity training for teachers.

Peterz further added that the steadily increasing number of African American students placed in special education has been recognized, but still not adequately addressed. Not only are these data alarming, but it has also been recognized that some African Americans, mostly males, are misdiagnosed or misplaced into special education programs. The over-representation of diverse learners in special education settings can be detrimental and only increase academic and behavioral problems (Golba, 1998). Students vary widely in their cultural, linguistic, and social

backgrounds as well as in their academic abilities. Educators should provide multiple opportunities to examine student-level needs and system-level issues (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988).

Research data reported in May 2002 by National School Boards Association (NSBA) on the Racial Isolation Task Force and the Urban Student Achievement Task Force of the Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) identified the over-representation of students of color in special education as an issue warranting CUBE's attention. The task force developed a nine-question survey designed to provide a snapshot of the situation in the 2001-2002 school year in urban districts and to share preventive measures that districts used to address the problem of misidentification. The survey data suggested that more than any other ethnic group, African American students were identified as needing special education at rates above their representation in the general student population.

The research on over-representation of students of color indicates that the referral to special education results in categorization. According to Meyer and Patton (2001), two elements have emerged as keys to understanding race, culture, and class of teachers in most schools. There is a disconnect between the race, culture, and class of teachers in most schools on the one hand and the culture, race, and socioeconomic status of learners they serve on the other.

A teacher's keen awareness of the differing student characterizations that they are faced with daily in the general education setting would not only benefit the teacher,

but the IAT members as they work collaboratively with identifying skills that would best assist each student according to the student's individual character.

Student Characterizations

Boykin (1983) theorized that the manner in which a student behaves in the classroom would often determine how the teacher views that student's ability to perform academically. He identified nine dimensions of African American culture (spirituality, harmony, movement, verve, affect, oral tradition, communalism, expressive individualism, and social time perspective). In his study, he demonstrated that the patterns of socialized, cultural behavior were not stereotypes and have been consistent in the United States over time. He indicated that his dimensions, or "student characterizations," are often misunderstood by teachers and lead them to believe that students are inattentive, hyperactive, aggressive, and slow in managing time.

Good and Brophy (2000) asserted that African American learners may demonstrate modes of school survival that are resistant to traditional instruction in a manner that can cause teachers to lower their expectations of them in the classroom. Certain characteristics, such as the inability to "catch on" quickly and the need to ask questions, cause some teachers to question comprehension abilities of students and could lower the achievement expectations of the teacher (Howard, 1999).

Neal, McCray, and Webb-Johnson (2001) suggested that students who are loud, multi-task oriented, rhythmically expressive, sassy, and also move their necks, while rolling their eyes, are viewed cognitively and behaviorally as unable to understand and obey rules that have been established. They are often referred to special education when

actually, they are regular students with normal abilities. Psychologists, diagnosticians, and even teachers sometime lack the knowledge base that is needed to accurately assess children of color in the classroom (Hillard, 2001).

Conversely, Haberman (1991) reported that teachers often characterize students who are consistently on task and appear to be organized as good students. Howard (1999) stated that teachers are pleased to label students as "smart" when they are generally passive, appear to pay attention visually and auditorally, and come to class with homework and materials.

Teachers who lack knowledge and who are not anxious to gain the knowledge needed to work with challenging students appear to lack efficacy. Teachers can work earnestly with an attempt to gain as much knowledge and background experience about students as they eagerly and tirelessly find solutions for students without giving up, thereby efficacy is realized.

Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy has to do with the extent to which a teacher believes he or she can actually teach the children and make a difference in their lives (Bandura, 1996; Carter, 2003; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Teacher efficacy and expectations have been consistently related to student achievement (Bennett, 1995; Nieto, 2000). Teachers' experience sheds light on their sense of teacher efficacy, and those who are not highly efficacious, have a tendency to recommend referrals to special education (Neal et al., 2001). It appears that some general education teachers give up too easily when they feel that "other" teachers are trained to perform the duties of educating students with special

needs and characterizations. When teachers possess high teacher efficacy, they take responsibility for teaching the students who have been assigned to their classrooms (Carter, 2003). When teachers are in IAT meetings working with other members who are efficacious, they may begin to see how utilizing new and innovative strategies and techniques can improve their level of teaching ability and keep students from being referred to special education.

When teachers can learn ways to help their students, teaching skills of perseverance in teaching and re-teaching are strengthened, thereby, teachers may learn to cope better as well. Coping strategy skills are beneficial to any educator, but especially for teachers who are willing to make a difference in the academic lives of students.

Coping Strategies

Often, students are referred to special education because they demonstrate student characterizations that represent classroom management challenges. In a classic study on classroom management, Kounin (1970) found that it is increasingly necessary for teachers and educators to learn ways to cope effectively with children who experience learning and behavioral difficulties in the classroom setting. Teachers may feel that it is easier to give up than to continue to cope with student challenges (Kounin, 1970). Coping is the act of the teacher taking responsibility for making decisions and handling situations that occur in the classroom, if at all possible. General education teachers often need support in this area, because they are too quick to refer students who are challenging. They do not recognize their responsibility in trying every method

possible to reach a child who may have behavior difficulties. They have a willingness to adapt programs to promote the success of difficult-to-teach and difficult-to-manage students. For example, instead of immediately contacting a parent or administrator, they try to handle the situation themselves. Teachers who have effective coping strategies are more successful in the classroom and have a greater impact on student learning (Cangelosi, 1993; Good & Brophy, 2000; Jones & Jones, 1990). Teaching methods rooted in solid research constitute the consistent use of coping strategies to support the curriculum. Resources may need to become available to educators and teachers in this area (Charles, 2002). These methods lessen poor and disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Coping is related to teacher efficacy in the sense that one must be highly efficacious to utilize coping skills.

When teachers learn to teach in ways that improve student achievement, they meet the needs of learners. They are not eager to penalize children academically and/or behaviorally and show their eagerness to adapt to programs that would assist them in working with children who possess varying learning modalities and styles and who are difficult to teach.

Learning Styles

Cognitive styles research focuses on how learners prefer to receive and process information and experiences, how they create concepts, and how they retain and retrieve information (Irvine & York, 2001). Theses authors promote the theory that an individual responds to educational experiences with consistent behavior and performance patterns. Learning styles of children of color can often be misinterpreted

because some teachers are unaware of cultural contexts associated with modes of socialized behavior that is supported and nurtured in various communities (Webb-Johnson, Rochan, & Larke, 2004). Often, if a teacher does not respond to the learning style of students, achievement does not take place at optimum levels, and the teacher may think the students need special education services.

Teachers want to work with students who have academic/behavioral challenges, but they need guidance on effective strategies. IATs are needed to help teachers and other members brainstorm about ideas and ways to support students who possess these challenges.

Background of the Study

Intervention Assistance Teams

History

One collaborative problem-solving system that has enjoyed recent widespread use across the nation is the intervention assistance team (IAT) Region IV Education Service Center (1999). A number of legislative mandates exist for collaboration and teaming among professionals and parents. The initial catalyst for IAT was found in Section 121 a. 532 (e) of Public Law (P.L). 94-142. This law required student evaluation by a multidisciplinary team. Collaboration was further strengthened with the passage of P.L. 99-457 and 101-476 and amendments to P.L. 94-142. Each of these laws addressed issues that called for increased collaboration and involvement of families and a range of professionals in program design and implementation for students with disabilities (Coben, Thomas, Sattler, & Morsink, 1997).

Educators learned quickly that they needed guidance and training on the function of IAT if they were to support them in academic and/or behavioral success in the general education setting. Laws were used as guides to implement successful IAT programs.

Function of IAT

The function of intervention assistance teams is to support general education teachers in working together as team players when attempting to support students. Working closely with the intervention assistance team will allow teachers to gain practice of effective skills needed to become productive in the classroom setting. According to Region IV Education Service Center (1999), the IAT process is a model of collaborative problem solving that complements current campus-wide initiatives and builds teacher capacity to meet the needs of students. According to Safran and Safran (1996), although the sole function of the IAT is for members to find resolutions and intervention strategies that would assist students who have academic and behavioral challenges, it emphasizes general education ownership and immediate classroom assistance by placing the initiative for action in the hands of those responsible for the solution. It stresses one-on-one student/teacher involvement in the classroom setting and the overall goal of reducing referrals to special education.

Teachers may not be skillful in how to find solutions for intervention strategies, and they may not know how to work effectively with students one-on-one. Professional development opportunities are a good way for administrators to give teachers the support needed to assist them in these areas.

Professional Development

Professional development is an essential component of the IAT process, because it provides the team with the knowledge base, skills, and information that is needed to keep students from being referred to special education. The goal is to assist students in remaining in a general classroom setting. General and special education teachers, including specialists and other support personnel in the school setting, need more collaboration, communication, and understanding of teaming for problem solving techniques and intervention to become more successful. According to Goals (2000), professional development allows for the gathering of ideas from others who can assist in collaborative effort to support the students in the IAT process. During professional development, teachers can learn various techniques for intervention strategies that can be helpful tools for students in the general education setting.

Intervention Strategies

The overall goal of intervention strategies is to keep the student in the general education setting and to prevent referral to special education. The difference between coping and intervention strategies is that coping is related to the teacher being willing to take responsibility, whereas intervention is related to the methods, intercessions, change, or activities the teacher conducts to break, or encourage specific patterns. Intervention strategies in the classroom setting may consist of, but are not limited to change in seating, curriculum changes, prompts, approaches to change behavior, positive or negative reinforcers, peer tutoring, counseling, or parent conference (Noell & Witt, 1999).

Students are expected to be passive in school and their actions invisible. Many are not empowered to work on strategies for learning. Often, they possess characteristics of feeling disempowered, frustrated, and alienated while in the general education classroom setting (Nieto, 2000). Educators are not aware of the cultural differences that many of the students bring into public schools. As a result, teachers are not aware of intervention strategies that would be best suited for student learning and success.

According to Cangelosi (1993), intervention strategies are not solely behaviors that a teacher instructs the student to perform. The teacher can serve as an instrument of movement and doing in order to engage learning for the student. For example, the teacher can move about the classroom and change his or her acoustical level in order that a student can hear the instructions better.

Teachers' attempts to find intervention strategies that are a good match for student growth and success may be hard at times. Teachers should look to the IAT for support and help when they have run out of intervention ideas. It is important that all team members contribute information and ideas for student success based on student data collection.

Team Contributions

Bangert and Baumberger (2001) suggested that during the IAT work session, team members contribute valuable information as they determine what behaviors they expect from the students and the performance level needed by the student in order to meet expectations. It is imperative that team members read the students' cumulative

records prior to IAT meetings regarding individual students. Team members will find valuable information in the students' records that may give insight on relative issues at hand, such as past and present medical records, student work samples, and behavioral rating scales. The reason it is important to look at past and present records of the students is to fairly perform a step-by-step analysis to examine a variety of variables that may be the cause of the academic skill challenges and problem behaviors of the students. Bangert and Baumberger further suggested that interviews and checklists completed by multiple informants could assist with interpreting the purposes of manipulative behaviors and provide specific information with which to design interventions. When the problem and analysis step is over, the IAT should have a clearer picture of the discrepancy between actual and desired level of performance. The IAT can also have an understanding about the most appropriate setting for the proposed intervention and an understanding of how the problem situation began.

All team members can feel good about supporting each other and giving to the team if all members work as partners for the betterment of students. Educators feel a sense of efficacy when they continue to make differences in the lives of students.

Team Efficacy

Team contributions carry over into IAT decisions about student outcomes. Students who meet challenges need educators who are willing to work with them and promote their success in school. If team members take advantage of the time and information given them during IAT sessions, they will begin to feel good about instructing students who they feel are difficult to teach. Team efficacy is an essential

component that gives the team the push and passion to work intensely for the betterment of children who struggle in the classroom setting. Interactive team members are professionals who collaborate to provide direct or indirect services to students. They view each other as equal partners in their efforts to provide students with support and effective programming (Coben et al., 1997). When team members work earnestly toward the cause of children, children are successful in the classroom setting both academically and behaviorally. The idea is to assist children with academic and behavioral difficulties at the point of contact. The point of contact begins in the classroom setting. While professionals meet in the IAT setting, they share ideas with each other to best support the general education classroom teacher who is a valued contributor of the team. The teacher may possess efficacy of his or her own.

Statement of the Problem

Historically, a high percentage of teachers referred students to special education in an effort to search for solutions to the students' learning or behavioral problems. This practice generated an over-referral of students who did not need special education services.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of intervention assistance team members on the impact of reducing student referrals to special education. This study also determined the factors that reduced referrals to special education.

Significance of the Study

Studies need to be conducted to determine if intervention assistance teams are effective in reducing referrals to special education. This study was significant because it gave insight to IAT programs. In addition, comparing the data on factors that had the most impact for referral and types of interventions will be useful in future program recommendations for IATs in general.

Research Questions

Based on a review of the literature on intervention assistance teams, the following research questions were developed:

1. What are the perceptions of intervention assistance (IAT) team members of factors impacting referrals in urban elementary schools?
2. Are there differences by position among IAT members in their perceptions of factors impacting referrals dependent on the school?
3. What are members' perceptions of the efficacy of the IAT in reducing referrals?
4. Are the behaviors of the members of IAT consistent with the indicators of efficacy?

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the following assumptions were made:

1. If a member of the IAT leaves the school, he/she will be replaced immediately, and the IAT will continue in his/her absence.

2. All IAT members are selected based on uniform guidelines set forth by the district.

Limitations

The limitations of this study consisted of the following: (a) surveys were dependent on self-reports for accuracy, (b) surveys only tapped respondents who were accessible and cooperative, and (c) surveys were vulnerable to over-rater or under-rater bias (Isaac & Michaels, 1997).

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Collaboration involves a non-hierarchical interchange between colleagues, shared responsibilities, and freedom to accept or reject processed information (Noell & Witt, 1999).

Consultation involves an emphasis on interpersonal variables or procedural variables that specify activities such as interviews, observations, and direct assessments that the consultant is required to complete (Noell & Witt, 1999).

Coping Strategies are the act of the teacher taking responsibility for making decisions and handling situations that occur in the classroom, if at all possible.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) mandates an educational opportunity for students with disabilities (Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998).

Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) is a school-based, problem-solving group whose purpose is to assist one another in developing intervention strategies for

meeting the needs of students who are not succeeding in school (Region IV Education Service Center, 1999).

Intervention Strategies are action plans for addressing, mediating, and prioritizing obstacles in problem situations.

Pre-Assessment Procedures are effective support devices for collecting inclusive information about the student, documenting the student's problem, developing explicit and detailed intervention plans, identifying support personnel to help implement the intervention plan, and establishing monitoring procedures.

Pre-Referral Teams are groups of professionals that use problem-solving methods to better serve students, supply teachers with skills to assist future students, and prevent inappropriate referrals to special education.

- Problem solving is a process used by IATs to capitalize on the collective expertise of diverse team members. It promotes individualized creative solutions tailored to the students, professionals, and settings involved (Korinek & McLaughlin, 1996).

- Pullout support is a process that allows students to receive supplementary services outside the classroom in another program that will promote academic gain and/or remediation.

School-Based Intervention is an approach to service delivery that is introduced as a program that has the potential to assist schools in addressing diverse student needs (Bahr, Whitten, Dieker, Kocarek, & Manson, 1999).

Special Education is a federal legislation act that was passed in 1975 by the U.S. Congress entitled, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, which guarantees a free and appropriate public education to all children with

disabilities in the United States between the ages of 3 and 21 (Educating Exceptional Children, 1989).

Summary

As a nation, we have witnessed the growing problem of students with academic and behavioral challenges. In addition, we have seen numbers rise to a level of over-representation of students in special education programs. This is of particular concern for populations of color because they are referred to special education in high percentages, and they comprise a disproportionate percentage of members in special education programs. Special education laws, such as P.L. 94/142, were implemented to support general education teachers by helping students to remain in general education programs and have mandated IATs.

Educators need training on guidelines and requirements of IAT so implementation can take place as mandated. Teachers desire professional development and in-service training on effective intervention strategies that can best serve students. Teams can be formed and collaboration can take place in school districts.

This study was conducted to determine the perceptions of IAT members on the impact of reducing referrals to special education and to determine the factors that reduce referrals to special education. The results of the study will be shared with the learning community for use in improving the IAT at various campuses. It will allow for reflection as to the strengths and weaknesses of the IAT program and an opportunity, through research, to design a program that will meet the needs of the learning community.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Meeting the educational challenges of students with disabilities over the past 25 years of the 21st century has been a test for educators across our nation (Safran & Safran, 1996). It has been documented that culturally and linguistically diverse students have not progressed in school programs that were to support student progress through mandated special education laws (Weintraub & Ballard, 1982). As relative to collaborative teams, educators were unsure of how to implement and structure these federally funded programs and services. Due to this uncertainty, an increase of students being placed in special education classes was on the immediate rise.

According to Sindelar et al. (1992), at the height of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, the issue of disproportionality of students of color in special education first received national attention. Researchers and practitioners have studied the issue in an effort to understand and explain how the processes used to identify, assess, and place students in special education programs may contribute to the over-representation of students of color (Warger & Burnette, 2000). Warger and Burnette further stated that identification processes are taking place that successfully prevent inappropriate placement and ensure that the opportunities for educational achievement offered to students of color equal those offered to the majority group.

History of Over-Representation of Students in Special Education

Special education was initially designed for students with severe learning problems in the school setting (Winzer, 1998). It was not until the middle decades of

the 19th century that those persons determined to be deaf, blind, or mentally retarded were served (Hodgson, 1973). As years passed, the population expanded with more children facing placement and becoming segregated in special needs classes in the early 1900s. In the 1950s and 1960s, the federal government began to develop and validate practices for children with disabilities and their families (Winzer, 1998).

According to the research, the over-representation of children of color in special education has haunted the field for decades (Artiles, 1998; Patton, 1998a; Peterz, 1999). Townsend (2000) stated that she believed that the reduction of disproportionality was a key concern of Congress in writing the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1997, but it is the Office for Civil Rights that appears to have taken the lead in addressing the issue. According to Townsend, the federal statute said that greater efforts are needed to prevent the intensification of problems connected with misleading and high dropout rates among children of color.

Warger and Burnette (2000) added that diversity is increasing, and one of the most troublesome issues associated with its growth is the over-representation of students of color in special education. Warger and Burnette further argued that children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds comprise a large percentage of public school students. Educators and teachers lacked the understanding and awareness of students' diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Increasingly, students began to be referred and ultimately placed in special education classes.

Research points out that more students of color are served in special education than we would expect based on their percentage in the general school population. Many

of these students do not meet the eligibility for classification as having disabilities according to the law.

Among the conceptual factors that can influence disproportionate representation are (a) issues around race (Hillard, 2001) and its definition and significance; (b) issues around culture, class, and gender oppression; and (c) issues around the definition of disability and the nature of difference (Artilles & Trent, 1994). At the same time, other conceptual and sociocultural factors, like the individual and collective use of stereotypes and assumptions about marginalized groups, also contribute to the intractability of comprehension (Steele, 1997).

Although African American students represent 16% of elementary and secondary enrollments, they constitute 21% of total enrollments in special education (Patton, 1998a). Congress found that children of color are 2.3 times more likely labeled and placed in special education as compared to European American students (Losen, 2000). These students are over-represented at the national level and poor male students are most affected (Artiles & Rueda, 2002). According to 1997 data collected by the U.S. Department of Education (2000), approximately 1.5 million students of color were identified as learning disabled. According to Chinn and Hughes (1987), the disproportionate representation of minority students in special education has been an important and persistent topic almost since the inception of special education.

Currently, and still during this decade, African American students represent an excessively high percentage of students enrolled in these classes (Patton, 1998a). In 2001, it was reported by senior research analyst Darren Woodruff at the American

Institutes for Research (AIR) that African American students represent 16% of the school population, but they represent 21% of the enrollments in special education. Woodruff stated that this over-representation is one stage in the system of progressive risk (Harvard Civil Rights Project and American Youth Forum, 2001) facing students of color. Tom Parrish, a managing research scientist at AIR, was also interested in the funding implications of disproportionate classification of children of color in special education. Parrish found that African American students are more likely than European American students to be placed in special education classes.

According to Weintraub and Ballard (1982), to strengthen the rights of students, in 1975, a landmark decision to advance increased educational opportunities for children with disabilities created the implementation of Education for All Handicapped Children Act. The law required the following: link assessments of student progress directly to the instructional curricula, examine the student individually, observe the student in the classroom setting, inspect student work samples, create classroom environments that reflect different cultural heritages, accommodate different styles of communication and learning, and develop collaborative partnerships between the school and parent (Weintraub & Ballard, 1982).

Under the requirements of P.L. 94-142, state schools were inconsistent in how they implemented programs and services. Implementation of programs and services were delivered in a variety of ways. This inconsistency indicated to Congress that educators and teachers needed clearer and stronger mandates (Winzer, 1998). The law had to be reauthorized and strengthened further to assist students who continued to

struggle in general education classrooms. This law is currently enacted as the Individuals With Disabilities Act, as amended in 1997. With the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA, Congress required that all students, regardless of their disability status, get the support needed to meet high educational standards (Harvard Civil Rights Project and American Youth Forum, 2001).

Although IDEA provides support for educators who wish to tackle the issue of over-representation of African American students in special education, it stops short of prescribing what educators might do to intervene (Council for Exceptional Children, 2002). According to Paolino (2002), under Part B of IDEA, the section of the law relevant to disproportionality reads: "each state that receives assistance under the Act, will provide for the collection and examination of data to determine if significant disproportionality based on race is occurring in the state or schools operated by the state's Secretary of Education" (para. 2). With respect to identification of students as students with disabilities and the placement in particular educational settings of these children, the law also seeks to have educators review and revise policies, practices, and procedures with respect to disproportionality. According to Webb-Johnson et al. (2004), a pattern has emerged in the education of African American students. Governed under the special education laws that are supposed to protect disparities in placement, placement of this particular ethnicity group in special education is still on the rise. IDEA is to guarantee a free and appropriate public education for those students who demonstrate disabilities, or at least student characterizations that appear to be associated with disabilities.

Student Characterizations

As viewed by general education teachers, student characterizations are some of the reasons students are readily referred to special education. According to Pang (2001), routinely, students who are referred to special education, are often characterized as being off-task during assignments, having poor attention span, lacking in organizational skills, appearing to have passive aggressive behaviors, possessing visual/auditory perception problems, and exhibiting instructional preparation problems. Often when students experience failure when possessing the student characterizations listed above, teachers may easily give up on them. Students' self-presentations can lead teachers to make erroneous assumptions about them (Good & Brophy, 2000). General education teachers who have not had the specialized preparation required to work with students from diverse backgrounds often misread or get the wrong idea about them. This leads to difficulty in implementing instructional assistance or behavioral redirection. Teachers feel that students do not learn from the instruction given them due to the lack of motivation, discrepancies in their achievement levels, and the lack of parental involvement in their school studies.

Students sometimes see things differently from their teachers or observers. Peterson and Swing (1982) studied relationships among students' thought processes, time-on-task, and achievement. These researchers reported that students' descriptions of their attending (active listening) to teacher presentations were better predictors of achievement than were observers' ratings of students' time-on-task during teacher presentations. Students appear to understand how they are characterized, but teachers

often misunderstand students in the classroom setting; thereby, referrals to special education increase, and over-representation of referrals to special education continue to be a major concern.

Teachers may have the desire to teach and make differences in student achievement, and they may have the desire to work efficaciously, but they need resources for solutions. If teachers can obtain what is needed to work with challenging students, teachers may become more efficacious.

Teacher Efficacy

Teachers who are willing to find solutions prior to referring students to special education are those who possess teacher efficacy. Teachers who are efficacious and committed to teaching students who are educationally challenging and culturally different remain in the urban schools. When teachers remain in urban schools, it can be theorized that they understand that students have differing student characterizations (Haberman, 1991). Few teachers and educators understand how to work with students who come to school with multiple student characterizations. When teachers and educators desire to work with these students, despite characterization and cultural differences, these teachers and educators are usually described as efficacious (Howard, 1999). According to Lin and Tsai (1999), teachers who are efficacious work earnestly each day toward their students' success in the mainstream and general education setting. Collegial exchanges can be enhanced and deepened when teachers have a high sense of efficacy. Teachers who believe that they can affect student learning will want

to seek new ways to improve their teaching and the quality of their work (Peterson, 1994).

Teacher efficacy plays an important role in the confidence and success of students in the classroom. A teacher's sense of efficacy shows the degree in which teachers believe their efforts bring about student learning and whether educational systems in general are effective (Lin & Tsai, 1999). Lin and Tsai further stated that it is reasonable to expect that to be effective, teachers must construct more solid, well-structured teaching knowledge. Teachers will obtain a higher sense of knowledge when efficacy is sought (Pang, 2001).

According to Henson, Kogan, and Vacha-Hasse (2001), teacher efficacy has proven to be an important variable in teacher effectiveness. It is consistently related to positive teaching behaviors and student outcomes. This is especially important as teachers work with students who have varying student characterizations. According to North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (1995), educators can nurture student self-direction and teacher efficacy by providing students with opportunities before, during, and after instruction to exercise some control of their own learning.

According to Deshler (2002), a teacher's sense of efficacy influences his or her thoughts and feelings, choice of activities, the amount of effort expended with students, and the extent of persistence shown in the face of challenging circumstances. Teachers obtain the skills needed during the training process of IAT. Teachers may begin to feel good about the knowledge gained and, therefore, capitalize on further expansion of academic challenges with a sense of hope (Deshler, 2002). Deshler further pointed out

that teachers who have a high sense of efficacy believe that good teaching can make a difference with all students, regardless of external obstacles, while teachers with low efficacy express the belief that good teaching cannot outweigh those kinds of influences. When teachers seek to understand and are aware of themselves and how their students feel about them, their teaching becomes much more effective (Henson et al., 2001). Teacher efficacy plays a key role in classroom learning and is more significant than general self-concept or self-esteem in predicting achievement. Hoy (2000) stated that the development of teacher efficacy beliefs among prospective teachers has generated a great deal of research interest because once efficacy beliefs are established, they appear to be somewhat resistant to change. As teachers feel good about their instructional preparation prior to students entering the classroom, teacher efficacy is fulfilled to greater levels. Hoy further suggested that teacher efficacy has been associated with such significant variables as student motivation; teachers' adoption of innovations; teachers making a step-by-step plan for interventions, collecting pre-intervention data that can be used to assess students; superintendents' ratings of teachers' competence; teachers' classroom management strategies; time spent teaching subjects; and a decrease of teacher referrals of students to special education.

According to Miller (2003), the study of teacher efficacy examines the factors that contribute to the confidence teachers have to successfully achieve their goals related to classroom instruction, reflective teaching, classroom management, and engaging students in their education. The teacher plays a significant role in the student's life. The teacher's knowledge with the teacher's feelings become integrated

within the student's schemata (Camilia, 2001). Camilia further stated that when the teacher understands the components involved in the construct of motivation, one can better learn and remain motivated. When a teacher is motivated, loving the teaching career will allow the students not only to gain knowledge of the content taught by the teacher, but also the students are stimulated and eager to learn. When the teacher loves his/her profession, the student learns to love education and student characterizations emerge into skills and talents that are closely aligned with teacher anticipations.

Teachers with a passion to make a difference in our urban schools teach with goals in mind and possess a sincere desire to make positive differences in the education of students. These teachers do not give up and they have the perseverance to continue teaching. The classroom atmosphere created by constant teacher redirection and student compliance seethes with passive resentment that sometimes bubbles up into overt resistance (Haberman, 1991). Often, good teachers have the desire to make changes and teach to the needs of the students regardless of their personal and sometimes negative background experiences. Haberman further added that some teachers who begin their careers intending to be helpers, models, guides, and stimulators, and caring sources of encouragement transform themselves into efficacious, directive authoritarians in order to function in urban schools.

With the thought of teachers being helpers of students, teachers who learn earlier on in their teaching careers to be caring sources, regardless of student characters, also cope well during times when teaching appears tough.

Coping Strategies

In order to work effectively with students who possess a variety of student characterizations, teachers can engage in effective teaching and coping methods that promote student knowledge and success in the general education setting. Century (1994) suggested that when teachers provide ambitious goals and rules for all students, these goals promote the practice of increased teaching and coping strategies as teachers engage students in expectations that support reducing referrals to special education.

The art and the skill of teaching are very important concepts to remember as teachers work with students who demonstrate student characterizations and represent classroom management concerns. Coping is the act of the teacher taking responsibility for making decisions and handling the situations that occur in the classroom setting. It is important to recognize that when teachers learn ways to cope and when coping is enhanced, coping strategies for teachers and educators increase; thereby promoting success for students who are academically and behaviorally challenged (Coleman, 2004).

There are multiple ways that a teacher can learn to cope. Programs that promote coping strategies are on the rise in education. For example, in a study by Freiberg, Stern, and Huang (1995), research was performed to determine positive effects of coping strategies via a classroom management program on student achievement. Based on previous work and their own program modifications, these researchers developed the Consistency Management Program to reduce disruptive student behavior that would increase opportunities for student learning. Teachers who were taught the Consistency

Management Program were found to have better student attendance, positive attitudes, and enhanced achievement (Freiberg et al., 1995). Teachers who are willing to try varying classroom management programs to reduce academic and behavioral concerns in the classroom are those who seek to possess good coping strategies.

When teachers learn to instruct in ways that promote student success, they meet the needs of students. Instead of penalizing children for lack of successful academic/behavioral performances in the classroom, teachers use a variety of learning techniques in which to gain knowledge, thus strengthening their coping strategies (Cangelosi, 1993). Teachers who possess an eagerness to adapt programs to promote the success of students who experience academic/behavioral problems, may demonstrate teachers who are eager in utilizing coping strategies for students who are difficult to teach and manage. When coping strategies are effective and pedagogical knowledge is in effect, referrals to special education decrease.

According to Coleman (2004) students are passive recipients and the teacher's task is to inject into students what they already know. The location of responsibility and accountability becomes much richer for the teacher when coping strategies are put into effect. According to McCaslin and Good (1996), in order for teachers to work toward good coping strategies, teachers make an effort to get to know students individually. While enhancing coping strategies, teachers can also establish credibility early on in the school year and maintain it (McCaslin & Good, 1996). Credibility can provide classroom structure for the teacher. Students will be less likely to test teachers and disrupt the learning process. Appropriate rules and expectations are also involved in

establishing credibility and coping. Students will conform to what teachers expect when rules are set from day one of the school year (McCaslin & Good, 1996). Good teachers are wise to work towards strategies that will assist them in effective coping strategies that can be maintained and adhered to during the school year. When teachers are able to cope effectively, they are better able to work with students who bring differing student characterizations to the classroom setting. Without information of the culture of the students in the classrooms, teachers may not be responsive to and aware of the behavior patterns of diverse learners (Knight, 2004).

Learning Styles

The concept of learning styles is based on the theory that an individual responds to educational experiences with consistent behavior and performance patterns (Irvine & York, 2001). Irvine and York further stated that technically, learning styles is an umbrella term encompassing three distinct styles or sub-styles: cognitive, affective, and physiological.

According to Irvine and York (2001), the division of learning styles into cognitive styles, affective styles, and physiological styles serves both to differentiate and to specify related research. Cognitive styles research focuses on how learners prefer to receive and process information and experiences, how they create concepts, and how they retain and retrieve information. In contrast, affective styles research emphasizes differences in interpersonal skills and self-perception, curiosity, attention, motivation, arousal, and persistence. Physiological-styles research measures how gender, circadian rhythm, nutrition, and general health impact learning processes (Irvine & York, 2001).

Gay (2000) has indicated that characteristics of learning styles is not monolithic, situationally idiosyncratic, or static traits. Instead, they are multidimensional, habituated processes that are the "central tendencies" of how students from different ethnic groups engage with learning encounters. Gay further pointed out that there are eight key dimensions of how students from different ethnic groups learn. These key dimensions are as follows: procedural, communicative, substantive, environmental, organizational, perceptual, relational, and motivational. Procedural is the preferred way of approaching and working through learning tasks; communicative is how thoughts are organized, sequenced, and conveyed in spoken and written forms; substantive is preferred content, such as descriptive details or general pattern, concepts, and principles or factual information; environmental is preferred physical, social, and interpersonal settings for learning; organizational is preferred structural arrangements for work and study space; perceptual is preferred sensory stimulation for receiving, processing, and transmitting information; relational is preferred interpersonal and social interaction modes in learning situations and motivational is preferred incentives or stimulation that evoke learning (Gay, 2000). As student populations have become more diverse, the ability to teach to the needs of different learners has become increasingly important (Haar, Hall, Schoepp, & Smith, 2002).

In 1974, Ramirez and Price-Williams performed a study in Houston, Texas (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974). The study included four statements that were taken from a socialization measure used with Mexican American and European American mothers.

According to Ramirez and Castaneda (1974), the first two statements listed below received more positive responses from the European American mothers, and the third and fourth statements received more positive responses from Mexican American mothers:

> A child should be encouraged to be very competitive. Children should be allowed to do things on their own so that they can learn from their mistakes. A mother should protect her child as much as possible because he/she will have plenty of time later to face reality and suffering. Children should be guided very closely by their parents so they do not make as many mistakes and become discouraged. (p. 54)

There are socialization practices and differences in attitudes of the two cultures. Socialization styles, teaching approaches, the nature of rewards, and characteristics of the relationship between teacher and learner, which children experience at home, differ from culture to culture. Values and socialization styles determine or affect development of cognitive styles in children, and differences, which parallel those seen in socialization practices, may be seen in several areas of behavior (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974).

Ramirez and Castaneda added further that through socialization practices, children develop preferences for certain types of rewards, certain rewards have more meaning for them, and the learner is more motivated by culturally appropriate incentives. Children's behavior is also affected by the manner in which they have learned to relate with the person in the teaching role. Children develop their own styles of learning, their own modes of organizing, classifying, and assimilating information about their environments. Values through socialization practices affect many school

and learning behaviors which, when recognized, may be utilized to teach children effectively.

It is wise for educators to realize student behaviors and capitalize on these behaviors in a positive way as they begin to recognize how our schools got to the point of IAT mandates. When educators keep the thought of how IATs arrived in the first place, they may keep in mind how not to eagerly refer students to special education, but work with the student with the support of assistance teams.

Intervention Assistance Teams

History

A large number of state education agencies (SEAs) adopted and implemented pre-referral intervention procedures, as reflected in the findings of a national survey of state directors of special education (Carter & Sugai, 1989). Over the past twenty years, professionals from various disciplines have been advocating variations of consultation, collaboration, and teaming models as the most effective way to improve service delivery to students with disabilities (Coben et al., 1997).

Pre-assessment procedures were mandated in the majority of states nearly two decades ago as a gate-keeping system for special education. These building teams were given the charge of providing technical assistance to general educators who had children in their classrooms that were not meeting learning and behavioral expectations (Ormsbee, 2001). Beginning in the late 1990s and currently, intervention assistance teams within the elementary school setting appear to be on the rise in relation to increased academic and behavior support for children.

The Regular Education Initiative (REI) and amendments to the Individuals With Disabilities Act strongly encourage general education interventions prior to referral for special education (Bangert & Baumberger, 2001). To meet the challenges of students' academic and behavioral struggles, school intervention assistance and pre-referral teams of various configurations have existed for decades (Safran & Safran, 1996). Prior to school intervention assistance teams, the referral process was the procedure taken to decide whether or not a child would be placed in special education.

The Referral Process

The referral process can play a critical role in the determination of whether a student receives special services. According to Merit Care (2004), a referral is when the parents, teachers, and physician refer a child to the special services committee of a school. A family may request in writing that a child be evaluated to determine if the child has special academic or behavioral problems that may cause learning or academic failure in school. It is an alternative to assist the teacher of the non-classified student who is experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties in the instructional setting.

Usually, however, it is the general education teacher who refers the student to special education (Region IV Education Service Center, 1999). The process taken was to first contact the parents in person or by telephone to inform them that their child was having academic and/or behavioral concerns in the classroom. The teacher gave the parents a plan of action for the next three-six weeks of promised interventions. The teacher would keep records and document the students' progress or lack thereof. If

these interventions did not work, the parents were contacted again and the referral was implemented.

Referrals created a Pandora's box of opportunities for general classroom teachers to avoid instructing students who were difficult to teach through referral for special education pull-out support (Safran & Safran, 1996). Students were in trouble and needed the support of our legislators. An overabundance of students were leaving the general education setting without effective interventions taking place, or taking place long enough to give the students the guidance and support needed to improve academically. According to Olson (1991), the referral of a student to special education should be an indication that all other avenues have been explored and that a conclusion has been reached that the needs of the child cannot be met by general education programs.

Collaborative Team Models

Regardless of the differences in title and design, all collaborative teams are intended to provide problem-solving assistance to general education teachers with respect to students who are considered difficult to teach or to manage (Region IV Education Service Center, 1999). According to Sindelar et al. (1992), the development and implementation of collaborative models (e.g., Teacher Assistance Teams (TATs), began in the early 1970s and continue to the present. TATs were introduced as an alternative to traditional in-service training. According to Bangert and Cooch (2001), the vehicle that is typically used in the public schools to design and implement these

educational accommodations within general classroom settings is commonly known as the teacher assistance team (TAT).

The teams during the 1970s era typically consisted of three teachers with the referral teacher as a fourth member, and although other professionals (e.g., special education teachers, principals, and school psychologists) might have been asked to participate when appropriate, TATs primarily included general education teachers. Sindelar et al. (1992) pointed out that discussion of more formal consultative models, such as pre-referral interventions, appeared in the literature by mid-1980, and most educators only recently received research on their usefulness. Pre-referral interventions are useful and beneficial because school teams are established to make suggestions about educational procedures and practices that can be implemented by teachers within general classroom settings. Contrary to what Sindelar et al. suggested in 1992, Craig, Hull, Haggart, and Perez-Selles (2000) stated that TATs usually consist of general education teachers, administrators, and other educational specialists such as, but are not limited to, school psychologists, counselors, nurses, occupational therapists, and physical therapists.

The TAT is defined as a school-based routine specifically designed to create an atmosphere of understanding and problem solving to support students (Craig et al., 2000). Intervention assistance teams are designed for members to address the needs and problems that are selected on the basis of specific information derived from problem analysis. The discussion should include persons who are most familiar with the problem and who can assist the TAT in identifying intervention strategies that will

most likely ensure success (Bangert & Cooch 2001). The guidelines set forth in IAT regulations will assist members on how to work as a team. The ideal is for students to remain in the general education setting as teachers utilize intervention strategies and modifications to maintain the academic and behavioral progress of their students (Chafant & Pysh, 1989). IAT building teams give consultation and collaboration to teachers to meet the needs of children with learning and behavioral problems in both general and special education classrooms, thereby decreasing over-representation.

According to Logan et al. (2001), Student support teams (SSTs), also known as pre-referral intervention teams, are designed to help general education teachers solve student learning and behavior problems in the general education classroom. SSTs are part of the student assistance system (SASystem), a school-based prevention and early intervention program that gathers information and develops a plan using the student as an important resource. The plan identifies the student's strengths and needs and offers strategies that build on strengths and meet the needs to help get the student back on track (School Campus Partnership, 2002).

To more effectively assist teachers in instructing students who are difficult to teach, many schools have adopted a pre-referral intervention system that relies on an intervention assistance team (IAT) approach (Burns, 1999). If the teacher uses the suggested procedures and they are successful, the child is not referred for special education or subjected to formal diagnostic testing (Naquin & Adler, 2002).

Although the names and titles of these intervention programs began to change slightly, individual school campuses learned quickly that they needed to know how

teams were to function. They also needed assistance in determining how and when to place children in special education classroom settings.

Function of IATs

The IAT process is becoming common practice in school districts. Educators agree that academic and behavioral modifications can be implemented in general education settings and the pre-referral interventions can reduce the number of students requiring diagnostic evaluation and placement in special education (Fraser, 1986). Innovative ideas, brainstorming, professional development, and intervention strategies continue to be components of the process. Fraser added that the intervention assistance team (IAT) addresses student learning and behavior problems, conducts on-site modifications in the classroom, collects pre-intervention data, supports teacher efforts, facilitates family involvement, and monitors student progress. When all of these steps are taken, teams can meet together to collaborate and pinpoint intervention strategies that will best meet student needs.

Team Member Collaboration

Educators in the past have lacked understanding of, and training in, the intervention team process. It has been expected that although educators lacked the understanding of IAT process, the team still convened. One of the reasons these teams lacked understanding and training in the IAT process is because educators and related service professionals collaborated to problem solve concerning students with special concerns, in a unidisciplinary setting. In order for these teams to work effectively for students, educators need to come together in an interdisciplinary setting (Korinek &

McLaughlin, 1996). A unidisciplinary setting is an educational approach that focuses on one discipline in the learning process with the goal of fostering ideas and suggestions only from within its own discipline. An interdisciplinary setting is an educational approach in which two or more disciplines collaborate in the learning process with the goal of fostering inter-professional interactions that enhance the practice of each discipline (American Association of Colleges and Nursing, 2002).

Administrators are school leaders that select and designate interdisciplinary personnel who will best serve on their IAT. Although in general, the IAT is comprised of an administrator, teacher, and school counselor (as the team leader or facilitator), there may be a need to have a school nurse, social worker, OT/PT, or psychologist on the IAT (Region IV Education Service Center, 1999). Team leaders are responsible for the training on their campuses and for training any new members on the team. When a new team leader starts the year, the previous team leader is responsible for training them from the IAT manual (Region IV Education Service Center, 1999). Region IV Education Service Center goes on to add that although there is no set schedule to train campuses, most campuses that are a part of the serving district ensure that the members on their campus teams are trained at the beginning of each school year.

Realizing that each campus has a climate of its own, children arrive at school from varying cultural backgrounds and home life experiences (Patton, 1998a). Depending on the make-up of the campus pupil ratio, schools may have differing academic and/or behavioral goals for the students who they are charged with educating. With this in mind, administrators take charge and select personnel from their individual

campuses who best meet student needs academically, physically, and emotionally. These educators perform related services for the betterment of educational needs of the students.

According to the literature, factors that impact reducing referrals to special education may include, but are not limited to, the various student characterizations and learning styles of culturally diverse students, teacher efficacy, IAT efficacy, professional development, intervention strategies, IAT contributions, and coping strategies. There are many factors that impact referrals to special education (Region IV Education Service Center, 1999) and each member of the team may perceive that one factor is more prevalent than another. Since each school's team may comprise a member from a different area of expertise, perceptions may vary widely from school-to-school.

Research Studies

Research on intervention assistance was performed in 1990 by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to examine the outcomes experienced by students two years after they had received intervention assistance services. Research was also performed to determine whether referral for special education had been avoided or simply delayed (Rock & Zigmond, 2001). Participants included students from nine different elementary schools in an urban Pennsylvania school district. The sample included 140 students who had been referred for intervention assistance during year 1 of the study. The reasons for referral varied among the students. Sixty-four of the

students were referred for academic failure, 22 were referred for behavioral challenges, and 17 were referred for both academic and behavioral difficulties.

Data sheets that included 13 variables were used to record information that was obtained from student school records. These variables included items ranging from the student's demographic information such as the student's name, gender, and grade to the student's race and reason for referral.

By the end of the first year of data collection, the academic and behavioral challenges of 74.3% of students referred to IST appeared to have been resolved without the need for referral for special education services, although about a third of these students were retained at the end of the school year.

As a result of research findings, Pennsylvania revised its special education standards to require intervention assistance services in their schools. They titled their intervention assistance services instructional support teams (ISTs). The IST mandate was phased in over a five-year period, 1990-1991 through 1994-1995 (Rock & Zigmond, 2001). Pennsylvania is a part of the Commonwealth association that promotes and respects equality. Commonwealth is a voluntary association of more than 50 independent sovereign states. These states provide support to each other and work together toward international goals. One of the goals targeted throughout many of the associated states was the need for IAT in public schools. Many school districts belonging to these states began their preparation for intervention training. Once the school districts' representatives received extensive training from Commonwealth, they began extensive training throughout the schools in their individual school districts.

According to Bahr et al. (1999), as the reform for academic and behavioral intervention teams strengthened, many states began to practice school-based intervention teams using different policies. Bahr et al. performed a research study examining the policies and practices of 680 professionals from Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin. These researchers chose to investigate the practices of teams from these three states that possess different mandates. Illinois legally mandates pre-referral intervention. Wisconsin minimally requires documentation of interventions prior to referral. Michigan does not require pre-referral intervention.

The research study represented 680 professionals and over 121 intervention teams. Team members completed a survey investigating the nature of referrals addressed by the team, their perceptions of team effectiveness, identification of professionals who best facilitated team problem-solving via their knowledge and communication skills, and their use of quality indices in intervention development and implementation.

The research findings revealed that states with stronger policies on pre-referral practices, school-based practitioners might consider advocating for standards that increase the rigor with which pre-referral intervention is implemented and evaluated by their intervention teams. Teams may need to be developed where none exist, and schools with existing teams may consider elevating their decision-making status. These goals may be accomplished through professional development on the role and function of intervention teams when the knowledge base on effective team practices expands (Bahr et al., 1999).

Professional Development

Many educators have the passion and intent to assist and change the lives of children for the better; however, they lack intuitive knowledge and need pre-service workshops and in-services that assist them on how to effectively work with students with academic and behavioral needs prior to their interventions with students.

Professional development is a good starting place for educators to begin learning key ways to implement strong and effective IATs in an effort to reduce student referrals to special education. According to Goals 2000 (2001), professional development is essential for IAT members to learn successful ways in collaborating and interacting with one another in an effort to reduce referrals to special education. Professional development serves as the bridge between where team members are and where they need to be to meet the challenges of guiding academically challenging students in achieving higher standards of learning and development. The first challenge for IAT members during professional development is the need for better understanding of an increasingly diverse student population. Future educators must not only be aware of student diversity, but they must also be attitudinally and practically prepared to be comfortable and confident in accepting it as an expected part of the context in which they will work (Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990).

According to Cook (1997), reform requires that educators via the IAT learn new roles and ways of assisting students that mandates into a long-term developmental process requiring educators to focus on changing their practice. Creating professional development opportunities for IAT members in order to help all students achieve the

ambitious learner goals of reform will require the support and ideas of everyone. Cook further pointed out that professional development can no longer be viewed as an event that occurs on a particular day of the school year. It must become part of the daily work life of educators. Teachers, administrators, and other school system employees need time to work in study groups; conduct action research; participate in seminars; coach one another; plan lessons together; and meet for any other necessary purposes. During professional development sessions, it is important for teachers and professionals to learn a variety of skills that can prove to be effective in the general education classroom setting. A variety of strategies can be utilized to determine if any can be used to reduce referrals to special education. The selection of intervention strategies should be thought through very carefully and matched well to student characters. Intervention strategies chosen well will benefit students sooner and academic gains can increase.

Intervention Strategies

With the use of consistent interventions and effective brainstorming, IAT members see the need for consistent identification of students. Teachers and educators utilize intervention strategies such as instructional modifications and behavioral techniques when analyzing the academic and behavioral needs of students. Through experience, IAT members learn interventions that are functionally appropriate for students in order to decrease the chance of referrals to special education.

Intervention strategies in the classroom setting comprise, but are not limited to, change in seating, individual/small group instruction, repeated review/drill of lessons, curriculum changes, prompts, approaches to change behavior, positive or negative

reinforcers, peer tutoring, counseling, or parent conferences. According to Noell and Witt (1999), for decisions to result in the delivery of services to students, it must lead to implementation of the selected interventions made by the IAT.

According to Angelo and Cross (1995), when teachers begin to make interventions with students, they need to make their goals and objectives explicit, get specific comprehensible feedback on the extent to which the students achieve goals and objectives, and then give them appropriate and focused feedback early and often. Dodd, Nelson, and Spint (1995) noted that during the intervention process, classroom teachers select procedures from among recommendations made by the IAT that will accommodate their classroom management and teaching styles. This selection process empowers classroom teachers to solve problems within their classrooms. In other cases, the student may have to be taught prerequisite skills; in still other situations, a redirection of curricula and evaluation of instructional programs may be required (Garcia & Ortiz, 1988). Dodd et al. (1995) further added that if the procedures are implemented for a predetermined amount of time and if they are found to be effective, students are not referred for special education assessments.

When teachers require students to work toward intervention strategies that appear to be non-effective after a while, the IAT may suggest other alternatives to teachers. These alternatives may consist of students working in pairs or small groups (Enerson, Plank, & Johnson, 1994). Group activities can be extremely effective in introducing students to one another and encouraging group learning.

Pang (2001) pointed out that in order to make a child successful in school the intervention strategy to use in building success is that of teaching the whole student. Pang believes that students' emotional and physiological needs are just as important as the students' academic success. Pang (2001) shared the following:

> If a young female student is hungry, she is less likely to be attentive. If a young man is feeling insecure because someone was calling him names, he may not be able to concentrate on writing his essay. If a student in high school is having problems with peers, parents, or a teacher, he may not pay attention in his classes or, he may become defiant. (p. 84)

The willingness of team members to share and seek ways to make a child successful in school exhibits a sense of efficacy. Team members who are efficacious may not stop finding ways to work with challenging students.

Team Efficacy

Members of the IAT are the experts and facilitators who are equipped in sharing information that can best serve the general education teacher (Abelson & Woodman, 1983). IAT members share ideas that can assist with the struggling student whether the student's struggle is characterized as academic or behavioral (Friend & Cook, 1996).

According to Coben et al. (1997), IAT members collaborate and share efficaciously with knowledge as they "teach" other team members their skills, as appropriate. Team members view each other as equal partners in their efforts to provide teachers with support and effective programming. Due to team efficacy and commitment, there is a concerted effort to train team members in areas of programming that can unlock knowledge of student characterizations (Hansen, Himes, & Meier, 1990).

According to Region IV Education Service Center (1999), team members should collect pre-intervention data, observe student's in the classroom setting, inspect samples of student's academic work prior to meeting with IAT, and graph the progress and results of the IAT after the conclusion of each meeting. Bangert and Baumberger (2001) listed the following as examples of functional assessment methods used for intervention purposes: systematic and direct observation, structured interviewing, behavior checklists, curriculum-based assessment, review of records, and student work samples from the classroom. Although data and information from the student's school records are examined during the problem identification step, these documents can be reconsidered with other data collected during a more comprehensive functional analysis. Contributing input and the results of student assessments prior to the IAT meeting is a valued part of the meeting and is a good indicator of a team member's efficacy. By contributing meaningful student documentation as relative to the background and school history of students, IAT members work toward reducing referrals to special education.

IAT members arrive at the meetings with unidisciplinary information and documentation that has to be shared with the interdisciplinary team. It is important that each member share concerns from their own disciplines as they work toward solutions to student problems; however, teams are usually comprised of interdisciplinary members who may need to gain a clearer understanding of the others' discipline as documentation is presented (Coben et al., 1997). It is important for team members to focus on remedies that will best support the general education teacher who is on the

front line in the classroom setting working with students of various student characterizations. It is the general education teacher who first realizes that the student is struggling and may need interventions that will allow the student to remain in the general education setting (Salend, 1994). IAT members who care about team efficacy work toward mutual goals, participate in the IAT activity, and have equally valued personal or professional resources and documentation to contribute to the team (Sindelar et al., 1992).

Just as students may work together in pairs and gain knowledge from their peers, it is just as important for teachers and IAT members to work together giving each other team support. It is stressful enough engaging in ways to reach the challenging needs of students, so working with peer educators pulling together ways and means of addressing student needs is essential for the elasticity of the IAT. IAT members will want to contribute as much information to the team as needed for the success of all students.

Team Contribution

Teachers and specialists in the school setting need more collaboration, communication and understanding of teaming in IAT for problem solving and techniques to become successful. According to Peterson (1994), norms of collegiality support regular and continuous dialogue among IAT members about problems, ideas, techniques, instructional approaches, and modifications. According to Korinek and McLaughlin (1996), it is generally acknowledged that preparation and practice in problem solving can enhance the skills of team members and improve the likelihood

that the advantages of collaboration will be realized. Due to intensified pressures to collaborate, successful implementation of collaborative and team efforts requires that special educators expand their roles as interactive professionals (Coben et al., 1997).

IAT members need to start at the problem identification stage by determining where individual students function as compared to the expectations of the educator (Bangert & Baumberger, 2001). Bangert and Baumberger further suggested that IAT members should attempt to determine the perceived problem and the related factors that contribute to it so that they are equipped and ready to brainstorm when teams meet.

Assessment techniques are particularly important when attempting to identify skill or performance deficits that need to be targeted for remediation. Teachers and educators should remember to utilize interviews as well as behavioral checklists to provide insight about student, teacher, and parent perceptions that may be contributing to negative, "acting out" behaviors or academic concerns within the classroom setting (Bangert & Baumberger, 2001).

Additionally, a part of team contribution is sharing the assessment of targeted students. Teachers and/or IATs must conduct functional analyses to pinpoint specific problems and graph the progress of students. This is especially important to members because the goal is to reduce referrals to special education.

Summary

Due to the overabundance of referrals to special education for students who possessed academic and/or behavioral difficulties, students who would normally have gained assistance in the general education classroom setting were placed in special education classes. Legislators recognized that students were in trouble and mandated that states implement pre-referrals in an effort to solve this problem. Teams were formulated to problem solve and find ways to intervene with these students.

Through the literature review and research findings, it was realized that teachers did not know how to work with students who learned differently and who came from culturally diverse backgrounds. Many of these students possessed characteristics unlike those characteristics with which the teacher was used to working. Teachers became frustrated and lacked the efficacy and passion needed to cope and push forward while working with these students.

It was soon conceived that IAT members needed to learn ways to work in team collaboration with one another with an effort to reduce referrals to special education and keep students in the general education setting. Professional development opportunities needed to be implemented in districts so that educators could learn the guidelines and functions of IATs. Educators also needed to become knowledgeable of effective intervention strategies and modifications for students. Gaining knowledge of team support within teams was also a goal of the IAT.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The district in this study is located in a large, urban school system in the southwestern part of the United States. During the targeted 2003-2004 school year, the serving district's general teacher and administrative staff population as a whole, including ethnicity and sex, consisted of 3,106 European Americans, 1,632 Hispanics, 2,701 African Americans, and 81 Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans. There were 690 European American males, 2,415 European American females, 282 Hispanic males, 1,350 Hispanic females, 461 African American males, 2,239 African American females, 11 Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American males, and 70 Asian Pacific Islander and Native American females. The district's personnel job codes by position consisted of 2,060 regular teacher educators, 620 bilingual/ESL teacher educators, 98 gifted and talented teacher educators, and 359 special education teacher educators. Teachers' years of experience were reported as 193 beginning teachers, teachers with experience ranging from 1-5 years was reported as 1,163, teachers with experience ranging from 6-10 years was reported as 736, teachers with experience ranging from 11-20 years was reported as 871, and teachers over 20 years of experience was reported as 652.

During the 2003-2004 school year, the Executive Director of Student Services and Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Coordinator in the district's electronically submitted the district's data to the state education agency. PEIMS encompasses all data requested and received by Texas Education Agency

(TEA) (2003) about public education, including student demographic and academic performance, personnel, financial, and organizational information. PEIMS is classified into two categories: (a) data collected through PEIMS electronic collection method and (b) other collections, calculations, and analyses of data used in evaluating, monitoring, or auditing public education.

A report was formulated by the PEIMS coordinator during the first semester, 2003-2004 school year. A total of 56,292 students attended schools in the serving district during the first semester. The ethnic breakdown of all students in the district was as follows: Native Americans = 49, Asian/Pacific Islanders = 1,327, African Americans = 18,603, Hispanics = 32,679, and European Americans = 3,634. Of the 56,292 total enrolled students in the serving district, 5,524 were enrolled in special education classes. The ethnic breakdown of the special education students in the district was as follows: Native Americans = 3, Asian/Pacific Islanders = 46, African Americans = 2,442, Hispanics = 2,459 and European Americans = 574. There were 13,958 LEP students in the serving district. Of these, 1,137 were served in special education classes. The number of economically disadvantaged students with mental retardation was 496. The total number of African American students with mental retardation was 262.

There were 5 high schools, 4 ninth grade schools, 8 middle schools, 10 intermediate schools, 29 elementary schools, and 5 early childhood/pre-kindergarten (EC/PK) schools in the district. All the schools surveyed were identified as low in socio-economic status.

The district in this study implemented its intervention assistance program in 1999 in accordance with state mandates. The district's school psychologists along with personnel from three pilot schools attended a two-day workshop at Regional Educational Service Center. After the pilot year, Region trainers came to the district and trained a team from each school to become trainers of trainers for their campuses. Day one of the training consisted of: purpose of IAT process, interpersonal styles, team building tools, links to other models, problem-solving process, team self- evaluation, and system-level problem solving. Day two of the training, entitled "Constructing Effective Problem Solving Teams," consisted of: IAT process (comparisons and student level) and problem-solving process at the student level. The school psychologists serve as support staff for campuses that need assistance. One of the psychologists in the serving district continues to visit schools and performs refresher training when needed.

The goals and features of the urban district program are directly related to the goals and features that are outlined in the conceptual framework and theoretical framework of such theorists as Stephen and Joan Safran and Arthur Bangert. These goals and features are the components that should be seen in an IAT program.

Goals of the IAT

The goals of intervention assistance teams are to seek early intervention. The IAT process will give the team skills to help work with general education teachers who need assistance with students who experience either academic and/or behavioral problems.

Features of the IAT

The features of the intervention assistance teams are regularly scheduled meetings, general education teacher initiated referrals, use of effective interventions by the general education teacher, written action plans for the classroom setting and follow up and follow through of the intervention strategies that are selected. The team learns systematic problem-solving methods that enable them to define the problem, analyze why the problem is occurring, refine the problem statement, state goals for the student, brainstorm solutions to the problem, develop an action plan, and implement and evaluate the success of the action plan.

In obtaining IAT members' perceptions, it is believed that all elements and factors of the program are present during one calendar school year. The elements of the program and the ideas and opinions of the team members change over a period of time. To obtain an accurate view of the perceptions of the program, a single year of information gathered from the IAT members from 16 schools was analyzed. For all practical purposes, the bulk of referrals from the serving district are between September and December of the school year. Although the district allows referrals to special education until the end of March, best practices prove that students are best served in special education classes when they are identified early on in the school year. Teachers and staff were strongly encouraged to identify students with special needs prior to the winter break.

Procedures

Prior to the collection of data, approval from the Human Subjects Review Committee of Texas A&M University was obtained. When permission was granted, the administration of each campus was contacted. Surveys were distributed to the IAT members by their campus administrator and/or IAT facilitator (see Appendix A). Each survey was accompanied by an information sheet explaining the purpose of the study: encouraging full voluntary participation in the study (see Appendix B) and a cover letter detailing specific campus instructions to ensure a successful return rate (see Appendix C). The subjects were asked to return the completed survey within one week. The responses were anonymous and were kept in a locked cabinet in a secured office.

Population

The personnel who were a part of the intervention assistance teams and the personnel who participated in the survey consisted of: teachers (general, bilingual/ESL, gifted/talented); counselors, administrators, other (support staff): occupational therapists, physical therapists, nurses, school psychologists, and social workers. The district's personnel in these job code areas consist of 3,576 teachers, 127 counselors, 11 occupational therapists, 3 physical therapists, 62 nurses, 3 school psychologists, 9 social workers, 147 assistant principals and 62 principals. The PEIMS report that was made available to the researcher did not categorize these job codes into separate ethnicity and sex.

More specifically, there were 29 elementary schools located in the school district. From the general population, the researcher targeted a study involving only

elementary schools in the district. They were similar to the district as a whole. Four schools were comprised of grades Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD), kindergarten to fourth grade. Twenty-five elementary schools served grades kindergarten to fourth grade. The district included a variety of communities in an urban area. Faculty included experienced teachers and beginner teachers. The student population was steadily increasing.

Sample

Sixteen out of 29 elementary schools were selected after school administrators responded positively on their willingness to participate in the study. The schools were identified as A through P.

School A

The school population was comprised of first to third grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 631 students. Of these, 46 students were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 8 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 5 students qualified as candidates for special education. The intervention assistance team had a total of 6 members. Of these 6 members, 6 were female and 0 were male. All male teachers on this campus taught special education. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 1 administrator, 1 direct instruction teacher, 1 Montessori teacher, 1 skill specialist, and 1 general education teacher.

School B

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 709 students. Of these, 35 students were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 0 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 0 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 7 intervention assistance team members. Of these 7 members, 7 were female and 0 were male unless the referring teacher was male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 1 administrator, 1 counselor, 1 assistant principal, 1 skill specialist, and 3 general education teachers.

School C

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 957 students. Of these, 44 students were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 9 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 5 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 6 intervention assistance team members. Of these 7 members, 6 were female and 1 was male. The job code of the IAT members comprised 2 administrators, 1 counselor, 1 nurse, 1 special education representative, 1 skill specialist, and 1 general education teacher.

School D

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 764 students. Of these, 50 students were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 18 students were referred to

special education for assessment and of these, 8 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 6 intervention assistance team members. Of these 6 members, 6 were female and 0 were male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 1 administrator, 1 special education teacher, 1 English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, and 3 general education teachers.

School E

The school population was comprised of Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) to kindergarten students. This school had a total enrollment of 660 students. Of these, 31 were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 13 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 12 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 6 intervention assistance team members. Of these 6 members, 6 were female and 0 were male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 1 administrator, 2 assistant principals, 1 social worker, and 1 Title I teacher.

School F

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 878 students. Of these 54 were referred to IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 16 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 11 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 7 intervention assistance team members. All 7 were female unless the referring teacher was male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 1 administrator, 1 skill specialist, 2 counselors, 1 speech

pathologist, 1 social worker, and 1 teacher. The team had only four members who agreed to participate in the research study.

School G

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 762 students. Of these, 90 students were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 43 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 22 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 6 intervention assistance team members. Of these 6 members, 6 were female and 0 were male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 1 administrator, 1 counselor, 1 skill specialist, 1 Title 1 teacher, 1 P.E. teacher, and 1 program director.

School H

The school population was comprised of PPCD – pre-kindergarten students. This school had a total enrollment of 710 students. Of these, 27 were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 7 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 6 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 7 intervention assistance team members. Of these 7 members, 7 were female and 0 were male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 1 administrator, 1 assessment specialist, 1 Learning Early Acquisition of Problem-Solving (LEAPS) teacher, 1 nurse, 1 PK ESL teacher, 1 motor lab teacher, and 1 social worker.

School I

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 800 students. Of these, 60 students were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 11 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 2 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 5 intervention assistance team members. Of these 5 members, 5 were female and 0 were male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 1 administrator, 1 counselor, 1 diagnostician, 1 nurse, 1 dyslexia/504 coordinators, and 1 teacher.

School J

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 692 students. Of these, 43 students were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 18 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 13 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 7 intervention assistance team members. Of the seven members, 7 were female and 0 were male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 2 special education teachers, 1 social worker, 2 skill specialists, 1 content mastery teacher, and 1 administrator. The team had only 5 members who agreed to participate in the research study.

School K

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 262 students. Of these, 19 students were referred

to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 7 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 6 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 4 intervention assistance team members. Of these 4 members, 4 were female and 0 were male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 1 skill specialist, 1 counselor, 1 general education teacher, and 1 instructional facilitator. The team had only three members who agreed to participate in the research study.

School L

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 770 students. Of these, 42 students were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 28 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 11 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 5 intervention assistance team members. Of these 5 members, 5 were female and 0 were male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 1 administrator, 1 counselor, 2 skill specialists, and 1 speech therapist.

School M

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 866 students. Of these, 38 were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 17 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 7 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 8 intervention assistance team members. Of these 8

members, 8 were female and 0 were male, unless the referring teacher was male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 2 administrators, 2 lead teachers, 2 special education teachers, and 2 classroom teachers.

School N

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 877 students. Of these, 74 students were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 20 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 13 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 12 intervention assistance team members. Of these 12 members, 12 were female and 0 were male unless the referring teacher was male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 1 administrator, 1 counselor, 1 bilingual skills specialist, 1 content mastery/inclusion teacher, 1 special education teacher, 1 kindergarten teacher, 1 first grade teacher, 3 second grade teachers, 1 third grade teacher, and 1 fourth grade teacher. The team had only 11 members who agreed to participate in the research study.

School O

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 752 students. Of these, 41 students were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 13 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 1 student qualified as a candidate for special education. There was a total of 2 intervention assistance teams on this campus. Team 1 reviewed IATs for grades kindergarten to second. This team was chaired by a

Title 1 teacher and had a representative from each of the three grades, and there was one additional support team member. Team 2 was comprised of two special education teachers, the nurse, and a teacher from each of the two grade levels. These 2 teams consisted of a total of 10 IAT members. Of these, 9 were female and 1 was male. The team had only 8 members who agreed to participate in the research study.

School P

The school population was comprised of kindergarten to fourth grade students. This school had a total enrollment of 890 students. Of these, 74 students were referred to the IAT for review. As a result of the IAT review, 33 students were referred to special education for assessment and of these, 22 students qualified as candidates for special education. There was a total of 7 intervention assistance team members. Of these 7 members, 7 were female and 0 were male unless the referring teacher was male. The job code of the intervention assistance team members comprised 1 administrator, 2 teachers, 2 skill specialists, and 2 teachers who served as support staff personnel under special district funding. The team had only 6 members who agreed to participate in the research study.

The sample for the study was comprised of all 100 IAT members from the 16 selected schools. Job codes of these members consisted of administrators (which included counselors), teachers, and other (support staff) such as school psychologists, social workers, nurses, OT/PT; however, IAT members were not only limited to these specific job codes.

Instrument

This study relied on data from one instrument. The instrument consisted of one 40-item survey, including 7 factor variables and a Likert scale, 34-question tool. The first section, 6 factor variables of the survey, requested demographic information that was collected to perform descriptive analysis of the participants. These areas included each subject's job code position, gender, ethnicity, age, area of expertise, and years of service on the IAT. The second section of the survey included 34 questions that were formed on the basis of input from the literature review on specific information relative to the components of an IAT. The response scale includes strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree and strongly agree, with 1 as an indicator of strong disagreement and 5 as an indicator of strong agreement. This scale was used to allow for potential variability and was identified as the most common response format (Patton, 1998b).

In addition, a pilot study survey contained items reviewed by teachers and non-participating members to identify major points of concern and essential areas that needed addressing. This group provided input regarding clarity, relevance, format, and general make-up of the survey. The feedback from the pilot study was used to improve the appearance and quality of the final instrument. These items were included on the final survey to determine the impact of the IAT relative to team members' perceptions.

Survey research is a form of descriptive research that involves collecting information about research participants' beliefs, attitudes, interests, or behavior through questionnaires. Survey research in this study collected basic descriptive information from a sample. According to Isaac and Michaels (1997), survey research is designed to

assist the researcher in collecting data. They are the means of gathering information that describes the nature and extent of a specified set of data ranging from physical counts and frequencies to attitudes and opinions. Isaac and Michaels further stated that this information can be used (a) to answer questions that have been raised; (b) to solve problems that have been posed or observed; (c) to assess needs and set goals; (d) to determine whether or not specific objectives have been met; (e) to establish baselines against which future comparisons can be made; (f) to analyze trends across time; and (g) to describe what exists, in what amount, and in what course. According to Gall, Borg, and Gall (1998), it is important that the researcher define the research problem and lists the specific objectives to be achieved, or hypotheses to be tested, by the questionnaire.

There are advantages and disadvantages of surveys. According to Isaac and Michaels (1997), the advantages of a survey (a) are that records are non-reactive, (b) are inexpensive, (c) often allow historical comparisons and trend analysis if records are accurate and up-to-date, and (d) provide an excellent baseline for comparisons. The disadvantages of a survey are that (a) they may involve confidential restrictions; (b) they are often incomplete, inaccurate, and out-of-date; (c) they often make year-to-year comparisons invalid because of changing rules for keeping records; (d) they can be misleading unless a knowledgeable person can explain how the records were compiled; (e) their purpose usually is unrelated to the purpose of surveys and actual data only; and (f) there is no input on values or attitudes (Isaac & Michaels, 1997).

Pilot Study Results

The pilot study was administered to six people from a sample different from the one used for final study. The completed surveys were used to identify weaknesses in the questionnaire, which were later modified in the final survey. Some of the questions were reformatted to get a simpler survey. Seventeen complex questions were broken down to 40 straightforward questions. Unanswered questions were deleted from the survey.

The Final Survey

The survey was designed to generate information about the traits and practices of intervention assistance teams and to generate student characteristics for analysis. Variables found in the literature review were: intervention strategies used in IATs, IAT contribution, team efficacy, professional development, teacher efficacy, coping strategies of IAT, and student characterizations. These variables were examined in the present study by use of this final survey. Commonly used by the educational community are the demographic question format and the five-point scale format (Patton, 1998b). The requested demographic information included each subject's job code position, gender, ethnicity, age, area of expertise, and years of service on the IAT. The response scale included: strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, and strongly agree. This scale was used to allow for potential variability and was identified as the most common response format (Patton, 1998b).

The questions were designed to address perceptions of seven specific factors: efficacy of intervention assistance teams, teacher efficacy, intervention strategies used

in IATs, IAT contribution, professional development, coping strategies of IAT, and student characterizations (Table 3.1). The following table represents factors and questions designed to address perceptions of intervention assistance team members and generate student characterizations for analysis. These factors were found to be important in the literature review. Chapter IV will detail further results after performing principal component analysis and varimax rotation for the seven factors.

The questions that addressed intervention strategies included 1, 6, 7, 9, and 17. Questions 2, 3, 26, and 28 addressed IAT contribution. Team efficacy included 27, 30, 31, 32, and 34. Professional development included 4, 8, and 13. Teacher efficacy included questions 24, 25, 29, and 33. Questions 5, 10, 11, 12, and 15 addressed coping Strategies. Student characterizations included questions 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23.

Table 3.1. Questions Addressing Factors

Factors	Items
Intervention Strategies	1, 6, 7, 9, 17
Team Contribution	2, 3, 26, 28
Team Efficacy	27, 30, 31, 32, 34
Professional Development	4, 8, 13
Teacher Efficacy	24, 25, 29, 33
Coping Strategies	5, 10, 11, 12, 15
Student Characteristics	14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23

Research Design

Quantitative descriptive and inferential research was used in this study. This research design aimed to provide a clear, accurate description of individuals, events, or processes and involved collecting numerical data to answer questions and develop a precise description of a sample's behavior or personal characteristics (Gall et al., 1998). This research provided a one-shot description of the 2003-2004 IAT in the district. Therefore, a single sample at one point in time described the perceptions of IAT members toward the IAT program.

This study examined the perceptions of intervention assistance team members of factors impacting referrals: differences by position among IAT members in their perceptions of factors impacting referrals dependent on the school, members' perceptions of efficacy of the IAT in reducing referrals, and consistency of the behaviors of the members of IAT with the indicators of efficacy. According to Isaac and Michaels (1997), reliability refers to the accuracy, consistency, and stability of measurement by a test. According to Gall et al. (1998), reliability refers to the extent to which other researchers would arrive at similar results if they studied the same case using exactly the same procedures as the first researcher.

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS). The perceptions were tested using a number of statistical models such as descriptive statistics, mean, and standard deviation. Correlation coefficients, factor analysis, statistical significance testing such as multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) using

Pillais, Hotellings, Wilkes and Roys was also used. Effect size was calculated. All statistical significance tests were tested at a confidence level of .05.

The frequency, mean, and standard deviation were calculated to answer questions 1,3, and 4. The descriptive data were analyzed statistically using the multivariate analysis approach for question 2. According to Gall et al. (1998), descriptive statistics are mathematical techniques for organizing and summarizing a set of numerical data. The mean is one measure of central tendency that is calculated by dividing the sum of all scores by the number of scores. The mean is considered the best measure of central tendency because it is a more stable measure. The standard deviation is the measure of variability. It measures the extent to which scores in a distribution deviate from their mean. The standard deviation is popular as a measure of variability because it is stable.

The researcher performed an exploratory factor analysis to determine if there were definite patterns in the results. An exploratory factor analysis examined the individual scores collected in the study. This allowed the researcher to examine raw data of important patterns and phenomena that could be revealed by the individual scores. This method discovers unforeseen or unexpected patterns in the data and gains new insights and understanding of natural phenomena (Gall et al., 1998). Factor analyses correlates so that the researcher can determine if there was some relationship among variables and if it conformed to the researcher's literature review.

Chapter II disclosed information revealed through a study of the literature. During the literature review, there were seven factors that were of high interest to IAT

members. These factors included: intervention strategies, team contribution, team efficacy, professional development, teacher efficacy, coping strategies, and student characterizations.

A principal component analysis with varimax rotation was performed on the data to classify and compare factors obtained from the literature. Exploratory factor analysis is a vital part of analysis. Items that correlated highly with the factor were considered significant, and these items were emphasized in interpreting the factors. Eigen values that were greater than 1 were looked at closely.

After performing principal components analysis and varimax rotation for the seven factors (intervention strategies, team contribution, team efficacy, professional development, teacher efficacy, coping strategies, and student characterizations), the factor pattern/structure coefficient matrix was analyzed. Ten components were extracted from the component transformation matrix.

Following the exploratory factor analysis, the researcher performed a multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA). MANOVA was used to uncover any interaction effects of categories of the factors used in the study. Finally, an effect size was calculated to determine "the degree to which the phenomenon is present in the population."

Results and findings are reported in Chapter IV. Conclusions, discussions, implications, and recommendations for further study are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter will discuss in detail the analysis and results of the present research study as it relates to the perceptions of IAT members. It will discuss the survey as well as give details of the statistical models used to derive results for inference.

Analysis was run using SPSS. The perceptions were tested using a number of statistical models such as descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, factor analysis, and statistical significance testing such as multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA). MANOVA was used to determine if the groups formed by categories of the independent variables were similar among the multiple variables. Effect size was also calculated. All statistical significance tests were tested at a confidence level of .05.

Respondents were asked to respond to a 40-item survey that included 6 demographic items and 34 that concerned their opinions and perceptions of the IAT on their campuses measured on a Likert scale. The demographics collected included job code positions, gender, ethnicity, age, area of expertise, and how long served on IAT. Administrators among the 29 elementary schools in the district were notified and asked if their IAT would participate in the research study. Of these 29 administrators, 16 administrators showed a willingness to participate and agreed to have their IAT take part in the survey. There was a total of 112 participants serving on these 16 IATs. Administrators disseminated the surveys to their team members. Of the 112 team members, there were 100 participants who agreed to respond to the survey. One

hundred surveys were disseminated to IAT members. Of the 100 sent out, 100 surveys were returned; therefore, the return rate was 100%.

Table 4.1 represents schools that participated in the survey. In order to maintain anonymity, the names of the schools were coded and replaced with alphabets A-P. School A constituted 6% of the total population, school B constituted 7% of the total population, and school C constituted 7% of the total population. School D represented 6% of the total population, school E represented 6% of the total population, and school F represented 4% of the total population. While school G made up 6% of the total population, school H made up 6% of the total population. School H comprised 7% of the total population, school I comprised 5% of the total population, school J comprised 5% of the total population, and school K comprised 3% of the total population. School L formed 5% of the total population, school M formed 8% of the total population, school N formed 11% of the total population, school O formed 8% of the total population, and school P formed 6% of the total population.

Table 4.2 represents job code positions. Job code positions included teachers, counselors, administrators, and other (support staff members) such as social workers, nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. Of the respondents, 48% were teachers, 7.1% were counselors, 20% were administrators and 24% were support staff. Only one participant did not respond to the question about his/her position. For the purpose of analysis, counselors, and administrators were collapsed together.

Table 4.1. School Name

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	School A	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
	School B	7	7.0	7.0	13.0
	School C	7	7.0	7.0	20.0
	School D	6	6.0	6.0	26.0
	School E	6	6.0	6.0	32.0
	School F	4	4.0	4.0	36.0
	School G	6	6.0	6.0	42.0
	School H	7	7.0	7.0	49.0
	School I	5	5.0	5.0	54.0
	School J	5	5.0	5.0	59.0
	School K	3	3.0	3.0	62.0
	School L	5	5.0	5.0	67.0
	School M	8	8.0	8.0	75.0
	School N	11	11.0	11.0	86.0
	School O	8	8.0	8.0	94.0
	School P	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2. Job Code Positions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Teacher	48	48.0	48.5	48.5
	Counselor	7	7.0	7.1	55.6
	Administrator	20	20.0	20.2	75.8
	Other	24	24.0	24.2	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 4.3 represents gender. There were 4% (4) male and 89% (89) female respondents. Seven respondents chose not to disclose their gender. Table 4.4 represents ethnicity. Ethnicity of the participants included 18% (18) African Americans, 15% (15) Hispanics, and 53% (53) European Americans. Fourteen participants chose not to respond to ethnicity.

Table 4.3. Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	4	4.0	4.3	4.3
	Female	89	89.0	95.7	100.0
	Total	93	93.0	100.0	
Missing	System	7	7.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 4.4. Ethnicity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	African American	18	18.0	20.9	20.9
	Hispanic	15	15.0	17.4	38.4
	European American	53	53.0	61.6	100.0
	Total	86	86.0	100.0	
Missing	System	14	14.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 4.5 represents the different age groups of participants. Age groups were comprised of 17% (18-30 year olds), 30% (31-40 year olds), 30% (41-50 year olds), 9% (51-60 year olds), and 1% (61-70 year olds). Thirteen participants chose not to respond to this section of the survey.

Table 4.5. Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-30	17	17.0	19.5	19.5
	31-40	30	30.0	34.5	54.0
	41-50	30	30.0	34.5	88.5
	51-60	9	9.0	10.3	98.9
	61-70	1	1.0	1.1	100.0
	Total	87	87.0	100.0	
Missing	System	13	13.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 4.6 represents area of expertise. Area of expertise comprised 32% general educators, 12% special educators, 21% bilingual/ESL educators, 12% gifted and talented, and 17% other (support staff members). Six participants chose not to respond to this section of the survey.

Table 4.7 represents years served on IAT. Forty-two percent of the participants have served on the IAT for 0-2 years, 39% of the participants have served on the IAT for 3-4 years, 16% have served on the IAT for 5-7 years, and 2% served on the IAT at an age not reported on the survey. One participant chose not to respond to this question.

Table 4.6. Area of Expertise

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Regular Educator	32	32.0	34.0	34.0
	Special Educator	12	12.0	12.8	46.8
	Bilingual/ESL	21	21.0	22.3	69.1
	Gifted/Talented	12	12.0	12.8	81.9
	Support Staff	17	17.0	18.1	100.0
	Total	94	94.0	100.0	
Missing	System	6	6.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 4.7. Years Served on IAT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-2	42	42.0	42.4	42.4
	3-4	39	39.0	39.4	81.8
	5-7	16	16.0	16.2	98.0
	No Age	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Reliability of the Data

One misleading feature of contemporary scholarly language is the usage of the statement, “the test is reliable” or “the test is valid” (Thompson, 1994). Therefore, it was important to recognize that when performing scholarly inquiry, reliability was a

characteristic of the actual scores and data were extracted from the results of the instrument used for a certain population of people but not of the instrument itself.

As researchers Linn and Gronlund (2000) noted: "Reliability refers to the results obtained with an evaluation instrument and not to the instrument itself…Thus, it is more appropriate to speak of the reliability of the 'test scores' or of the 'measurement' than of the 'test' or the 'instrument'" (p. 78, emphasis in original).

> The subjects themselves impact the reliability of scores, and thus it becomes an oxymoron to speak of "reliability of the test" without considering to whom the test was administered or other facets of the measurement protocol. (Thompson, 1994, p. 486)

Table 4.8 represents the item-total statistics and Cronbach's alpha. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha item-total statistics for scores keyed for the 34 items. Questions with negative wording were changed to positive and the response scale was reversed. The reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha for the data under study was calculated to be .6982. This was a considerably low value. Initial calculation of alpha values indicated that the reliability could be increased if some of the items were deleted. Eight items were deleted step-by-step after examining the improvement in Cronbach's alpha value in each step. These items were Questions 6, 11, 12, 14, 21, 22, 24, and 27. After these 8 variables were removed, scores were keyed again to obtain a higher reliability score. A higher reliability score increased the alpha coefficient from .6982 to .8011.

Table 4.9 represents item-total statistics and Cronbach's alpha for scores keyed for the 26 items after 8 variables were removed to obtain a higher reliability score.

Table 4.8. Item-Total Statistics for the 34 Items

	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
ATEAMOR	113.3971	74.6026	.3092	.6843
NINSMOD	112.8971	76.2443	.2846	.6872
NBEHMANT	113.0736	75.7123	.2357	.6901
STAFDEV	113.6765	75.3578	.3117	.6848
INDSMGRP	113.1177	74.7335	.3873	.6804
REPREVDR	113.9707	81.0455	-.0514	.7108
SEATASS	113.7207	73.1311	.4190	.6762
ENCREGTE	113.5589	76.0430	.2949	.6864
ESTDISCI	113.2648	74.4378	.5313	.6755
FINDSOLU	113.0001	77.7327	.2759	.6895
CONPARAD	113.9854	78.0756	.0898	.7025
MAKREFER	114.0001	78.8073	.0669	.7031
PENCHILD	112.8088	76.0077	.4237	.6821
TNDIFLRN	115.9707	83.1349	-.1850	.7148
ADAPTPRO	113.2207	73.7579	.4282	.6769
STUORGMA	113.9265	74.8763	.3464	.6825
STUONTAS	113.4265	76.9959	.2795	.6883
PASAGRES	113.8530	78.5170	.1134	.6983
VISAUDPE	114.1471	75.1137	.3305	.6836
LACINSPR	114.1913	77.3521	.1286	.6992
LOWACAFU	115.5148	80.5830	.0004	.7032
INAPROIN	115.3971	82.7220	-.1744	.7106
INCOMPRE	115.4707	79.9259	.0654	.6994
TEAATTI	115.2501	81.2064	-.0675	.7151
COMMUN	112.8236	77.9401	.3263	.6888
TNGIATGU	113.5442	74.6114	.3107	.6842
FUNCFAV	115.5589	84.5801	-.2831	.7202
TEAMEFF	112.9413	77.3113	.2942	.6882
COLLDATA	113.3530	75.6062	.3116	.6851
ROUGRAPH	114.6324	73.5211	.3866	.6785

Table 4.8 (continued)

	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
ROUVISIT	114.3383	71.2434	.4286	.6728
INSPSAMP	114.0883	77.2773	.1291	.6993
DEVPLAN	113.1324	76.2074	.3717	.6838
CNSIMPIS	112.9118	76.7399	.4704	.6833

Reliability Coefficients
N of Cases = 68.0
N of Items = 34
Alpha = .6982

Table 4.9. Item-Total Statistics for the 26 Scales

	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
ATEAMOR	94.8109	75.3891	.3954	.7912
NINSMOD	94.3109	77.8342	.3308	.7946
NBEHMANT	94.4866	76.8566	.2963	.7968
STAFDEV	95.1082	77.9888	.2754	.7973
INDSMGRP	94.5271	75.5958	.4864	.7875
SEATASS	95.1217	75.4240	.4236	.7898
ENCREGTE	94.9866	77.6035	.3466	.7939
ESTDISCI	94.7028	77.1714	.4968	.7892
FINDSOLU	94.4190	79.2337	.3377	.7951
PENCHILD	94.2297	78.1794	.4245	.7920
ADAPTPRO	94.6622	76.8575	.3786	.7923
STUORGMA	95.3379	77.2684	.3303	.7946
STUONTAS	94.8514	79.0331	.3007	.7960
PASAGRES	95.3109	80.6290	.1133	.8049
VISAUDPE	95.5947	79.0395	.2083	.8006
LACINSPR	95.5271	79.1847	.1380	.8070

Table 4.9 (continued)

	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
INCOMPRE	96.8920	82.8108	.0049	.8059
COMMUN	94.2568	79.7011	.3666	.7950
TNGIATGU	94.9595	76.7524	.3069	.7961
TEAMEFF	94.3920	79.0641	.3350	.7950
COLLDATA	94.7433	76.0296	.4227	.7901
ROUGRAPH	95.9595	73.7937	.4528	.7878
ROUVISIT	95.7163	71.6587	.5165	.7835
NSPSAMP	95.4595	78.3348	.1911	.8034
DEVPLAN	94.5541	77.5387	.4477	.7907
CNSIMPIS	94.3379	78.1180	.5537	.7900

Reliability Coefficients
N of Cases = 74.0
N of Items = 26
Alpha = .8011

Descriptive Statistics

Mean is one measure of central tendency that is calculated by dividing the sum of all scores by the number of scores. The mean is considered the best measure of central tendency because it is a more stable measure.

Standard deviation is the measure of variability. It measures the extent to which scores in a distribution deviate from their mean. The standard deviation is popular as a measure of variability because it is stable.

Frequencies determine how the respondents, by percentages, answer on the survey response scale: strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree or strongly agree.

Factor Analysis

Chapter II disclosed pertinent information revealed through a study of the literature. During the literature review, there were seven factors that were of high interest to IAT members. These factors included: intervention strategies, team contribution, team efficacy, professional development, teacher efficacy, coping strategies, and student characterizations.

Factor analysis can be used to develop theory regarding the nature of constructs (Thompson & Daniel, 1996). Gorsuch (1983) noted, "A prime use of factor analysis has been in the development of both the operational constructs for an area and the operational representatives for the theoretical constructs" (p. 350). The purpose of factor analysis is to identify the least number of meaningful factors that provided the maximum amount of information (Gorsuch, 1983). Given this premise, principal component analysis with varimax rotation was performed on the data to classify and compare factors obtained from the literature.

It was posited that the primary analytic methods employed in the present study were factor analyses. Gorsuch (1983) made a related observation that, "Factors that will appear under a wide variety of conditions are obviously more desirable than factors that appear only under specialized conditions" (p. 201), e.g., only when certain samples or certain factor extraction or rotation methods are used. It was conceived that science is about the business of identifying relationships that recur under stated conditions.

Exploratory factor analysis is a vital part of analysis. Gorsuch (1983) emphasizes that the extraction of correlated factors implies that second-order factors

should be extracted. He noted: “Rotating obliquely in factor analysis implies that the factors do overlap and that there are, therefore, broader areas of generality than just a primary factor” (p. 255). Items that correlated highly with the factor were considered significant, and these items were emphasized in interpreting the factors. Eigen values that were greater than 1 were looked at closely.

After performing principal components analysis and varimax rotation for the seven factors: intervention strategies, team contribution, team efficacy, professional development, teacher efficacy, coping strategies, and student characterizations, the factor pattern/structure coefficient matrix was analyzed. Ten components were extracted from the component transformation matrix. Of the components, 1-8 revealed several values with high Eigen values. Components 9 and 10 revealed several low Eigen values and did not have a group of values to which a common name could be assigned. An analysis of components 1-8 (see Table 4.10) is as follows:

Intervention Strategies

Component 1 contained 3 questions with factor coefficients of .30 or greater. The percentage of variance was 8.8. These questions consisted of question 1, “I have assisted the team with teacher morale to accommodate classroom management,” question 9, “Help with the establishment of discipline is an intervention strategy that reduces referrals on my campus,” and question 17, “Student ‘on-task’ during assignments is a student characteristic that reduced referrals on my campus.”

Table 4.10. Factor Analysis Rotated Component Matrix

	Component									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Q1 Assisted IAT with teacher morale to accommodate classroom management	.515	.486	-.040	.241	.050	.181	-.192	-.094	-.102	.028
Q2 Assisted instructional Modifications	-.392	.657	.088	.351	-.180	.209	.157	-.020	.130	.174
Q3 Assisted IAT with behavior management techniques	.184	.815	-.037	-.096	.011	.064	.180	.010	.097	-.119
Q4 Confidence in my ability as an IAT member result of professional development	-.259	.274	.218	.554	-.052	.154	-.075	.168	-.436	-.044
Q5 Individual/small group instruction effective intervention strategy that reduced referrals	.440	.124	.524	-.106	-.120	.418	.158	.009	.194	.101
Q7 Changing student seat Assignments is as effective Intervention strategy that reduced referrals	.383	.040	.020	.246	.004	.381	.239	.404	.214	-.152
Q8 Encouraging regular education teacher effective intervention strategy that reduced referrals	.400	-.047	.106	.715	.048	-.204	.147	-.119	-.012	.120
Q9 Help with establishment of discipline was an intervention strategy that reduced referrals	.800	.101	.153	.140	.049	.145	.124	.179	.011	-.039
Q10 Reacted to a child with an academic/behavioral problem by finding solutions to the problem	.216	-.059	.137	-.067	.474	.662	-.114	-.138	-.100	.088
Q13 Reacted to a child with an academic/behavioral problem by penalizing the child	.085	.078	-.019	.662	.287	.225	-.196	.111	.120	.095
Q15 React to a child with academic/behavioral problems with eagerness to adapt programs to promote difficult-to-teach and difficult-to-manage students	.133	.062	-.007	.130	-.005	.820	.108	.056	.079	.035

Table 4.10 (continued)

	Component									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Q16 Student organization of materials is a student characteristic that reduced referrals	.136	.150	.004	.108	.129	-.089	.811	.045	-.052	.236
Q17 Student "on-task" during assignments is a student characteristic that reduced referrals	.598	.150	-.120	-.023	.048	.184	.329	-.176	.017	.163
Q18 Passive aggressive behaviors is not a student characteristic that reduced referrals	-.021	.121	.023	.047	.061	.082	-.058	.013	-.896	-.026
Q19 Visual/auditory Perception is a student characteristic that reduced referrals	.194	-.039	.186	-.119	-.023	.347	.719	-.179	.005	-.170
Q20 Instructional preparation was a common academic behavior exhibited by the student's referred to IAT	-.062	-.003	-.070	.054	247	-.038	.045	.812	.051	.195
Q23 Ability to comprehend information is a common academic/ behavior exhibited by student's referred	.060	-.006	.097	-.034	-.230	.010	-.159	.761	-.083	-.089
Q25 Our team has great rapport with one another	.112	-.004	.257	.196	.770	-.153	.027	.039	.171	-.108
Q26 Eager to become trained in IAT guidelines and requirements prior to becoming a member of IAT	.053	.098	.140	.139	-.002	.071	.088	.061	-.024	.890
Q28 Overall, I think our team is efficient	.152	.646	.100	.032	.225	-.143	-.056	.016	-.010	.214
Q29 Routinely, I collect pre-intervention data prior to meeting with IAT	.023	.106	.634	-.007	.409	.117	-.098	.122	-.177	.125
Q30 Routinely, graph the progress and results of the IAT	-.027	-.002	.409	.520	.230	.063	.147	.008	.033	.066

Table 4.10 (continued)

	Component									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Q31 I make routine visits to the classroom to observe candidates prior to meeting with the IAT	.166	.287	.665	.234	.080	.020	.115	.125	-.085	-.122
Q32 Inspect samples of student's academic work prior to meeting with IAT	-.130	-.225	.723	.116	.114	-.071	.028	-.152	.113	.163
Q33 Assist with developing a step-by-step plan for interventions chosen by the IAT	-.078	.167	.102	.177	.698	.317	.186	-.046	-.044	.067
Q34 I am considerate of issues that are important to IAT members	.218	.353	.325	.333	.362	.104	-.314	.035	.161	.167

Team Contribution

Component 2 contained 3 questions with factor coefficients of .30 or greater. The percentage of variance was 8.5. These questions consisted of question 2, "I have never assisted the team with the use of instructional modifications," question 3, "I have never assisted the team with behavior management techniques," and question 28, "I perceive that our team is efficient."

Team Efficacy

Component 3 contained 3 questions with factor coefficients of .30 or greater. The percentage of variance was 8.4. These questions consisted of question 30, "I routinely graph the progress and results of the intervention assistance team," question 31, "I make routine visits to the classrooms to observe candidates prior to meeting with

the IAT," and question 32, "I inspect samples of student's academic work prior to meeting with the IAT."

Professional Development

Component 4 contained 3 questions with factor coefficients of .30 or greater. The percentage of variance was 8.1. These questions consisted of question 4, "I have greater confidence in my ability as an IAT member as a result of professional development," question 8, "Encouraging the general education teacher is an effective intervention strategy that reduces referrals on my campus," and question 13, "IAT members react to a child with an academic/behavioral problem by penalizing the child."

Teacher Efficacy

Component 5 contained 3 questions with factor coefficients of .30 or greater. The percentage of variance was 7.7. These questions consisted of question 25, "Our team has great rapport with one another," question 29, "Routinely, I do not collect pre-intervention data prior to meeting with my IAT," and question 33, "I assist with developing a step-by-step plan for the interventions chosen during the IAT."

Coping Strategies

Component 6 contained 3 questions with factor coefficients of .30 or greater. The percentage of variance was 7.7. These questions consisted of question 5, "Individual/small group instruction is an effective intervention strategy that reduced referrals on my campus," question 10, "IAT members react to a child with an academic/behavioral problem by finding solutions to the problem," and question 15,

"IAT members react to a child with an academic/ behavioral problem with eagerness to adapt programs to promote the success of *difficult-to-teach and difficult-to-manage students*."

Student Characterizations

Component 7 contained 2 questions with factor coefficients of .30 or greater. The percentage of variance was 6.8. These questions consisted of question 16, "Student organization of materials is a student characteristic that reduces referrals on my campus," question 19, "Visual/auditory perception is a student characteristic that reduces referrals on my campus."

Common Academic Behaviors

Component 8 contained 3 questions with factor coefficients of .30 or greater. The percentage of variance was 6.3. These questions consisted of question 7, "Changing student seat assignments is not an effective intervention strategy that reduces referrals on my campus," question 20, "The lack of instructional preparation is a common academic behavior exhibited by the student's referred to IAT," and question 23, "The inability to comprehend information is the common academic behavior exhibited by the student's referred to IAT."

After completing and interpreting the rotated component matrix, an additional factor, component 8 was found. Common student academic/behaviors contained items very similar to those of student characterizations. Items 7, 20, and 23 loaded well under component 8. These items were not used in the analyses.

It was also revealed through the analysis of rotated component matrix, that item 1 overlaps in components 1 and 2. Item 5 overlaps in components 1, 3, and 6. Item 10 overlaps in components 5 and 6. These items were analyzed individually, and they were collapsed into another component where they fit well. Item 1 collapsed into component 1 and items 5 and 10 collapsed well with component 6. There were two items that did not collapse well with the 8 components that gave high Eigen values. These items were 18 and 26. To determine further results, Table 4.11 addresses alpha scores after analyzing principal components and items that loaded under the same component.

Table 4.11. Scale Scores for Factors

Factors	Items	Alpha	Rounded Alpha
Intervention Strategies	1, 9, 7	0.5794	0.58
Team Contribution	2, 3, 38	0.6349	0.63
Team Efficacy	30, 31, 32	0.6020	0.60
Professional Development	4, 8, 13	0.4487	0.45
Teacher Efficacy	25, 29, 33	0.5045	0.50
Coping Strategies	5, 10, 15	0.5519	0.55
Student Characteristics	16, 19	0.6175	0.62

Research Question 1

The first research question was: “What are the perceptions of intervention assistance (IAT) team members of factors impacting referrals in urban elementary

schools?" The results of the data gathered through the frequency table (see Table 4.12) and means/standard deviation (see Table 4.13) overwhelmingly support that there were four factors IAT members agreed or strongly agreed were of high importance to impacting referrals to special education. These four factors were intervention strategies, team contribution, team efficacy and coping strategies.

Factor 1, intervention strategies, supported 3 questions; in question 1, "Assisted IAT with teacher morale to accommodate classroom management," 53% of team members agreed and 31% strongly agreed. The mean is 4.0 and standard deviation is .95. In question 9, "Help with the establishment of discipline is an intervention strategy that reduced referrals," 66% of team members agreed and 22% strongly agreed. The mean is 4.0 and standard deviation is .70. In question 17, "Student 'on-task' during assignments is a student characteristic that reduced referrals," 70% agreed and 16% strongly agreed. The mean is 3.9 and standard deviation is .67.

Table 4.12. Frequency Table

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Q1 Assisted IAT w/ teacher morale to accommodate classroom management					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	8.1
	Not Sure	7	7.0	7.1	15.2
	Agree	53	53.0	53.5	68.7
	Strongly Agree	31	31.0	31.3	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q2 Assisted IAT w/ use of instructional modifications					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0	24.0	24.0
	Disagree	5	5.0	5.0	7.0

Table 4.12 (continued)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Agree	34	34.0	34.0	41.0
	Strongly Agree	59	59.0	59.0	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Total		100	100.0		
Q3 Assisted IAT w/ behavior management techniques					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Disagree	5	5.0	5.0	9.1
	Not Sure	2	2.0	2.0	11.1
	Agree	35	35.0	35.4	46.5
	Strongly Agree	53	53.0	53.5	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q4 Greater confidence in my ability as an IAT member as a result of Staff Development					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	3.0	3.5	3.5
	Disagree	9	9.0	10.6	14.1
	Not Sure	14	14.0	16.5	30.6
	Agree	48	48.0	56.5	87.1
	Strongly Agree	11	11.0	12.9	100.0
	Total	85	85.0	100.0	
Missing	System	15	15.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q5 Individual/small group instruction effective intervention strategy that reduced referrals					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Not Sure	4	4.0	4.0	8.0
	Agree	51	51.0	51.0	59.0
	Strongly Agree	41	41.0	41.0	100.0
Total		100	100.0		
Q7 Changing student seat assignments is an effective intervention strategy that reduced referrals					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Disagree	14	14.0	14.1	15.2
	Not Sure	11	11.0	11.1	26.3
	Agree	58	58.0	58.6	84.8
	Strongly Agree	15	15.0	15.2	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 4.12 (continued)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Q8 Encouraging regular education teacher effective intervention strategy that reduced referrals					
Valid	Disagree	8	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Not Sure	16	16.0	16.0	24.0
	Agree	60	60.0	60.0	84.0
	Strongly Agree	16	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Q9 Help w/establishment of discipline was an intervention strategy that reduced referrals					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Disagree	3	3.0	3.0	4.0
	Not Sure	6	6.0	6.0	10.0
	Agree	68	68.0	68.0	78.0
	Strongly Agree	22	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	85	85.0	100.0	
Q10 Reacted to a child w/an academic/behavioral problem by finding solutions to the problem					
Valid	Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Not Sure	2	2.0	2.0	3.0
	Agree	54	54.0	54.0	57.0
	Strongly Agree	43	43.0	43.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Q13 Reacted to a child w/an academic/behavioral problem by penalizing the child					
Valid	Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Not Sure	2	2.0	2.0	4.0
	Agree	32	32.0	32.0	36.0
	Strongly Agree	63	63.0	63.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Missing	System	15	15.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q15 React to a child with academic/behavioral with eagerness to adapt programs difficult to teach/manage					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	5.1
	Not Sure	7	7.0	7.1	12.1
	Agree	52	52.0	52.5	64.6
	Strongly Agree	35	35.0	35.4	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 4.12 (continued)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Q16 Student organization of materials is a student characteristic that reduced referrals					
Valid	Disagree	16	16.0	16.5	16.5
	Not Sure	30	30.0	30.9	47.4
	Agree	43	43.0	44.3	91.8
	Strongly Agree	8	8.0	8.2	100.0
	Total	97	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q17 Student "on-task" during assignments is a student characteristic that reduced referrals					
Valid	Disagree	5	5.0	5.1	5.1
	Not Sure	8	8.0	8.1	13.1
	Agree	70	70.0	70.7	83.8
	Strongly Agree	16	16.0	16.2	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q18 Passive aggressive behaviors is not a student characteristics that reduced referrals					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	13	13.0	13.1	15.2
	Not Sure	29	29.0	29.3	44.4
	Agree	48	48.0	48.5	92.9
	Strongly Agree	7	7.0	7.1	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q19 Visual/auditory perception is a student characteristic that reduced referrals					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	21	21.0	21.2	23.2
	Not Sure	30	30.0	30.3	53.5
	Agree	43	43.0	43.4	97.0
	Strongly Agree	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q20 Instructional preparation was a common academic behavior exhibited by the students referred to IAT					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Disagree	26	26.0	26.3	30.3
	Not Sure	17	17.0	17.2	47.5
	Agree	41	41.0	41.4	88.9
	Strongly Agree	11	11.0	11.1	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	

Table 4.12 (continued)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q25 Our team has great rapport with one another					
Valid	Agree	48	48.0	48.5	48.5
	Strongly Agree	51	51.0	51.5	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q26 Eager to become trained in IAT guidelines and requirements prior to becoming a member of IAT					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Disagree	11	11.0	11.1	14.1
	Not Sure	7	7.0	7.1	21.2
	Agree	52	52.0	52.5	73.7
	Strongly Agree	26	26.0	26.3	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q28 Overall, I think our team is efficient					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Agree	53	53.0	53.0	54.0
	Strongly Agree	46	46.0	46.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q29 Routinely, I collect pre-intervention data prior to meeting w/IAT					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	9	9.0	9.1	11.1
	Not Sure	7	7.0	7.1	18.2
	Agree	53	53.0	53.5	71.7
	Strongly Agree	28	28.0	28.3	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q30 Routinely, graph the progress and results of the IAT					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.1	4.1
	Disagree	50	50.0	51.0	55.1
	Not Sure	16	16.0	16.3	71.4
	Agree	22	22.0	22.4	93.9
	Strongly Agree	6	6.0	6.1	100.0
	Total	98	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 4.12 (continued)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Q31 Make routine visits to the classrooms to observe candidates prior to meeting w/IAT					
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Disagree	37	37.0	37.4	40.4
	Not Sure	7	7.0	7.1	47.5
	Agree	38	38.0	38.4	85.9
	Strongly Agree	14	14.0	14.1	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q32 Inspect samples of student's academic work prior to meeting w/IAT					
Valid	Disagree	33	33.0	33.0	33.0
	Not Sure	4	4.0	4.0	37.0
	Agree	50	50.0	50.0	87.0
	Strongly Agree	13	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	100.0	
Q33 Assist w/developing a step-by-step plan for interventions chosen by the IAT					
Valid	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Not Sure	1	1.0	1.0	5.0
	Agree	62	62.0	62.0	67.0
	Strongly Agree	33	33.0	33.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		100	100.0		
Q34 I am considerate of issues that are important to IAT members					
Valid	Agree	53	53.0	53.0	53.0
	Strongly Agree	47	47.0	47.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.13. Mean and Standard Deviation

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q1. I have assisted the team with teacher morale to accommodate classroom management	4.0404	.95745
Q2. I have assisted the team with use of instructional modifications	4.4300	.89052
Q3. I have assisted the team with behavior management techniques	4.2929	1.02273

Table 4.13 (continued)

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q4. I have greater confidence in my ability as an IAT member as result of professional development	3.6471	.95998
Q5. Individual/small group instruction effective intervention strategy that reduced referrals	4.2800	.76647
Q7. Changing student seat assignments is an effective intervention strategy that reduced referrals	3.7273	.92381
Q8. Encouraging regular education teacher is an effective intervention strategy that reduced referrals	3.8400	.78779
Q9. Help with establishment of discipline was an intervention strategy that reduced referrals	4.0700	.70000
Q10 Reacted to a child with an academic/behavioral problem by finding solutions to the problem	4.3900	.58422
Q13. Reacted to a child with an Academic/behavioral problem by Penalizing the child	4.5701	.63964
Q15. React to a child with academic behavioral problem with eagerness to adapt programs to promote the success of difficult-to-teach and difficult to manage students.	4.1414	.90362
Q16. Student organization of Materials is a student characteristic That reduced referrals	3.4433	.86565
Q.17 Student “on-task” during assignments is a student characteristic that reduced referrals	3.9798	.66975
Q.18 Passive aggressive behaviors is not a student characteristic that reduced referrals	3.4545	.88379
Q19. Visual/auditory perception is a student characteristic that reduced referrals	3.2424	.89318
Q20. Instructional preparation was a common academic behavior exhibited by the students referred to IAT	3.2929	1.09965

Table 4.13 (continued)

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q23. Ability to comprehend information is the common academic behavior exhibited by the students referred to IAT	1.8586	.62287
Q25. Our team has great rapport with one another	4.5152	.50231
Q26. Eager to become trained in IAT guidelines and requirements prior to becoming a member of IAT	3.8788	1.02293
Q28. Overall, I think our team is efficient	4.4300	.60728
Q29. Routinely, I collect pre-intervention data prior to meeting with IAT	3.9697	.95249
Q30. Routinely, I graph the progress and results of the IAT	2.7551	1.04597
Q31. I make routine visits to the classrooms to observe candidates prior to meeting with the IAT	3.2323	1.18518
Q.32. Inspect samples of student's academic work prior to meeting with IAT	3.4300	1.08484
Q33. Assist with developing a step-by-step plan for interventions chosen by the IAT	4.2400	.66848
Q34. I am considerate of issues that are important to IAT members	4.4700	.50161

Factor 2, team contribution, supported 3 questions; in question 2, "Assisted IAT with use of instructional modifications," 34% of team members agreed and 59% strongly agreed. The mean is 4.4 and standard deviation is .89. In question 3, "Assisted IAT with behavior management techniques" 35% of team members agreed and 53% strongly agreed. The mean is 4.2 and standard deviation is 1.0. In question 28, "Overall

I think our team is efficient," 53% of team members agreed and 46% strongly agreed. The mean is 4.4 and standard deviation is .60.

Factor 3, teacher efficacy, supported 3 questions; in question 25, "Our team has great rapport with one another," 48% of team members agreed and 51% strongly agreed. The mean is 4.5 and standard deviation is .50. In question 29, "Routinely, I collect pre-intervention data prior to meeting with IAT," 53% agreed and 28% strongly agreed. The mean is 3.9 and standard deviation is .95. In question 33, "I assist with developing a step-by-step plan for interventions chosen by the IAT," 62% agreed and 33% strongly agreed. The mean is 4.2 and standard deviation is .66.

Factor 4, coping strategies, supported 3 questions; in question 5, "Individual/ small group instruction is an effective intervention strategy that reduced referrals," 51% agreed and 41% strongly agreed. The mean is 4.2 and standard deviation is .76. In question 10, "IAT members react to a child with an academic/behavioral problem by immediately contacting a parent/administrator," 54% of team members agreed and 43% strongly agreed. The mean is 4.3 and standard deviation is .58. In question 15, "IAT members react to a child with an academic/behavioral problem with eagerness to adapt programs to promote the success of *difficult-to-teach and difficult-to-manage students*, 52% agreed and 35% strongly agreed. The mean is 4.1 and standard deviation is .90.

As evidenced by the frequency table and the means/standard deviation table, results as per the perceptions of respondents (sample), indicate that these four factors were perceived favorably by the IAT, contrary to component 3 (team efficacy) and

component 4 (professional development) revealing higher percentages of variance on the Principal Component Matrix.

MANOVA and Effect Size

MANOVA tests differences in multiple variables among two, three, or more groups (Stevens, 1996). It is also noted that this design deals with multiple independent variables and multiple dependent variables (Table 4.14). It tests whether the groups formed by the categories of the independent variables are similar among the multiple dependent variables (Stevens, 1996).

Table 4.14. Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)

EFFECT WITHIN CELLS Regression
Multivariate Tests of Significance (S = 1, M = 3, N = 31)

Test Name	Value	Exact F Hypoth.	DF	Error DF	Sig. Of F
Pillais	.18874	1.86116	8.00	64.00	0.82
Hotellings	.23264	1.86116	8.00	64.00	0.82
Wilks	.81126	1.86116	8.00	64.00	0.82
Roys	.18874				

Note. F statistics are exact.

Cohen (1977) defined effect size as: “the degree to which the phenomenon is present in the population” or “the degree to which the null hypothesis is false…the larger this value, the greater the degree to which the phenomenon under study is manifested” (pp. 9-10, emphasis in original). Effect size can be defined as the degree to

which the sample results differ from the null hypothesis (Cohen, 1988, 1994). Effect sizes (see Table 4.15) are used as an alternative to or supplement for statistical significance tests, given the severe limits of a statistical significance test (Cohen, 1994; Meehl, 1978; Schmidt, 1996; Thompson & Daniel, 1996). Effect size is calculated as follows: where d is the difference between the population means after standardizing it by division by the average population standard deviation. Cohen devised the following formula in 1969 for effect size, d given by Cohen's $d = M_1 - M_2 / \sigma_{pooled.}$

Table 4.15. Effect Size

Survey Question	Between Group	Sum of Squares Within Group	Total	Effect Size
1	3.545663	85.3625	88.90816	3.988006
2	0.861923	77.46131	78.32323	1.100469
3	3.814667	98.60370	102.41840	3.724592
4	2.407126	74.87859	77.28571	3.114581
5	2.833189	55.24762	58.08081	4.878012
7	0.689044	82.87218	83.56122	0.824598
8	1.369499	60-04464	61.41414	2.229940
9	3.463979	45.04107	48.50505	7.141481
10	2.163745	31.47262	33.63636	6.432754
13	1.322824	38.85326	40.17609	3.292564
15	1.759220	78.24078	80.00000	2.199025
16	0.814850	70.81015	71.62500	1.137661
17	2.181026	41.77816	43.95918	4.961480
18	1.581688	74.75505	76.33673	2.071988

Table 4.15 (continued)

Survey Question	Between Group	Sum of Squares Within Group	Total	Effect Size
19	3.694773	73.90727	77.60204	4.76118
20	2.996074	115.00390	118.00000	2.539046
23	1.578521	36.42148	39.00000	4.154002
25	2.074913	22.38427	24.45918	8.483166
26	1.595727	97.38387	98.97950	1.612177
28	2.533947	33.78929	36.32323	6.976104
29	0.565809	84.42399	84.98980	0.665738
30	2.770305	102.77610	105.54640	2.624727
31	18.959810	118.10140	137.06120	13.833090
32	9.391468	105.05000	114.44440	8.206137
33	3.316342	40.86548	44.18182	7.506124
34	1.208297	23.47857	24.68687	4.894494

Research Question 2

The second research question was: “Are there differences by position among IAT members in their perceptions of factors impacting referrals dependent on the school? Question 2 was analyzed using MANOVA (see Table 4.14). A multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) (see Table 4.14) was conducted with the seven factor scores: intervention strategies, team contribution, team efficacy, professional development, teacher efficacy, coping strategies, and student characterizations. A

multiple analysis of variance was conducted at 95% confidence level to test the main effects of categorical independent variables (job codes on an interval dependent variable (factor scores). The significance value that was obtained was .082, which is not less than .05. Therefore, the job code positions failed to have an effect on the factor scores. This means that the teachers, administrators, and other (support staff) perceive each factor similarly.

Research Question 3

The third research question, "What are members' perceptions of efficacy of the IAT in reducing referrals?"

From the results of the frequency table (see Table 4.12) and the results of the means/standard deviation table (see Table 4.13), it appears that members' perception of efficacy of the IAT in reducing referrals were mixed. The researcher used all reportable indicators on the response scale to indicate the disparity of perceptions among team members.

In question 30, "Routinely, I graph the progress and results of the IAT," 22% agreed, 6% strongly agreed, 16% not sure, 50 disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed. The mean is 2.7 and standard deviation is 1.04. The results of the respondents are mixed. Half of the team members perceive that they failed to adequately graph the progress and results of the IAT.

In question 31, "I make routine visits to the classroom to observe candidates prior to meeting with the IAT, 38% agreed, 14% strongly agreed, 7% not sure, 37% disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed. The mean is 3.2 and standard deviation is 1.1

Overall, the responses of team members indicate that they had mixed perceptions about observing students in the classroom setting prior to meeting with the IAT. Additional findings support the results that administrators had higher percentages in the area of making routine visits to classrooms to observe candidates prior to meeting with the IAT. The rationale may be because teachers are already in the classrooms as the first persons or contact with the student. Teachers have no need to go to another classroom to observe students because the student of concern is already present in their own classroom setting.

In question 32, "Inspect samples of student's academic work prior to meeting with IAT," 50% agreed, 13% strongly agreed, 4% not sure, and 33% disagreed. Response, strongly disagreed, was not indicated in the frequency results. The mean is 3.4 and standard deviation is 1.08.

Results indicate that team members had mixed perceptions on team efficacy as relative to graphing the progress and results of the IAT, making routine visits to classrooms to observe students, and readily inspecting samples of student's academic work.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question was: "Are the behaviors of the members of IAT consistent with the indicators of efficacy?" The results of the frequency table (see Table 4.12) and the means/standard deviation table (see Table 4.13) were used to determine if the self-reported behaviors of the members of IAT were consistent with the indicators of efficacy. All response scales were analyzed. It does not appear that the self-reported

behaviors of the members of IAT are consistent with the indicators of efficacy. The indicators of efficacy based on the literature review are: (a) team members making routine visits to the classroom to observe students; (b) team members inspecting samples of student's academic work prior to meeting with IAT, and (c) team members graphing the progress and results of the IAT.

In question 30, "Routinely, I graph the progress and results of the IAT," 22% of team members agreed and 6% strongly agreed, 16% not sure, 50% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed. The mean is 2.7 and the standard deviation is 1.04. Overall, in question 30, behaviors of team members did not indicate consistency.

In question 31, "I make routine visits to the classroom to observe candidates prior to meeting with the IAT, 38% agreed, 14% strongly agreed, 7% not sure, 37% disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed as relative to this answer. The mean is 3.2 and the standard deviation is 1.1. Overall, in question 31, behaviors of team members did not indicate consistency.

In question 32, "Inspect samples of student's academic work prior to meeting with IAT," 50% agreed, 13% strongly agreed, 4% not sure, and 33% disagreed. Response, strongly disagreed was not indicated in the frequency results. The mean is 3.4 and the standard deviation is 1.08. Overall, in question 32, behaviors of team members did not indicate consistency.

Summary

Team members perceived four of the seven factors highlighted in the literature review as important to impacting referrals to special education. These factors are

intervention strategies, team contribution, teacher efficacy, and coping strategies. Although the literature highlighted seven factors, the study indicated that only four factors were important to the participants. It is important for educators to recognize the importance of acknowledging what is important to team members, either to maintain the strengths cited, or to gain more strength in these areas.

Team members felt strongly that there were no differences by position among IAT members in their perceptions of factors impacting referrals as being dependent on the school. Results indicated that all team members had similar perceptions. It is good to recognize that all team members who took part in the study felt similarly in regards to there being differences by position among IAT members in their perceptions of factors impacting referrals being dependent on the school. It appears that team members can agree on the important factors that need to be addressed in an effort to reduce referrals to special education regardless of their job codes. Results indicate that team members had mixed perceptions on team efficacy as relative to graphing the progress and results of the IAT, making routine visits to classrooms to observe students, and readily inspecting samples of student's academic work. The self-reported behaviors of the members of IAT were not consistent with the indicators of efficacy.

The literature review does indicate the measures of efficacy for IAT members. Team members may want to begin making routine classroom observations and looking at student work samples as a priority for their school if they truly want to assist students through the channels of IAT. Team members may want to begin graphing the progress and results of the IAT upon conclusion of each meeting.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Nationwide, the number of students who exhibited both academic and behavioral challenges in the educational setting has grown each year (Coben et al. (1997). An increasingly high percentage of students has been referred to special education, and growth in this program is on the rise (Parson, 2001). Teachers and educators have searched for ways to assist and support these challenging students and keep them in inclusive settings, thereby warding off referrals to special education. Intervention assistance teams (IATs) were designed to assist teachers and educators with ideas of how to help children progress and remain in the general education setting. Chafant, Pysh, and Moultrie began publishing reports on intervention teams in 1979 with much discussion on how the teams were to operate (Region IV Education Service Center, 1999). The purpose of the present research study was to determine the perceptions of IAT members on the impact of reducing referrals to special education.

The methodology adopted for this study was a quantitative study of the intervention assistance team in one urban independent school district (ISD). The study was devised to gather data that sought to classify the perceptions of the factors that impacted referrals as characterized in the literature. In obtaining IAT members' perceptions, it was believed that all elements and factors of the program were present during one school year, although the elements and factors of the program and the ideas and opinions of the IAT members' change over a period of time. Isaac and Michaels

(1997) pointed out that survey research is a form of descriptive research that involves collecting information about a research participant's beliefs, attitudes, interests, or behavior. To obtain an accurate view of the perceptions of the program, a single year of information was gathered from the IAT members and was investigated through a series of statistical analyses.

The district in this study was located in a large, urban school system in the southwestern part of the United States. The school district had 56,292 students that could be categorized as 33% African American, 56% Hispanic, 8% European American, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.1% Native American. There were 5 high schools, 4 ninth grade schools, 8 middle schools, 10 intermediate schools, 29 elementary schools, and 5 early childhood/pre-kindergarten (EC/PK) schools in the district. Of these students, 5,397 were considered to be special education by the end of the first semester 2003. All the schools surveyed were identified as low in socio-economic status.

This study consisted of 16 schools in this urban elementary school district. Of the 16 schools that participated in the study, collectively there were 112 team members. Of these, only 100 agreed to participate in the study. The 16 IATs included a variety of job codes, such as teachers, counselors, administrators and other (support staff members), such as social workers, nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. Although the literature review points out that there are members of the IAT who are pertinent, such as teachers, administrator and counselors, oftentimes, it is educationally relevant for other support personnel to have input to the team. For

example, some students may have attention deficit disorder and have to take Ritalin to assist with attending to task. With this in mind, a nurse may be asked to bring anecdotal records of medicine dispensing to the IAT meetings to determine if the amount of dosages are regulated enough to assist the student in remaining on-task while in the school setting.

In this study, 48% were teachers, 7.1% were counselors, 20% were administrators, and 24% were support staff. One participant did not respond to the question about position. Four percent of the IAT members were male, and 89% were female. Seven respondents chose not to disclose their gender. Ethnicity of participants included: 18.0% African American, 5% Hispanic, and 86% European American. Fourteen participants chose not to respond to ethnicity. Age groups comprised 17% (18-30 year olds), 30% (31-40 year olds), 9% (51-60 year olds), and 1% (61-70 year olds). Thirteen participants chose not to respond. Job codes and area of expertise comprised 32% general educators, 12% special educators, 21% bilingual/ESL educators, 12% gifted and talented educators, and 17% other (support staff personnel). Six participants chose not to respond. IAT members' years of experience comprised 42% with 0-2 years, 39% with 3-4 years, 16% with 5-7 years, and 2% at ages not reported.

Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha item-total statistics for scores keyed for the 34 items. Questions with negative wording were changed to positive, and the response scale was reversed. The reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha for the data under study, was calculated to be .6982. This was a considerably low value. Initial

calculation of alpha values indicated that the reliability could be increased if some of the items were deleted. Eight items were deleted step-by-step after examining the improvement in Cronbach's alpha value in each step. After these eight variables were removed, scores were keyed again to obtain a higher reliability score. A higher reliability score increased the alpha coefficient from .6982 to .8011.

Analyses were run using SPSS, a statistical software package. The perceptions were tested using a number of statistical models such as descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, factor analysis, and statistical significance testing such multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) and effect size was calculated. All statistical significance tests were tested at a confidence level of 95%.

The mean, standard deviation, and frequency were calculated to answer questions 1, 3, and 4. This descriptive data were analyzed statistically using the multivariate analysis approach for research question 2. According to Gall et al. (1998), descriptive statistics are mathematical techniques for organizing and summarizing a set of numerical data. The mean is one measure of central tendency that is calculated by dividing the sum of all scores by the number of scores. The mean is considered the best measure of central tendency because it is a more stable measure. The standard deviation is the measure of variability. It measures the extent to which scores in a distribution deviate from their mean. The standard deviation is popular as a measure of variability because it is stable.

The researcher performed an exploratory factor analysis to determine if there were definite patterns in the results. An exploratory factor analysis examined the

individual scores collected in the study. This allows the researcher to examine raw data of important patterns and phenomena that can be revealed by the individual scores. This method discovers unforeseen or unexpected patterns in the data and gains new insights and understanding of natural phenomena (Gall et al., 1998). Factor analyses were used so that the researcher could determine if there was some relationship among variables and if it conformed to the researcher's literature review.

Questions were investigated through a survey questionnaire that was given to the participants who agreed to take part in the research study. This study relied on data from one instrument. The instrument consisted of one 34-item survey, including 6 variables. The first section, 6 items of the survey, requested demographic information that was collected to perform descriptive analysis of the participants. The second section of the survey included 34 questions that were formed on the basis of input from the literature review on specific information relative to the component and the function of an IAT.

The following questions guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of intervention assistance team (IAT) members of factors impacting referrals in urban elementary schools?
2. Are there differences by position among IAT members in their perceptions of factors impacting referrals dependent on the school?
3. What are members' perceptions of efficacy of the IAT in reducing referrals?
4. Are the behaviors of the members of IAT consistent with the indicators of efficacy?

Research Question 1

The first research question asked, "What are the perceptions of intervention assistance team (IAT) members of factors impacting referrals in urban elementary schools?" Intervention assistance team members perceived that there were four factors that impacted referrals. These factors were intervention strategies, team contribution, teacher efficacy, and coping strategies. In terms of how the respondents scored, it appeared that these four factors were rated similarly among all job codes with all schools represented in the study.

Intervention strategies represent techniques and skills used to intercede with the student when the student exhibits academic and/or behavioral challenges. In the absence of meaningful intervention strategies, students continue to exist in the classroom setting without growth. Strategies include, but are not limited to, change in seating, individual/small group instruction, and repeated review/drill of lessons. Teachers are charged with taking on the role of implementing interventions for struggling students in an effort to reduce referrals to special education.

Team contribution represents shared efforts in which each member of a group has defined contributions while subordinating personal importance to the team. Without meaningful contributions to the team, the IAT will be limited in pinpointing the student's problem or generating enough ideas for effective interventions. It is important that the ISD recognize that a cross-section of representatives from each job code is needed on the IAT. If these representatives are visible during the IAT meetings and ready to share their gathered documentation and expertise, the team is perceived as

effective. It was perceived that IAT members on each campus in the ISD could make valuable contributions to the team. These contributions include effective instructional modifications and behavior management techniques.

As a growing number of students were referred to special education, IAT members were baffled about the factors that impacted this growing number each year. The literature review supports team contributions as a factor that can reduce referrals to special education. Team contribution is working in collaborative efforts to assist other team members and especially general education teachers with effective techniques that can be used in the classroom to promote the success of students. For example, according to Patton (1998b), norms of collegiality support regular and continuous dialogue among IAT members about problems, ideas, techniques, instructional approaches, and modifications that teachers can use in the general education setting. Findings in this study show that team members in this ISD overwhelmingly perceive that they make effective contributions to support general education teachers.

Teacher efficacy has to do with the extent to which the teacher believes that he or she can actually teach the children and make a difference in the lives of students (Bandura, 1996; Carter, 2003; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Teachers who possess efficacy are not quitters. They continuously find ways to enrich their curriculum, thereby supporting their students daily. Teachers who are efficacious want to attend teacher training workshops, in-services, and professional development, so that they can keep abreast of current trends in education as they learn effective ways to teach. Respondents

in this study overwhelmingly agreed and strongly agreed that teacher efficacy is a very important factor.

Coping strategies has to do with the ability to demonstrate patience and perseverance. Often, educators who work with challenging students, give up easily after only a few attempts to assist the student. Teachers may feel that it is easier to give up than to continue to cope with student challenges. As teachers are skillfully trained in ways to intervene with students, coping can increase. Educators need support in effective ways to cope. Resources may need to become available to educators and teachers in this area. Giving educators and teachers the support needed can easily be done in professional development training.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked, "Are there differences by position among IAT members in their perceptions of factors impacting referrals dependent on the school?" A multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) (see Table 4.14) was conducted with the 8 factor scores: intervention strategies, team contribution, team efficacy, professional development, teacher efficacy, coping strategies, and student characterizations. A multiple analysis of variance was conducted at the 95% confidence level to test the main effects of categorical independent variables (job codes on an interval dependent variable (factor scores).

The significance value that was obtained was .082, which is not less than .05. Therefore, the job code positions do not have an effect on the factor scores. This means

that the teachers, administrators, and other (support staff) personnel perceive each factor in similar ways.

Research Question 3

The third research question, "What are members' perceptions of efficacy of the IAT in reducing referrals?" From the results of the frequency table (see Table 4.12) and the results of the means/standard deviation table (see Table 4.13), it appears that members' perceptions of efficacy of the IAT in reducing referrals were mixed. The researcher used all reportable indicators on the response scale to indicate the disparity of perceptions among team members.

In question 30, "Routinely, I graph the progress and results of the IAT," 33% agreed, 6% strongly agreed, 16% not sure, 50 disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed. The mean is 2.7 and the standard deviation is 1.04. The results of the respondents are mixed. Half of the team members perceived that they failed to adequately graph the progress and results of the IAT.

In question 31, "I make routine visits to the classroom to observe candidates prior to meeting with the IAT, 38% agreed, 14% strongly agreed, 7% not sure, 37% disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed. The mean is 3.2 and standard deviation is 1.1. Overall, the responses of team members indicate that they had mixed perceptions about observing students in the classroom setting prior to meeting with the IAT.

In question 32, "Inspect samples of student's academic work prior to meeting with IAT," 50% agreed, 13% strongly agreed, 4% not sure, and 33% disagreed. Response, strongly disagreed, was not indicated in the frequency results. The mean is

3.4 and standard deviation is 1.08. Results indicate that team members had mixed perceptions on team efficacy as relative to making routine visits to classrooms to observe students and readily inspecting samples of student's academic work before meeting with the IAT.

As expressed in the literature review, it is of importance for team members to possess efficacy as they share information from their own disciplines and work toward solutions to student problems; however, teams are usually comprised of interdisciplinary members who may need to gain clearer understanding of others' disciplines as documented information is presented during IAT meetings (Coben et al., 1997) in order for efficacy of teams to exist.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question asked: "Are the behaviors of the members of IAT consistent with the indicators of efficacy?" The results of the study show that self-reported behaviors of IAT members vary with indicators of efficacy.

The results of the frequency table were used to determine if the behaviors of the members of IAT were consistent with the indicators of efficacy. All response scales were analyzed. It does not appear that the behaviors of the members of IAT were consistent with the indicators of efficacy. The indicators of efficacy based on the literature review are: (a) making routine visits to the classrooms to observe students; (b) team members inspecting samples of students' academic work, and (c) team members graphing the progress and results of the IAT.

In question 30, “Routinely, I graph the progress and results of the IAT,” 22% of team members agreed and 6% strongly agreed, 16% not sure, 50% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed. The mean is 2.7 and the standard deviation is 1.0. Overall, in question 29, behaviors of team members did not indicate consistency.

In question 31, “I make routine visits to the classroom to observe candidates prior to meeting with the IAT, 38% agreed, 14% strongly agreed, 7% not sure, 37% disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed as relative to this answer. The mean is 3.2 and the standard deviation is 1.1. Overall, in question 31, behaviors of team members did not indicate consistency.

In question 32, “Inspect samples of student’s academic work prior to meeting with IAT,” 50% agreed, 13% strongly agreed, 4% not sure, and 33% disagreed. Response, strongly disagreed, was not indicated in the frequency results. The mean is 3.4 and the standard deviation is 1.08. Overall, in question 32, behaviors of team members did not indicate consistency.

Conclusions

The purpose of embarking on this research was to determine the perceptions of IAT members’ on the impact of reducing referrals to special education. The study gave insight into one urban ISD school district.

The factors that impacted reducing referrals to special education were intervention strategies, team contribution, teacher efficacy, and coping strategies. It is perceived by team members that it is very important that all members utilize intervention strategies in the classroom, contribute documents, and share information

that will assist in effectively analyzing academic and behavioral problems. The intent of supporting students in the general education setting, possessing and exhibiting high teacher efficacy, and learning effective ways to cope in the classroom setting as student academic and behavioral challenges is also perceived as important to team members. It can be concluded as well that IAT members have high perceptions that efficacy does have an impact on whether or not referrals are reduced in this ISD even though the results indicated inconsistency among the job codes.

Although this research study gave demographic information regarding 16 urban elementary schools, the results in this ISD that differences by position among IAT members in their perceptions of factors impacting referrals being dependent on the schools did not have an effect. All team members perceived each factor in the similar ways.

In this ISD, findings revealed that efficacy was based on team members' performance. IAT members would be perceived as efficacious if each member made routine visits to the classroom to observe students and inspected samples of student work prior to meeting with the IAT and graph the progress and results of the IAT. Team members were not consistent in making routine visits to observe students and inspecting samples of student work nor were they consistent in graphing the progress and results of the IAT.

Due to the team make-up, IATs were comprised of personnel from varying job codes. Among a variety of job codes, traditionally, teams include at least one administrator, a general education classroom teacher and a school counselor. Most

often, other (support staff) such as nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, or psychologists are not engaged in classroom observations unless they are related to medical, discipline, and/or fine/gross motor skill issues as relative to education. Inspecting samples of student work is a very common task for teachers and administrators prior to meeting with IAT. This may be largely due to state-mandated tests and expected performance levels as related to tests. Teachers and administrators may monitor student progress to determine if students are on target academically. Professional development in the area of program strategies and services for other (support staff) as relative to team efficacy would be advantageous for this ISD.

Overall, findings indicate that IAT members have mixed perceptions and/or were inconsistent in coming prepared to IAT meetings with information about each student even if the information is relative to their own discipline or job code. The area that needs to be consistent is documented proof of shared information within the IAT as the team works toward reducing referrals to special education.

Implications for Further Research

The review of literature validated the importance of the IAT in efforts to provide support for educators in the classroom setting. Implications for further research could be performed in a number of areas. Research could be performed to:

1. Determine the amount of time the IAT actually spent on graphing IAT progress and results and if graphing and charting results have proven to be helpful to the team.

2. Determine the amount of time other (support staff) actually spend on classroom observations and inspection of student work samples prior to meeting with IATs.
3. Determine if other (support staff) have improved over time on classroom observations and inspection of student work samples prior to meeting with IATs.
4. Determine if consulting with special educators as a resource for IAT can assist the team in reducing referrals to special education.
5. Include the special educator as an additional member of the IAT, as compared to only the traditional team members found in the literature review. This may determine if using the expertise of the special educator makes the team more effective in finding ways to reduce referrals to special education.
6. Determine if factors impacting referrals are dependent on the schools' climate.
7. Determine if ideas and opinions of male IAT members make a difference in selective intervention strategies chosen by IAT as compared to female IAT members.
8. Determine if African American and/or Hispanic teachers have a different perception of factors that impact referrals to special education as compared to European American teachers.

9. Determine how the teacher could work with other support personnel individually, or from teacher-to-teacher. IAT collaboration does not have to be performed including the traditional members suggested in the literature review.

Lastly, valuable data were gathered from the respondents' answers in this study. Encouragement should be given to the school districts to continue the study of the IAT and practices that make a difference in reducing student referrals to special education.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY PROTOCOL

Intervention Assistance Team Survey

Indicate your position by checking the appropriate. Are you

__ A Teacher __ An Administrator
__ A Counselor __ Other (specify) _____

_____Gender _____Ethnicity _____Age

What is your area of expertise?

__ Regular Educator __ Special Educator __ Bilingual/ESL

__ Gifted/Talented __ Support Staff (psychologist, social worker, nurse counselor, occupational therapist, physical therapist)

How long have you served on the IAT?

__ 0-2 years __ 3-4 years __ 5-7 years

Answer each question as it relates to your perception of the IAT on your campus.

1. I have assisted the team with teacher morale to accommodate classroom management.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

2. I have never assisted the team with the use of instructional modifications.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

3. I have never assisted the team with behavior management techniques.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

4. I have greater confidence in my ability as an IAT member as result of professional development.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

5. Individual/small group instruction is not an effective intervention strategy that reduces referrals on my campus.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

6. Repeated review/drill of lessons is an effective intervention strategy that reduces referrals on my campus.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

7. Changing student seat assignments is not an effective intervention strategy that reduces referrals on my campus.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

8. Encouraging the general education teacher is an effective intervention strategy that reduces referrals on my campus.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

9. Help with the establishment of discipline is an intervention strategy that reduces referrals on my campus.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

10. IAT members react to a child with an academic/behavioral problem by finding solutions to the problem.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

11. IAT members react to a child with an academic/behavioral problem by immediately contacting a parent/administrator.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

12. IAT members react to a child with an academic/behavioral problem by making the referral.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

13. IAT members react to a child with an academic/behavioral problem by penalizing the child.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

14. IAT members react to a child by meeting the needs of different learners.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

15. IAT members react to a child with an academic/behavioral problem with eagerness to adapt programs to promote the success of *difficult-to-teach and difficult-to-manage students*.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

16. Student organization of materials is a student characteristic that reduces referrals on my campus.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

17. Student "on-task" during assignments is a student characteristic that reduces referrals on my campus.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

18. Passive aggressive behaviors is not a student characteristic that reduces referrals on my campus.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

19. Visual/auditory perception is a student characteristic that reduces referrals on my campus.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

20. The lack of instructional preparation is a common academic behavior exhibited by the student's referred to IAT.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

21. Low academic functioning is a common academic behavior exhibited by the student's referred to IAT.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

22. The inability to process information is a common academic behavior exhibited by the student's referred to IAT.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

23. The inability to comprehend information is the common academic behavior exhibited by the student's referred to IAT.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

24. Teacher attitudes do not play a role in reducing referrals on my campus.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

25. Our team has great rapport with one another.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

26. I was not eager to become trained in IAT guidelines and requirements prior to becoming a member of our IAT.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

27. My perception of how the IAT functions is not favorable.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

28. I perceive that our team is efficient.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

29. Routinely, I do not collect pre-intervention data prior to meeting with my IAT.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

30. I routinely graph the progress and results of the intervention assistance team.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

31. I rarely make routine visits to the classroom to observe candidates prior to meeting with the IAT.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

32. I inspect samples of the student's academic work prior to meeting with the IAT.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

33. I assist with developing a step-by-step plan for the interventions chosen during the IAT.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

34. I am considerate of issues that are important to IAT members.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

Information Sheet

The Perceptions of Intervention Assistance Team Members on the Impact of the IAT in Reducing Referrals in Urban Elementary Schools

You have been asked to participate in a research study regarding your perceptions of the intervention assistance team on the impact of the IAT in reducing referrals in Aldine ISD. Your school was selected because your building principal has willingness for your school to be a part of the study. Approximately 130 people have been asked to participate in the study. The purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions of the intervention assistance team members on the impact of reducing referrals to special education after problem-solving by IAT, and intervention strategies by a team of professional has been performed. IAT can be comprised of any school district personnel who have direct educational interest of the student as well as the student's parent, teachers, counselors, administrators, school nurses, licensed specialists in school psychology and social workers, just to name a few. The study will be conducted in the Aldine Independent School district on 16 elementary school campuses.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to respond to a survey that will only take 30 minutes to complete. There are no risks or benefits associated with this study.

This study will be conducted anonymously. You will complete the survey and return it to the IAT facilitator or administrator for your building. Once collected by the facilitator, all surveys will be mailed in an addressed envelope to the researcher. Additionally, the survey will not ask for names of any of the participants. All responses will be coded to ensure anonymity. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Cherrye Vasquez and Norvella Carter will have access to the records. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Aldine ISD or Texas A&M University. If you decide to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions that make you feel uncomfortable. You can withdraw at any time without your relations with the university, job, benefits, etc., being affected.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 713.628.2908 or by email at the following address: j.vasquez@sbcglobal.net. If you have any additional questions, you may contact my professor, Dr. Norvella Carter at Texas A&M University at College Station or by email at the following address: ncarter@tamu.edu.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, you can contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Research Compliance, Office of Vice President for Research at (979) 845-8585 (mwbuckley@tamu.edu).

Keep this information sheet for your records.

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER

RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

To: Building Principal/Intervention Assistance Team Facilitator

From: **Lynn Prussia**
Director of Special Education

Re: IAT Survey

A study is being conducted with Texas A&M University concerning intervention assistance teams. The study is researching the perceptions of intervention assistance team members on the impact of the IAT in reducing referrals in urban elementary schools. This will give our district valuable information concerning the impact of IAT and the perceptions of your campus team members.

Enclosed you will find surveys concerning IAT members and their perceptions of the IAT program in Aldine during the 2003-2004 school year.

Please distribute one survey to each member on your IAT in your building (please do not forget your male IAT teacher members). Have them complete the survey and return it to you as soon as possible. After all IAT members have completed the survey, return the surveys to me through interoffice mail by Wednesday, March 3, 2004.

Also, please update the top sheet which outlines your campus demographics -- labeled (Ex. School A – P). Please make any corrections that you may have in red, as I know that your numbers may have changed since you last gave Cherrye Vasquez this information.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

VITA

CHERRYE S. VASQUEZ
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Houston, Texas 77091

EDUCATION

2005	Doctor of Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas
1985	Master of Education, Special Education Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas
1981	Bachelor of Arts, Speech Pathology/Audiology Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas

EXPERIENCE

1997 – Present	Aldine Independent School District, Aldine, Texas Administrative Assistant for Medicaid (2002-Present) Program Director of Special Education (1997-2002)
1993 – 1997	Ermel Elementary School Aldine Independent School District, Aldine, Texas Educational Diagnostician
1984 – 1993	Klein Intermediate School Klein Independent School District, Klein, Texas Adaptive Behavior Teacher (1987-1993) Special Education Teacher (1984-1987) Speech Therapist(1984-1985)
1983 – 1984	Burbank Middle School Houston Independent School District, Houston, Texas Special Education Teacher

This dissertation was typed and edited by Marilyn M. Oliva at Action Ink, Inc.