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A Survey of Teacher Receptiveness Regarding Inclusive Education Within a New Jersey Urban School District

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A SURVEY OF TEACHER RECEPTIVENESS REGARDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WITHIN A

NEW JERSEY URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

By Tammy Hobbs-Ginsberg

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the thesis presented to us by **Tammy Hobbs-Ginsberg** on the 19th

day of March, 2019, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of

Psychology, has been examined and is acceptable in both scholarship and literary quality.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURES

Chairperson

Chair, Department of School Psychology

Dean, School of Professional & Applied Psychology

DEDICATION

In loving memory of Tara Yvette Hobbs. You left your fingerprints of grace on my life

Your spirit is always with me, guiding me throughout life

You shall never be forgotten

I miss and Love you.

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Abstract

The inclusion model is being implemented on a national scale in response to the United States Department of Education's mandate that all pupils with special needs be integrated into the general education classroom. For the inclusion model to yield adequate yearly progress for all pupils, it must be appropriately applied. Research has indicated that an important factor in adequate implementation is an understanding of teachers' initial attitudes concerning inclusion. The propose of this study is to survey the receptiveness of kindergarten through high school special and general education teachers in an urban New Jersey school district concerning inclusion. More specifically, the study will examine: (a) teachers' receptiveness; (b) the foundation of teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and experiences that shape their views; and (c) the identification of future training, strategies and interventions

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Several acts of judicial legislation have required pupils in special education programs to be educated with their general education compeers, using the guidelines of the least restrictive environment (LRE) part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 1990). These requirements continue to generate complicated questions (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2017; Wright & Wright, 1999). The IDEA permits special education pupils throughout the nation to access general education classrooms for a portion of the school day. The IDEA mandates that children with disabilities be educated with their same age peers unless general education, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, is not achievable. The IDEA stipulates children with disabilities should engage with their typically developing peers in nonacademic and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent possible (McLeskey, Rosenberg, & Westling, 2012).

The No Child Left behind Act of 2002 (NCLB) further constituted provisions for pupils, including subgroups of pupils identified by disability, race, language, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. In 2015, President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The Secondary and elementary Education Act (ESEA) was rewritten to succeed NCLB. ESSA's aim was to help underserved, low performing high schools. NCLB required pupil achievement and graduation data. Dissimilar to No Kid Left behind (NCLB), ESSA, allowed schools to identify the support type and

interventions necessary. School districts had more responsibility and flexibility (Klein, 2015. Because most school districts require pupils to participate high stakes assessments, districts are expected to show adequate yearly progress (AYP; Cawthon, 2007). Special education pupils are not permitted to be exempt from taking standardized assessments (Wakeman, McColl, Meier, Browder, 2007). To comply with the act, districts are expected to integrate special education and general education into an extensive inclusive system (Kern, 2006). Because the concept does not use the term inclusion, the U.S. Department of Education has not defined inclusion. The idea, however, calls for school districts to find placements in probably the least restrictive environment. This means that to the maximum extent appropriate, districts must educate pupils with disabilities in the general education classroom, including the needed aids and supports. These aides and supports, known as supplementary aid services and aides, assist disabled students with their studies alongside their exact same age peers in the school they will attend if not disabled. LRE requires an individualized investigation into the particular need of every pupil to identify the support type necessary to facilitate the pupil's placement (Peterson, 2017 and Wrights Law, 1999.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court (2005) in *Gaskin v. Pennsylvania Department of Education* affirmed that pupils were not being educated within the LRE. In New Jersey, a similar court action transpired. "*The Disability Rights New Jersey et al. Plaintiffs v. New Jersey Department of Education et al.*, (2014) a lawsuit concerning LRE, was initially filed in federal court. In 2007, the Education Law Center, New Jersey Protection and Advocacy, New Jersey Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, and the ARC of New Jersey participated in the agreement. The complaint stated that children

with disabilities in New Jersey public school districts aged 3–21 were denied a free, appropriate education (FAPE) in the LRE. The plaintiffs sought an order requiring the defendants to provide FAPE in LRE to all pupils enrolled in New Jersey public schools. The lawsuit did not result in judgment; however, the involved parties agreed to a settlement in which they were required to perform specific measures to ensure that pupils with disabilities received FAPE in the LRE" (Livingston, p. 22872).

"The settlement agreement consisted of the following components. First, the NJDOE was required to administer a needs assessment targeted specific school districts from September 2014 to December 31st, 2014. From January 2015 to June 30th, 2018. NJDOE began training and assistance. State inclusion facilitators were to participate in the 3-year training and technical assistance phase. The NJDOE was to provide facilitators to "noncompliant" school districts to assist in the training, monitoring, and technical assistance phases of the settlement" (Livingston, p. 22872). "The NJDOE was to conduct annual webinars and create at least one interactive web-based training session with duration of least 1 hour. The NJDOE was also required to develop and administer professional development evaluations for each school district participating in the LRE training. The department was to issue technical assistance to determine the need for support and training. Annual compliance monitoring began in Years 1 and 2 of the training and technical assistance. The NJDOE was expected to implement compliance monitoring to determine how well the participating districts implemented LRE. Final monitoring was to occur in Year 3 of the training and technical assistance, after which the NJDOE would provide the stakeholder committee with a report summarizing the progress of the participating school districts. District LRE facilitators of noncompliant districts

were required to identify a district staff (e.g., teacher, child study team member, or administrator) to act as a resource and to administer technical assistance to other district staff regarding LRE during the settlement period" (Livingston, p. 22872). To comply with the settlement agreement and federal law, all stakeholders were required to play a crucial role in rectifying the situation. These cases and lawsuits emphasize the importance and vital part of the general education teacher in the inclusion process.

Statement of the Problem

"The complaint indicated children with disabilities in New Jersey public school districts aged 3–21 were being denied a free appropriate education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The litigants obtained an order requiring the appellants to provide FAPE in LRE to all pupils enrolled in New Jersey public schools" (Livingston, p. 22872). In response to the complaint, a New Jersey urban school district is interested in taking additional steps for the successful integration of special and general education pupils. The district is working with the premise that success is contingent on the receptiveness and preparedness of teachers to provide LRE and FAPE.

Research indicates teacher receptiveness regarding inclusion varies. An examination of the literature implies that many educators are receptive to the inclusion concept. Studies have found that teachers are receptive to the benefits of inclusion for their pupils and are receptive to providing appropriate education to their pupils. Studies also indicate teachers thought that they did not receive appropriate support and training regarding teaching in an inclusive environment. Consequently, since the introduction of the inclusion model teacher resistance and frustration has continued to rise (Roberts & Simpson, 2016). Liu and Meyer (2005) described the general educational arena as

mediocre and non-inclusive to pupils. There is a possibility that pupils with disabilities in general education classrooms may be isolated with a worksheet to complete, never receiving the same education as the general population (Beglieri & Knopf, 2004). Correspondingly, these pupils receive minimal exposure to the general curriculum and are unable to perform successfully on state assessments; in turn, they may be unable to receive a diploma (Mortimer, 1995). "As pupils become dissatisfied with their education, ultimately, society may be faced with the continuation of rising dropout rates and less skilled future workers" (Kluth, Villa, & Thousand, 2002, Mortimer, 1995). When addressed appropriately, many benefits may result; i.e., teachers may accept inclusion and, in turn, pupils may interact with their nondisabled peers. Society may become more experienced with accepting diversity (Mortimer, 1995). Assessment scores may improve, therefore producing educated skilled workers. It is important to recognize that districts that do not utilize inclusive classrooms for service delivery are in violation of the law as well as of pupils' rights. It is therefore essential to provide adequate support for the general education teacher to be compliant with FAPE and LRE.

Purpose of Study

The study's purpose is to ascertain whether or not a relationship exists between teacher receptiveness about inclusion and their opinions about and receptiveness to the inclusion of pupils with disabilities in general education settings. Given that general education teachers are often the primary providers of education for pupils with special needs, the receptiveness of teachers towards inclusion is a contributing factor in success or failure of inclusion.

In this study, the aims are to describe receptiveness of elementary general education teachers who use inclusion practices in their classrooms and to determine the influence of teachers' receptiveness regarding inclusion. For this research, *receptiveness* is a combination of "conceptually distinguishable reactions to a specific objection" (Ross-Hill, 2009). These responses include affective, cognitive, and conative (intentions) components (Kern, 2006). As stated by Eagly and Chaiken (1993), behavioral (intention to interact with the individual who has the disability), cognitive (knowledge about the disability; more distinct than merely conative), and affective (feelings about the individual with the disability) responses influence the development of attitudes towards disability (Kern, 2006).

A negative feeling toward inclusion may inadvertently transfer to pupils. Teachers who support inclusion can provide special education pupils with a positive atmosphere. "In an urban environment, the issue of inclusion becomes more difficult due to the number of classified pupils. The literature indicates there are disproportionate numbers of pupils diagnosed with intellectual disabilities and emotional disturbance" (Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Salend & Duhaney, 2005). The successfulness of inclusive education is dependent on the educator's receptiveness and willingness to accommodate pupils with special needs. An examination of the general educator's attitudes towards inclusion is crucial.

Receptiveness is an essential factor in teacher receptiveness and a determinant in successful inclusion educational models. Taking into consideration that insufficient information exists regarding teacher receptiveness about inclusive urban school environments, this study will provide needed information in the process of inclusion.

Experts agree full inclusion and integration will occur after there is a long-term change in receptiveness, (Brinkmann, & Twiford, 2012).

Definition of Terms

Accommodations. Changes to test administration that do not significantly alter what the test measures, including changes in presentation format, response format, test setting, or test timing. A teaching support or services that a student needs to meet expectations or goals of the general education curriculum, (Osborne & Russo, 2014).

Accountability. Policies developed by federal, state and school districts to ensure districts, school staff, and pupils are held responsible for academic performance. Test scores are measures of success or failure, (Osborne & Russo, 2014).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). A state's measure of progress towards the goal of pupils achieving complete academic standards in at least reading/language arts and math, as mandated by NCLB, (Osborne & Russo, 2014).

Behavior concerns. An emotional and behavioral disorder is an emotional disability characterized by the following: (i) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers. (Osborne & Russo, 2014).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). A cornerstone of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" (McLaughlin, 1975). ESEA is an extensive statute that funds primary and secondary education, emphasizing high standards and accountability. The act that was reauthorized to become No Child Left Behind, (Hurder, 2014).

Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). Act passed in December 2015 that governs U.S. K–12 public education policy. The law replaced NCLB and modified it, but

did not eliminate provisions relating to the periodic standardized test given to pupils. Similar to NCLB, the ESSA is a reauthorization of the 1965 ESEA, which established the federal government's expanded role in public education. (Hurder, 2014).

Free appropriate public education (FAPE). An education standard for disabled children that must be provided in the LRE. FAPE is granted at public expense, under public supervision, and without charge through an IEP, (Osborne & Russo, 2014).

General education. The classroom environment where pupils without disabilities learn (Osborne & Russo, 2014).

High-stakes tests. Tests that produce results that decide promotions, tracking, graduation, or entrance into special programs or higher education. Many activists and educators believe scores alone do not provide enough information to make such critical educational decisions.

Inclusion. The practice of educating all pupils together, pupils with and without disabilities, regardless of their abilities or readiness (Hurder, 2014). Inclusion entails more than physically situating disabled students with their nondisabled peers. A genuinely inclusive model provides pupils with disabilities access to the general curriculum, to classrooms, and to typical school activities. Rather than having the student go to a segregated setting for specialized instruction and support, the student receives these supports in the general curriculum. Within an inclusion setting, no more than 49% of the pupils in that general education classroom possess disabilities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Individualized education plan (IEP). A document developed at an IEP meeting that describes the child's individualized education program and aims to meet the child's

unique needs. The IEP sets the standard by which special education services are determined to be appropriate for a child with a disability. Any child receiving special education and related services is required to have an IEP. The IEP provides the opportunity for teachers, parents, school personnel, related services and pupils to collaborate and improve educational outcomes for children with learning disabilities. The IEP is the cornerstone of quality education for each child with a disability and is a legally binding state and federal document, Johnson, (2016).

IEP team. A group that collaboratively develops the IEP document. By law, the team should include parent(s), the regular teacher, the special education teacher, individual services providers, a school district representative, and any person knowledgeable about the child's disability. Parents, school districts, and pupils can invite others to the meeting.

Individualized family support plan (IFSP). This document outlines the services available to families of infants and toddlers receiving early supports and services (ESS), (Hurder, 2014).

Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). Otherwise known as Public Law 108-446, this act refers to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is a federal special education law that ensures FAPE in the LRE to all eligible children with disabilities. (Hurder, 2014).

Large classroom size. A classroom with a student-teacher ratio of 1:27 or higher. (Hurder, 2014).

Learning disabilities (LD). "Includes disorders involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language that results in substantial difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, written expression, or mathematics" (Turnbull et al., 2003, p. 67).

Least restrictive environment (LRE). A policy that dictates that school districts are required to educate a student with disabilities in a general education classroom with nondisabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled, to the maximum extent appropriate, (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2010).

Modification. A change in the general education curriculum. It addresses 'what' a student will learn: instructional level, content, and performance criteria. (Hurder, 2014).

Needs assessment. A systematic process for determining and addressing 'needs' or 'gaps' between current conditions and desired conditions or 'want.' It determined that the discrepancy between the current condition and desired condition must be measured to identify the need appropriately, (Hurder, 2014).

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The federal law that reauthorized the ESEA. The law requires states to set higher standards for what children should know and be able to do in Grades 3–8. NCLB includes incentives and consequences for school districts that do or do not show AYP towards the standards established by the law, Osborne & Russo, (2014).

Noncompliance. A failure or refusal to comply, with the law, regulation, or term of a contract, (Hurder, 2014).

Other health impairment (OHI). Having limited strength, vitality, alertness, or heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that results in limited alertness concerning the educational environment. An OHI can be due to chronic or acute health problems

(e.g., asthma, attention, ADHD, diabetes, epilepsy, heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome); (Winnick & Woika, 2014). An OHI can adversely affect a child's educational performance [34 Code of Federal Regulations §300.8(c) (10)].

Preparedness. The state of being prepared; readiness, (Hurder, 2014).

Professional development. The advancement of skills or expertise to succeed in a profession, primarily through continued education, (Hurder, 2014).

Receptiveness/receptivity. Able or willing to receive; exceptionally open and responsive to ideas, impressions, or suggestions, (Hurder, 2014).

Section 504. A provision of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits recipients of federal funds from discrimination against persons with disabilities, (Hurder, 2014).

Smaller classroom size. A classroom with a 1:20 or less student-teacher ratio.

Special education. Specifically, designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability (e.g., instruction conducted in the classroom, the home, the hospital, institutions, other settings, and in physical education); (IDEA, 1997).

Special education background experience. Prior exposure to special education practice and law through special education college courses and degree(s), professional development, and the teaching of pupils with special needs.

Stakeholders. Anyone invested in the welfare and success of a school and its pupils (e.g., district employees, teachers, pupils, families, parents, community members,

local businesses, elected officials, school board members, city councilors, and state representatives) Hurder, 2014).

Supplement aids and services. Accommodations that permit a student to profit from instruction in the LRE, including the aids, services, and support is given in general education classes, various education-related settings, and extracurricular and nonacademic settings. These enable children with disabilities to receive education with non-disabled peers to the most considerable extent appropriate (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2010; Trohanis, 2008).

Support and training. Support, training, and resources provided by the principal, special education director and department, and special education teacher with the goal of allowing the general educator to become comfortable and at ease with working with pupils with disabilities.

Justification

The identification of educator receptiveness is important to academics and school culture. Van Reusen et al. (2001) reported the "attitudes of educators regarding inclusion and the learning ability of pupils with disabilities influences the learning environment and the availability of equitable educational opportunities for pupils." Stakeholders are the potential beneficiaries of this study. This study may generate ideas and concepts for effective inclusion programming. Administrators may conclude from the study those areas in which professional development may be needed to improve teacher morale and performance, the familiarity with various disabilities, and strategies for teaching pupils with disabilities. "For general education inclusion teachers to feel a sense of competence in teaching pupils with disabilities, they need additional training", McLeskey and

Waldron (2002). "Identifying the factors influencing the attitudes and beliefs of teachers may construct useful information that may be utilized by administrators to address required changes of existing policies and procedures of the inclusion programs" (Varnado, 2002). According to Varnado, (2002), pupils will benefit from the training and knowledge presented to teachers during professional development workshops, which articulate the concept that all pupils can learn and perform academically to high standards.

Summary

IDEA (1997) and No Child Left Behind (2001) offer directions on how best to educate pupils with disabilities. Although neither law mentions inclusion explicitly, the law does state that pupils with disabilities should be allowed placement in the LRE and should have access to the general education curriculum and setting. The least restrictive environment (LRE) mandate provides a preference for educating pupils with disabilities in general education classrooms while allowing separate class services as necessary to meet student needs, McLeskey, Landers, Williamson, & Hoppey, (2012).

Inclusion draws upon the belief that all pupils can learn (Varnado, 2002). Rogers (1993), argued that inclusion should be embraced and will be ineffective if pupils are placed without preparation, are isolated, and their needs are unfulfilled. For inclusion to be successful, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and perceptions of teachers must be in support of the model (Waldron, & McLeskey, 2002). These attributes enable teachers to respect the model (Waldron, & McLeskey, 2002). In the inclusion setting, teachers become more willing to ensure flexible approaches towards teaching and learning as they alter their strategies to provide instruction and assessment for different kinds of learners (Karten,

2008). Teachers become more willing to engage themselves in collaborative, professional

learning opportunities regarding the inclusion model (Karten, 2008).

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Background

Fifty years ago, the *Brown vs. Board of Education* U.S. Supreme Court decision redefined public education. This 1954 court case desegregated educational institutions and refuted the concept of 'separate but equal'. The court reiterated the constitutional guarantee that every child was entitled to an equitable education regardless of color. In *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (ARC) vs. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1972),* the court decided education rights should not be denied to pupils diagnosed with cognitive impairment. Furthermore, the concept of equitable access was emphasized. Shortly after, the law that prohibited the segregation of people with disabilities, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, was authorized. Section 504 of this act sanctioned pupils otherwise ineligible for related services

Public Law 94-142, the foundation of special education, was established along with the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This act established policy for special services and defined the idea of FAPE for all pupils within a LRE. In 1990, the IDEA, which was developed from P.L. 94-142, granted increased protection to pupils with disabilities. In 1997, IDEA was amended. The amendments advanced the rights of pupils with special needs and insisted on substantial attempts to secure inclusion placements for pupils (Kern, 2006). This act continues to be relevant to special educational practices.

Various forms of legislative acts have advocated for special education pupils to leave separate learning situations for more inclusive learning situations. In 2002, the No Child Left

Behind established the rights of all pupils including subgroups identified by disability, socioeconomic status, language, color, and ethnicity. Because all learners are required to take high-stakes assessments, districts must show progress toward AYP (Kern, 206). Districts are no longer permitted to exempt any of the subgroups from participation in standardized testing. To be compliant with the law and to ensure the education of all learners, schools merged special education and general education into a cohesive comprehensive system (Matlock et al., 2001). This educational system is referred to as inclusion, co-teaching, or mainstreaming. The concept of inclusion has been received with excitement by some and with trepidation by others.

Gaskins vs. Pennsylvania (2005) legally mandated *inclusion in the Department of Education*. The case concluded a 10-year battle through the courts, representing over 280,000 special needs children in the lawsuit. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court decided that schools were not using LRE to educate pupils (Gaskin, 2005). The case highlighted the significance of districts' need for acceptance and the incorporation of methods for instructing pupils with special needs within the general education curriculum. The courts noted the importance of the inclusive participation of pupils with disabilities. Inclusion is more complicated than physical placement (Borthwick-Duffy et al., 1996).

Aspects of Inclusion

According to Kern (2006), as with any issue in education, inclusion is both denounced and celebrated. Arguments against inclusion include the possibility that pupils with special needs may be harassed or disparaged; educators may be ill-prepared for inclusive education (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004; Salend & Duhaney, 2005). On the contrary, various researchers have suggested "inclusion" fails to benefit all pupils with special needs. "Pupils with mild disabilities are not always given appropriate specialized programs." (Lloyd, Wilton, &

Townsend, 2000). Researchers studying pupils at the elementary level concluded that, "only higher functioning pupils perform better and improved both socially and academically than those with lower functioning" (Brown, 2016).

Effects on Nonexceptional Pupils

Non- exceptional pupils are positively impacted by inclusion. While working with the exceptional learner, non-exceptional learners become more considerate of differences; therefore, they were more sociable; that contributes to the betterment of society. (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004). Hunt et al., (2003) concluded that inclusion educational programming assisted pupils to be more accepting of individual differences (Kern, 2006). Whereas, as friendships were established, mainly at non instructional situations, most pupils assumed the function of caretaker instead of peer-friend (Staub, Schwartz, Gallucci, & Peck, 1994). Research has also suggested that the thought process of adolescents towards an individual with a disability is positivistic. Junior high pupils educated with exceptional students show decreases in fearfulness of people with disabilities and have a greater acceptance of disabilities (Kern, 2006). Pupils at the secondary schools who were not exposed to inclusion were more liable to stereotype and have negative opinions of peers with impairments and differences (Capper & Pickett, 1994). Agran et al. (2002) asserted that secondary level pupils who had prior exposure to disabled peers had more favorable thoughts about inclusive education. Many pupils thought the chance to be around disabled peers assisted them in the comprehension of individual differences. On a personal level they had the capacity to engage with a disability.

Concerning academic performance, Saint-Laurent, Dionne, Royer, Simard, and Pierard (1998) observed that academically nondisabled pupils performed equivalently or better than nondisabled pupils in non-inclusive general education. The inclusion of pupils with severe

disabilities did not adversely affect the total teaching time of general education pupils (McDonnell, Thorson, & McQuivey, 2000). Comparable findings revealed the same for pupils at the secondary level (Cawley et al., 2002). Copeland et al. (2004) indicated functioning of nonexceptional pupils was enriched by the pupils' chances to offer support to pupils identified with a moderate to a severe learning disability (Kern, 2006).

Effects on Teachers

Supplemental to being beneficial to all pupils, inclusive practices offer benefits to educators and promotes diversity (Kern, 2006). Educator's skills set improved, making them more efficient and better-prepared (Carter, 2006). Teachers improved in the areas of conferencing, socialization, collaboration (i.e., teachers and special education support staff) (Mastroppieri & Scruggs, 2004). Essentially, educators have a tremendous impact on pupils' lives (Cook, 2007).

McLeskey, Landers, Williamson, & Hoppey (2012) study examined modifications in the nationwide least restrictive environments placement tendencies for special education pupils from periods 1990-1991 and 2007-2008. Results indicated there was a substantial escalation in LRE placements and a significant de-escalation of restricted placements. Placement practices at the primary level were significantly less than placements for secondary pupils. These groups are trending in the direction of LRE practices (Stiefel et al, 2017). Pupils classified with emotional disturbance, behavioral disorders or intellectual disability have had smaller-scale changes in LRE trends (Stiefel et al., 2017). Students classified with a learning disability explain most of the shift in placement practices (Stiefel et al, 2017).

Pupil access to general education involves educators adopting a collaborative role in "sharing expertise and engaging in joint problem solving" (Matlock et al., 2001). Years after the

Brown vs. Board of Education decision, inclusive education has contributed to the success or failure of inclusion programs. Inclusive education has substantially been dependent on the teachers (Kern, 2006). It depends on teachers partnering to integrate the special needs pupils into the general classes. Inclusion is highly dependent on the teachers responsible for its implementation; for this reason it is essential to gauge attitudes and receptiveness (Kern, 2006).

In the field of education, the topic of inclusive education is a commonly debated issues. Particular to the debate is the receptiveness and perceptions of teachers towards an inclusive model for special education pupils. Many educators are in favor the idea but express concern about not being given enough training or support.

Attitudes

Parent Attitudes

Attitudes of parents differ widely. Research has shown that some parents feel their children have gained from inclusion. These beliefs encompass thoughts of the child having greater access to "positive role models, a challenging curriculum, greater expectations and opportunity for achievement, and improved preparedness for the real-life situations" (Kern, 2006). Parents have thought their child had improved "self-esteem", as well as improved motor and language acquisition, (Leyser, & Kirk, 2004). Palmer et al. (2001) stated families thought inclusive programs were beneficial to non-exceptional pupils as well. The exposure taught the children coping skills to handle differences (Kern, 2006).

Conversely, on the opposite side of the continuum, some parents expressed reservations regarding inclusion in general. Palmer et al. (2001). Seery et al. (2000) indicted parents had concerns regarding the loss of IEP benefits (i.e., services, modifications, functional curriculum,

instructional accommodations, and community-based instruction). They also verbalized concern regarding verbal abuse and lowered self-concept (Palmer et al., 2001; Kern, 2006).

Teacher Attitudes

According to Kirch, Bargerhuff Turner & Wheatley, 2010, "Inclusion is the meaningful participation of pupils with disabilities in general education classrooms. The CLASS project (Creating Laboratory Access for Science Pupils) is a unique initiative, offering training and resources to help educators provide pupils with a variety of physical, sensory and learning disabilities equal access in the science laboratory or field. To determine whether or not participants believed a two-week residential workshop sponsored by CLASS raised disability awareness and provided teacher training in inclusive science teaching practice, a multipoint Likert scale survey and questionnaire was completed by all participants (N= 20) in four workshops. Participants reported large gains in their preparedness to teach science to pupils with disabilities. Participants also reported gains in their familiarity with instructional strategies, curricula, and resources and their ability to design, select, and modify activities for pupils with disabilities. Finally, shifts in attitudes about teaching science to pupils with disabilities were noted."

Several researchers looking at educator' perceptions towards inclusive classes have highlighted a necessity of resources and training. Chung's (1998) studied science educators' didactic modifications, exams, and inclusion attitudes. The studies suggested that teachers thought inclusion was a good idea. Nevertheless, they doubted that appropriate support and resources, information and strategies would be furnished (Cook, 2001; Bargerhuff &Wheatley, 2005; Chung, 1998; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1996). Mastropieri & Scruggs (2006) indicated

educators were quite encouraging regarding of the notion of inclusiveness. Teachers thought inclusion was a practical educational practice for all pupils. The majority of research recognizes that teachers require extensive preparation to integrate special needs pupils. Bargerhuff and Wheatley (2005) reported a minority of educators in their analysis received instruction on types of disabilities. However, most college-level educators indicated that they thought the content was incorporated into their courses.

Many educators find the concept of incorporating special needs pupils into the regular educational program as challenging. In general, it is hard not only to visualize teaching but also to meeting the requirements of pupils achieving differently from other pupils. Being in close proximity to general education is not sufficient enough to encourage immersion within the inclusive program. Educators have to be knowledgeable about accommodations and adaptations (Kern, 2006).

A discrepancy exists between the perception and the reality of the training that educators receive in college. There is limited teacher preparation provided to meet the academic needs of pupils with disabilities (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1998; Duhaney and Salend, 1999). In 1985, thirty-three states required one undergraduate course on exceptionalities. In 1990, forty states required a course on exceptional learners (VanAcker, 2004).

Previous studies had measured teachers' beliefs in the efficacy of the instruction acquired, regarding instructing special needs pupils. The outcomes indicated that teachers believe they were ill prepared to manage special needs pupils efficiently (Cook, 2007). Nevertheless, research has noted even after receiving training, many educators questioned their competency to instruct pupils with special needs (Kern, 2006).

Comparison of Elementary Special and General Education Teacher Attitudes

In the Gebhardt, Schwab, Krammer, & Gegenfurtner (2015) study, which compared inclusive classrooms teamwork as well as teacher collaboration, there are decisive aspects for inclusion success. The study participants included 191 general teachers and 130 special education teachers. Currently, little research exists on the best way teacher that collaboration is actually implemented and whether or not special and general education teachers appreciate their collaboration equally. This is similar to the study by Gebhardt, Schwab, Krammer, & Gegenfurtner, (2015).

Special Education Teacher Attitudes

Kern, 2006 indicated that it is not only the general educator who is required to have a positive receptiveness for the success of inclusive programming but also, the research suggests that positive outcomes for inclusion is reliant on the positive receptiveness of the special educator .

Inclusion constitutes a logistical predicament for educators without effective multitasking skills. This means that the special educator who has not fully bought into the inclusion concept may inadvertently share that feeling with the general educator as well as the pupils (Cook, 2001). Cawley et al. (2002) ascertained that special educators employed in inclusion settings described enjoying a strengthened sense of belonging, an enhanced perspective of education, and a significant breadth of knowledge regarding the general education system.

Cook et al. (1999) and Fennick and Liddy (2001), further identified special educator worries regarding inclusion practices in relation to employment security. Teachers expressed concerns that inclusion would lead to a subordinate status. Others worried that they would be seen as a visitor or an aide by the pupils due to their perceived subordinate role (Kern, 2006).

Administration Attitudes

Typically, teachers and principals take their cues with regard to receptiveness from administration in the district. The philosophical support encountered in previous reviews was found in this particular research. However, teachers had to deal with the details of the inclusion program, the principals could approach it from a purely theoretical viewpoint. Hence, there existed a difference in receptiveness between principals and educator regarding including special needs pupils in the general education (Kern, 2006).

Pace (2003) suggested that other administrators and principals considering inclusion give thought to teacher perceptions about inclusion before execution. The investigator indicated brief trainings such as a one day workshop were impractical. Schools should gravitate away from a strictly technical strategy of inclusive education to a comprehensive understanding of the more significant concerns. Additionally, the researcher suggested that in order to boost teacher receptiveness for inclusive education; constant, recurring workshops and professional development opportunities should be offered.

Administrators have optimistic views of the inclusion practice due in part to a certain level of separation from the process. Positive receptiveness among principals may assist in the explanation of current growth trends in inclusion programming. Special education teachers, dissimilar to chief administrators, are immediately impacted in by inclusive practices and are frequently disconfirming. The absence of support for special education educators both reflects and exacerbates the effects for the inclusion of pupils with mild disabilities (Stewart & Shade, 2001). Cook (2001) suggested that it is these conflicting perceptions among principals and special education teachers that may explain the paradoxical, simultaneous development and disappointment associated with inclusion reforms (Kern, 2006).

Pace (2003) similarly indicated the relationship between principal perception regarding inclusive education and the consequent attitudes of educators that instruct under that principal. As reported by Pace (2003), if an administrator is not in acceptance or experiences discomfort with inclusive education, this can be conveyed to the pupil and educator. Administrators, either implicitly, by not reinforcing strategies that promote inclusion, or perhaps explicitly, in interactions concerning teaching and learning, will make their feelings known. This could become a significant impediment to educational reform.

<div align="center">**Student Variables**</div>

Influence of Student Variables

Student variables play a role in teacher perceptions towards inclusion. Diebold and Von Eschenbach (1990) determined that educators are amenable to the inclusion of pupils with mild or high incidence-disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities and to a lesser degree towards including pupils with severe or low-incidence disabilities (e.g., autism) within general education. General education teachers were more amenable towards incorporating pupils with intellectual disabilities than students with emotional or behavioral difficulties (Hastings & Oakford, 2003). "When asked for the reasons why teachers were less favorable of inclusion for severely disabled pupils, teachers responded that they did not have the time to prepare to instruct such pupils." Inclusive programming has been subject of dialogue for over three decades. "There are several compelling reasons to create high-quality inclusive programs for young children with special needs in schools. Most countries support the notion of inclusion and research studies have shown the teachers' success and ability to modifying activities and contexts in such a manner that they facilitate the development of young children with special needs. The study suggested that schools

and local administrators play a vital role in the effectiveness of inclusion. In addition to

compliance with governmental requirements, the schools and the administrators and the teachers

in early childhood environments set the tone as well as the philosophy of a program" (Hastings

& Oakford, 2003.

The 2016 study by Biamba has attempted to examine several inquiries regarding effectual

inclusion and it functioning with regard to disabilities such as cognitive impairment, autism,

hearing impairments, multiple disabilities, orthopedic disabilities, visual impairments, and other

health impairments. Hidden disabilities included ADHD, learning disabilities, and behavioral

disorders (Kern, 2006). The results indicate a level of uneasiness with comprehending the

requirements of the pupils with severe special needs. This research has highlighted the necessity

of educators in inclusion programs to acquire instruction so that they feel knowledgeable

concerning proper instructional techniques to utilize with apparent and severe disabilities. The

research describes the necessity for continuing and methodical assistance to inclusive educators.

Inclusion of Intellectually Gifted Pupils

When a pupil is twice exceptional, both gifted and learning disabled, it presents as

particularly challenging situation for the educator. Most educators assume that if a pupil is

intellectually gifted, then the pupil's disabilities do not impact educational progress and, thus,

does not need to be addressed (Kern, 2006). "This impression can be a challenge if a gifted

special needs pupil is in a class with an educator who is unsupportive of inclusion. In addition, if

the educator thinks they do not possess the knowledge to instruct the pupil, the impulse may

exist to treat the gifted, disabled student as simply gifted and resent, or ignore, the needs of the

disability for that student" (Hegeman, 2001).

Underrepresented pupils' needs in gifted and talented programs are not typically recognized. Ford (1998) stated that underrepresented pupils (e.g. Hispanic, Native Indian, and African-American) are underrepresented in programs customized for such exceptional pupils. Ochos, Robles-Pina, Garcia, and Breunig (1999), moreover, suggested minority pupils have decreased access to programs provided to the gifted learner. "In such instances where pupils are underrepresented, the strong probability of a denial of access to services, programs, and resources specific to their needs. Inclusive programming may help to deliver services to the gifted as well as disabled pupils within the general education curriculum" (Kern, 2006).

Multicultural Issues

The disproportionate representation of pupils from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds placed into special education groups is a cause for concern (Dunn, 1968) Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier, Mattison, Maczuga; Cook, (2015) also expressed concerns about the over identification and representation of culturally diverse pupils in special education placements. Currently, there continues to be an inordinate number of diverse pupils educated within the urban school environment. Particularly, in these environments, fifty-one percent or even more of the pupil enrollment belong to an ethnic minority; a major portion come from low income households; in addition, these districts are located in or near the outskirts of metropolitan areas (Glover and Dejong, 2003). The U.S. Department of Education identifies urban school districts as "ones in which seventy five percent of the households are located in the city's center" (Glander, 2016).

"Common problems associated with urban school districts include low academic achievement; invasive politics; financial crisis and limited funds; and education impacted by

crime, adolescent pregnancy, vandalism, drugs, and gang related violence. Further difficulties usually include a turnover in administrators, conflicts with teachers' unions, angry or disengaged parents, and apathy, or even outright antagonism, from state lawmakers"(Glover and Dejong, 2003; Kern, 2006).

In urban school districts, a portion of pupils are identified as needing special education services (Duhaney and Salend, 2005). Male African American pupils have a high likelihood of being relegated to special needs classes for mild cognitive impairments or perhaps severe emotional disturbance (Gardner, 2001). In comparison with suburban and rural school districts, urban school districts are generally marked by higher levels of poverty, much more significant racial and ethnic diversity, more significant levels of linguistic diversity and immigrant populations, and much greater standard rates of pupil mobility, (Kincheloe, 2004; Nguyen, 2010; Bogotch and Schoorman, (2010). Townsend and Patton (1999) indicated that African American and Native American males are actually over identified regarding the rates of classification in the three most common disabilities: learning disabled, cognitively impaired, and psychologically disabled. Moreover, investigators have discovered that the overrepresentation of these pupils in separate programs, "impedes their educational and social performance by limiting accession to the general education curriculum." The inclusion program, consequently, enables pupils to access the general curriculum. The issue, nonetheless, remains the negative receptiveness educators have regarding having pupils with a psychological disability. Educators do relish having pupils with disturbing behaviors (Gable and Laycock}, 1991; Landrum, 1992).

Additionally, teachers are unsure of their aptitude relative to knowing exactly how one is able to teach such pupils. Finally, teachers are not clear on the positive aspects of taking on these pupils (Carter, 1991). Durand and Kearney (1992) suggested that these outcomes should not be a

surprise. Overall, it is practically inconceivable for educators to possess positive attitudes about instructing pupils with behavioral and learning issues. In most cases the educator is unsure how to help.

Attitudes about inclusion tend to be complicated and differ from educator to educator and district to district. Fakolade, Adeniyi, & Tella, (2017), in their analysis, explored the perceptions of educators about the including secondary, disabled pupils in general classes; they utilized a descriptive survey research design, with educators as subjects, from specified secondary schools within Oyo State, Nigeria. A questionnaire with question including demographic information (i.e. gender, marital status, profession, and teaching experience) was used and had a standard reliability coefficient alpha of 0.83. A t-test method of analysis was the primary statistical method used to analyze the four hypotheses. The study results revealed that the receptiveness of male teachers is 39.4, and that of female teacher is 43.3. Therefore, the t-test analysis indicated that the calculated t-test is 2.107, which is higher, compared with the critical t (t=1.960). This suggested that female educators had a more positive receptiveness towards the inclusion of special needs pupils compared with their male counterparts (Fakolade, Adeniyi, & Tella, (2017).

Moreover, the results indicate that a significant difference exists between married and single educators in their receptiveness towards special need pupils. Additionally, a professionally qualified teacher tends to have a more favorable receptiveness of the inclusion of special needs pupils than non-professionally qualified counterparts. The study suggested that educator should attend trainings to heighten their awareness about ways of practicing and accepting inclusion for an improved inclusion experience for the special needs pupils in Nigeria (Fakolade, Adeniyi, & Tella, (2017).

Cooc, (2017), Nieto (2003) and Scott (2002) analyzed racial disparities in teacher perceptions of pupil disabilities and suggested that multicultural education, and inclusion are directly linked. Both share complications that are within the academic arena. Both aim to provide equality and access to every pupil. The mutual purpose is generally to ensure excellence for all learners, not only a certain group. Considering NCLB, districts have to obtain this level of achievement for all the pupils.

Inclusion and Collaboration

In the Gaskin (2005) case, which legally reinforced the important concept behind IDEA and also stated that disabled pupils are permitted to obtain schooling within the LRE, a query about the future of inclusion arises. There is a blurred distinction between collaboration and inclusion (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 2004). Often collaboration is associated with inclusion, but the conditions are not the same. A collaborative relationship depicts a connection with individuals working towards a common goal. Often the aim is to support a disabled pupil in a class environment. Collaboration can help in the facilitation of inclusion. Currently, in "school terminology, collaboration is spoken about in terms of the way pupils are provided services" (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 2004).

Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2004 describe inclusion, mainstreaming or co-teaching as a service delivery approach which involves a general educator and a special educator or an aide working together to instruct all pupils. In a typical inclusion classroom, the aide or special educator assists the general educator in teaching a pupil. The researchers indicate it is a win, win situation for all.

Inclusive education is more complicated than the physical proximity of a disabled pupil in general education. Student do not perceive or learn in the same exact manner. Thus, general

educators cannot be expected to instruct students with special needs without the necessary support (Keenan, 1997; Shade, and Stewart, 2001). The very best use of inclusion is the situation in which all pupils participate in every aspect of school.

Keenan (1997) suggested that perception is easily transformed. Specifically, when an educator feels special education is the best placement for a disabled pupil, and if the educator is accustomed to the notion that special educator are specifically trained to handle and instruct certain pupils, a change in receptiveness is not likely to occur. The very first step in changing perception involves the idea that all stakeholders associated with a pupil's educational progress (i.e. parents, administrators, all teachers, and individuals in the community) consider their personal philosophical beliefs on the issue. (Kern, 2006).

Experts agree that acceptance and the integration of pupils with learning disabilities will take place when there is a monumental change in receptiveness, (Sharma and Subban, 2005; Beattie et al., 1997). Sharma and Subban, (2005) presented findings of a study to explore the perceptions of general educators toward the implementation of inclusion. The study was a part of a two pronged research question that examined teachers' attitudes toward, as well as their concerns about inclusive education. The discussion was based on several semi-structured interviews, conducted with general education teachers in Victoria, Australia state schools. The results suggest that Victorian teachers are favorable towards the idea of inclusive education and perceive the inclusive process as good for most individuals in the inclusive environment. However, they remain cautious regarding the addition of pupils with severe disabilities.

Research Questions

1. What are the differences in teachers' receptiveness about inclusion related to gender, age, educational level, teaching level, and the number of special education classes taken?

2. What is the relationship between teachers' receptiveness and the number of years at the teachers' current level of teaching, experience teaching special needs pupils in their classrooms, and years in the teaching profession?

3. What types of inclusive education methods do teachers believe are the most and what types are least beneficial?

Delimitations and Assumptions

This study is limited to understanding the attitudes of kindergarten through fifth grade teachers within a school district. The researcher assumes that the participants of the study will honestly complete the survey instrument.

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Summary

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Inclusion came into use relatively recently in the long history of special education in the United States. Since the late 19th century, children with disabilities were segregated for instruction in public schools. Through the years, educational professionals and parents have called for more equitable treatment and increased interaction with typical peers. Over the past few years, the major concerns and topics of discussion among parents, educators and the government have focused on who is considered disabled and who is responsible for planning and providing an appropriate education. Initially, educators were concerned with the classroom setting itself, whether or not disabled children were appropriate in the setting; if not, why not; and if so, how this could be accomplished? By the 1960s, the focus of discussion had moved to

assess the comprehensive components of special education and its relationship with general education.

Research indicates Inclusion is more complicated than the physical placement of a student with a disability into a general education classroom. Several variables play a role in influencing teacher perceptions towards inclusion and successful implementation of inclusion programs (e.g. all children do not perceive or learn the same way and all teachers do not teach the same way.

Chapter 3

Methods

This study aimed to investigate attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with special needs in grades K–5 in a large, urban New Jersey elementary school. This chapter is organized into four sections describing the research design, participants, materials, and research procedures (Kern, 2006).

Research Design

A descriptive research design was utilized for this study to investigate general teacher attitudes regarding inclusive education practices in the urban school setting. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) reported that, "descriptive research is a type of quantitative research that involves making careful descriptions of educational phenomena" (p. 374). Quantitative data from the participants were gathered at one point in time in a single-group design via a survey assessing teacher attitudes, which is the dependent variable for this study.

This study aimed to answer the following research questions: (a) What are the differences in teachers' receptiveness about inclusion related to gender, age, educational level, teaching level, and the number of special education classes taken? (b) What is the relationship between a teachers' receptiveness and the number of years at the teacher's current level of teaching, experience teaching special needs pupils in their classrooms, and years in the teaching profession? Also, (c) What types of inclusive education methods do teachers believe are the most beneficial what are least beneficial?

Setting and Participants

A convenience sample of educators in a large, urban elementary school were the population for this study. A total of 60 certified individuals are employed at a local elementary school for the 2018–2019 school year, according to information obtained from the district administration office. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; 2018) defines the district as being urban. The elementary school is located in a northeast city and exhibits characteristics that research has identified as an urban district: it has low academic achievement; invasive politics; financial crises and limited funds; and education impacted by crime, drugs, vandalism, teen pregnancy, and gang violence (Dejong & Troy, 2003).

The teachers hold both bachelor's and master's degrees. The certified staff consists of the following: thirty-three general education teachers, six special education teachers, five specialist teachers (music, physical education, art, and technology), one math leader, one literacy leader, one psychologist, one school counselor, one learning consultant, one social worker, and one administrator. According to the District's Office of Accountability, the school district's student enrollment as of October 15th, 2017 was 13,881. District demographic information for Kindergarten through Grade 12 is as follows: .0.8% Asian, 29.8% African American, 21.5% Hispanic, 0.5% Native American, 46.0% Caucasian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 1.3% Two or more races; 51.0% male, and 49.0% female. Jefferson Elementary enrollment was 420. Demographic information for Kindergarten through Grade 5 is as follows: 0% Asian, 94.5% African American, 4.3% Hispanic, 0% Native American, 0.5% Caucasian, 0.2% Pacific Islander, 0.5% Two or more races, 51.0% male, and 49.0% female.

The district comprises twenty-two schools: fifteen elementary schools, four middle schools, two high schools, and one alternative education school. Eighteen percent of pupils are

identified as requiring special education services, although the state's average is 15%. Of the 18%, or 2499 pupils identified, the current district data report the following information on the number of pupils in each of the disability categories: 1,532 learning disability, 86 emotional disturbance, 98 cognitively impaired, 215 speech or language impairment, 171 autism, 205 multiple disabilities, 15 visual impairment, two traumatic brain injury, eight deafness/blindness, and 167 other health impairment.

Of the special education student population, 61.9% receive specially designed instruction in a part-time learning environment (defined as >60% time spent outside of the general classroom); 26.5% receive specially designed instruction in a resource setting (defined as 21–60% time spent outside of the regular classroom), and 3.4% receive itinerant specially designed instruction (defined as < 21% time spent outside of the regular classroom). The state data revealed that 21.7% special education pupils receive specially designed instruction in a part-time situation; 12.6% of the pupils receive specially designed instruction in a resource room situation, and 37.2% of the pupils receive services as itinerant support. It is evident that the district manner in serving pupils with special needs is more restrictive than the state average.

The survey was distributed to each of the 60 educators (e.g., 43 general education teachers, six special education teachers, five specialists, two literacy/math intervention leaders, two child study members, one school counselor, and one administrator (principal) in the elementary school. Ninety-eight percent of teachers in total were be asked to participate in the study. Each teacher was provided with a cover sheet (see Appendix D), stating the general purpose of the study, that his or her identity and responses will be kept confidential, that participation in the study is entirely voluntary, and that sending back the completed survey is his or her consent to participate in the study.

Measure

The survey questions address issues pertaining to teacher perceptions of training, administrative support, peer support, collaboration, and student variables as they relate to inclusion (Kern, 2006). The survey was developed, based on areas of concern identified through the review of the literature. The survey, *Teacher Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education,* consists of Parts A, B, and C (see Appendix E). Part A of the survey consists of 42 questions related to teacher attitudes regarding inclusive education. The teachers are instructed to circle their responses on a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree. Part B of the survey consists of open-ended responses related to the type of training teachers perceive would most benefit them in implementing. Part C of the survey gathers teacher demographic information (i.e., gender, age range, educational level, current level of teaching, number of years teaching at the current level, number of years teaching in total, and the amount of training received in teaching children with special needs).

Findings from this study indicated that the survey yields a total score and five subdomains. The five subdomains include student variables, peer support for teachers, administrative support for teachers, collaboration with other teachers, and training for teachers.

Subdomain: Student Variables

The purpose of the items in the student variables domain was to gauge the role of teacher perceptions that influence inclusion. Diebold and Von Eschenbach (1990) determined that educators are amenable to the inclusion of pupils with mild or high incidence-disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities and to a lesser degree, towards including pupils with severe or low-incidence disabilities (e.g., autism) within general education. General education teachers were amenable

towards incorporating pupils with intellectual disabilities rather than students with emotional or behavioral difficulties (Hastings & Oakford, 2003).

The benefits of inclusive education are numerous for students both with and without disabilities. Benefits of inclusion for students with disabilities include friendships, increased social initiations, relationships and networks, peer role models for academic, social and behavior skills, increased achievement of IEP goals, greater access to general curriculum, enhanced skill acquisition and generalization, increased inclusion in future environments, greater opportunities for interactions, higher expectations, increased school staff collaboration, increased parent participation, and greater integration of families into community.

Benefits of inclusion for students without disabilities include meaningful friendships, increased appreciation and acceptance of individual differences, increased understanding and acceptance of diversity, respect for all people, preparation of all students for adult life in an inclusive society, opportunities to master activities by practicing and teaching others, greater academic outcomes, meeting all students' needs in a better way and greater resources for everyone. There is a lack of research that shows any negative effects from inclusion that is done appropriately with the necessary supports and services for students to participate actively and achieve IEP goals.

Subdomain: Peer support for teachers

The purpose of the items in the peer support domain was to gauge the role that giving and receiving encouragement and assistance plays towards achieving inclusion. Peer supporters "offer emotional support, share knowledge, teach skills, provide practical assistance, and connect teachers with resources, opportunities, communities of support and other teachers"(Solomon, 2004; Mead, 2003). Teachers have to work together on the curriculum and delivery, which will

give them a chance to get to know their colleagues both personally and professionally. If teachers seeing amazing results from students in their classrooms, there is no reason not to share techniques and lessons with other teachers. Teachers can also draw on their experiences with what works for them, making their students' experiences all the better in the process. (Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin), (1996).

Subdomain: Administrative support for teachers

The purpose of the items in this domain was to gauge the impact of administrative support and vision as an influence on inclusion. In addition, a study of 32 inclusive school sites in five states and one Canadian province found that the degree of administrative support and vision was the most powerful predictor of general educators' attitudes toward inclusion (Villa et al., 1996).

For inclusive education to succeed, administrators must act to articulate publicly the new vision, build consensus for the vision, and lead all stakeholders to active involvement. Administrators can provide four types of support identified as important by frontline general and special educators: personal and emotional (for example, being willing to listen to concerns); informational (for example, providing training and technical assistance); instrumental (for example, creating time for teachers to meet); and appraisal (for example, giving constructive feedback related to implementation of new practices) (Littrell, Billingsley, & Cross, 1994).

Visionary leaders recognize that changing any organization, including a school, is a complex act. They know that organizational transformation requires ongoing attention to consensus building for the inclusive vision. It also requires skill development on the part of educators and everyone involved in the change; the provision of extra common planning time and fiscal, human, technological, and organizational resources to motivate experimentation with

new practices, and the collaborative development and communication of a well-formulated plan of action for transforming the culture and practice of a school (Ambrose, 1987; Villa & Thousand, 2013).

Subdomain: Collaboration with other teachers

The purpose of the items in the collaboration domain was to ascertain the role of working with another teacher on a common goal as an influence in the inclusion process. There is no reason why a teacher has to tackle a problem at his or her school or in his or her classroom all by him or herself. Seek out other teachers for advice and for larger issues work together to find lasting, solid solutions. Nothing fosters unity like working through something together. Reports from school districts throughout the United States identify collaboration as a key variable in the successful implementation of inclusive education. Creating planning teams, scheduling time for teachers to work and teach together, recognizing teachers as problem solvers, conceptualizing teachers as frontline researchers, and effectively collaborating with parents are dimensions reported as crucial to successful collaboration (National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1995).

Achievement of inclusive education presumes that no one person could have all the expertise required to meet the needs of all the students in a classroom. For inclusive education to work, educators must become effective and efficient collaborative team members. They must develop skills in creativity, collaborative teaming processes, co-teaching, and interpersonal communication that will enable them to work together to craft diversified learning opportunities for learners who have a wide range of interests, learning styles, and intelligences (Thousand & Villa, 2000). Collaboration emerged as the only variable that predicted positive attitudes toward inclusion among general and special educators as well as administrators (Villa et al., 1996).

Subdomain: Training for teachers

The purpose of the items in the training domain was to determine if being taught a particular skill (i.e. inclusive techniques) through practice and instruction effects perception regarding inclusion. All individuals have unique skills and knowledge, so it can be worth it to share those things with others.

Training includes in services and professional development for educators currently teaching. In addition to developing professional skills prior to teaching, it is crucial that educators already in the classroom be provided skills and techniques for working in inclusive educational environments. Educators are required to upgrade their professional skills annually to improve their teaching performances. In-service training programs are effective strategies to enhance the quality of the educational system. Inclusive education techniques are child-centered, utilize active and participative learning techniques that improve educators' capacity to teach students both with and without disabilities. Collaborative and participative methods improve learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2005).

Survey Validity

To establish face validity for the survey, researcher Kern, 2006 enlisted the assistance of ten experts in the field of school psychology. The 10 experts charged with reviewing the survey instrument questions. Reviewers included certified school psychologists from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The experts offered suggestions that were incorporated into a development and a revision of the instrument. The survey was be administered to elementary general and special education teachers in an urban East Coast public school district.

Procedures

The following methods were utilized to conduct the research. First, a resolution of support from the superintendent and the Board of Education to disseminate the survey to school personnel, and IRB approval were obtained for the study. Next, a cover letter (see Appendix D and the *Teacher Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education* Survey (see Appendix E) were disseminated to the elementary teachers. Teachers were informed that participation was voluntary and provided two ways in which to contact the researcher or the principal investigator of the study if they had concerns or questions. Surveys were completed through paper and pencil method.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to determine teachers' receptiveness regarding the inclusion of children with special needs in the general education classroom environment. The primary objective was to identify differences and relationships in receptiveness with respect to gender, age, marital status, parental status, educational teaching level, current teaching level, years teaching at current level, number of special education course taken, total teaching experience, years teaching children with special needs, special education degree possession and inclusion hours acquired. In addition, perceived impediments and training requirements related to inclusive education were investigated. This chapter presents the results of the data collection, data entry, a description of the demographics, and a statistical analysis of the results.

Data Entry, Scoring, and Screening

The data collected included responses from teachers (N=58) who completed the Teacher Receptiveness Inclusion Survey. Teachers completed the surveys through paper and pencil format. The data were then entered into IBM SPSS Statistic, Version 25.0, with each question as a variable in order to set up the database for analysis. The *Teacher Receptiveness Scale,* comprised 42 questions, and served as the primary measure of teacher receptiveness. Higher scores on each item suggested positive receptiveness regarding inclusive education. Several items, however, had to be reversed scored. Reverse scoring means that the numerical scoring scale runs in the opposite direction. Therefore, strongly disagree= 4, disagree, 3, agree=2 and strongly agree =1. Given that pro inclusion was determined to yield higher scores, the following

survey questions were reversed scored: Appendix A is organized by domains and as a result the reverse sored questions are items 7, 8, 10, 13, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 40 and 41.

The survey consisted of 42 items scored on a Likert scale as previously described. For the purposes of this study, results were organized by the subdomains of the survey (student variables, peer support, administrative support, collaboration, and training). Open-ended questions completed by teachers at the end of the survey instrument were utilized to identify the training methods that teachers rated as being the most beneficial and/ or least beneficial to obtaining training about inclusion. Data were entered in three parts. Part 1 *Teacher Receptiveness Inclusion Survey* consisted of the appropriate Likert scale response (4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2= Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree). Part 2 involved qualitative responses regarding aspects of training from those participants who provided additional data. Finally, Part 3 included demographic information provided by the participants. Descriptive statistical analyses were calculated to determine frequencies and percentages of survey responses.

Demographics

The population for the study comprised certified teachers in an urban New Jersey school district. During the data collection process, 60 certified teachers were employed for the 2018-2019 school year. Fifty-eight teachers completed and returned the survey. This sample of 58 teachers comprised the data used for the analyses presented below. Table 1 provides the demographic characteristics of the sample. The number of respondents and percentages are provided for the categorical variables with the means, standard deviations, and ranges shown for the continuous variables. Complete data (N=58) is shown for the categorical variables. All

participants completed information for the continuous variables, and thus, the information is

based on the number of subjects completing these variables, shown in parentheses.

Table 1- Demographic Characteristics of Participating T*e*achers (N=58)

Characteristics	*F*	*%*	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Range	Dif
Gender						
Male	11	19.0				
Female	47	81.0				
Age Range (years)			3.05	1.05	1-5	(4)
<25	2	3.4				
25-35	19	32.8				
36-45	16	27.66				
46-55	16	27.6				
56+	5	8.6				
Marital Status						
Married	34	58.4				
Non-Married	24	41.4				
Have Children						
Yes	39	67.2				
No	19	32.8				
Educational Level						
Bachelor's	6	10.3				
Bachelor's +30	5	8.6				
Bachelor's +60	7	12.1				
Master's	12	20.7				
Master's +30	20	34.5				
Master's +60	7	12.1				
Doctorate	1	1.7				
Current Level Teaching						
Preschool	0	0.0				
Elementary	56	96.6				
Middle	1	1.7				
High School	1	1.7				
Number of Years at Current Level				7.23	1-30	(29)
Total Number of Years Teaching			11.7	8.40	1-30	(29)
Number of Special Education Courses				7.02	0-26	(26)
Years of Experience Teaching Sped				8.02	0-30	(30)
Special Education College Degree/Minor				.44	1-2	(1)
Number of Inclusion Hours >5				.50	1-2	(1)

Descriptive aspects of each of the variables included within the analyses were reviewed. Regarding gender, the sample was primarily female (81%, $n = 47$). Regarding the other demographic variables, there were several variables that had low sample counts within specific categories. In order to facilitate interpretation of results, several of the categories were collapsed. For example, the below 25 years of age category was collapsed into the 25 – 35 category. The new category was referred to as Below 25 – 35 (36%, $n = 21$). Additionally, the 56+ category was collapsed into the 46 – 55 category (36%, $n = 21$). The revised frequency counts are provided in Table 2.

Table 2 – Frequency within Revised Age Variable

Category	Frequency	Percent
Below 25 – 35	21	36%
36 – 45	16	28%
46 – 56+	21	36%

Demographic Characteristics and Teacher Receptiveness

The first researched question asked, "What are the differences in teacher's receptiveness about inclusion related to gender, age, educational level, teaching level, and the numbers of special education classes taken?" Teaching level was not utilized for this analysis because the majority of respondents were elementary school teachers. Instead, education level was used as the independent variable for this analysis. The second research question asked, "What is the relationship between teachers' receptiveness and the number of years at the teacher's current

level of teaching, experience teaching special needs pupils in their classrooms, and years in the
teaching profession?" To answer these questions, the mean of the participants responding
"Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" was calculated for the number of years at the teacher's current
level of teaching, total experience teaching, special education courses taken, years of experience
with special needs, degree obtained, and professional development coursework and organized by
subdomain (i.e., student variables, peer support, administrative support, collaboration, and
training). These results are provided in tables 2 and 3. Frequencies of total individual responses
within each subdomain on the teacher survey have been provided in Appendix A.

Table 3.

Percentage of participants responding Agree or Strongly Agree on the Teacher Survey by Level of Education

Subdomain	Q#	Bach	Bach +30	Bach +60	Masters	Masters +30	Masters +60
	7	16.7	0	5.6	11.1	44.4	22.3
	8	6.9	10.3	20.7	6.9	31.0	24.1
	9	9.1	18.2	9.1	27.3	36.4	0
	10	19.0	4.8	19.0	9.5	33.3	14.3
Student variables	11	13.6	4.5	4.5	31.8	31.8	13.6
	25	10.3	10.3	12.8	28.2	25.6	12.8
	26	14.6	7.3	17.1	26.8	19.5	14.6
	27	13.3	8.9	15.6	11.1	35.6	15.5
	38	12.8	10.6	12.8	21.3	27.7	14.9
	39	9.1	18.2	9.1	0	54.5	9.1
	4	20.0	0	20.0	0	20.0	40.0
	22	20.	0	20.0	20.0	40.0	0
Peer Support	29	12.5	12.5	0	12.5	62.5	0
	37	20.0	20.0	20.0	0	40.0	0
	41	11.3	9.4	13.2	22.6	30.2	13.2

	3	7.1	7.1	14.3	35.7	7.1	28.7
	14	6.7	0	6.7	33.3	40.0	13.3
	15	5.6	0	5.6	33.3	44.4	11.1
Administrative	20	10.0	0	20.0	20.0	30.0	20.0
Support	21	12.5	12.5	9.4	15.6	34.4	15.6
	31	8.3	8.3	5.6	22.2	38.9	16.7
	35	10.0	0	5.0	10.0	55.0	20.0
	36	12.5	12.5	8.3	16.7	25.0	25.0
	5	25.0	50.0	0	0	25.0	0
	6	0	0	0	0	100	0
	12	16.7	0	16.7	16.7	16.7	33.2
Collaboration	13	5.0	15.0	20.0	15.0	35.0	10.0
	23	15.4	10.3	12.8	17.9	28.2	15.4
	24	14.7	5.9	14.7	23.5	26.5	14.7
	28	9.3	11.6	16.3	18.6	25.6	18.6
	30	14.3	14.3	0	0	71.4	0
	40	8.3	10.4	12.5	20.8	33.3	14.7
	1	13.0	13.0	8.7	30.4	26.1	8.7

	2	0	8.3	16.7	0	33.3	41.7
	16	14.3	8.6	8.6	20.0	28.6	20.7
	17	7.9	7.9	13.2	26.3	31.6	13.2
	18	4.8	19.0	9.5	42.9	19.0	4.8
Training	19	13.2	5.3	13.2	21.1	31.2	15.8
	32	0	0	25.0	0	75.0	0
	33	13.3	16.7	6.7	30.0	26.7	6.6
	34	0	10.0	10.0	10.0	50.0	20.0
	42	5.1	10.3	17.9	25.6	35.9	5.2

Table 4.

Mean of participants responding Agree or Strongly Agree by Experience in Teaching and Special

Education

Subdomain	Q#	Current Level Years	Total Years Teaching	# Sped Courses Taken	Yrs. Experience sped pupils
Student variables	7	11.11	13.61	7.78	9.00
	8	11.45	13.83	9.00	8.66
	9	10.91	13.73	6.18	9.73
	10	10.86	12.29	7.00	7.29
	11	10.09	12.50	6.14	5.14
	25	9.85	12.69	6.69	6.44
	26	9.78	12.56	6.44	7.37
	27	9.64	12.02	7.07	6.93
	38	10.28	12.77	7.32	7.19
	39	7.27	8.00	7.64	4.45
Peer Support	4	12.60	15.80	3.80	10.80
	22	5.60	8.80	3.00	8.60
	29	5.25	4.63	3.75	2.50
	37	7.00	8.00	5.20	5.20
	41	9.34	11.51	6.79	6.25

	3	11.5	14.86	4.64	7.21
	14	8.67	10.93	7.40	7.07
Administrative	15	9.28	12.17	7.89	7.39
Support	20	9.60	13.15	8.05	8.65
	21	9.66	11.94	7.25	6.38
	31	10.67	13.42	6.72	7.53
	35	11.30	13.20	9.25	8.15
	36	12.54	15.29	7.08	8.75
	5	6.75	4.75	2.50	3.50
	6	2.50	2.50	5.00	2.50
	12	11.33	13.17	7.17	8.17
	13	8.55	10.25	6.55	7.10
Collaboration	23	10.10	12.03	8.08	7.41
	24	9.53	12.21	9.24	7.09
	28	9.88	12.19	7.72	7.23
	30	9.14	10.0	8.43	5.86
	40	10.04	12.00	6.54	6.54

	1	10.17	12.35	3.35	6.39
	2	11.67	15.08	13.00	8.42
	16	11.54	13.86	8.00	8.66
	17	9.32	11.71	5.71	6.13
Training	18	9.43	11.43	2,71	5.10
	19	10.39	12.84	6.95	7.66
	32	4.00	8.00	9.00	7.25
	33	9.17	11.57	6.23	5.90
	34	9.00	11.60	9.50	6.10
	42	7.87	9.00	4.10	4.64

The third question asked about the types of inclusive education methods that teachers believe are the most beneficial and least beneficial. In order to answer this question, it was important to determine if there were preferences between groups, based upon age and scores on measures pertaining to preferred delivery methods of training. The delivery methods were, district level in-service training, out of district training, coursework at college/university training, school building level training, article(s) provided, time for consultation with school psychologist, and time for consultation with special education teachers. The researcher uses descriptive statistics to test for differences between the groups on these measures. The results of the analyses indicated that there were overall preferences for district level in-service training (26%), college courses (19%) and school building level training (19%) between groups, based upon age on measures of preferred delivery methods of training (See Table 4 & Appendix C).

Table 5.

Training: Age by Preferred Method of Training Delivery

	Age			
	Below 25-36	36-45	46-56	Total
District level in-service training	4	4	7	15
Out of District training	5	4	4	13
Coursework at college/university	2	1	3	6
School building level training	4	3	2	9
Article(s) provided	3	1	0	4
Time for consultation with school psychologist	3	1	1	5
Time for consultation with special education teachers	0	2	4	6
Total	21	16	21	58

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the receptiveness of K-5 teachers regarding inclusion.

Notably, the question about whether or not differences in receptiveness about inclusion exist,

based on the teacher's gender, age, marital status, having children, and educational level, and

current teaching level. Various relationships were examined, (e.g., between receptiveness and

number of years teaching at their current teaching levels; receptiveness and the total number of

years teaching; receptiveness and number of special education courses taken; receptiveness and

years teaching pupils with special needs; receptiveness and special education degree possession;

and receptiveness and number of inclusion hours). Finally, the type of inclusive training methods

that teachers considered most beneficial, and least beneficial were also examined. Regarding

gender, the sample was primarily female (81%, n = 47). Therefore, comparisons of gender were

not conducted in this study.

Educational Level

Educational level was used as the independent variable for analysis. The researcher

looked for differences between education level on the independent measures pertaining to

inclusion, student variables, peer support, administrative support, and collaboration. The results

were inconsistent with the literature. According to Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996), general

education teachers' attitudes and beliefs about instructing pupils with disabilities are learned and

appear to be influenced by the amount of knowledge they have with regard to a particular

individual or group. Similarly, Cook (2001) revealed that teacher attitudes about inclusion in

their classrooms stemmed from their lack of confidence and perceived lack of proper training in that area.

The literature suggests a consensus that teachers' receptiveness toward inclusion is critical in implementing the goal of inclusive schools and also for these strategies to be successful. Attempts to identify factors associated with teachers' receptiveness toward inclusion has been mixed. Results from the current study is consistent with the literature because the findings were inconclusive. The current study does not provide additional insight into the significance of gender, age, teaching educational levels, years of special education experience, and targeted training on receptiveness towards teaching pupils with disabilities.

Previous studies have presented mixed results regarding the impact of gender on receptiveness towards inclusion. Literature reviews show that in four of seven studies, female teachers held more positive receptiveness toward inclusion than male teachers (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). In a later review, two of three studies reported the same results; i.e., that female teachers were more positive towards inclusion. compared with their male colleagues, (de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). That is, there may actually be no difference between male and female teachers in the actual practice of inclusive education, rather than simply contemplating the idea of inclusion. In the current study the majority of the participants were female (81%); therefore, a gender comparison was not conducted.

The results of the current study do not align with previous research indicating that older teachers tend to have more negative receptiveness towards inclusion, (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; This may not be a surprise because older teachers are said to have had limited or no training in inclusive teaching. Therefore, these teachers may have to adapt not only to a new

group of pupils that requires additional support and alternative teaching strategies, but also to an inclusive school as a new concept that might differ from the school they envisioned.

While examining the educational level of teachers, no difference in receptiveness was detected in teachers who hold a Bachelor's degree. Bachelor's +30 hours, Bachelor's +60 hours, Master's degree, or Master's +30 hours, Master's +60 hours. Similarly, no difference in receptiveness was found with teachers who teach at the elementary level. There was no significant difference in receptiveness that was detected between teachers who took four or fewer special education courses and teachers who took five or more special education courses in teaching children with special needs.

Teaching Experience

Experience teaching at their current teaching level did not seem to influence teacher receptiveness. The receptiveness remained generally positive regardless of the length of time working at the current teaching level. The total number of years of teaching also did not appear to influence teacher receptiveness towards inclusive education. The number of years spent teaching children with special needs in their classrooms did not appear to have any influence on the measure of receptiveness. Teachers indicated a generally neutral receptiveness despite the numbers of years teaching pupils with special needs in their classes. The relationship between total scores on measures of teachers' receptiveness and the number of years at the teachers' current levels of teaching, experience teaching special needs pupils in their classrooms, and years in the teaching profession was assessed.

Professional Development

Part C of the receptiveness survey was associated with research question 3 that asked the teachers about their beliefs with respect to different training methods that may be beneficial

regarding inclusive education. Teachers revealed that district level in-service training was believed to be most beneficial, with coursework ranking and school building training tied for second, out-of-district training being fourth. Providing articles about inclusiveness were believed to be the least beneficial means to provide training. The remaining methods were evenly divided.

Research indicates that exposure to pupils with special needs and inclusion training impact teacher receptiveness. Therefore, the lack of appropriate training is a crucial factor in influencing positive teacher receptiveness regarding inclusion, (Vaz et al., 2015). Subsequently, teachers would be more receptive and make more gains from training programs they perceive as having the most value to them, (Forlin, Earle, Loreman & Sharma, 2011).

In this study, teacher receptiveness was compared with peer support, administrative support, and collaboration to gauge the extent to which teachers believe training delivery methods are best delivered to them. Specifically, the need for general education teachers to receive training through methods that they perceive as being the most beneficial is essential and additional training is essential as inclusive classrooms become more prevalent in schools.

The Semmel, and Gerber (1990) study concluded that administrative support was necessary for successful inclusion outcomes. The study also indicates that teachers were resistant to "novel approaches to educational practices." For the implementation of the inclusive education model, administrators must first provide support and technical assistance, (Semmel and Gerber, 1990). Another outcome from the study indicated that people need to feel respected and have their work valued, (Semmel and Gerber, 1990). Administrators need to encourage a collaborative interaction in the school and assist teachers in the development of the necessary skills for collaborative service delivery (Kern, 2006). The district administration should support and assist teachers in the development of the necessary skills through providing training, either through

district-level training, college-level coursework or appropriate school building level training. The promotion of such an environment would encourage teachers to be more supportive of each other.

Collaboration, the relationship between two people as they work toward a common goal, was considered an important aspect. In an inclusive classroom, both the special teacher and general education teacher work collaboratively to teach the class. According to Kratochwill and Pittman (2002), teachers believe they learn most through direct intervention, specifically, watching others perform a particular task. Therefore, having a supportive administration, peer support, and direct consultation through collaboration increases the likelihood of more positive receptiveness towards inclusive education, (Santos, 2016).

Respondent Reflections

In a review of the participants' responses, it was noticeable that teachers' responses were consistent with what is indicated by the literature review. In the Student Variable subdomain, teachers agreed that pupils with mild disabilities (e.g., speech/language impairments, one year below level, or with no apparent behavioral problems) should be educated within the general classroom. Also, a prevailing thought was that pupils with mild cognitive impairments could be taught within the general education environment. However, pupils who exhibit more severe disabilities (e.g., psychiatric diagnosis, cognitive impairment, autism, two or more years below level, verbal or physical aggression) should be educated within the special education classroom. This practice is common in the urban school districts where there is a higher prevalence of apparent behavioral difficulties and less positive receptiveness towards inclusive education.

Within the Peer Support subdomain, teachers agreed that they have the support of their peers when educating pupils with special needs in the general classroom. The support of peers is a critical factor in the attainment of a positive receptiveness, as indicated   by the literature.

Concerning the administrative support subdomain, teachers have expressed ambivalence, (Boscardin, 2005). Most believed they are able to approach their administrators with concerns they have when teaching pupils with disabilities. Teachers also thought the administration did not provide sufficient support, materials, or time to attend conferences addressing issues concerning the education of pupils with special needs in the general education environment.

In reference to the collaboration subdomain, teachers reported they agreed that collaboration between general education and special education teachers yielded positive outcomes. They also agreed that both special education and general education teachers should be accountable for teaching special needs pupils.

Regarding the training subdomain, teachers thought their training equipped them well enough to teach pupils with disabilities, such as speech/ language impairments, learning disabilities (1-grade level below) and cognitive delays. However, most teachers did not think their educational background sufficiently prepared them to teach special needs pupils with behavior difficulties and learning disabilities (2-grade levels below). Most teachers also believed that they required more training to teach pupils with an IEP for learning problems. Most teachers reported they needed additional training to teach pupils with an IEP for behavioral problems. Teachers also reported that they firmly believed that their school district did not provide them with sufficient in-service training to teach pupils with an IEP.

Limitations

A significant limitation of this study lies in the small sample size. The survey was given to 60 teachers, with 58 returning the survey. Larger sample sizes may have yielded more information, and significant results. In addition, only two schools were utilized for the study and therefore these results are not generalizable to all teachers. Another aspect to teacher receptiveness regarding inclusive education is teacher receptiveness regarding education in general. Overall, job satisfaction may influence their receptiveness towards inclusive education. Job satisfaction was not examined in this study and may have influenced receptiveness toward inclusion. Finally, the instrument utilized for this study was developed by Kern, 2006 and as such no psychometric properties are available.

Clinical Implications

Based on results from the current research, a paradigm shift may be in order for educators, for the district, as well as the state of New Jersey's Department of Education. Fundamental changes in approach or underlying assumptions will need to happen before the inclusion model can be fully implemented. The challenge will be to change the manner in which educators think of pupils with disabilities. Generally, a shift in the way teachers think about learning and disability will need to occur. Most people consider disabilities as a barrier that prevent pupils from functioning "normally". However, the concept of "neurodiversity" may help to expand what individuals think of as "normal" and with transitioning to inclusion, (Kapp, et al., 2013). "Truly effective special education requires both a special education teacher and a general education teacher trained to do two different things, not merely to work together with common purpose" (Hallahan, 2012). Both groups of educators should be properly educated in their respective areas and knowledgeable about how to work together to provide an effective learning

environment for all pupils in the classroom. Results from this study involving teachers revealed that district level in-service training was believed to be most beneficial, with coursework ranking and school building training tied for second, out-of-district training being fourth. Providing articles were believed to be the least beneficial means to provide training. The remaining methods were evenly divided. Therefore, district level in-service training and school building training are good places to start inclusion training in the school district.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could investigate various statewide reform initiatives to improve inclusion programs. For example, in 2017, California's Department of Education made a significant change to its teacher education curriculum by including special education within general education teacher preparation programs. Prior to the overhaul, special education and general education teaching programs were taught as separate entities.

Looking at the role of various stakeholders could also be further explored. For instance, due to the crucial role that administrators have in shaping teacher receptiveness towards inclusive education, obtaining administrator attitudes towards inclusive education may be of value. Parents also influence student educational experience; as a result, it may be valuable to ascertain parent receptiveness regarding inclusion. Because inclusive education is becoming more prevalent in classrooms due to federal and state mandates, it may be useful to obtain student receptiveness concerning its implementation, (Kern, 2006).

It could be of interest to further examine if training specifically designed to prepare teachers to teach pupils with disabilities may be better at incorporating all aspects of knowledge, compared with the formal training in inclusive teaching.

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APPENDIX A

Frequencies of Total Individual Responses Within Each Subdomain on Teacher Survey

(*Reversed Scored Items)

Subdomain	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Student Variables	Question 7* Pupils who are 2 or more years below grade level should be in special education classes.	5.2%	25.2%	58.6%	10.3%
	Question 8* Pupils who are diagnosed as autistic need to be in special education classrooms.	6.9%	43.1%	39.7%	10.3%
	Question 9* All efforts should be made to educate pupils who have an IEP in the regular education classroom.	32.8%	48.3%	12.1%	6.9%
	Question 10* Pupils who are diagnosed cognitively impaired should be in special education classes.	1.7%	34.5%	50.0%	13.8%
	Question 11 Pupils who are verbally aggressive towards others can be maintained in regular education classrooms.	3.4%	58.6%	31.0%	6.9%
	Question 25 Pupils who are physically aggressive towards others can be maintained in regular education classrooms	5.2%	27.6%	55.2%	12.1%
	Question 26* All pupils who have an IEP for any reason need to receive their education in a special education classroom.	20.7%	50%	24.1%	5.2%

	Question 27* Pupils who display speech and language difficulties should be in special education classes.	13.8%	63.8%	20.7%	1.7%
	Question 38* Pupils who are 1 year below grade level should be in special education classes.	29.9%	55.2%	19.0%	0%
	Question 39 Pupils who are identified as depressed but do not display overt disruptive behavior should be in regular education classes.	13.8%	67.2%	17.2%	1.7%
Peer Support	Question 4 My colleagues are willing to help me with issues which may arise when I have pupils with an IEP in my classroom	15.5%	75.9%	6.9%	1.7%
	Question 22 I can approach my colleagues for assistance when needed if I have pupils with special needs in my classroom	17.2%	74.1%	6.9%	1.7%
	Question 29 My colleagues are approachable when I ask for their advice when 1 teach pupils with special needs.	19.0%	67.2%	12.1%	1.7%
	Question 37 I feel comfortable in approaching my colleagues for help when I teach pupils with special needs.	15.5%	75.9%	6.9%	1.7%

	Question 41* My colleagues will try to place all their special needs pupils in my classroom if l start including pupils with an IEP in my regular classroom	37.9%	53.4%	6.9%	1.7%
Administrative Support	Question 3 I am encouraged by my administrators to attend conferences/workshops on teaching pupils with special needs.	6.9%	69.9%	20.7%	3.4%
	Question 14 I can approach my administrators with concerns I hold regarding teaching pupils who have special needs.	15.5%	58.6%	24.1%	1.7%
	Question 15 I feel supported by my administrators when faced with challenges presented by pupils with behavioral difficulties in my classroom	15.5%	53.4%	24.1%	6.9%
	Question 20 My administrators provide me with sufficient support when I have pupils with an IEP in my classroom.	12.1%	53.4%	25.9%	8.6%
	Question 21 I am provided with enough time to attend conferences/workshops on teaching pupils with special needs.	8.6%	36.2%	44.8%	10.3%
	Question 31 I am provided with sufficient materials to make appropriate accommodations for pupils with special needs	0%	37.9%	50.0%	12.1%

	Question 35 I feel supported by my administrators when faced with challenges presented by pupils with learning difficulties in my classroom	6.9%	58.6%	27.6%	6.9%
	Question 36 I am provided with monetary support to attend conferences/workshops on teaching pupils with special needs.	5.2%	53.4%	27.6%	13.8%
Collaboration	Question 5 I feel comfortable in working collaboratively with special education teachers when pupils with an IEP are in my classroom.	15.5%	77.6%	6.9%	0%
	Question 6 I welcome collaborative teaching when I have a student with an IEP in my classroom	29.3%	67.2%	3.4%	0%
	Question 12 Collaborative teaching of children with special needs can be effective, particularly when pupils with an IEP are placed in a regular classroom.	24.1%	65.5%	8.6%	1.7%
	Question 13* Special education teachers should teach pupils who hold an IEP.	1.7%	32.8%	55.2%	10.3%
	Question 23* Regular education teachers should not be responsible for teaching children with special needs	19.0%	48.3%	29.3%	3.4%
	Question 24* I like being the only teacher in the classroom	6.9%	51.7%	39.7%	1.7%

	Question 28* I should be responsible for teaching only pupils who are not identified as having special needs.	24.1%	50.0%	24.1%	1.7%
	Question 30 Both regular education teachers and special education teachers should teach pupils with an IEP.	32.8%	55.2%	10.3%	1.7%
	Question 40* Special education teachers might lose their jobs if I teach children with an IEP.	41.4%	41.4%	12.1%	5.2%
Training	Question 1 My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach pupils with cognitive delays and deficits in daily living skills.	13.8%	46.6%	34.5%	5.2%
	Question 2 I need more training to appropriately teach pupils with an IEP for learning problems	17.2%	62.1%	12.1%	8.6%
	Question 16 My district provides me with sufficient out of district training opportunities for me to appropriately teach pupils with disabilities	1.7%	37.9%	43.1%	17.2%
	Question 17 My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach pupils with behavioral difficulties.	6.9%	27.6%	51. %	13.8%
	Question 18 My educational background has prepared me to teach pupils with special needs.	13.8%	50.0%	31.0%	5.2%

	Question 19 I am provided with sufficient in-service training through my school district, which allows me the ability to teach pupils with an IEP.	5.2%	29.3%	48.3%	17.2%
	Question 32 My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach pupils who are 1 year below level.	20.7%	72.4%	6.9%	0%
	Question 33 My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach pupils with speech impairments	10.3%	37.9%	36.2%	15.5%
	Question 34* I need more training to appropriately teach pupils an IEP for behavioral problems	3.4%	13.8%	44.8%	37.9%
	Question 42 My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach pupils who are 2 or more years below level	1.7%	6.9%	53.4%	37.9%

APPENDIX B

Mean of participants responding Agree or Strongly Agree

Subdomain	Q#	College Degree/Minor special education	Inclusion Professional Development of 5 or more hours
Student variables	7	1.72	1.61
	8	1.66	1.48
	9	1.82	1.55
	10	1.76	1.57
	11	1.77	1.50
	25	1.74	1.49
	26	1.80	1.49
	27	1.73	1.53
	38	1.70	1.49
	39	1.82	1.45
Peer Support	4	1.80	1.60
	22	2.00	1.80
	29	2.00	1.75
	37	1.80	1.60
	41	1.79	1.51

	3	1.79	1.64
	14	1.60	1.53
	15	1.56	1.50
	20	1.60	1.45
Administrative Support	21	1.69	1.50
	31	1.72	1.47
	35	1.55	1.45
	36	1.71	1.38
	5	2.00	2.00
	6	2.00	2.00
	12	1.83	1.33
	13	1.80	1.60
Collaboration	23	1.67	1.51
	24	1.65	1.47
	28	1.72	1.49
	30	1.57	1.43
	40	1.75	1.57

	1	1.96	1.52
	2	1.42	1.25
	16	1.69	1.43
	17	1.76	1.53
Training	18	2.00	1.62
	19	1.74	1.47
	32	1.50	1.50
	33	1.77	1.53
	34	1.70	1.60
	42	1.92	1.59

APPENDIX C

Ranking of Preferred Delivery Methods for Receiving Training about Inclusive Education (N=58)

Delivery Method		%
Out of district training		
	Most beneficial	14
	Neutral	12
	Least beneficial	5
Coursework at college/university		
	Most beneficial	19
	Neutral	14
	Least beneficial	10
District level in-service training		
	Most beneficial	26
	Neutral	16
	Least beneficial	10
Consultation with special education teacher		
	Most beneficial	10
	Neutral	16
	Least beneficial	16

School building level training		
	Most beneficial	19
	Neutral	19
	Least beneficial	3
Consultation with school psychologist		
	Most beneficial	12
	Neutral	13
	Least beneficial	3
Articles (provided)		
	Most beneficial	0
	Neutral	10
	Least beneficial	52

Note. Percentages were rounded

APPENDIX D

Teacher Letter

 Hello Educators:

 You are invited to participate in a study of teacher receptiveness toward inclusive
 education by taking the following survey. In this Teacher Receptiveness Toward Inclusive
Education survey, approximately 60 educators will be asked to complete questions pertaining to
inclusive education. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes or less to complete.

 Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks
 associated with this project. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any of the questions,
you may omit that question or you may withdraw from the survey at any point. With that said, it
is very important for us to obtain your input and opinions regarding inclusive education.

 Your survey responses will be strictly confidential, and data from this research will be
 reported only in the aggregate. Your information will be coded and will remain confidential.

 If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may contact
 Tammy Hobbs-Ginsberg at (redacted).

 Thank you very much for your time and support. Please return completed surveys to the Child
 Study Team mailbox located in the main office.

Sincerely,

Tammy Hobbs-Ginsberg, MA
School Psychologist

APPENDIX E

Teacher Receptiveness Inclusion Survey

Instructions: Please complete the following scale by circling the appropriate response corresponding to your belief. Use the following key to determine your answer. Please circle a response and do not indicate responses between choices.

SA=Strongly Agree
A-Agree
D=Disagree
SD=Strongly Disagree

1.	My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach pupils with cognitive delays and deficits in daily living skills.	SA	A	D	SD
2.	I need more training to appropriately teach pupils with an IEP for learning problems.	SA	A	D	SD
3.	I am encouraged by my administrators to attend conferences/workshops on teaching pupils with special needs.	SA	A	D	SD
4.	My colleagues are willing to help me with issues which may arise when I have pupils with an IEP in my classroom.	SA	A	D	SD
5.	I feel comfortable in working collaboratively with special education teachers when pupils with an IEP are in my classroom.	SA	A	D	SD
6.	I welcome collaborative teaching when I have a student with an IEP in my classroom.	SA	A	D	SD
7.	Pupils who are 2 or more years below grade level should be in special education classes.	SA	A	D	SD
8.	Pupils who are diagnosed as autistic need to be in special education classrooms.	SA	A	D	SD
9.	All efforts should be made to educate pupils who have an IEP in the regular education classroom.	SA	A	D	SD
10.	Pupils who are diagnosed as mentally retarded should be in special education classes.	SA	A	D	SD
11.	Pupils who are verbally aggressive towards others can be maintained in regular education classrooms.	SA	A	D	SD
12.	Collaborative teaching of children with special needs can be effective, particularly when pupils with an IEP are placed in a regular classroom.	SA	A	D	SD

*Adapted from Teacher Survey by Evangeline Kern (2006)

13.	Special education teachers should teach pupils who hold an IEP.	SA	A	D	SD
14.	I can approach my administrators with concerns I hold regarding teaching pupils who have special needs.	SA	A	D	SD
15.	I feel supported by my administrators when faced with challenges presented by pupils with behavioral difficulties in my classroom.	SA	A	D	SD
16.	My district provides me with sufficient out of district training opportunities for me to appropriately teach pupils with disabilities	SA	A	D	SD
17.	My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach pupils with behavioral difficulties.	SA	A	D	SD
18.	My educational background has prepared me to teach pupils with special needs.	SA	A	D	SD
19.	I am provided with sufficient in-service training through my school district which allows me the ability to teach pupils with an IEP.	SA	A	D	SD
20.	My administrators provide me with sufficient support when I have pupils with an IEP in my classroom.	SA	A	D	SD
21.	I am provided with enough time to attend conferences/workshops on teaching pupils with special needs.	SA	A	D	SD
22.	I can approach my colleagues for assistance when needed if I have pupils with special needs in my classroom.	SA	A	D	SD
23.	Regular education teachers should not be responsible for leaching children with special needs	SA	A	D	SD
24.	I like being the only teacher in the classroom.	SA	A	D	SD
25.	Pupils who are physically aggressive towards others can be maintained in regular education classrooms.	SA	A	D	SD
26.	All pupils who have an IEP for any reason need to receive their education in a special education classroom.	SA	A	D	SD

*Adapted from Teacher Survey by Evangeline Kern (2006)

27.	Pupils who display speech and language difficulties should be in special education classes.	SA	A	D	SD
28.	I should be responsible only for teaching pupils who are not identified as having special needs.	SA	A	D	SD
29.	My colleagues are approachable when I ask for their advice when 1 teach pupils with special needs.	SA	A	D	SD
30.	Both regular education teachers and special education teachers should teach pupils with an IEP.	SA	A	D	SD
31.	I am provided with sufficient materials to make appropriate accommodations for pupils with special needs	SA	A	D	SD
32.	My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach pupils who are 1 year below level.	SA	A	D	SD
33.	My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach pupils with speech impairments	SA	A	D	SD
34.	I need more training to appropriately teach pupils an IEP for behavioral problems.	SA	A	D	SD
35.	I feel supported by my administrators when faced with challenges presented by pupils with learning difficulties in my classroom	SA	A	D	SD
36.	I am provided with monetary support to attend conferences/workshops on teaching pupils with special needs.	SA	A	D	SD
37.	I feel comfortable in approaching my colleagues for help when I teach pupils with special needs.	SA	A	D	SD
38.	Pupils who are 1 year below grade level should be in special education classes.	SA	A	D	SD
39.	Pupils who are identified as depressed but do not display overt disruptive behavior should be in regular education classes.	SA	A	D	SD

*Adapted from Teacher Survey by Evangeline Kern (2006)

40.	Special education teachers might lose their jobs if I teach children with an IEP.	SA	A	D	SD
41.	My colleagues will try to place all their special needs pupils in my classroom if l start including pupils with an IEP in my regular classroom	SA	A	D	SD
42.	My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach pupils who are 2 or more years below level	SA	A	D	SD

Training

A. **What type of delivery method do you believe would benefit you most in receiving training regarding the inclusion of special education pupils into your classroom?**

(Please rank from **1**=most beneficial to **7**=least beneficial)

____District level in-service training
____Out of District training
____Coursework at college/university
____School building level training
____Article(s) provided
____Time for consultation with school psychologist
____Time for consultation with special education teachers

B. **Please list other methods of training delivery you believe would be helpful in receiving information on inclusive education.**

_____
_____
_____

C. **Please list any other topic(s) on which you would like training regarding inclusive education:**

_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INPUT.

*Adapted from Teacher Survey by Evangeline Kern (2006).

Teacher Receptiveness Toward Inclusive Education Survey

Demographic Information

Please check the appropriate answer

1	**Gender**		Male ☐	Female ☐				
2	**Age Range**		Below 25 ☐	25-35 ☐	36-45 ☐	46-55 ☐	56+ ☐	
3	**Marital Status**		Married ☐	Non-Married (single, divorced, and widowed) ☐				
4	**Do you have children?**		Yes ☐	No ☐				
5	**Education Level**	Bachelors ☐	Bachelors+30 ☐	Bachelors+60 ☐	Masters ☐	Masters+30 ☐	Masters+60 ☐	Doctoral ☐
6	**Current Teaching Level**		Preschool ☐	Elementary ☐	Middle School ☐		High School ☐	
7	*Number of years teaching at this level: _____*							
8	*Total number of years teaching: _____*							
9	*Number of special education courses taken: _____*							
10	*Years of experience teaching student with special needs: _____*							
11	**Do you have a college degree or minor in special education?**					Yes ☐	No ☐	
12	**Have you participated in 5 or more hours of inclusion professional development?**					Yes ☐	No ☐	

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INPUT.

*Adapted from Teacher Survey by Evangeline Kern (2006)