

THE ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS ON INCLUSION

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper will be on the attitudes that educators have on the idea of inclusion. This paper will discuss studies and surveys that are representative of educators who have worked in or have been in an inclusion setting. It will also illustrate the attitude of new teachers that are starting in the teaching profession. With inclusion being the big push within the past ten years, the attitudes of teachers have been varied throughout school districts and levels of teachers. It appears the senior educators are not too keen on the idea, where as the new teachers, just beginning their careers only know what they have learned through their schooling. It should be noted that the underlying problem of inclusion is that there is no formal or state mandated way to carry it out. Many districts learn as they go, and create a plan of action. It is these authors' beliefs and experiences, that the attitude of educators will be negative towards the inclusion model of a class, due to the poor application of the plan.

INTRODUCTION

Children now more than ever are being mainstreamed and placed into inclusion classrooms. As more children with disabilities are being mainstreamed into general education settings, there is a need for teachers to be more educated in the field of special education. By law, children are required to be in the least restrictive environment to reach their academic potential. Inclusion means that all students are included into a classroom, general education students and children with special needs. There are advocates on both sides of the issue. Kauffman of the University of Virginia views inclusion as a policy driven by an unrealistic expectation that money will be saved. Furthermore, he argues that trying to force all students into the inclusion mold is just as coercive and discriminatory as trying to force all students into the mold of a special education class or a residential institution (as cited in Ford, 2001). At the other end of the spectrum are those who believe that all students belong in the regular education classroom, and that "good" teachers are those who can meet the needs of all the students, regardless of what those needs may be. Between the two extremes are large groups of educators and parents who are confused by the concept itself. They question whether inclusion is legally required and wonder what is best for children. They also question what it is that schools and school personnel must do to meet the needs of children with disabilities. When teachers have little knowledge of inclusion, it could end with a detrimental effect on young children with disabilities. "Attitudes are essential in the success of educating students with disabilities in regular education classrooms, pre-service programs should emphasize and concentrate on enhancing teachers attitudes towards inclusion" (Kauffmann & Hallahan, 1981, p. 3). Teachers are often not including adaptations into the classroom that would better students with special needs. Instead they are teaching with antiquated strategies (Kara & Yoga, 2001).

Mainstreaming has been used to refer to the selective placement of special education students in one or more "regular" education classes. Proponents of mainstreaming generally assume that a student must "earn" his or her opportunity to be placed in regular classes by demonstrating an ability to "keep up" with the work assigned by the regular classroom teacher. This concept is closely linked to traditional forms of special education service delivery (Emad, Hamzah & Ibrahim, 2003). When inclusion and mainstreaming are in the classroom, special educators and general educators need to collaborate in order to devise a plan that will work with the child or children who has special needs. "As inclusion requires the collaboration between general and special education, researchers must analyze the phenomenon of classroom teachers' and building administrators' perceptions about including students with disabilities in general education settings" (Bernie-Smith & Latham, 2000, p. 424). For the purpose of this study the term inclusion needs to be defined. Inclusion is a term which expresses commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend if this student did not have special needs. It involves bringing the support services to the child, rather than moving the child to the services and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class, rather than having to keep up with the other

students. Proponents of inclusion generally favor newer forms of education service delivery. Full inclusion means that all students, regardless of handicapping condition or severity, will be in a regular classroom/program full time. All services must be taken to the child in that setting. In addition to problems related to definition, it also should be understood that there often is a philosophical or conceptual distinction made between mainstreaming and inclusion. Those who support the idea of mainstreaming believe that a child with disabilities first belongs in the special education environment and that the child must earn his/her way into the regular education environment (Shade & Stewart, 2001). In contrast, those who support inclusion believe that the child always should begin in the regular environment and be removed only when appropriate services cannot be provided in the regular classroom. Many believe that inclusion is a good environment for a student because it will assist in his/her social skill development (Emad et al., 2003). The legal aspect of inclusion is as follows: two federal laws govern education of children with disabilities. Neither requires inclusion, but both require that a significant effort be made to find an inclusive placement. IDEA, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as amended in 1997, does not require inclusion. In fact, the term "inclusion" does not appear in the text of the statute or the implementing regulations. Instead, the law requires that children with disabilities be educated "to the maximum extent appropriate" in the "least restrictive environment" (Emrad, et al., 2003, p. 520). The IDEA contemplates that the "least restrictive environment" is the regular education classroom. In developing the Individual Education Program (IEP) for a child with disabilities, the IDEA requires the IEP team to consider placement in the regular education classroom as the starting point in determining the appropriate placement for the child. If the regular education classroom is deemed to be inappropriate, the IEP team must include an explanation in the IEP as to why the regular education classroom is not appropriate. The purpose of these requirements is to carry out the intent of the IDEA, which is to educate as many students with disabilities as possible in the regular education classroom. Robert T. Stafford, the Republican Senator from Vermont and one of the bill's primary sponsors, has argued that the legislation is essential if we are to allow children with special needs to live ordinary lives (as cited in Arnold & Dodge, 1994). Section 504 requires that a recipient of Federal funds provide for the education of each qualified handicapped person in its jurisdiction with persons who are not handicapped to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the handicapped person. A recipient of Federal funds is required to place a handicapped child in the regular educational environment unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aides and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. The purpose of this study is to investigate inclusion and how it is viewed in the education community. Although many hold the belief that inclusion is beneficial in many ways for a student, this study will focus on the academic outcome of students who are placed in inclusion settings. This study will also look at the theories and other studies that have already been done. The purpose of this study is to investigate inclusion and the attitudes that teachers hold towards children with special needs. This study will be focused on the perceptions and attitudes of general and special education teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

These were the questions these researchers wanted to investigate:

Is inclusion the best academic setting for children with disabilities? Are general education teachers educating children with special needs without proper training? Do teachers hold a positive or negative attitude towards inclusion? Do teachers believe that all students will benefit from inclusion?

Hypothesis:

Based upon the research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H1: General education teachers and special education teachers will not support inclusion as the best setting for children with disabilities.
- H2: General education teachers are teaching children with disabilities without proper training.
- H3: The majority of the teachers will hold a negative attitude towards inclusion.
- H4: Teachers will not support that all students will benefit from inclusion.

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards inclusion. The questions set forth by these researchers are:

1. Is inclusion the best academic setting for children with disabilities?
2. Are general education teachers are being trained appropriately?
3. Do teachers hold a positive or negative attitude towards inclusion?
4. Does the general education setting help benefit children with special needs?

Before conducting this study, research was needed in order to understand what previous studies have shown. Past research has shown that many teachers hold negative attitudes towards inclusion and do not believe that students benefit positively from inclusion (Hammond et al., 2003).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward inclusion. The questions that were to be answered and the hypothesis posed above are reflected in much of the literature about inclusion as an effective method of educating, both those with special needs and those without special needs. The articles used in preparation of this paper will be broken into two categories; attitudes and perceptions. The literature review is used to compare the articles to understand the thesis.

Attitudes

Attitudes of pre-service teachers toward persons with disabilities: predictions for the success of inclusion.

The purpose of a study by Emad et al., (2003) was to explore pre-service teachers' attitudes towards individuals with disabilities as a predictor for success in including disabled students in the regular classroom. Before any actual implementation of strategies for those with special needs are used in the classroom, it is important to determine the attitudes of educators and administrative workers. This study used the Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons (ATDP) scale in order to assess the attitudes of educators towards those persons with disabilities. Studies have shown that the most important predictors in having a successful inclusion class are to determine what the attitudes of the educators are (Emad et al., 2003). Positive attitudes of inclusion encourage children to strive, whereas negative attitudes limit children to meet their potential ability. "Teachers have been found to express positive attitudes towards inclusion and mainstreaming of general education settings" (Emad et al., 2003 p. 414). Attitudes of educators in an inclusion classroom are the most important aspect in creating an inclusive class. Since it is essential that educators have positive attitudes towards inclusion, pre-service programs should emphasize and enhance teachers' thoughts and perceptions toward inclusion. Attitudes and the ability to teach children with special needs is a learned process and it is an on-going process. In Emad et al.'s study, there were 597 participants in the pre-service education program and the students were from three different Universities in Jordan and one from the United Arab Emirates University. All students had a Bachelor's degree. There were two survey questionnaires to measure the attitudes towards persons with disabilities. The demographic instrument used was a researcher designed questionnaire. The researchers studied the subject's gender, number of times of contacts with persons with disabilities, educational backgrounds and culture. There were five different categories: no contact, one time per year, one time per month, one time per week, and one time per day. It was assumed that culture plays a role in the positive or negative effects of inclusion. The second instrument used was the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP) scale. This instrument consists of 20 items that can be measured on the 6-point Likert scale. Translators were necessary to make this study work because some of the participants did not speak English fluently.

The results for the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards persons with disabilities showed that 62.0% had a negative attitude towards inclusion. This study had 227 females and 370 males. The independent t-test procedure supported this result and the t-test value was not significant. Females had a 62.2% negative attitude on inclusion, while males had 61.1% negative attitude on inclusion. Cultures were compared by those from Jordan and UAE. There were 399 from Jordan and 198 from UAE. Jordanian participants had a 63.9% negative attitude towards inclusion while UAE participants were 58.0%. This study assumed that the more an educator knows about inclusion and children with disabilities the more positive their attitudes are towards mainstreaming and inclusion. Gender may also play a role in the attitudes of inclusion. Males were shown to have more negative attitudes toward inclusion than females.

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes of pre-service Arab educators towards persons with disabilities. The results indicated that pre-service teachers in general have more negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities. The assumption that those who have more knowledge in inclusion would have more positive attitudes did not prove to be the outcome in this study. It showed that the amount of contact did not matter when assessing the attitudes. There was no difference when based on gender either. Both males and females held a negative attitude on inclusion. The educational background of teachers did have an effect on attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Students from Jordan held more positive attitudes of inclusion than those from UAE (Emad et al., 2003). This might be because Jordan started services in the 1930s where UAE did not start until 1979.

Programs teaching educators should implement strategies and should enhance positive attitudes towards inclusion. Future teachers need to accept students with disabilities and provide them with adequate skills to be effective in the classroom. Schools in Jordan and UAE now provide more training for pre-service teachers in order to enhance positive attitudes towards inclusion. The next article will discuss student teachers' attitudes toward inclusion.

Student teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special needs

Throughout the world, mainstreaming children into general education classrooms is becoming more popular. Hastings and Oakford (2003) researched student teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special needs. This research focused on factors such as those that facilitate or impede efforts to include special needs children into general classrooms. Over the decades, researchers have concluded that teacher's attitudes towards inclusion were the most essential key to making inclusion classrooms work (Hastings & Oakford, 2003). There are multiple factors that can affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Such factors include child, teacher, and school variables. The child variable needs to be clear as to the child's disability and its impact on functioning. The main purpose of this study was to explore two issues that the researchers felt were not addressed adequately in previous research. Teachers view those with severe special needs as more needy, which results in teachers feeling less negative. Hastings and Oakford explored the subgroups of children with emotional and behavioral disorders. Next they explored the mixed results relating to the effects of the school environment by age group. Teacher variables that could affect their attitudes were addressed in this research two ways. In order to control any potential effects of the amount of teaching experience they sampled student teachers. This sample was used because the authors did not want those who had experience and had been taught their specific school inclusion philosophies to be sampled. They wanted those who had their own ideas and were not teaching. It is important to see the attitudes they acquire during student teaching about inclusion. Secondly, the student teachers' previous experience of special needs was measured.

The participants in this study were 93 university students studying for professional teaching qualifications. Sixty of the participants were being trained to work with children of special needs from 4-11 years of age, and 33 participants were being trained to work with children and adolescents from 11-19 in age. In the sample, 79 of the participants were female and 14 were male. Their mean age was 26.47. Thirty-one of the participants had previous experience working with special needs children and 26 participants had social contact with those of special needs.

The data were located using a self-report questionnaire containing two different sections. The first section required participants to give their demographic information and their experience of working with those who had special needs. The second section contained a rating scale designed for the study: the Impact of Inclusion Questionnaire (IIQ). The IIQ had sections that separated the different disabilities. There were 24 items developed in total with 6 items in each domain: the child with special needs, adults and other children in the classroom, the teacher and the school environment. They ranged from "very strongly agree" to "very strongly disagree." The IIQ summed scores for each of the domains described above. Scores that were negatively phrased items are reversed so that higher totals on each of the four IIQ domain scores indicated more positive attitudes. Scores on the IIQ ranged from 6 to 42 and total IIQ scores ranged from 23 to 161. All the domains were found to have a good level of consistency. Children with less severe disabilities, who are less demanding, were generally viewed as more positive. Children with behavioral disorders are viewed as the least positive in the child factor. Teacher variables that influenced their attitudes toward inclusion include the amount of contact and training that they had received. Those who had more teaching experience frowned upon inclusion settings. The last variable, which is school factors, include the age group of the children and the classroom environment. Children in primary grades were viewed to have more positive experiences than those in intermediate grades.

Student teachers were invited to be a participant in this study by their tutors. There were 150 questionnaires given to tutors training students to work with younger or older students. The tutors approached the student teachers in lectures and then on an individual basis. In order to gain some information about how valid the IIQ data was, they used one sample: Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were used to compare the IIQ scores to a normal distribution. Relationships between demographic variables and IIQ scores were explored. Gender and experience is typically related to experience with children with special needs and previous social experience of children with special needs. There were no significant effects on the IIQ. The results show that participants rating children with intellectual disabilities reported more positive attitudes than ratings children with emotional/behavioral problems. The IIQ showed that 89% of teachers' attitudes toward special needs children were based on the children and their disability. Only 5% was based on the teacher and 6% was based on the classroom environment. Those training to work with older children reported more positive attitudes. There were no other main effects found to be significant at the 0.05 level. Teachers working with younger children who had emotional and behavioral disorders had the least positive

attitudes.

The results of the study revealed that the major factors on student teachers' attitudes towards those with special needs were based on the child and their disability. Children who had emotional disturbances and behavioral problems were less likely to have student teachers who expressed positive feelings. Those working with older children had more positive feelings towards those with special needs. The IIQ found good reliability and the differing pattern of results across domains of potential impact reinforced the value of a measure that can be scored to take into account attitude dimensions rather than simply a total attitude score. Focusing on the issue of teacher attitudes, previous research has suggested that teacher training courses have little impact upon student teachers' attitudes towards children with special needs (Hastings & Oakford, 2003).

The next article looks at whether the attitudes of teachers are changing about mainstreaming in rural areas.

Are attitudes and practices regarding mainstreaming changing? A case of teachers in two rural school districts

Yoga and Kara (2001) explored the practices regarding mainstreaming and if they are changing. This research explored the attitudes and practices regarding mainstreaming of 91 regular and special educators in two small rural school districts. The participants were given two questionnaires and were asked to respond to them. There were several demographic variables that were found to relate to the teacher and if they included adaptations into their classrooms. These variables are special education versus regular education, grade level, gender, and training in mainstreaming. Implications for teacher training and practice are discussed. Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (U.S. Congress, 1975), and its subsequent amendments, PL 105-17 (U.S. Congress, 1997), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, ensures that all children with disabilities have access to free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. How successful mainstreaming and inclusion is depends on several variables, which includes the attitudes held by teachers and the quality of instruction they offer to their students. Female teachers were more supportive of mainstreaming than male teachers.

The participants were 91 regular and special education teachers from two small school districts in a rural county in a Midwestern state with 15,000 people in the county. One district was composed of 5 elementary schools and 1 junior high with an enrollment of 1,263 students and the second district was composed of one high school with an enrollment of 1,027 students. The majority of the teachers were Caucasian; 91% in the first district and 96% in the second district. There were 27 males and 63 females. Of the teachers, 36 were elementary teachers, 12 were junior high teachers and 43 were high school teachers. Sixty-eight of the teachers were general educators and 17 were special educators. Twenty-eight of the teachers had up to 5 years experience, 12 between 6-13 years experience, and 50 had over 13 years of experience. Twenty-seven of the teachers did not indicate whether or not they had training in mainstreaming, 34 had no training, 23 had 1-2 courses and 7 had 3 courses or more (Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001, p. 753).

One instrument used was the Options Relative to Mainstreaming scale (ORM). This scale was composed of 12 items selected and revised from the ORM scale by Antonak and Larrivee (1995). An analysis yielded three main factors. The first factor addressed the impact of mainstreaming on students with a disability and on their peers. The second factor addressed the social aspects of mainstreaming and was named "The Social Growth." The last factor was composed of one item and was dropped from the statistical analysis. The next instrument used was the Instructional Strategies Scale (ISS). This scale was composed of 14 items assessing teacher curricular and instructional strategies and adaptations for students with diverse needs. Teachers were asked to rate each item on a six point scale ranging from 1 "never" to 6 "always." The Chronbach alpha reliability of this 14 item scale was .85. The ISS had four main factors. Factor one contained items that focused on the teacher behavior. Factor two addressed classroom adaptations and was labeled "The Instructional Adaptation" factor. Factor three focused on student active participation in learning and was named "The Student Involvement." Factor four was composed only of one item and was not used in the analyses. The researchers handed out 140 surveys and 91 forms, or 65%, were returned.

The results on the ORM showed a mean score of 41.82. This score represents a score above the midpoint of the scale that had a range from 12 to 72. Females attained a significantly higher score than male teachers, females 13%, males 11%, on the "Social Growth" scale. There were no variables from the teacher certification grade and training in mainstreaming that related to attitudes. Regarding the relationships between teacher background, variables and choices of instruction strategies show significant relationships that were found between factor two and the instructional factor. High school teachers had lower scores on factor two and on the total scores. Females had significantly higher scores on the ISS than males on factor two and total score. No significant attitudes were found between junior high and high school teachers. Teachers with much more training had higher scores on the factor two than those who did not. There was no significant difference in gender and attitudes. Teachers report more often not

that they use adaptations to better the students who have special needs. Special education teachers compared to general education teachers felt that they were better able to accommodate those with special needs. Elementary teachers also were more likely to implement instructional strategies that would better the students with special needs.

Findings suggest that these teachers do not hold unfavorable attitudes towards mainstreaming as reported by several investigators (Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001). The studied teachers did not express a liking for inclusion. Teachers rely more on procedures which are typically geared toward large groups of students. Teachers did not frequently use individual adaptations to help those with special needs. The demographic variables showed that gender showed significant differences in mainstreaming attitudes. Females were more likely to accept it and have positive attitudes than males. Special education teachers reported using more diversity and adaptations when teaching those with special needs than general education teachers. Teachers in high school reported using less differentiated strategies than elementary student teachers in bettering the needs of special children. Teachers with more training used more strategies in the classroom than those who did not have training. Female teachers reported using more strategies in the classroom than males.

Research on teachers and their attitudes towards inclusion is needed with larger samples representing other urban, suburban and rural communities. The next article will continue to discuss how teachers' attitudes are important in an inclusion classroom.

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General education and special education pre-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusion

Shade and Stewart (2001), wanted to investigate general education and special education pre-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusion classrooms. The philosophy of inclusion for children with disabilities has been reinforced into classrooms over the last 30 years. Federal law does not mandate inclusion, but its practices are influenced by state commissioners of education. Inclusion was brought to forefront when the Regular Education Initiative (REI) was first introduced. REI first had only general education teachers teaching children with special needs. Special educators put a stop to that when it was realized general education teachers do not have enough training.

Teachers may feel challenged but it is important to continue to learn about children with special needs and have a positive attitude to keep children feeling successful. Preparing both pre-service and in service teachers for the task of helping children with special needs has become very challenging. Dedication is needed. Teachers' attitudes become very critical in building a successful inclusion classroom. General and special educators may differ in opinion but both need to collaborate to create a successful inclusion room. The most direct step is to have training courses for general education teachers. They should be taught how to work with children of special needs. Probably the simplest and most direct step that can be taken is to add to these prospective teachers' training programs a course or courses, in which they are taught about the different areas of exceptionality and about children's learning problems, how to identify them, how to teach the children despite their deficits and how to remediate their learning problems while teaching them academics through their strong learning modalities.

The participants in this study were general education teachers, elementary and secondary majors (N=122) enrolled in a course entitled Survey of Special Education and undergraduate special education majors (N=72). The course was a 15 week, 30 hour required course. All attended a teacher preparation institution. On the first day of each course, participants were administered a 48-item inclusion inventory. They reacted to statements designed to assess their overall attitudes towards the education of students with disabilities and inclusion. The inventory employed a 5-point Likert scale: 1-5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). There were eight subscales made up the total survey: class placements (5 items), behavior (7 items), self-concept (7 items), and parents (2 items). High total scores represented more positive attitudes towards inclusion. One sample question is "A student with disabilities will be disruptive in your classroom." The teacher had to write how they felt.

The data was analyzed by a dependent measures t tests with alpha <.05. The t-tests were used to measure whether mean gain scores by group were statistically significant from zero to total test scores and subtest scores. Overall, the majority of the teachers had positive attitudes towards inclusion. The results of this study support the assertion that one individual course can significantly change pre-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Results also indicated a course of this nature is beneficial to both general educators and special educators.

Pre-service teachers need to be prepared to teach special needs children before entering the classroom. It is essential for teachers to have training. Teacher training will help teachers enhance positive attitudes so that children feel more successful and positive in the classrooms. A study completed 10 years after the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 revealed that 33 state education agencies had no specific certification requirements or required only one course on exceptionalities. Many teachers do not believe that they are capable of

being trained and prepared enough to teach special children.
The next article will look at the perceptions that teachers have toward inclusion.

Perceptions

Administrators' and teachers' perceptions of the collaborative efforts of inclusion in the elementary grades

Danne, Beirne-Smith, Latham and Dianne (2000) wanted to investigate administrators' and teachers' perceptions of the collaborative efforts of inclusion in the elementary grades. Recent efforts have been made to try and reform education and help those children who have special needs. Educators have been moving away from segregation of students who are general education students and special needs children. This is called inclusion, where general and special children are integrated into one classroom setting. The movement of inclusion gave rise to questions about the roles of the teacher, principals and administrators in inclusion settings. Everyone wants to know what they are going to be responsible for in helping children with special needs. Inclusion requires collaboration between general and special education teachers. Researchers must analyze teachers' and building administrators' perceptions about inclusion. General education teachers do not always feel prepared to teach a special needs child. It is important to consider teachers' and building administrators' perceptions as these may have a great impact on the inclusion of students with disabilities. Many schools do not continue to offer pre-service classes to help teachers work with children with disabilities.

In many districts administrators have required teachers to implement inclusion into their classroom and collaborate with other teachers. The purpose of this study was to investigate perceptions toward inclusive education of administrators, and the elementary general education teachers and the elementary special education teachers who worked in their schools. This study was conducted in a school district of 8,000 students in the southeast United States. The setting was mostly rural but included some suburban areas. The survey was designed by the researchers after an extensive review of literature concerning the regular education initiative inclusion, and teacher collaboration. The survey was administered to 324 elementary general education teachers, 42 special education teachers, and 15 administrators. The survey used a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5 (agree to strongly disagree), and consisted of 24 items. The items were grouped into 4 categories (1) teacher collaborative efforts, (2) instruction of students with disabilities, (3) teacher preparedness for meeting the needs of students with disabilities, and (4) perceived achievement outcomes of students with disabilities. There was also a semi-structured interview with 12 of the participants: 4 elementary general education teachers, 4 special education teachers and 4 administrators. They were all randomly selected.

The results show that collaboration appeared to be taking place between special and general education teachers. However, when asked if they were comfortable with collaboration, they all responded negatively. Reasons given were: conflict of personality differences, lack of planning and limited time in the classroom by special education teachers. They saw the need for the students to have more one-to-one help. The results show that inclusion was deemed the most helpful for students with disabilities. All the principals felt that the pull out programs were still essential to helping children. Teachers and administrators both agreed that special education resources were protected under IDEA. All students should be able to work in the least restrictive environment. Special education teachers did not believe that general education teachers should have primary responsibility over those children who have disabilities. The general educators and administrators believed differently. All three groups felt that students were not going to receive effective instruction in a general education classroom. All three groups felt that general education teachers were not prepared enough to teach children with disabilities. Administrators expressed concern for children's academics. They are not reaching their maximum potential. Contrasting teachers, administrators believed that students grew socially when inclusive models of education were employed in their schools.

In this study teachers and administrators realized that there appeared to be social benefits of including students with disabilities in general education classrooms but they had some serious concerns about the academic success of students who had disabilities. Administrators, general education teachers and special education teachers need to work together to make the most supportive learning environment that will promote success for all students. This means they need to collaborate, as much as they do not want to.

The above articles used in this study help to understand our research better as they give some insight on teachers' attitudes and perceptions. Chapter III will discuss the methods used in the current authors' research.

METHODS

The participants in this study were general educators and special educators from a suburban school district in the

northeast region of the United States. The teachers and students are primarily from middle to upper-class socioeconomic status communities where a majority of the population comes from a Caucasian background. The preferred language of the children and families is English. Permission was obtained from the school principal to conduct the study in the school. The principal and researchers discussed what the study was about and how it was going to be conducted. Each teacher in the building was given a survey to be filled out anonymously and to be placed in an envelope inside the main office mailroom for privacy.

In total, 29 teachers participated with approximately 50 teachers receiving surveys. A total of 29 (58%) surveys were completed and returned for analysis. There were 5 male teachers and 24 female teachers who responded. The average age range of teachers was 31 to 40. The grade levels ranged from K-5 in a public elementary school with general education and special education settings.

The instruments that were used were a questionnaire developed to obtain information on teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards inclusion and inclusionary plans in their schools. The questionnaire surveyed teachers' attitudes on inclusion and also asked them their basic demographic information, such as gender and teaching experience. The questionnaire was developed using a 5 point Likert-type scale (Borg & Gall, 1989).

Once the results come back from the teachers, the information was prepared for input in order to be tabulated and analyzed. In order to determine the results, they were added up and then turned into percentages. The researchers used this method of data analysis to determine if the results were meaningful or whether they were likely due to chance. The participants answered questions about inclusion which ranged from 1-5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). This was done in order to have no ambiguity. The next section will explain the participants and their responses on the inclusion questionnaire. The next chapter will have the results tabulated and displayed in percentages and graphs for better understanding. The results will be broken down into how teachers feel and think about inclusion.

RESULTS

The questions that these researchers wanted to investigate were if inclusion would benefit all students, if teachers have special education training in order to teach an inclusion class, and the attitudes that teachers hold about inclusion. The results will be displayed in tables and charts to show the results.

Twenty-nine teachers volunteered and answered the survey on their feelings toward inclusion. Names were not given so each participant is identified by number. Percentages were tabulated as the method of data analysis to express the results. The first question that was investigated was if teachers thought that inclusion would benefit all children. This means children in general education classes and those in special classes would gain something out of being in an inclusion class. Sixty five percent (19 teachers) strongly disagreed that inclusion would not benefit all children. This is not to say that it would not benefit those children who are in special education, but teachers felt, as a whole, inclusion does not give benefits to everyone. Those who did agree that inclusion would be beneficial were a group of 17%. No teachers strongly agreed that inclusion benefits all children. The remaining 17% were uncertain if inclusion would benefit all students. All males (100%) felt that inclusion would not be beneficial to all children, whereas, females had a mix of agreeing, disagreeing, and uncertain. The researchers' hypothesis was that teachers would disagree with that notion that all children would benefit from inclusion. Therefore, the hypothesis was confirmed. Table 1 shows the respondents' answers.

Table 1: *Concerning the Benefits for All Students*

Gender	SD	D	Benefits		
			NS	A	SA
Male	0	5	0	0	0
Female	0	0	5	0	5
Total	5	19	0	5	0

The next question the researchers wanted answered was if teachers thought that children with severe disabilities would benefit academically in an inclusion class. The disabilities ranged in severity, from mild disability up to being in a wheelchair with tubes attached to the student, who was unable to perform any type of movement. Sixty-two percent (18) of teachers strongly agreed that students who are severely disabled would not benefit academically from an inclusion class. Six teachers (20%) agreed that children with disabilities would not benefit from being in an

inclusion class. Those teachers that were uncertain (6%) were not sure if children would benefit from inclusion or not. Three percent agreed that children with severe disabilities would benefit from inclusion. The last six percent strongly agreed that it would be beneficial to those who are severely disabled to be included into an inclusion class. The researchers hypothesized that teachers would disagree with children with severe disabilities being placed in an inclusion class. The results showing the majority of teachers do not agree that children with severe disabilities would benefit from being in an inclusion class. Thus, the researchers' next hypothesis was confirmed. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2: *Do children with severe disabilities benefit from inclusion*

Gender	SD	D	Benefits		
			NS	A	SA
Male	0	0	0	1	4
Female	2	1	2	5	12
Total	2	1	2	6	18

The next question the researchers wanted to investigate was if teachers believe that they were trained enough to teach children with disabilities. This question asks if teachers feel college level training is sufficient for them to teach in an inclusion class. There are college courses and outside in-service and pre-service training courses to help teachers with special education; such Life Space Crisis Intervention training for those children who have behavioral and emotional problems. Life Space Crisis Intervention is a training program for new teachers who teach those with emotional disturbances. The program introduces teachers and counselors to the conflict cycle and red flag warnings. These courses can be used as college courses or new teacher credits. Most teachers agree that college level training is not sufficient to teach in an inclusion setting, especially those with children with severe disabilities and emotional and behavioral problems. Seventy-two percent of teachers disagree with the fact that college level courses prepared them sufficiently to teach in an inclusion setting. Teachers that disagreed (13%) with the fact that college level courses are not sufficient enough, have a slight agreement that college level courses can be sufficient. Three percent of teachers are uncertain if college level courses are sufficient enough for them to teach in an inclusion room. The last 10% of teachers feel that college level courses are sufficient enough to be placed into a classroom. The researchers hypothesized that teachers are teaching in inclusion settings without proper training and that college level courses are seen as insufficient in order to teach children with disabilities. Part of the third hypothesis was confirmed, most teachers do not think that they have enough training to teach those with disabilities.

The last question the researchers wanted to investigate was if teachers had a negative attitude toward inclusion. This was done by a series of question regarding inclusion and its possible benefits. The researcher asked if a teacher would accept an inclusion job if offered one. The majority of the teachers (55%) disagreed with the job opportunity of teaching an inclusion class which indicated that they would not accept the job. The ones that agreed and strongly agreed had a special education degree. The results in table 3 show the percentages. The researchers' last hypothesis was that teachers would have a negative attitude toward inclusion. The majority of teachers would not accept an inclusion teaching job which confirms the researchers' last hypothesis that teachers have more negative attitudes toward inclusion than positive.

Table 3: *Agreeability to teach in an inclusion classroom*

Gender	SD	D	Agreeability		
			NS	A	SA
Elem.	16	3	2	2	0
El/Spec	0	0	1	1	
Total	16	3	0	5	5

The other questions gave back more negative feedback than positive about inclusion. Teachers in general and special education settings in this school district seem to have preferred to work in a general education setting rather than inclusion. The problem might be that 90% of teachers surveyed do not believe that they have a good network communication with different departments such as inclusion teachers talking to general education teachers or special

education teachers talking to general education teachers. Teachers did not have a sense of strong communication between that special educators and general educators who are involved in the inclusive practices. There is not enough communication to discuss the pros and cons and how to better the teaching experience of inclusion classes. Teachers disagree with the fact that all students should have the same academic standards. Those with learning disabilities will have a harder time keeping up with those who have average or higher potential.

The researchers wanted to investigate the attitudes and perspectives of teachers' attitudes of inclusion. The researchers thought that teachers would have a more negative attitude toward inclusion, which was confirmed. The next chapter will be comparing the results of the study to the results found in previous sections.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this investigation was to determine if teachers' had a positive or negative attitude toward inclusion. The questions that were investigated are: if teachers believed all children would benefit from inclusion; if children who are severely disabled would be academically placed in an inclusion setting; if teachers feel that they have had enough training to teach in an inclusion class; and if they would accept an inclusion class.

Various studies, as noted earlier also found that education background played a part in the attitudes toward inclusion. Those that had more training or certification were more acceptable to teach an inclusion class, as the current study concluded. The researchers' hypothesis was that teachers would have a negative attitude, which was confirmed by the study. Teachers' attitudes will continue to play a part in inclusion and the success implementing inclusion into schools. Teachers who see inclusion as negative will continue to discourage children who have disabilities because those teachers are not positive towards students with disabilities.

There are a number of reasons why inclusion is not always supported. There is inadequate training of general education teachers to work with students who have special needs, professional's inability to problem-solve and work in a collaborative fashion, and lack of support. There is also a negative impact on the teachers' time utilization when children with special needs are in their classrooms. Schools in high risk areas might also have teachers concerned with other things such as crime, violence, drugs and drop-out rates, for example. Even with all the help and services, implementing inclusion services remains to be a challenging task. Teachers' attitudes are the most important aspect in having a successful classroom with inclusion (Hammond et al., 2003). There is a need to gain more information on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in order to implement the new types of practices into the classroom. All students should simply be included, by right, in the opportunities and responsibilities of public schooling.

In conclusion, the data from these surveys indicate clearly that educators need opportunities to collaborate on inclusive programs in their schools. Teachers need adequate training for working with those who have special needs and how to plan for the children. All educators need to be involved in planning and implementing adequate strategies to help children who are special needs children.

LIMITATIONS

There were some limitations to this study. The first limitation was the sample size. The sample size was a small group from a middle to upper class area which is not generalizable urban and rural areas. Another limitation that these researchers believe might have helped the study is to do further comparisons between general and special education teachers. Even though a few questions showed a segregation of special and general education, it was probably not enough to determine the true attitudes of both types of teachers. One can wonder if these researchers had questioned if the participants were from a more diverse area, would the results would have been different.

Appendix A1 Survey

Age
 22-30 ___ 31-40 ___ 41-50 ___ 50+ ___

Gender
 Male ___ Female ___

Highest degree obtained
 BA ___ MA ___ MA+ ___ PHD ___

Do you have a special education certification?
 Yes ___ No ___

How many years have you been teaching? (Please check one)
 0-5 ___ 6-10 ___ 11-15 ___ 16-20 ___ 21+ ___

Have you taught in an inclusion class?

Yes___ No___

Would you ever teach an inclusion class?

Yes ___ No___

ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW BY PUTTING A CIRCLE AROUND ONE (1) CHOICE

On a scale of 1 to 5

1= Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3= Not Sure 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

1. Do you believe all teachers should be able to teach in any type of classroom setting?
1 2 3 4 5
2. Does your district have a clear definition and guidelines for the implementation of inclusion?
1 2 3 4 5
3. If given the opportunity to have an inclusion class would you accept it?
1 2 3 4 5
4. Do you believe that there is a certain teaching style that would be most effective in an inclusion classroom?
1 2 3 4 5
5. Academically, do you believe that severely disabled students can succeed in an inclusion classroom?
1 2 3 4 5
6. Do you believe the academic expectations should be the same for all students?
1 2 3 4 5
7. Do you believe a school should be able to place a student, solely upon the recommendation of the students' teachers?
1 2 3 4 5
8. Do you believe that college level training for Special Education is sufficient enough for a classroom teacher?
1 2 3 4 5
9. Do you believe your school has a collaborative inclusion network between all teachers?
1 2 3 4 5
10. Do you believe that inclusion will be beneficial for all students?
1 2 3 4 5

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