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Cooperative Learning Activities In Social Studies Classrooms And The Effect On Self-Determination For Students With And Without Individualized Education Programs (ieps)

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COOPERATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOMS AND THE EFFECT ON SELF-DETERMINATION FOR STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEPS)

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my beloved mother Paulette: this one's for you mama. You are the smartest and strongest woman I have ever known. You will forever be my rock and my best friend. Your faith in me is the reason I believed I could do this in the first place. You will live on in me and my daughter.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

The Dalai Lama XIV (1999) stated that:

> We human beings are social beings. We come into the world as the result of others' actions. We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others' activities. For this reason, it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationships with others. (p. 62)

If this statement is true regarding humans as social beings, it is possible that cooperative learning activities could be used to effectively promote the domains of self-determination for all students.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) (formerly known as Public Law 94-142 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) is the federal policy outlining special education rules, procedures, guidelines, and expectations (Wright & Wright, 2009). Carter, Dictchman, et al. (2010) remind professionals that IDEA 1990 required the area of transition to be expanded and that it is now an area of accountability for teachers of students with special needs. They also point out that IDEA 2004 "clearly articulates . . . that an overarching purpose of special education is to 'prepare them (students) for further education, employment, and independent living' as one component of a national policy" (p. 194) which are all part of transition services for students.

It is common knowledge in the field of education that the standards based movement has affected the national educational focus and that states are continuously redesigning educational standards to be more rigorous and more effectively prepare students for college. This movement has been growing and consistently gaining momentum, so it is unrealistic to believe it will simply pass with time (Agran, Wehmeyer, Cavin, & Palmer, 2008). The standards movement has not left out the area of special education. Policy dictates that the goals and objectives for an

Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be standards-based in the state of Michigan and, for students that are age sixteen and over, a transition plan must be in place [Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education (MDE OSE), 2013a].

Although IEPs are expected to include transition plans that prepare students with special needs for adult life, including self-determination capabilities, research shows that this area is not a priority in public school (Fiedler & Danneker, 2007). However, special education teachers are more likely to recognize its importance than general education teachers (Stang, Carter, Lane, & Pierson, 2009). Both general and special education students are graduating, but are unable to go out into the world and advocate for themselves (Fiedler & Danneker, 2007) because they are often unaware of their disability or the accommodations they need for success (Abernathy & Taylor, 2009). Despite state and federal mandates, teachers are not focusing on self-determination skill development (Carter, Trainor, Sun, & Owens, 2009). This could possibly be a result of the lack of teacher preparation in this area for both general and special education teachers, as well as a lack of intervention strategies available to teachers in the area of self-determination instruction (Thoma, Pannozzo, Fritton, & Bartholomew, 2008).

The educational experiences of students in special education must go beyond the traditional focus areas (math and English language arts) and include more than strict academics (Agran, Wehmeyer et al, 2008). However, in order for this to be possible, teachers must put a priority on the instruction of self-determination domains in their classroom, whether it is in the general education classroom or the resource room (Stang et al, 2009). Addressing self-determination in the general education setting assists in the movement toward inclusive education (Palmer, Wehmeyer, Gipson, & Agran, 2004). Pierson, Carter, Lane, and Glaeser (2008) found that "social skills are a significant and substantial predictor of teachers' ratings of

youth's self-determination capacity" (p. 120). Mithaug, Campeau, and Wolman (2003) found a correlation between the self-determination capabilities of students and their academic achievement, regardless of general or special education status.

Problem Statement

Students with IEPs (SWIEPs) are spending the majority of their school day in the general education setting with limited pull out services due to policy requirements of placing students in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (MDE OSE, 2013a). Due to this trend, all teachers must address the area of transition (Carter et al, 2009; Palmer et al, 2004) as well as academic content. Transition plans are a required part of IEPs for students over the age of 16 (MDE OSE, 2013a). These plans help students prepare for post-secondary life and should be linked to their Educational Development Plan, which all students must have. Areas of need may include daily living skills, employability skills, or community services and supports. The ability to self-determine is part of this transition process (MDE OSE, 2013a). It is necessary for teachers to be able to successfully teach the domains of self-determination as well as implement programs and activities to allow for educational experiences in the general education classroom that provide opportunities to self-determine; specifically in self-advocacy and self-regulation (Fielder & Danneker, 2007). After a review of literature regarding interventions in various areas of self-determination, Test, Fowler, Brewer, and Wood (2005) concluded that there is "still a need for more (a) self-advocacy instruction at the secondary level and (b) empirical research on self-advocacy" (p. 102).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if cooperative learning activities implemented in a social studies classroom have an effect on the self-determination capabilities and opportunities of students. The following questions guide this study:

1. Do cooperative learning activities in a secondary social studies classroom improve overall self-determination scores as well as the scores in the areas of capacity and opportunity for SWIEPs as measured by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) Self-Determination Scale (SDS)?
2. Do cooperative learning activities in a secondary social studies classroom improve overall self-determination scores as well as the scores in the areas of capacity and opportunity for general education (GE) students as measured by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) Self-Determination Scale (SDS)?

Overview of Study Design and Methodology

This study will take place in an urban, public, charter high school. Social studies teachers were asked to participate in the study. Students enrolled in the classes of the teacher participant included both GE students and SWIEPs. This was a pretest posttest comparison group study and quasi-experimental in design. The instrument being used is the American Institutes for Research Self-Determination Scale (AIR SDS) student version. It is a survey style test in which students rate their capability (or capacity) and opportunity to self-determine.

Statement of the Hypotheses

The quasi-experimental design of this study required the need for both hypotheses (H_1, H_2, H_3) and a null hypothesis (H_0):

- H_1 Cooperative learning activities in a general education social studies classroom will improve self-determination capacity scores of GE students and SWIEPs as measured by the AIR SDS instrument.
- H_2 Cooperative learning activities in a general education social studies classroom will improve self-determination opportunity scores of GE students and SWIEPs as measured by the instrument.
- H_3 Cooperative learning activities in a general education social studies classroom will improve self-determination scores of GE students and SWIEPs as measured by the instrument.
- H_0 Cooperative learning activities in a general education social studies classroom will have no effect on self-determination scores of both GE students and SWIEPs as measured by the AIR SDS.

Potential Limitations

From the beginning, this study has potential limitations as it was only measuring data for students in secondary social studies classrooms at one public school academy. Also, the quasi-experimental design of this study caused several limitations, according to Carporaso (1973), which are further developed in chapter three.

Definitions of Terms and Acronyms

The following is a list of terms and definitions that appear throughout this prospectus:

1. *ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) / ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder):* "medical conditions characterized by a child's inability to focus, while possessing impulsivity, fidgeting and inattention" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).
2. *ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder:* "A brain development disorder characterized by impaired social interaction, communication and by restricted and repetitive behavior. Signs usually begin before a child is 3 years old" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).
3. *CI: Cognitive Impairment*: "This disorder is characterized by below average cognitive functioning in two or more adaptive behaviors with onset before age 18" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.). CI is the terminology used in the Michigan (MDE OSE, 2013a). This impairment is referred to as "mental retardation" in IDEA 2004 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004) and the Understanding Special Education website.
4. *Cooperative Learning:* "a form of active learning where students work together to perform specific tasks in a small group" (Lewis, n.d.).
5. *Disability:* "Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).
6. *Educational Development Plan (EDP):* "EPDs are 'living' documents, updated as student interests and abilities become more obvious and focused…The primary emphasis of the EDP is to develop a students' statement of career goals and a plan of action for reading them." [Michigan Department of Education (MDE), 2009, p. 2].

7. *EI: Emotional Impairment:* "Term used to describe a diagnosable mental, behavioral or emotional disorder that lasts for a significant duration that meets the criteria within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.) EI is the terminology used in the Michigan (MDE OSE, 2013a). IDEA 2004 uses the terminology of "emotional disturbance" (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004) as well as the Understanding Special Education website.
8. *IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act:* "The original legislation was written in 1975 guaranteeing students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education and the right to be educated with their non-disabled peers. Congress has reauthorized this federal law. The most recent revision occurred in 2004" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).
9. *IEP (Individualized Education Program):* "Special education term outlined by IDEA to define the written document that states the disabled child's goals, objectives and services for students receiving special education" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.). Note: The Understanding Special Education website refers to IEP as Individualized Education Plan, not Program.
10. *Inclusion:* "represents the belief or philosophy that students with disabilities should be integrated into general education classrooms whether or not they meet traditional curricular standards" (Friend & Bursuck, 1999, p. 4).
11. *Inclusive education:* "term used to describe services that place students with disabilities in general education classrooms with appropriate support services. Student may receive instruction from both a general education teacher and a special education teacher" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).

12. *Learning styles:* "Learning styles are simply different approaches or ways of learning" (LD Pride, n. d.). These styles are visual, auditory, tactile/kinesthetic.
13. *LRE (Least restrictive environment):* "The placement of a special needs student in a manner promoting the maximum possible interaction with the general school population. Placement options are offered on a continuum including regular classroom with no support services, regular classroom with support services, designated instruction services, special day classes and private special education programs" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).
14. *Mainstreaming:* "placing students with disabilities in general education settings only when they can meet traditional academic expectations with minimal assistance or when those expectations are not relevant (for example, participation in recess or school assemblies in order to have opportunities for social interaction)" (Friend & Bursuck, 1999, p. 3).
15. *Theory of Multiple Intelligences:* **"**Conceived by Howard Gardner, Multiple Intelligences are seven different ways to demonstrate intellectual ability" (LD Pride, n. d.). These intelligences are: visual/spatial; verbal/linguistic; logical/mathematical; musical/rhythmic; bodily/kinesthetic; interpersonal; intrapersonal.
16. *OHI: Other Health Impairment:* "term used to describe limited strength, vitality and alertness that results in limited ability in the educational environment. Impairment could be a result of chronic health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder, epilepsy, heart condition, hemophilia, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever and sickle cell anemia" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).

17. *Person-first language:* "the appropriate way to refer to anyone who has a disability… a student with a learning disability" (Friend & Bursuck, 1999, p. 23). It is language that places the person before the disability.
18. *PI: Physical Impairment:* "related to functional gross motor development" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).
19. *Quasi-experimental design:* "those that are 'almost' true experimental designs, except that. . . the research studies the effect of the treatment on intact groups rather than being able to randomly assign participants to experimental or control groups" (Mertens, 1998, p. 77).
20. *Resource room program:* "Term used to describe a program that provides instruction, materials and support services to students with identified disabilities who are assigned to general classroom for more than 50% of their school day" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).
21. *Self-determination:* choosing and enacting "choice in pursuit of one's needs and interests" (Wolman, Campeau, DuBois, Mithaug, & Stolarski, 1994, p. 4).
22. *Self-determination capacity:* "students' knowledge, abilities, and perceptions that enable them to be self-determined and feel good about it" (Wolman et al., 1994, p. 5).
23. *Self-determination domains of self-regulation:* Mithaug, Mithaug, Agran, Martin, & Wehmeyer (2003b) identifies the domains of self-regulation as: self-advocacy; self-instruction; problem-solving; choice-making; decision-making; goal-setting; performance.
24. *Self-determination opportunities:* "refers to students' chances to use their knowledge and abilities" (Wolman et al., 1994, p. 5).

25. *Special education:* "a broad term used to by the law to describe specially designed instruction that meets the unique needs of a child who has a disability. These services are provided by the public school system and are free of charge. Services can include instruction in the classroom, at home, in hospitals and institutions" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).
26. *SLD: Specific Learning Disability:* "Special education term used to define a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language spoken or written that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical equations" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).
27. *SLI: Speech and Language Impairment:* "Communication disorders such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment or voice impairment" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).
28. *Transition plan:* "IDEA mandates that at age 16, the IEP must include a statement about transition including goals for post-secondary activities and the services needed to achieve these goals. This is referred to an Individual Transition Plan or (ITP)" (Understanding Special Education, n. d.).

Significance of the Study

This study was designed to provide information to general education teachers on the use of cooperative learning activities as an instructional method to improve self-determination capabilities and increase opportunities to engage in self-determine experiences for GE students and SWIEPs.

Summary

This chapter introduced the need for and background of the current study. To summarize, SWIEPs are spending more time in the general education setting than in previous years. Both general and special education teachers are being held accountable for the performance of SWIEPs. Research has demonstrated a need for instructional practices to assist general education teachers with working with students with special needs.

Chapter two is the literature review. It discusses supports for this study and the theoretical frameworks on which this study is based. A brief history of special education is also provided.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The first section of this chapter discusses evidence to further support the need for the current study. The second section discusses a brief history of special education in the United States. The next three sections discuss the theoretical frameworks of the study: inclusive education, self-determination, and cooperative learning. The fourth section discusses previous research combining self-determination and cooperative learning. The chapter summary discusses how the theoretical frameworks fit together to create the current study.

Evidence of Need

Agran and Hughes (2008) determined, based on a review of over 100 Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition plans, that goals and objectives that focus on self-determination were not present and that teachers often reported that students generally receive low level and inconsistent instruction on self-determination domains. Pre-service teachers are not being provided with strategies for self-determination instruction (Abernathy & Taylor, 2009). Many of the issues regarding student development of self-determination domains stem from insufficient teacher preparation in their educational programs (Thoma, Pannozzo, Fritton, & Bartholomew, 2008). Agran and Hughes (2008) identified the research-to-practice gap between learning the strategies to teach self-determination and actually implementing those strategies, including providing opportunities for students to self-determine in the classroom. Teacher preparation programs were also found to prepare special education teachers to explain disabilities, manifestations of behavior, and academic skill development to everyone involved with the students, except the students themselves (Abernathy & Taylor, 2009).

"It is critical to identify and validate practices that do, in fact, enable teachers to promote outcomes such as self-determination while at the same time addressing needs pertaining to the general education curriculum" (Agran, Wehmeyer, Cavin, & Palmer, 2008, p. 106). The Michigan Department of Education's Office of Special Education (MDE OSE) (2013b) reports that in 2005, only 54% of students with IEPs (SWIEPs) were in a general education setting more than 80% of the school day and 17.9% were in a general education setting less than 40% of the school day. However, in 2012 data shows that more students were in the general education setting for greater portions of the day. MDE OSE (2014) reported that in 2012, 64.3% of SWIEPs were in a general setting 80% or more of the school day and only 11.4% were in less than 40% of the school day.

There is a need for the development of effective and realistic practices for teachers to implement self-determination instruction (Cobb, Lehmann, Newman-Gonchar, & Alwell, 2009) as well as to provide opportunities for students to practice self-determined behaviors in the classroom. Agran, Wehmeyer, et al. (2008, p. 108) stated that:

> given the potential of promoting self-determination to promote content acquisition and still focus on an important transition related outcome (e.g., self-determination), and given the evidence of the efficacy of the self-determined learning model of instruction across content areas and instructional contexts, further research on the effects of this instructional model with the context of the general education classroom is clearly warranted.

Teachers appear to be unaware of self-determination domains and transition programming (Carter, Lane, Pierson, & Stang, 2008). ". . . it is crucial that the field of transition expand the type and number of interventions to promote transition-related outcomes such as self-determination in the context of the general education classroom" (Agran, Wehmeyer, et al., 2008, p. 113).

Test, Fowler, Brewer, and Wood (2005) focused their research on students with learning disabilities, but they point out that there is a need for working with students with other disabilities as well. They also point out the need for research interventions regarding self-determination programming and for "increased attention to strengthening the rigor of self-advocacy intervention studies" (Test et al., 2005, p. 121). Carter, Trainor, Sun, and Owens (2009) further identifies the need for more research on transition related activities such as those that focus on self-determination as a key component. Agran and Hughes (2008) suggested that further research focus on identifying the details of the instruction that is used in intervention. Pierson, Carter, Lane, and Glaeser (2008) further details the importance of not only focusing on self-determination domains, but to also make sure those activities are aligned to multiple instructional standards and goals. Stang, Carter, Lane and Pierson (2009) also point out that future research should not only include teacher reporting, but direct observation as well.

Southeastern Michigan's Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency (Wayne RESA) has the annual goals and objectives for IEPs on their website. In general, academic goals for IEPs are focused on mathematics and English language arts (Wayne RESA, 2007; Wayne RESA, 2009). The only goals that apply to social studies are ones that focus on reading skills. One focuses on reading social studies magazines as an informational genre. The second one, although there is one for each applicable grade level, addresses developing the students' ability to apply what they read in social studies texts that are grade level appropriate. However, there are goals that address various areas of transition and self-determination domains, such as knowing the nature and diagnosis of one's disability and being able to ask for help when it is needed (Wayne RESA, 2008). These goals can be addressed in any setting as they are not content specific.

History of Special Education

In the early 1900s, public education provided very little programming for children with disabilities. Students with severe learning challenges did not attend school (Friend & Bursuck, 1999). In the 1950s, there were special education programs in schools but they were not academically focused (Friend & Bursuck, 1999). It wasn't until the 1970s that appropriate education for students with disabilities became a concern and the passage of the Education for the Handicapped Act (EHA) in 1975 ensured services would be provided in all public schools as set forth by the federal government (Friend & Bursuck, 1999). This law was renamed in 1990 to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Friend & Bursuck, 1999) and was then reauthorized in as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, commonly known as IDEA 2004 (Wright & Wright, 2009). These name changes were done to reflect the trend of using person-first language (Friend & Bursuck, 1999). IDEA outlines the disability areas for special education eligibility. In order to be provided special education services in the public school setting the student must be:

> a child with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as `emotional disturbance'), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004).

In order to make this determination, IDEA 2004 further states that:

> In conducting the evaluation, the local educational agency shall… use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information, including information provided by the parent, that may assist in determining… whether the child is a child with a disability; and… the content of the child's individualized education program, including information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum, or, for preschool children, to participate in appropriate activities;… not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability or determining an appropriate educational program for the child; and… use technically

> sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004).

The IEP is the "special education term outlined by IDEA to define the written document that states the disabled child's goals, objectives and services for students receiving special education" (Understanding Special Education, n. d). The IEP is developed at a meeting that includes stakeholders in the education of the student, including parents. This IEP meeting as an opportunity for the team to "collaborate in implementing the best and appropriate services for children" (Fish, 2008, p. 14) with disabilities.

Dewey (1938) stated that education is designed to prepare students for their futures, therefore, demonstrating that assisting students with transitions from high school to post-secondary life is as important in the general education setting as it is in the special education setting, for all students. Various federal, state, and local mandates, standards, and guidance push for the inclusion of transition services as well as access to the general education curriculum for all students with disabilities (Morningstar, Bassett, Kochhar-Bryant, Cashman, & Wehmeyer, 2012). Transition services have historically been provided only to SWIEPs, but policy reform states the importance of these services for all students (Morningstar et al., 2012). The ability to engage in self-determined behaviors is often part of transition goals and objectives (Wehmeyer & Field, 2007). This is one way to help transition become more present in the general education setting; therefore providing general education students with access to transition services.

Foundations of Inclusive Education

Prior to federal mandates such as the EHA and IDEA, students with disabilities were placed into categorical classrooms that were designed for students with specific disabilities (Kavale, 2002). However, "(w)ithin the antisegregation sentiments of the 1960s, the special …

class was attacked" (Kavle, 2002, p. 2014) and other options were being considered. At the time of the EHA in 1975, mainstreaming was becoming a more common practice in public schools in lieu of the special classroom. However, students with disabilities were more like "temporary guests in general education classrooms" (Friend & Bursuck, 1999, p. 4) than full participants. They were often mainstreamed into elective classes or social settings to gain social interaction. "In recent years, many educators have seriously questioned the assumption that students who need more intensive services must receive them in a restrictive setting" (Friend & Bursuck, 1999, p. 3). Those educators began to believe in the philosophy that students with disabilities could receive supports in the general education classroom that would allow them to meet all or most of the academic standards set in the classroom and began advocating for the implementation of inclusive education (Friend & Bursuck, 1999, p. 4).

Inclusion, or inclusive education, is a theoretical term used to describe a placement of students with special needs in the general education setting for as much of the school day as is deemed appropriate by the IEP team as well as to ensure student placement into the least restrictive environment (Understanding Special Education, n. d.). "There has been a steady press toward greater integration of students with disabilities but difficulties have resulted from the LRE coming to be interpreted as solely the general education classroom, particularly for all students, regardless of disability type and level of disability" (Kavale, 2002, p. 210). Kavale (2002) states that with this move toward inclusive education, there is a need for empirical evidence supporting its effectiveness and that "the reality of general education is that the requisite attitudes, accommodations, and adaptations for students with disabilities are not yet in place" (p. 210).

Peterson and Hittie (2003) emphasize that there are four building blocks on which inclusive teaching must be based. The first one they discuss is multilevel teaching, which is set on the basic premise that students should be together in the classroom but taught at their individual levels. This idea was stated by the authors to have been based on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. They stated that this is the zone of developmental activities a person is capable of completing with the assistance of others, not independently. The second block Peterson and Hittie (2003) identify is scaffolding, which fits in line with multilevel teaching because it is the strategy for creating the environment in which the members of the class help each other rise to their next level and can help all students in the classroom. The third building block for inclusive education, according to Peterson and Hittie (2003), relates to Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, which is grounded in the idea that all students have strengths but the teachers do not always provide opportunities for each student to experience the information in a form that makes sense to them. In the inclusive setting, this is something that must be considered and is reinforced by Peterson and Hittie's (2003) fourth building block of inclusive education: learning style. These authors state that all students have preferred learning styles and if these are not addressed when creating lessons, students may not learn the information. This is supported by Snyder's (2000) findings in a study of high school students in U. S. History courses. She found that "the majority of our high school students are Tactile / Kinesthetic and Global learners" (Snyder, 2000, p. 11) whereas many educational experiences today are geared toward auditory (listening) and visual (seeing, observing) learners (Snyder, 2000). The tactile / kinesthetic learner is one that learns best through actively engaging with the material and by "constructing their own knowledge" (Snyder, 2000, p. 18) and the global learner is on that needs to see the whole picture in order to understand material (Snyder, 2000).

Self-Determined Learning Theory and Students with and without Disabilities

Mithaug, Mithaug, Agran, Martin, and Wehmeyer (2003b) identify seven domains of self-regulation, one of the components of self-determination elements (the other two being beliefs and adjustment). This study will focus on self-regulation. Mithaug et al. (2003b) identifies the domains of self-regulation as: self-advocacy; self-instruction; problem-solving; choice-making; decision-making; goal-setting; performance.

There is a concern about the ability of students with special needs to self-determine (Mithaug, Campeau, & Wolman, 2003). Mithaug and Mithaug (2003) emphasizes that the disability is not what causes the inability to naturally self-determine, but that it stems from beliefs that they are unable to do so. Although this is a focal point for students with disabilities, students without disabilities can also benefit from self-determination development (Mithaug & Mithaug, 2003). Research demonstrates that students that are in general education classes where self-determination domains are addressed have an increased probability of school success and positive post-secondary transitions and outcomes (Lee, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Soukup, & Little, 2008). However, special educators consistently rate self-determination domains as more important in their classrooms than do general educators (Carter, Lane, Pierson, & Stang, 2008). In order for self-determination to be taught successfully in the general education setting, research must be conducted to develop appropriate strategies for implementation (Carter et al., 2008).

A major aspect of self-determined learning theory is that students who are not engaged in school will not learn to their full capabilities (Mithaug et al, 2003b). When they are in school, they experience new things every day and they must make choices and produce results for their teachers (Mithaug, Mithaug, Agran, Martin, & Wehmeyer, 2003a). They cannot do these things if they do not have the skills to become self-determined. The self-determined learning theory is

also strongly rooted in self-engagement (Mithaug et al, 2003b). Promoting self-determination domains can also help with successful inclusive education (Wehmeyer & Field, 2007).

Although Wehmeyer and Field (2007) discuss the limited amount of research on the classroom successes of students and their self-determination capabilities, these authors have identified multiple positive outcomes of promoting self-determination development in school from what does exist: "a decrease in difficulties in employment, community, and independent living situations… more positive work place interactions… improved employment outcomes… enabled them to self-direct learning and to achieve educationally relevant goals, including transition related goals" (pp. 10 – 11).

Carter, Trainor, Owens, Sweden, and Sun (2010) state "self-determination refers broadly to having the ability, motivation, and supports needed to direct one's own life in ways and directions that are personally meaningful" (p. 68) and include the same abilities listed in Mithaug et al.'s (2003b) self-regulation domains, as well as self-management skills, leadership skills, positive perceptions, self-knowledge, and self-awareness (Wehmeyer & Field, 2007, p. 6).

According to Wehmeyer et al. (2012), the Self-determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI) is designed to support teachers in developing experiences for student to use self-determination domains in their learning. These researchers also identified a need for further research on SDLMI and its effectiveness for general education students. Wehmeyer et al. (2012) found that there was a relationship between the SDLMI intervention and the ability of students to self-determine.

The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) developed a quick reference on the SDLMI. Although it was initially designed as an elementary curriculum

model, it has recently been viewed as a model appropriate for secondary students as well. It says (NSTTAC, n. d.):

> The Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI) is a curriculum that teaches students to engage in self-directed and self-regulated learning. The curriculum is comprised of three units:
> 1. Set a goal
> 2. Take action
> 3. Adjust goal or plan
>
> Students are required to solve the problems through a series of four steps:
> 1. Identify the problem
> 2. Identify potential solutions to the problem
> 3. Identify barriers to solving the problem
> 4. Identify consequences of each solution (p. 1)

The Social Construction of Knowledge

Dewey and Dewey (1915) identify school as the place where children must learn the social skills that will prepare them for adulthood in our society. Johnson and Johnson (as cited in Gillies, 2007) state that cooperative learning activities can assist with this as it "involves children's working together to accomplish shared goals, and it is this sense of interdependence that motivates group members to help and support each other's endeavors" (p. 50).

Johnson and Johnson (1999) identified three forms of cooperative learning: formal, informal, and cooperative base groups. The success of any of these forms are dependent upon the structure of the activity (Stahl, 1994). Johnson and Johnson (1999) state that success is dependent upon each individual taking responsibility for their actions and recognizing the importance of the group performance as a whole, as well as the implications of their efforts for overall success of the group. Stahl (1994) stated that cooperative activities must be designed with the following:

- clear set of specific student learning outcome objectives
- common acceptance of student outcomes objectives
- positive interdependence

- face to face interaction
- individual accountability
- public recognition
- heterogeneous groups
- positive social interaction behaviors and attitudes
- post group reflection (debriefing) over group processes
- sufficient time for learning (pp. 10-15)

Dewey (1973) stated that scientific innovation and creative development is dependent upon the ability of people to collaborate in a variety of settings. This can be developed and simulated through cooperative learning activities in the k-12 classroom setting. At the same time, as social beings, humans search for opportunities to collaborate and work with others (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 5).

When students work collaboratively in the classroom, they learn skills such as communication, positive interaction, and the responsibility of the individual within a group as well as the importance of modeling for classmates and sharing in the common good (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Dewey (1938) reminds us that experience is an important part of education but that the experiences must be rich in order to be effective. These experiences with peers allow students to participate in the community of the school, which will enable them to participate more fully in the community outside of school.

These concepts of the social construction of knowledge fit well with the curriculum of social studies, particularly history. “History must be presented not as an accumulation of results or effects, a mere statement of what happened, but as a forceful acting thing” and “history is considered as an account of the forces and forms of social life” (Dewey, 1976, p. 104). This supports using social studies classes to address social development as well as why history falls into the content area of social studies: the study of society and social situation comprehension (Stahl & VanSickle, 2009).

Self-determination and Cooperative Learning: Research Studies

There is very little research on the relationship between self-determination and cooperative learning activities. Several studies have shown a connection between students engaging in cooperative learning activities and an increase in self-determined behaviors, particularly self-regulation and self-advocacy (Stahl, 1994; Johnson & Johnson, 2004, Wehmeyer & Field, 2007).

Other studies focus on using cooperative learning to increase intrinsic motivation in the physical education setting (Ntoumanis, 2001; Standage, Duda, & Pensgaard, 2005). Skinner, Chi, & The Learning-Gardeners Educational Assessment Group (LGEAG) (2012) found that "cooperative, experiential learning activities are intrinsically motivating and have the potential to meet fundamental needs of children and youth" (p. 19) that are associated with self-determination. Hanze and Berger (2007) found that there are "strong effects of cooperative learning on the experience of basic needs, intrinsic motivation, and activation of deeper knowledge processing" (p. 39) but that there was not an effect on student performance in the physics courses measured. However, this intrinsic motivation is more a part of self-determination theory (Hanze & Berger, 2007) as opposed to the self-determined learning theory, on which the current study focuses. Ntoumanis (2001) stated that cooperative experiences allowed students to demonstrate leadership and use their choice and decision making abilities.

Summary

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) states that "social studies educators teach students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy" (n. d., ¶1). The NCSS also identifies individual development and identity as one of the ten themes of the social studies. Cooperative

learning may provide an avenue for students to develop these capabilities as well as increase student participation and social awareness. In order to increase the participation of general education social studies teachers in the programming for their students with special needs, they need to be given access to information that could assist them in their classrooms.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY AND ANALYISIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if cooperative learning activities implemented in a secondary social studies classroom would have an effect on self-determination capacity, self-determination opportunities, and overall self-determination scores for both general education (GE) students and students with Individualized Education Programs (SWIEPs) as measured by the American Institutes for Research Self-Determination Scale (AIR SDS) (see Appendix A). This chapter describes the setting, participants, methodological framework, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and reliability and validity of the instrument.

Population

This study was conducted in an urban, public, charter, high school where at least 90% of students graduate. Of those graduates, at least 90% go on to post-secondary education. Daily attendance exceeds 90%. Of the 555 students enrolled in the 2014-2015 school year, 289 were male and 266 were female; 552 of which were African-American. The school is Title I eligible with nearly 75% of the students eligible for the free and reduced lunch program and 9.5% of the population has an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The school is a college preparatory high school. The school culture embraces academic excellence and promotes life-long educational experiences. Parents are important stakeholders in the school system and, upon enrolling their students, agree to participate in a set number of service hours each academic year. They are a major part of daily school activities and the system prides itself on the high level of parent involvement it receives.

As of the 2014-2015 school year, the high school had seven full time social studies teachers, two for each grade level except for 12th grade. The social studies courses included

American History, Government, Economics, World History, AP World History, Pop Culture, and History of Law.

Methodological Framework

This study's purpose was to measure the relationship between cooperative learning activities and self-determination capacity, opportunity, and overall self-determination scores of students as measured by the AIR SDS (see Appendix A) in the natural setting (the school in the case of this study) and was therefore considered quasi-experimental in design (Muijs, 2004). "Quasi-experimental designs are those that are 'almost' true experimental designs, except that. . . the research studies the effect of the treatment on intact groups rather than being able to randomly assign participants to experimental or control groups" (Mertens, 1998, p. 77). The study design has been given various names over time: comparison groups (Muijs, 2004), non-equivalent control groups (Caporaso, 1973; Mertens, 1998); pretest posttest design involving non-equivalent control groups (Campbell & Stanley, 1966; Shingles, 1973); non-equivalent control groups pretest posttest design (McMillian & Shumacher, 1997). Although the names vary, the premise is the same: a pretest is given to the treatment and control groups, an intervention is made in the treatment group, and a posttest is given to both groups.

The design of the current study will be referred to as a pretest posttest comparison group study. This is a very common design in educational research and the only difference between this design and a true experiment is that intact groups are used (McMillian & Shumacher, 1997). Caporaso (1973) represents this design in the following manner:

O_1	X	O_2
O_1		O_2

This means that an observation (O_1) is made (in the case of this study, a pretest was given) in both the treatment and control group. Then, the treatment (X) is given to the treatment group (in the case of this study, the use of cooperative learning activities). Upon completion of X, another observation (O_2) is made (in the case of the study, the posttest was given) in both the treatment and control group. The intact groups were the classes that the teacher participant was teaching at the time of the study. This was the most appropriate design method for this study because it was provided data before and after the treatment, as well as allow for a control group. However, Carporaso (1973) points out several potential limitations for this design:

> the groups are non-equivalent on an unknown number of variables. . . it is possible that there is some interaction between x and the variable specific to the experimental group. . . a threat to external validity is provided by the possibility of interactions between selection bias and X. . . adoption of this design also limits the experimenter to analysis of differences between means (pp. 13 – 14).

Data Collection Methods

This study was conducted during the 2014-2015 school year, following approval from the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board (WSU IRB) (Appendix B). The researcher presented information regarding the study to the social studies teachers. All potential teacher participants received the information sheet regarding the study. They were invited to ask questions and were provided with contact information of the researcher in order to ask questions later. They had 48 hours to decide if they would like to participate. One teacher chose to participate and a meeting was scheduled in which the Cooperative Learning Activity Planning Worksheet (see Appendix C) was reviewed as well as the Cooperative Learning Activity Planning Worksheet Sample (see Appendix D). At that time, it was also determined which classes would be receiving the intervention and which ones would not. This was done by random assignment of treatment or control to each class.

Parents received an information sheet regarding the study that was sent home via US mail and minor students were provided with an information sheet for assent. It was read aloud to the students in order to accommodate students with reading deficiencies. In the case of students that were considered to have a diminished capacity for decision making, parental informed consent was obtained. Following the presentation of the information regarding the study, students and parents had three days to decide if they wanted to participate in the study.

All student participants were administered the AIR SDS student form (see Appendix A) during their regularly scheduled social studies courses. The assessment was read aloud to the students and they were provided with an opportunity to ask questions as needed. Their social studies teacher was not present during the administration of the assessment. Students checked a box on the cover sheet identifying if they have an IEP in order to analyze data for students with and without IEPs. Students were given a unique code for comparison purposes later.

Teacher Planning

Cooperative learning activities were planned by the teacher participant using the Cooperative Learning Activity Planning Worksheet and were implemented one to two times a week on a six week basis for a total of ten activities. The principal investigator was available to the teacher participant during his preparation and planning time for assistance with planning or to answer any questions he may have had.

Instrument Information

In order to develop effective strategies for promoting self-determination, there must be improvement over time of students' capabilities and opportunities to self-determine. The American Institutes for Research Self-Determination Scale (AIR SDS) measures both. This assessment "provides information on students' capacity and opportunities to self-determine"

(Wolman et al, 1994, p.4). "*Capacity* refers to students' knowledge, abilities, and perceptions that enable them to be self-determined and feel good about it. *Opportunity* refers to students' chances to use their knowledge and abilities" (Wolman et al., 1994, p. 5). The AIR SDS is an instrument that provides data on whether a student needs more knowledge (capabilities) to self-determine, more practice (opportunity) with self-determination abilities, or both, which come from an overall self-determination score.

The developers of the AIR SDS assessment conducted a field test of the assessment using the educator forms in order to establish reliability and validity of the scale. Based upon the author's data, the test is a reliable and valid assessment of overall self-determination, as well as capabilities and opportunities (Wolman et al., 1994, p. 41-47). They

> reported reliability results using an alternative-item correlation for item consistency, a split-half test of the internal consistency of the instrument, and a test-retest measure of stability of instrument assessments over time. . . the alternative-item tests produced correlation coefficients that ranged from .91 to .98. The split-half test for internal consistency. . . yielded a correlation of .95. The test-retest measure of consistency was conducted over a period of 3 months and yielded a correlation of .74 (Mithaug, Campeau, et al, 2003a, pp. 66-67)

This instrument is an informal assessment that is set up on a five point Likert scale. The scale is a as follows: 1 – Never; 2 – Almost Never; 3 – Sometimes; 4 – Almost Always; 5 – Always. There are four sections with six questions each. The two sections that measure capacity ask questions about things that the student do and feel; the two sections that measure opportunity ask question about what students experience in school and at home. The AIR SDS have three forms (parent, educator, student) but only the student form was used in this study.

Data Analysis

The AIR SDS was scored using the scoring (profile) sheet in the guide for each student to serve as raw data sheets (see Appendix E). Comparison charts were created to show all raw data

for self-determination capabilities (SDC), self-determination opportunities (SDO), and overall self-determination scores (SD) from both the pretest and posttest (see Appendix F).

The data from the pretest and posttest was used to analyze self-determination data for both comparison groups. Measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) were calculated for self-determination capabilities (SDC), self-determination opportunities (SDO), and overall self-determination scores (SD) in both comparison groups (Appendix G). These measures were also be calculated for general education and special education students separately in each group and was be compared between and within each group. However, the results for this study presented in Chapter 4 are reported using the mean comparisons and percent change from pretest to posttest. The majority of statistical calculations and data representations were done using a version of Microsoft Excel.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed methodological framework and study design, the setting, participants, and research activities.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents data collected regarding cooperative learning activities in the social studies classroom and the impact on the self-determination opportunities and capacity of both general education (GE) students and students with an Individualized Education Program (SWIEP). Self-determination is choosing and enacting "choice in pursuit of one's needs and interests" (Wolman, Campeau, DuBois, Mithaug, & Stolarski, 1994, p. 4); whereas, capacity is "students' knowledge, abilities, and perceptions that enable them to be self-determined and feel good about it" (Wolman et al., 1994, p. 5) and opportunity refers to "refers to students' chances to use their knowledge and abilities" (Wolman et al., 1994, p. 5).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Do cooperative learning activities in a secondary social studies classroom improve overall self-determination scores as well as the scores in the areas of capacity and opportunity for SWIEPs as measured by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) Self-Determination Scale (SDS) instrument?
2. Do cooperative learning activities in a secondary social studies classroom improve overall self-determination scores as well as the scores in the areas of capacity and opportunity for GE students as measured by the AIR SDS instrument?

The hypotheses for this research are:

- Hypothesis I - Cooperative learning activities in a social studies classroom will improve self-determination capacity scores of GE students and SWIEPs as measured by the AIR SDS instrument.

- Hypothesis II - Cooperative learning activities in a social studies classroom will improve self-determination opportunity scores of general education students and SWIEPs as measured by the AIR SDS instrument.
- Hypothesis III - Cooperative learning activities in a social studies classroom will improve self-determination scores of GE students and SWIEPs as measured by the AIR SDS instrument.

Population Sample

The school is a public charter high school in an urban city. There was one teacher and 53 student participants. In the control group there were 23 participants: 16 female, seven male. There were three students with current IEPs and two that previously had them. In the intervention group, there were 30 participants: 14 female, 16 male, and three students with IEPs.

After the study was presented to the social studies teachers at the high school, only one world history teacher chose to participate. Students of that teacher were then sought as participants. Of the six classes he taught, four were used in the study since the other two were an advanced placement world history class and homeroom.

Of the 67 students in that teacher's classes, there were 13 that declined to participate in the study, eight in the control group and five in the intervention group. Also, one student left the school prior to the posttest so those data were removed from analysis, resulting in 53 total student participants (see Table 1).

Table 1

Student Participants

Group	Total	Males	Females	SWIEPs
Control	23	7	16	3
Intervention	30	16	14	3
Total	53	23	30	6

Data Analysis and Results

Following the pre-test and the posttest, individual tests were scored for three categories: capacity, opportunity, and overall self-determination scores (see Appendix F). Graphs were developed for the individual capacity, opportunity, and overall scores for the control group (Figures F1, F3, and F5 respectively) as well as for the individual capacity, opportunity, and overall scores intervention group (Figures F2, F4, and F6 respectively). These data have been included as a basis for reference only.

Measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) were then calculated for both control and intervention groups as well as the subgroups of special education and general education for each category (see Appendix G). The percent of change between the pre-test and posttest means were also calculated for each category in each group and subgroup (Figures G1, G2, and G3). They are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Discussion of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I - Cooperative learning activities in a social studies classroom will improve self-determination capacity scores of GE students and SWIEPs as measured by the AIR SDS instrument.

Table 2

Capacity Mean Scores

	Pretest	Posttest	Change (%)
Control			
All	45.48	47.65	2.17 (4.8%)
GE	44.85	47.60	2.75 (6.1%)
SWIEP	49.67	48.00	-1.67 (-3.4%)
Intervention			
All	47.37	50.33	2.96 (6.2%)
GE	47.67	52.52	4.85 (6.0%)
SWIEP	44.67	48.67	4.00 (9.0%)

GE students in the control group saw an increase in their capacity scores of 2.75 (6.1%) while GE students in the intervention group saw an increase of 4.85 (6.0%). Students with IEPs in the intervention group showed an increase in their capacity scores of 4.00 (9.0%) while SWIEPs in the control group saw a decrease of 1.67 (3.4%) decrease in their capacity scores.

Hypothesis II - Cooperative learning activities in a social studies classroom will improve self-determination opportunity scores of GE students and SWIEPs as measured by the AIR SDS instrument.

Table 3

Opportunity Mean Scores

	Pretest	Posttest	Change (%)
Control			
All	44.48	45.13	0.65 (1.5%)
GE	44.05	44.60	0.55 (1.2%)
SE	47.30	48.67	1.37 (2.8%)
Intervention			
All	46.53	48.13	1.6 (3.4%)
GE	46.85	48.93	2.08 (4.4%)
SWIEPs	43.67	41.00	-2.67 (-6.1%)

GE students in the intervention group had an increase in their opportunity scores of 2.08 (4.4%), compared to the control group's increase of 0.55 (1.2%). There was a decrease of 2.67 (6.1%) in the opportunity for SWIEPs in the intervention group. SWIEPs in the control group saw an increase in their opportunity scores of 1.37 (2.8%).

Hypothesis III - Cooperative learning activities in a social studies classroom will improve self-determination scores of GE students and SWIEPs as measured by the AIR SDS instrument.

Table 4

Overall Self-Determination Mean Scores

	Pretest	Posttest	Change (%)
Control			
All	89.96	92.78	2.82 (3.1%)
GE	88.90	92.20	3.3 (3.7%)
SWIEPs	97.00	96.67	-0.33 (.0.3%)
Intervention			
All	93.90	98.47	4.57 (4.9%)
GE	94.52	99.44	4.92 (5.2%)
SWIEPs	88.33	89.67	1.34 (1.5%)

Overall self-determination scores for GE students in the intervention group had an increase of 4.92 (4.9%) compared to the increase of 3.3 (3.7%) in the control group. SWIEPs in the intervention group had an increase of 1.34 (1.5%) in the overall self-determination scores, whereas SWIEPs in the control group had a decrease of 0.33 (0.3%) in their overall self-determination scores.

Discussion of Research Questions

Research Question 1- Do cooperative learning activities in a secondary social studies classroom improve overall self-determination scores as well as the scores in the areas of capacity and opportunity for SWIEPs as measured by the AIR SDS instrument?

This multi-faceted question has a multi-faceted answer. For capacity, posttest scores for SWIEPs in the intervention group improved by 9% whereas posttest scores for SWIEPs in the control group decreased by 3.4% (see Figure G1). However, for opportunity scores on the posttest, SWIEPs' scores in the intervention group decreased by 6.1% whereas the scores of SWIEPs in the control group increased by 2.8% (see Figure G2). Overall self-determination posttest scores for SWIEPs in the invention group increased by 1.5% whereas scores for SWIEPs in the control group decreased by .3% (see Figure G3). Therefore, these data show that cooperative learning activities can improve the capacity and overall self-determination scores for SWIEPs in the secondary social studies classroom. However, these activities did not improve the opportunity scores for SWIEPs in the secondary social studies classroom.

Research Question 2 - Do cooperative learning activities in a secondary social studies classroom improve overall self-determination scores as well as the scores in the areas of capacity and opportunity for GE students as measured by the AIR SDS instrument?

This multi-faceted question has a multi-faceted answer. For capacity, posttest scores for GE students in the intervention group increased by 6% and posttest scores for GE students in the control group increased by 6.1% (see Figure G1). However, for opportunity scores on the posttest, GE student scores in the intervention group increased by 4.4% whereas the scores of GE students in the control group only increased by 1.2% (see Figure G2). Overall self-determination posttest scores for GE students in the invention group increased by 5.2%, whereas the control group increased by 3.7% (see Figure G3). Therefore, these data show that cooperative learning activities can improve the opportunity and overall self-determination scores for GE students in the secondary social studies classroom. However, these activities did not appear to affect the capacity scores for GE students in the secondary social studies classroom.

Summary

By the results of the AIR SDS, the self-determination scores of SWIEPs in the intervention group showed an overall increase while their counterparts' scores in the control group decreased overtime. With the exception of the opportunity scores of SWIEPs, cooperative learning activities increased all dimensions of students. Chapter five will include limitations, conclusions, and recommendations based on the results of this study.

CHAPTER 5 LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study addressed the possibility of using cooperative learning activities in a social studies classroom to improve the self-determination of both general education (GE) students and students with IEPs (SWIEPs). As stated previously, self-determination refers to the quest one takes in order to meet their goals and desires (Wolman, Campeau, DuBois, Mithaug, & Stolarski, 1994, p. 4). There are two dimensions to that should be addressed in school to assist students in becoming self-determined adults. First, there is capacity: the ability to engage in making appropriate self-determination decisions (Wolman et al., 1994, p. 5). Second there are opportunities: events that allow students to engage in activities to use and develop their capacity skills (Wolman et al., 1994, p. 5). Previous research in the field established the need for strategies for general education teachers to address various aspects of the needs of SWIEPs, particularly in the areas of transition, which included self-determination. This study provides potential strategies for teachers, particularly those teaching social studies.

Limitations

It is important to note several limitations of the study:

- The study included only one teacher
- This study only included students enrolled in eleventh grade world history
- Information was not collected regarding gender
- This study was conducted in only one school

Conclusions

The results in chapter four suggest three conclusions:

- Cooperative learning activities improved capacity scores for students with an IEP
- Cooperative learning activities improved the opportunity scores for general education students
- Cooperative learning activities improved the overall self-determination scores for both general education students and students with disabilities

The results from this study suggest that there could be a link between cooperative learning activities and improvement in the self-determination skills of students. Based upon the results in Chapter Four, there are several recommendations for instructional practices and further research in this area.

Recommendations for Teachers

- Teachers should use cooperative learning activities to improve self-determination skills for students with IEPs.
- Teachers should be trained in self-determination and its place in the social studies classroom as well as the general education setting.
- Teachers should use cooperative learning activities to improve self-determination skills for all students.
- Teachers would benefit from taking time to ensure that students are aware of expectations for cooperative learning activities.
- Teachers should explicitly teach students to work effectively in groups.

Recommendations for Further Research

- Further research should look at the teacher planning worksheet (see Appendix C) not just a single meeting with availability of assistance. This will ensure that teachers are able to use the teacher planning worksheet appropriately as well as have the opportunity to ask questions to clarify appropriate usage.
- In addition to the increased use of the teacher planning worksheet, it would be beneficial for future researchers to develop a list (or other resource) of specific cooperative learning strategies that increase opportunities for self-determination that teachers could reference in planning.
- In further research, the teacher planning worksheet should be collected as data to ensure teachers are using it with fidelity and addressing all areas appropriately in lesson planning.
- The teacher planning worksheet can also be used to analyze the lessons themselves. This will enable the researcher to verify that all aspects of the intervention are addressed in lessons in order to corroborate data found.
- Information on gender differences should be researched.
- Exploration of implementing cooperative learning activities to promote self-determination capabilities and opportunities in other content area classes should also be researched.
- Exploration of the general teaching styles of teacher participants, as well as how that style matches with the styles of students, should be addressed. This could be collected through a teacher survey or pre-intervention observations.
- Consideration of other measures for self-determination skills should be made.

- It is recommended that future research be done with larger population samples for data collection.

Summary

Due to the increased numbers of SWIEPs in the general education setting, it is important for general education teachers to have strategies to enable them to successfully work with all students assigned to them. Following the aforementioned recommendations for further research could potentially increase the body of information available to teachers.

Results of this study suggest that cooperative learning activities in the social studies classroom could improve the self-determination skills of both general education students and students with disabilities. There is not one way to teach that would improve all areas for all groups of students, however, applying multiple instructional methods that address the learning styles and multiple intelligences of students could assist with the process of attempting to reach all students overtime. This will assist students with the ability of developing into young adults that can make appropriate choices to meet their goals, thus guiding them into successful futures.

APPENDIX A

AIR Self-Determination Scale©

STUDENT FORM

Please check one box:

☐ I have an IEP

☐ I do not have an IEP

This part was added by the researcher and was not part of the original instrument.

HOW TO FILL OUT THIS FORM

Please answer these questions about how you go about getting what you want or need. This may occur at school, or after school, or it could be related to your friends, your family, or a job or hobby you have.

This is not a Test. There are no right or wrong answers. The questions will help you learn about what you do well and where you may need help.

Goal You may not be sure what some of the words in the questions mean. For example, the word **goal** is used a lot. A **goal is something you want to get or achieve**, either now or next week or in the distant future, like when you are an adult. You can have many different kinds of goals. You could have a goal that has to do with school (like getting a good grade on a test or graduating from high school). You could have a goal of saving money to buy something (a new iPod© or new sneakers), or doing better in sports (getting on the basketball team). Each person's goals are different because each person has different things that they want or need or that they are good at.

Plan Another word that is used in some of the questions is **plan**. A **plan is the way you decide to meet your goal, or the steps you need to take in order to get what you want or need**. Like goals, you can have many different kinds of plans. An example of a plan to meet the goal of getting on the basketball team would be: to get better by shooting more baskets at home after school, to play basketball with friends on the weekend, to listen to the coach when the team practices, and to watch the pros play basketball on TV.

The AIR Self-Determination Scale was developed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), in collaboration with Teachers College, Columbia University, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), under Cooperative Agreement HO23J200005

APPENDIX B

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NOTICE OF EXPEDITED APPROVAL

To: Carey Aubrey-Martinez
Teacher Education

From: Dr. Deborah Ellis or designee D. Ellis 9/25/14
Chairperson, Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3)

Date: September 25, 2014

RE: IRB #: 063414B3E

Protocol Title: Cooperative Learning Experiences in Social Studies Classrooms and the Effect on Self-Determinationfor Students With and Without Disabilities

Funding Source:

Protocol #: 1408013303

Expiration Date: September 24, 2015

Risk Level / Category: 45 CFR 46.404 - Research not involving greater than minimal riskResearch not involving greater than minimal risk

The above-referenced protocol and items listed below (if applicable) were **APPROVED** following *Expedited Review* Category (47)* by the Chairperson/designee for the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board (B3) for the period of 09/25/2014 through 09/24/2015. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals that may be required.

- Revised Protocol Summary Form (received in the IRB Office 9/25/2014)
- Protocol (received in the IRB Office 8/12/2014)
- A waiver of requirement for written documentation of informed consent has been granted according to 45 CFR 46.116(d). This waiver satisfies: 1) the research involves no more than minimal risk to the participants, involves questionnaires and taking photos of inanimate objects and focus group interviews; 2) the research involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context. Questionnaires and interviews only; 3) the consent process is appropriate and 4) an information sheet disclosing the required and appropriate additional elements of consent disclosure will be provided to participants.
- A waiver of informed consent (for parental permission of student surveys) have been granted according to 45 CFR 46.116(d). This waiver satisfies: 1) risk is no more than minimal, 2) the waiver does not adversely affect the rights and welfare of research participants, 3) the research could not be practicably carried out without the waiver, and 4) providing participants additional pertinent information after participation is not appropriate.
- Parental Permission/Research Informed Consent (dated 9/16/2014)
- Research Information Sheet - Teacher (dated 9/2/2014)
- Parental Supplemental Information Letter with "Decline to Participate" Option (dated 9/2/2014)
- Research Information Sheet - Students over 18 Years of Age (dated 9/2/2014)
- Behavioral Documentation of Adolescent Assent Form for Ages 13-17 (dated 9/2/2014)
- Data Collection Tools: AIR Self-Determination Scale - Student Form, Cooperative Learning Activity Planning Worksheet Self-Determination Aspect, and Inclusive Education Building Blocks

* Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. You may receive a "Continuation Renewal Reminder" approximately two months prior to the expiration date; however, it is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval *before* the expiration date. Data collected during a period of lapsed approval is unapproved research and can never be reported or published as research data.

APPENDIX C

Cooperative Learning Activity Planning Worksheet

Clear set of specific student learning outcomes *What are the outcome objectives you have for this activity for you students?*	**Common acceptance of student outcomes objectives** *How will you ensure that students "buy-in" to the objectives you will address in this activity?*
Positive interdependence *How does the activity design promote positive interdependence between group members, thus ensuring that one person does not complete the entire activity alone?*	**Face to face interaction** *When will students be able to interact face-to-face on the activity?*
Individual accountability *How will each individual be held accountable for their own participation in the group?*	**Public recognition** *How will students be recognized for their achievements in this group? (Classroom level)*

Heterogeneous groups *What strategy will you use to create your groups?*	**Positive social interaction behaviors and attitudes** *What guidance will you give students and when regarding these expectations?*
Post group reflection (debriefing) over group processes *Discuss how you will obtain student reaction to the process of cooperative learning.*	**Sufficient time for learning** *Discuss the timeframe of the activity (days? Minutes per task? Et cetera) to ensure the activity is structured in a way that keeps on schedule and realistically attain identified objectives*

Self-determination Aspect: *Check off the aspects of self-regulation included in this lesson. Each aspect should be addressed at least twice over the course of the ten weeks:*

☐ Problem-solving

☐ Self-advocating

☐ Self-instructing

☐ Decision-making

☐ Choice-making

☐ Goal-setting

☒ Performance (This should be in each activity as all students should each have a task to perform)

Inclusive Education Building Blocks

Multilevel Teaching *How will this be incorporated into this activity?*	**Scaffolding** *How is this activity scaffolded for various levels of learners?*
Multiple Intelligences *Which intelligences are best suited for this activity? Each should be address at least one time over the course of the ten weeks* ☐ Verbal/linguistic ☐ Logical/mathematical ☐ Musical/rhythmic ☐ Bodily/kinesthetic ☐ Interpersonal ☐ Intrapersonal ☐ Visual/spatial	**Learning Styles** *Which learning styles are best suited for this activity? Each should be addressed at least three times throughout the course of the ten weeks* ☐ Visual ☐ Auditory ☐ Tactile/kinesthetic

LD Pride. (n. d.). *Learning styles.* Retrieved from www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm

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APPENDIX D

Cooperative Learning Activity Planning Worksheet SAMPLE

Note: All boxes may not necessarily be filled out for each lesson

Clear set of specific student learning outcomes *What are the outcome objectives you have for this activity for you students?* CCSS: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.	**Common acceptance of student outcomes objectives** *How will you ensure that students "buy-in" to the objectives you will address in this activity?* I will make sure that students are aware this is not just a "for fun" activity and make sure that they are aware that this is an instructional method, not party time
Positive interdependence *How does the activity design promote positive interdependence between group members, thus ensuring that one person does not complete the entire activity alone?* Each student in the group will be responsible for a specific task for which they will be held accountable for during the activity. I will also make sure that the group as a whole will receive points based on their work together.Also, students are to only work on this assignment during class time over a series of three sessions, therefore no one will get "stuck" doing everything at home.	**Face to face interaction** *When will students be able to interact face-to-face on the activity?* This is an in class activity so regular class time will be used to complete the task and the goal is that NONE of the work be completed at home.

Individual accountability *How will each individual be held accountable for their own participation in the group?* Students will fill out a rating card for each of their group members on their participation, like a feedback form. Also, each student will have a specific role to play in the group and only they are to complete those activities.	**Public recognition** *How will students be recognized for their achievements in this group? (Classroom level)* These will be semi-permanent groups (they will last for this unit) and there will be a competition in the class. The group activities will be scored as rankings (first place, second place, et cetera) and after the unit, all rankings will be averaged and the group with the LOWEST average (thus being the highest ranked group) will win a "drop it" pass where they can choose an assignment that will be "dropped" from my gradebook (low test grade et cetera)
Heterogeneous groups *What strategy will you use to create your groups?* I will randomly assign groups by having them count off and then group by numbers.	**Positive social interaction behaviors and attitudes** *What guidance will you give students and when regarding these expectations?* Students are aware of behavior expectations for the class and they are posted in the classroom. They will be reminded that these expectations will be enforced during group activities as well.
Post group reflection (debriefing) over group processes *Discuss how you will obtain student reaction to the process of cooperative learning.* At the conclusion of each activity, I will have comments section their teammate score card in which they will be able to make suggestions for the next group activity or make comments on this one. I will compile these comments and present them to the class. We will discuss them and determine what can be implemented for the next activity.	**Sufficient time for learning** *Discuss the timeframe of the activity (days? Minutes per task? Et cetera) to ensure the activity is structured in a way that keeps on schedule and realistically attain identified objectives* This activity will take place over three class periods. They will receive a packet with their primary source document, a task list, a job list sign up, and a scoring rubric. The group will determine jobs and the order in which tasks need to be completed.

Self-determination Aspect: *Check off the aspects of self-regulation included in this lesson. Each aspect should be addressed at least twice over the course of the ten weeks:*

☒ Problem-solving: Students will need to make decisions regarding which tasks to choose on their task list and who will do which jobs as well as passing. It is expected that the groups will be disagreeing at the start.

☐ Self-advocating

☐ Self-instructing

☒ Decision-making: Students will need to make decisions regarding they stand they will take on the issue as well as if they will have a consensus or two-sided activity design.

☒ Choice-making: Students will be able to choose which tasks will be done and what jobs they would like to have

☐ Goal-setting

☒ Performance (This should be in each activity as all students should each have a task to perform)

Inclusive Education Building Blocks

Multilevel Teaching *How will this be incorporated into this activity?*	**Scaffolding** *How is this activity scaffolded for various levels of learners?*
Students will work on activities that are challenging to them individually but are also at varying performance levels. Students will have to option to have assistance with the text or to sign up to receive a mini-lesson if all members of a specific group are struggling with the content.	The task lists are designed so that all students will have a few different tasks they can choose that will be at their performance level. They can choose how challenged they will be.
Multiple Intelligences *Which intelligences are best suited for this activity? Each should be address at least one time over the course of the ten weeks* ☒ Verbal/linguistic ☒ Logical/mathematical ☐ Musical/rhythmic ☐ Bodily/kinesthetic ☒ Interpersonal ☐ Intrapersonal ☐ Visual/spatial	**Learning Styles** *Which learning styles are best suited for this activity? Each should be addressed at least three times throughout the course of the ten weeks* ☒ Visual ☒ Auditory ☐ Tactile/kinesthetic

LD Pride. (n. d.). *Learning styles.* Retrieved from www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm

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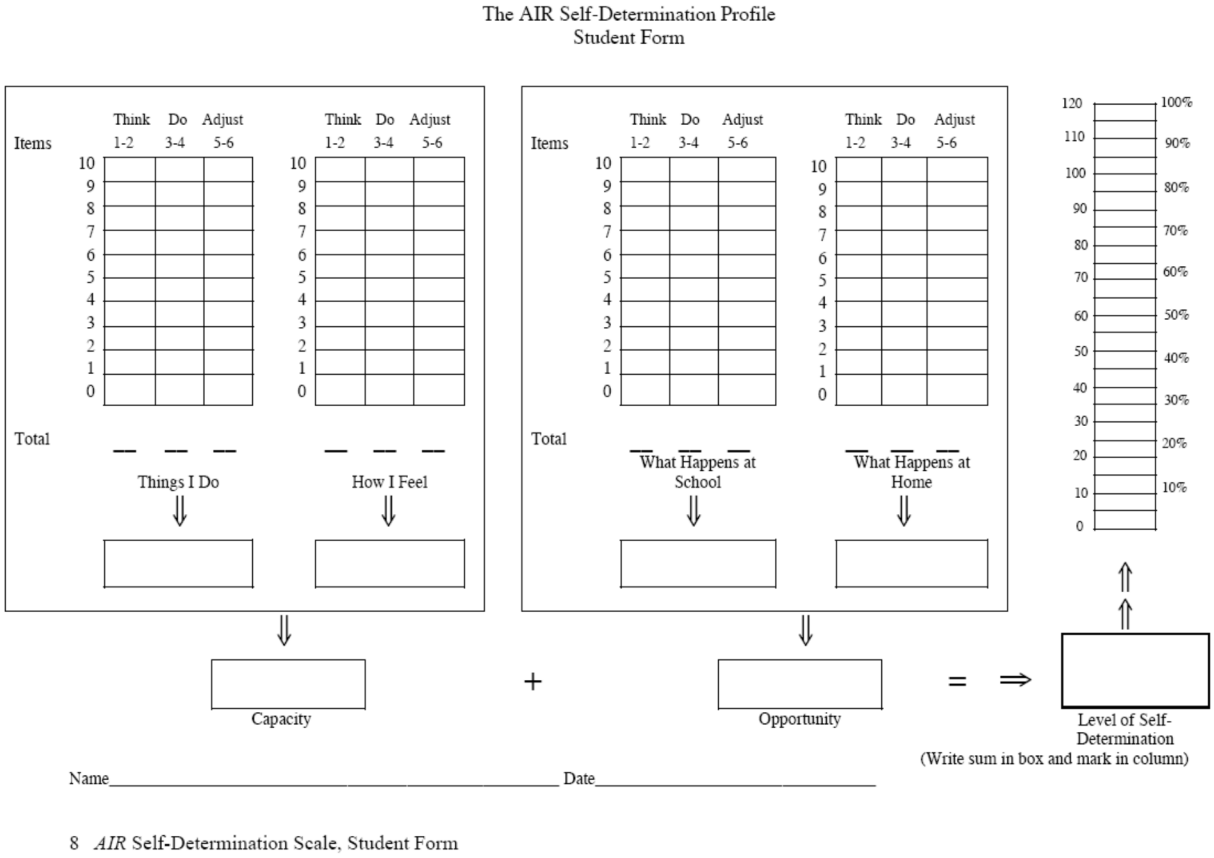
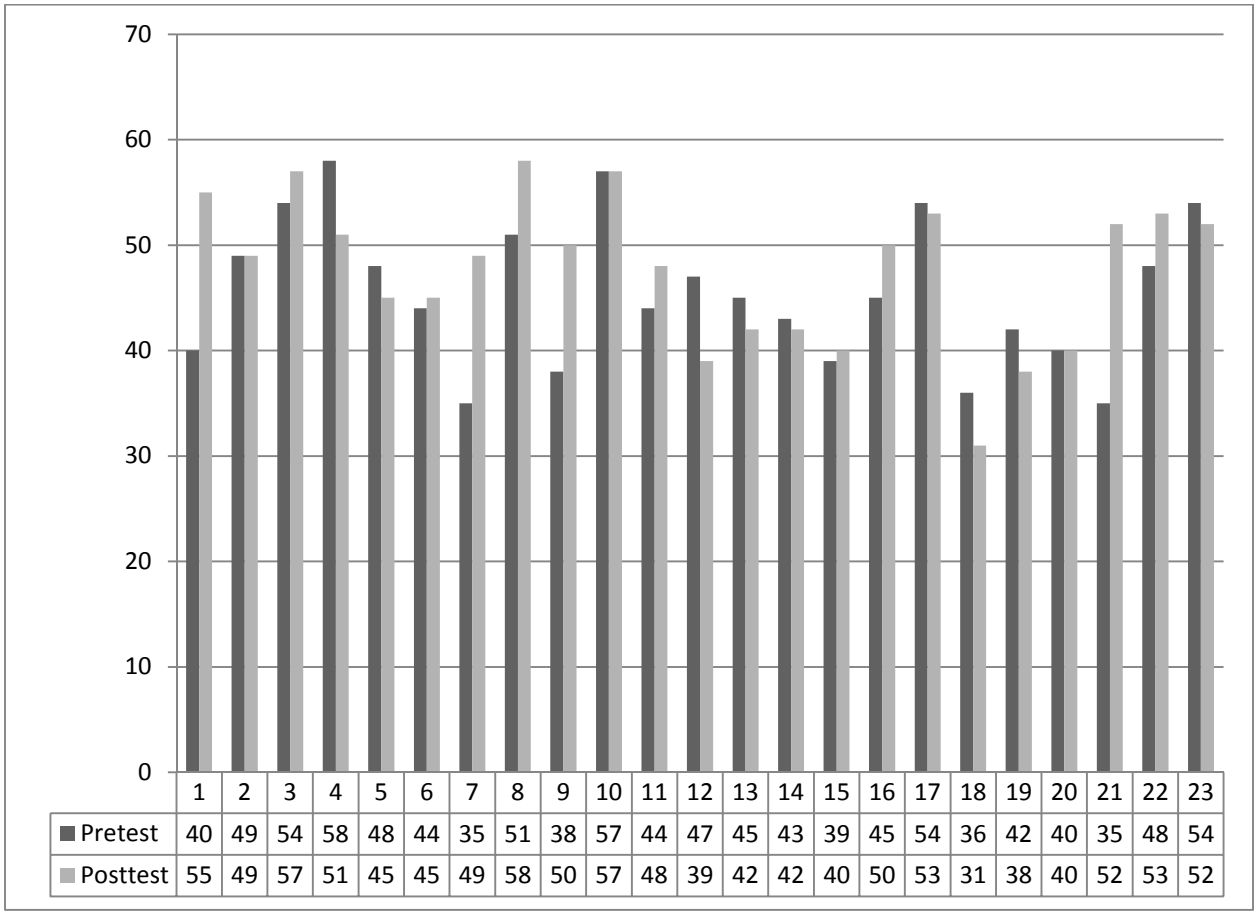
APPENDIX E



(Wolman et al, 1994)

APPENDIX F



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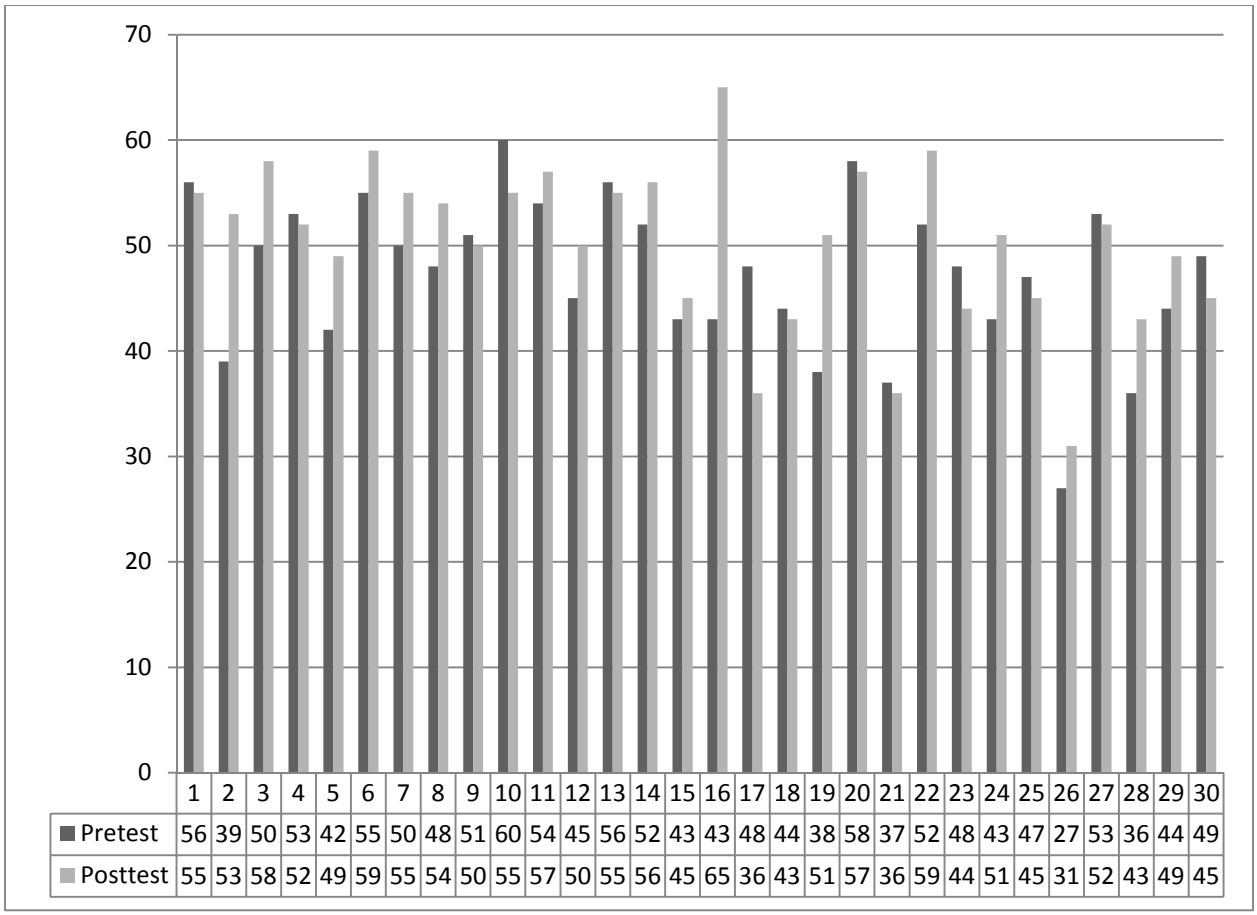
Pretest	40	49	54	58	48	44	35	51	38	57	44	47	45	43	39	45	54	36	42	40	35	48	54
Posttest	55	49	57	51	45	45	49	58	50	57	48	39	42	42	40	50	53	31	38	40	52	53	52

Figure F1. Individual Capacity Scores: Control Group



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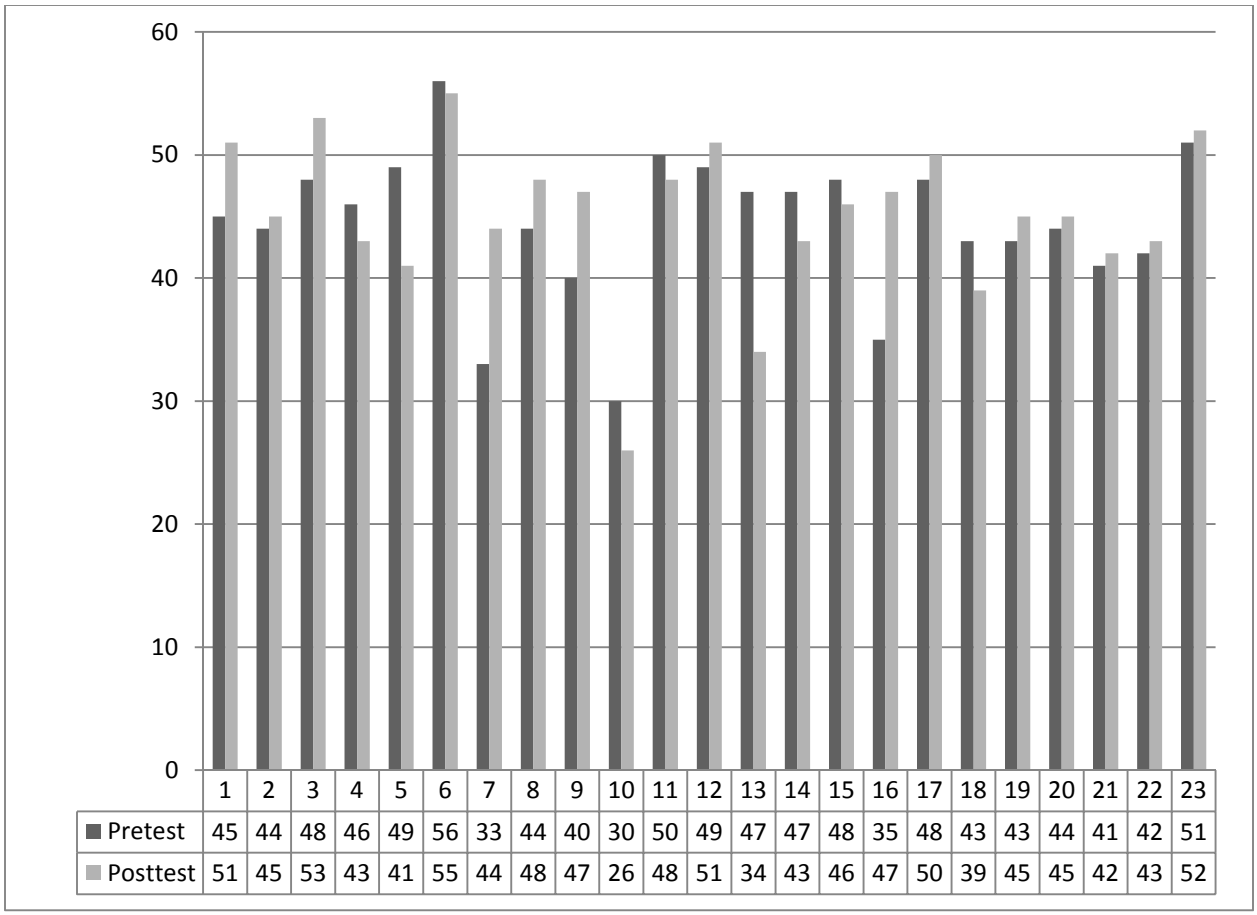
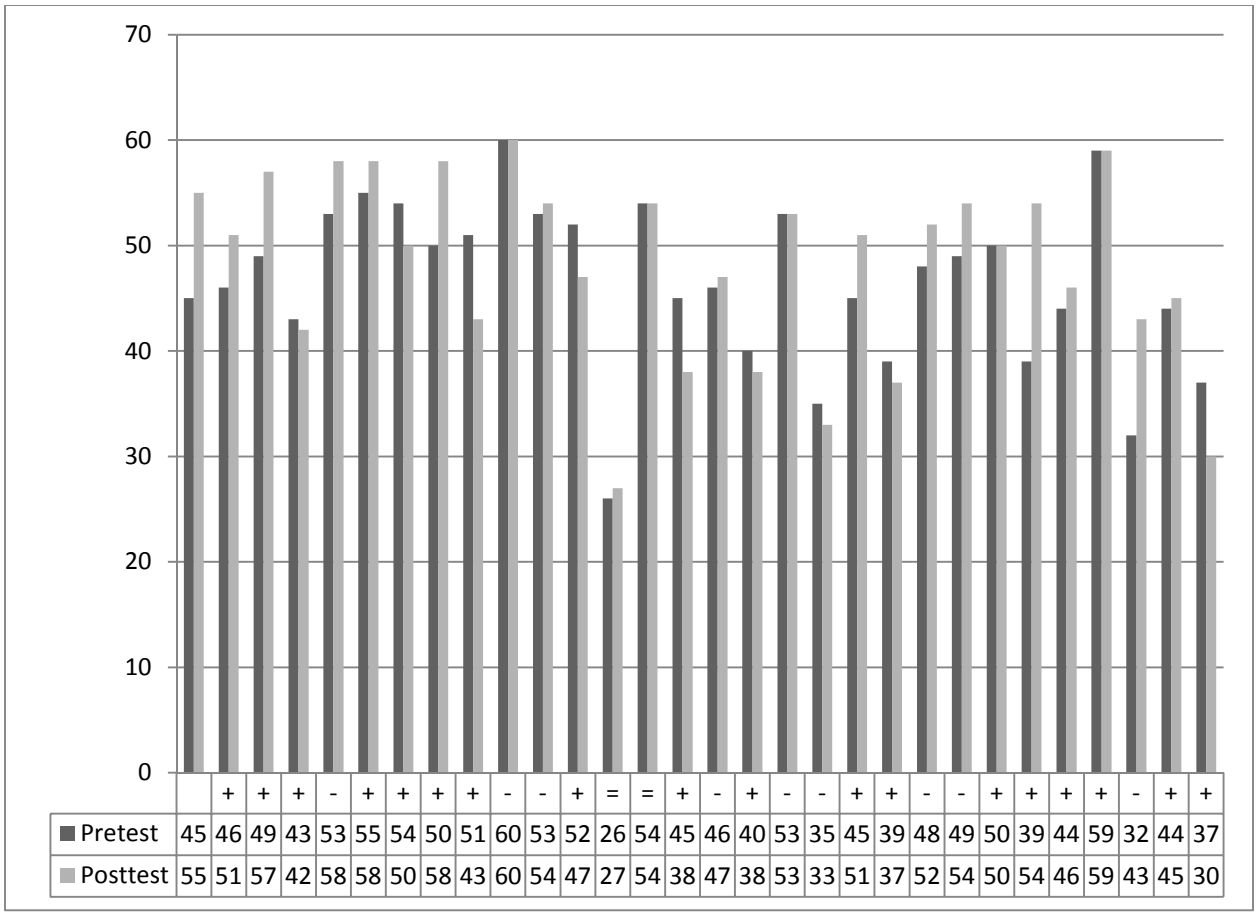
Pretest	56	39	50	53	42	55	50	48	51	60	54	45	56	52	43	43	48	44	38	58	37	52	48	43	47	27	53	36	44	49
Posttest	55	53	58	52	49	59	55	54	50	55	57	50	55	56	45	65	36	43	51	57	36	59	44	51	45	31	52	43	49	45

Figure F2. Individual Capacity Scores: Intervention Group



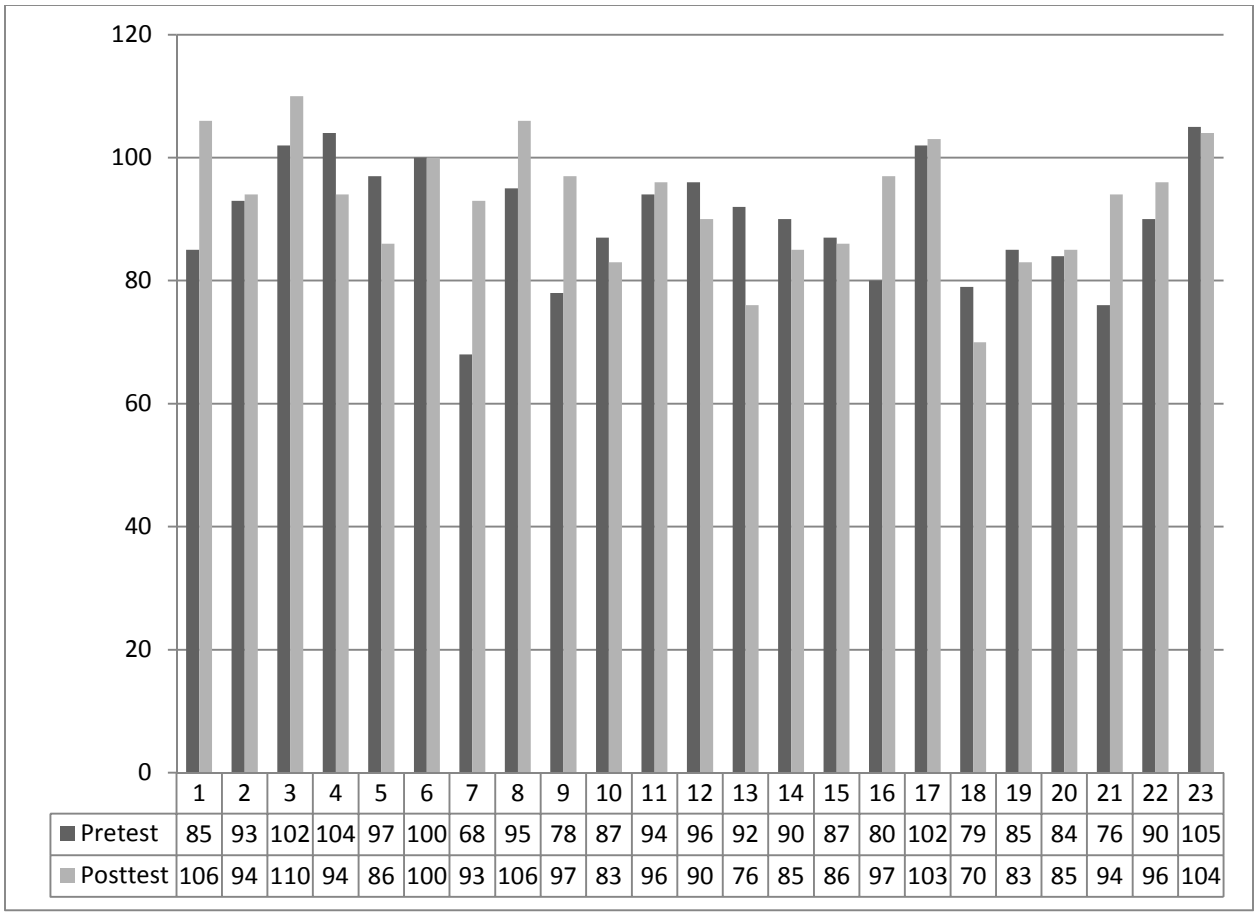
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Pretest	45	44	48	46	49	56	33	44	40	30	50	49	47	47	48	35	48	43	43	44	41	42	51
Posttest	51	45	53	43	41	55	44	48	47	26	48	51	34	43	46	47	50	39	45	45	42	43	52

Figure F3. Individual Opportunity Scores: Control Group



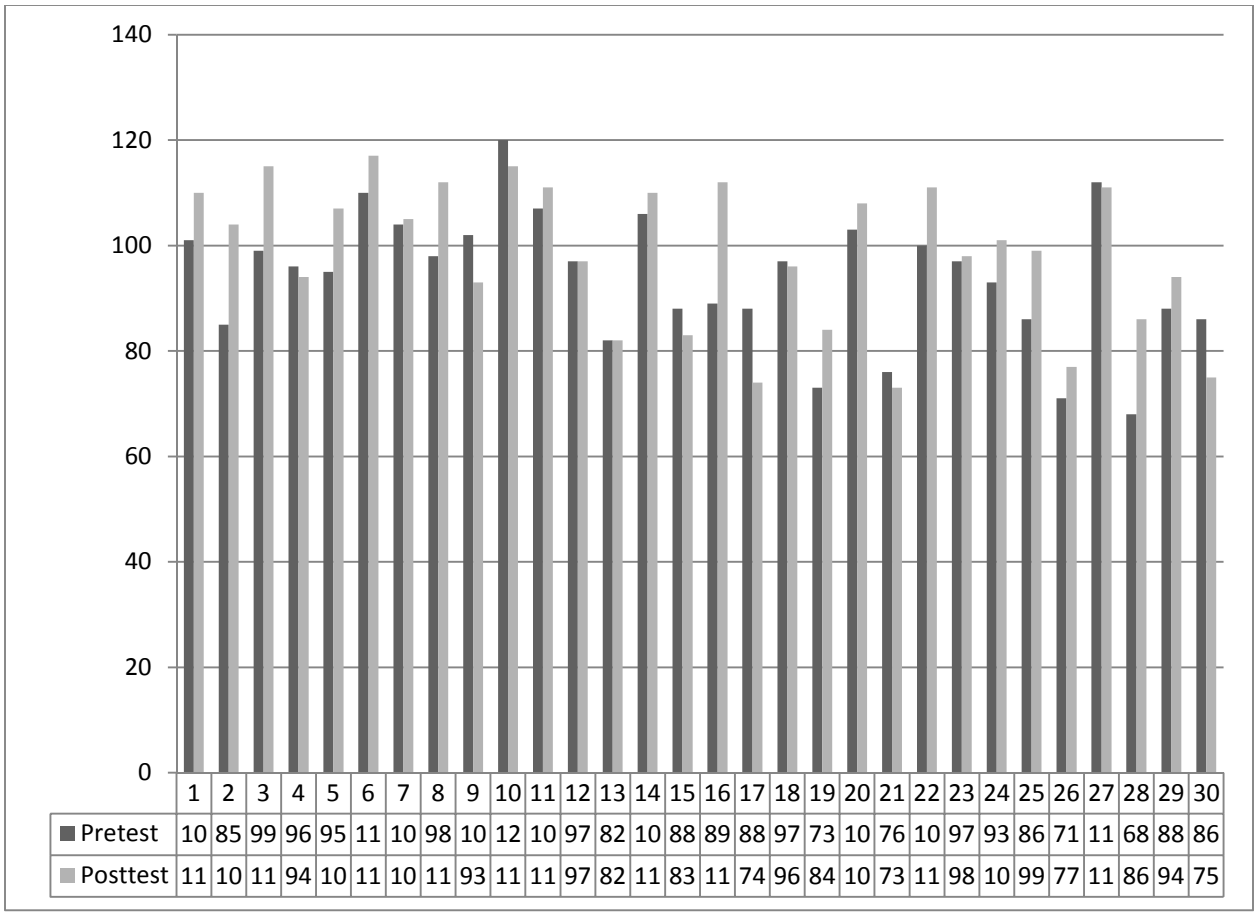
		+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	=	=	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
Pretest	45	46	49	43	53	55	54	50	51	60	53	52	26	54	45	46	40	53	35	45	39	48	49	50	39	44	59	32	44	37
Posttest	55	51	57	42	58	58	50	58	43	60	54	47	27	54	38	47	38	53	33	51	37	52	54	50	54	46	59	43	45	30

Figure F4. Individual Opportunity Scores: Intervention Scores



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Pretest	85	93	102	104	97	100	68	95	78	87	94	96	92	90	87	80	102	79	85	84	76	90	105
Posttest	106	94	110	94	86	100	93	106	97	83	96	90	76	85	86	97	103	70	83	85	94	96	104

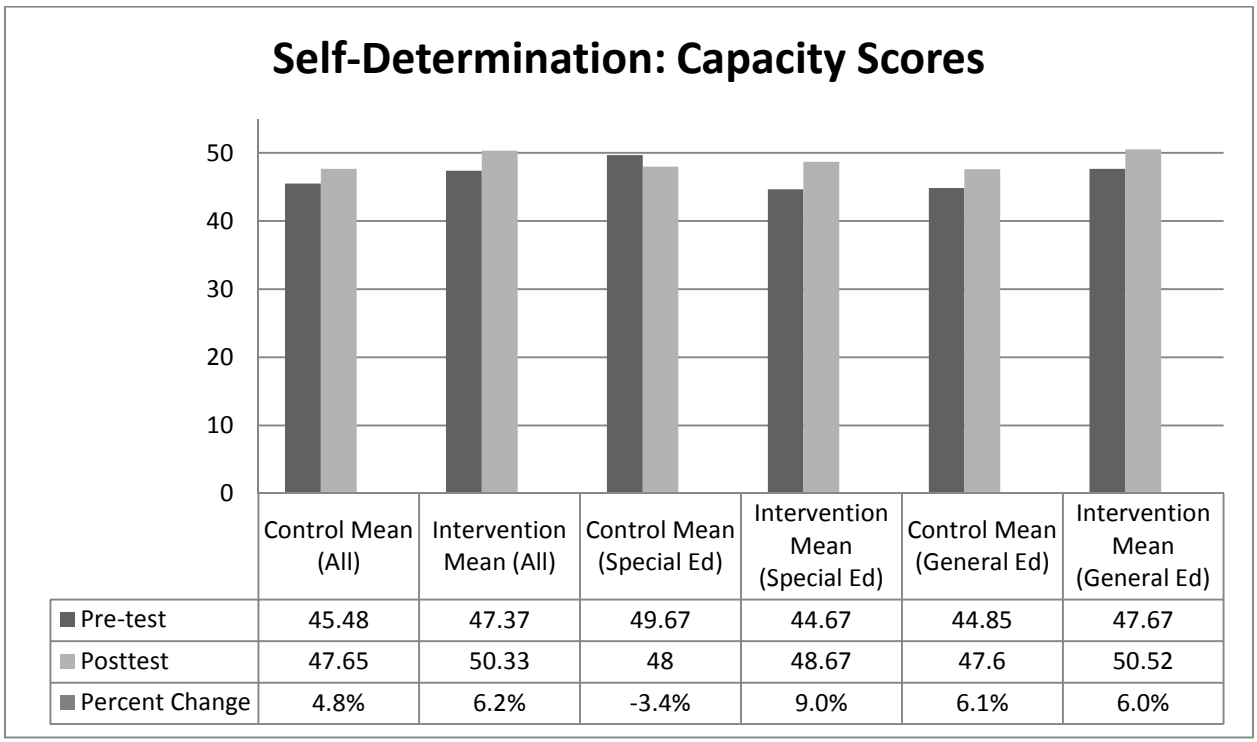
Figure F5. Individual Overall Self-determination Scores: Control Group



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Pretest	10	85	99	96	95	11	10	98	10	12	10	97	82	10	88	89	88	97	73	10	76	10	97	93	86	71	11	68	88	86
Posttest	11	10	11	94	10	11	10	11	93	11	11	97	82	11	83	11	74	96	84	10	73	11	98	10	99	77	11	86	94	75

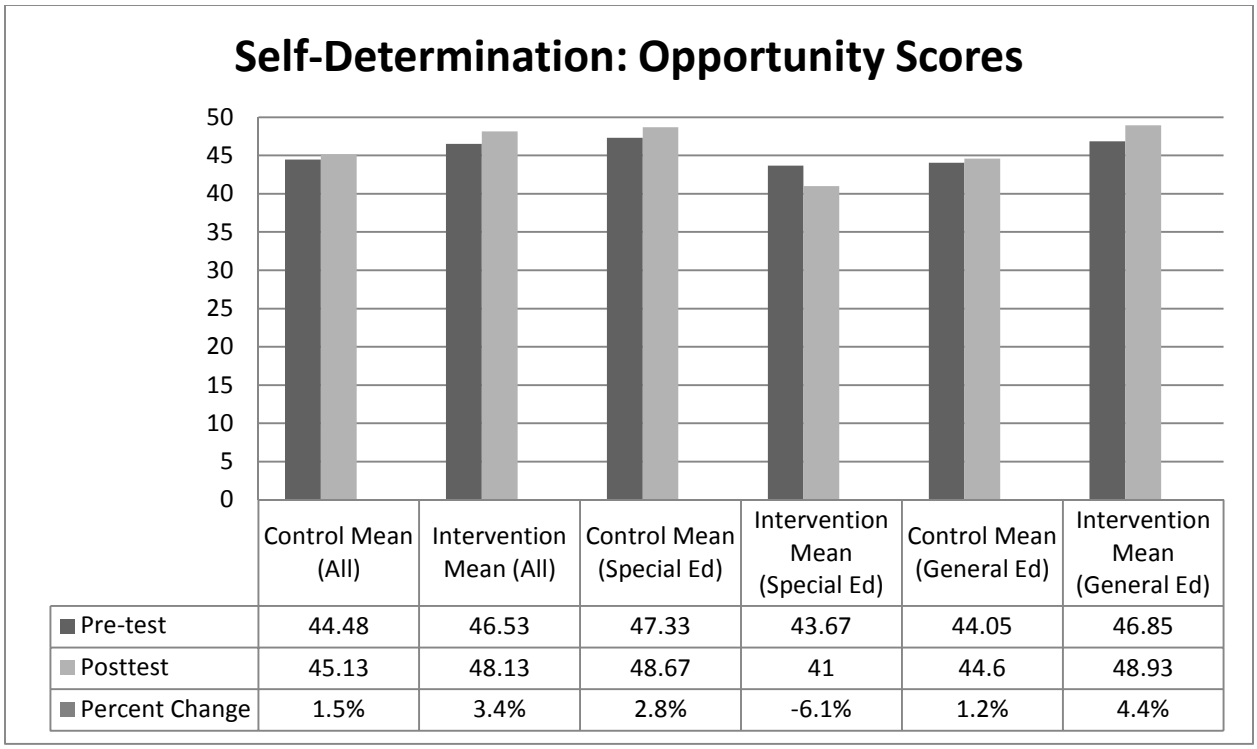
Figure F6. Individual Overall Self-determination Scores: Intervention Group

APPENDIX G



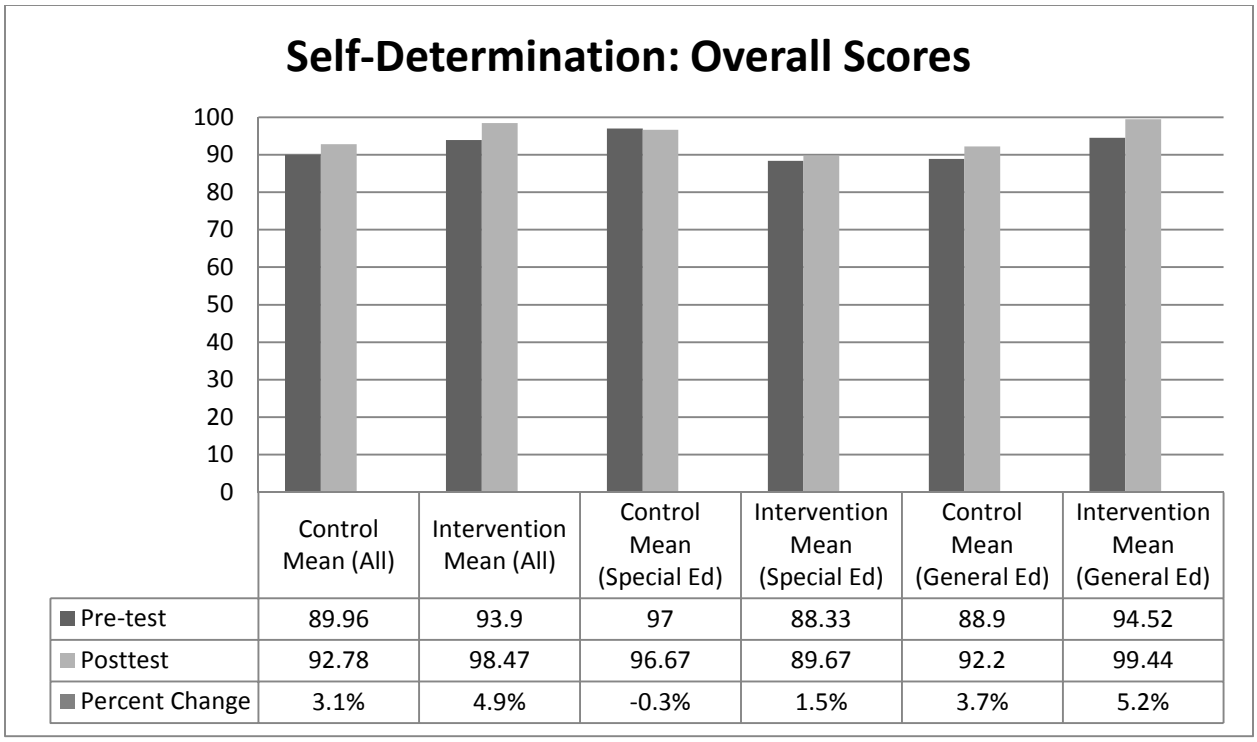
	Control Mean (All)	Intervention Mean (All)	Control Mean (Special Ed)	Intervention Mean (Special Ed)	Control Mean (General Ed)	Intervention Mean (General Ed)
Pre-test	45.48	47.37	49.67	44.67	44.85	47.67
Posttest	47.65	50.33	48	48.67	47.6	50.52
Percent Change	4.8%	6.2%	-3.4%	9.0%	6.1%	6.0%

Figure G1. Measures of Central Tendency and Percent Change for Capacity



	Control Mean (All)	Intervention Mean (All)	Control Mean (Special Ed)	Intervention Mean (Special Ed)	Control Mean (General Ed)	Intervention Mean (General Ed)
Pre-test	44.48	46.53	47.33	43.67	44.05	46.85
Posttest	45.13	48.13	48.67	41	44.6	48.93
Percent Change	1.5%	3.4%	2.8%	-6.1%	1.2%	4.4%

Figure G2. Measures of Central Tendency and Percent Change for Opportunity



	Control Mean (All)	Intervention Mean (All)	Control Mean (Special Ed)	Intervention Mean (Special Ed)	Control Mean (General Ed)	Intervention Mean (General Ed)
Pre-test	89.96	93.9	97	88.33	88.9	94.52
Posttest	92.78	98.47	96.67	89.67	92.2	99.44
Percent Change	3.1%	4.9%	-0.3%	1.5%	3.7%	5.2%

Figure G3. Measures of Central Tendency and Percent Change for Overall Self-determination Scores

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ABSTRACT

COOPERATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOMS AND THE EFFECT ON SELF-DETERMINATION FOR STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT IEPS

by

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Students with disabilities are spending significantly more time in the general education setting than they have historically. General education teachers are in need of strategies to enable them to work with these students more successfully. Additionally, research shows that all students could benefit from activities geared toward developing self-determination skills.

The purpose of this descriptive study was to see if the use of cooperative learning activities could improve the self-determination abilities of general education students and students with an Individualized Education Program in a social studies classroom. Students were given the American Institutes for Research Self-Determination Scale as a pretest and posttest.

Scores were compared between control and intervention group as well as the subgroups of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and general education students. Data from this study supports the use of cooperative learning activities in the social studies classroom in order to promote self-determination for all students. Recommendations for teachers as well as further research are made as well.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

I was born and raised in the city of Detroit. I became a wife and began my teacher career in August of 2002, after earning BS degree from Wayne State University in May 2002. I earned my M.Ed. in 2004 and my ES certificate in 2007 from Wayne State University as well. After completing my qualifying exams in winter 2011, we celebrated the birth of our daughter, Rosemary, in July 2011.

Throughout my years as an educator, one thing has remained constant whether I was working in parochial, public school academies, or city districts: students always struggled whenever it came time to advocate for themselves or take responsibility for their choices. I saw this across the board, regardless of whether or not the student had a disability.

In October 2008, the presidential election was right around the corner and students, particularly African-American students, at the school I worked at were wishing they were 18 so they could vote. It was the first time I ever saw my students so excited about politics. When I asked my adult students if they were registered to vote, they asked me not to tease them. I was so confused.

"Why do you think I'm teasing you?" I asked sincerely.

"Martinez, you know we can't vote; we're special" one answered with a solemn face as the others nodded their heads in agreement.

This conversation broke my heart. As a new special education teacher, it never occurred to me that these young adults were unaware of their rights as citizens. I knew that it would be my mission to attempt to find what I could do to help young people know that rights, as well as to speak up for themselves and act upon them. This inspired the topic of my dissertation.