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General educators and their needs for inclusion classrooms

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General Educators and Their Needs for Inclusion Classrooms

by
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ABSTRACT

Lisa B. Minkin General Educators Attitudes and Their Needs For Inclusion Classrooms 1996. Thesis Advisor Dr. Robinson. Masters of Science in Teaching Program

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the perceptions of available inclusion supports by elementary teachers, and their attitudes toward inclusion education. This correlational study used a non-random, convenience population. All thirty-nine members taught in a common district that implemented inclusion. They completed a close ended questionnaire which measured attitudes toward inclusion and their perceptions of available supports.

The research yielded inconsistent evidence related to the null hypothesis. Attitudes of teachers concerning inclusion and their perceived level of supports were not found to be statistically related. However, there were corresponding percentages of those who considered substantial resources available and favorable attitudes toward inclusion education. In contrast to general attitudes, the willingness to implement inclusion and perceived level of supports were significantly correlated. Finally, satisfaction with the current inclusion program was significantly related to opinions concerning inclusion.

Apparently, a sufficient supports system was a potential source of favorable attitudes toward inclusion, but the same pattern did not occur for low supports and attitudes. It was also

evident that the perceived level of supports did not necessarily reflect satisfaction with the inclusion program. Finally, attitudes regarding personal involvement with inclusion tended to be influenced by available resources.

MINI ABSTRACT

Lisa B. Minkin General Educators Attitudes and Their Needs for Inclusion Classrooms 1996. Thesis Advisor Dr. Robinson. Masters of Science in Teaching Program

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between perceptions of available supports by elementary teachers, and their attitudes toward inclusion. These two variables were not statistically related. The researcher discovered that available resources might not reflect satisfaction with the inclusion program, and attitudes regarding participation were correlated to perceived, available supports.

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CHAPTER I
The Scope of the Study

Introduction

"Inclusive education holds that children with disabilities should be placed in regular classrooms within their neighborhood schools, where they are most often served by a teacher and a interdisciplinary team." (Haring, McCormick and Haring, 1994:33). Since many schools and entire districts have been implementing inclusion education programs, (Putnam, Spiegel, and Bruininks 1995:553) a main concern of administration, teachers, and parents should be to evaluate the successes and failures of inclusion education according to the classroom teachers.

As an observer of faculty, within three school districts, it was common to hear that some teachers were dissatisfied with the provisions offered by their school for inclusion classrooms. This suggests that conflict can occur when districts promote inclusion, but do not offer quality supports, such as instructional aides, extra materials, and smaller class size.

Statement of the Problem

The classroom teacher is the primary source of information researchers can access about ideas to improve inclusion programs. It is possible that the opinions of educators concerning inclusion education is influenced by what their district offers as supports. Therefore, if teachers are unhappy about their classroom situation,

their attitudes toward teaching and actual performance might be negatively affected. Thus, it is crucial to investigate the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion and to find out the sources for their attitudes. If researchers can detect factors which may contribute to the positive or negative attitudes toward inclusion, it may give insight to what a properly structured program entails.

Significance of Study

The purpose of this correlational study was to investigate the relationship between the perceptions of available supports for inclusion classrooms by elementary teachers, and their attitudes toward inclusion education. This study also suggested how satisfied they were with the current inclusion program.

The literature did not find a correlation between attitudes toward inclusion education and available supports for inclusion classrooms. Therefore, if research further confirms this, then investigators should search for other variables which may relate to the attitudes of teachers. However, if the null hypothesis is disproved, then further investigation will be necessary. A positive correlation found between available supports and attitudes toward inclusion could be a stepping stone toward improvement of the quality of existing and the establishment of new programs. Teachers affected by the inclusion movement should be a primary concern of school administrations. If schools do not consider the needs of their employees when structuring inclusion educational

programs, the effectiveness of them might suffer.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between the two variables, attitudes of elementary, classroom teachers toward inclusion education and the degree of perceived supports available for inclusion elementary, classroom teachers.

Limitations

The following are the limitations of this research design. Since the researcher used a closed ended questionnaire to obtain data, it limited the variety responses and the relevance of some questions to particular subjects. Since inclusion education programs involve students with a broad range of disabilities, an unlimited amount of classroom situations to arise. Therefore, it was impossible for one instrument to address every issue, subjects may have felt that certain questions did not pertain to them or certain students. The researcher addressed this limitation by providing space for additional comments.

Due to time and financial restraints the researcher used a non random sample in order to obtain data. Therefore, the results were not representative of the general population of regular classroom teachers.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study:

Inclusion: The full-time placement of children with mild, moderate, or severe disabilities in regular classroom. It assumes

that regular class placement must be considered as a relevant option for all children, regardless of disability. It does not preclude the use of pull-out services or instruction in self contained settings when appropriate" (Staub and Peck, 1995:36).

Attitudes of classroom teachers toward inclusion: Their personal willingness to teach in an inclusive classroom and their beliefs concerning the advantages and disadvantages of inclusion.

Supports and resources needed for inclusion classrooms: In-service training, materials and physical classroom provisions, support personnel, number of meeting times with necessary specialists and colleagues (Wolery, Werts, Caldwell, Snyder, and Lisowiski 1995:18), reduction of class size (Myles and Simpson 1990:234).

CHAPTER II
Review of Related Literature

Introduction

It is possible that the opinions of classroom teachers concerning inclusion education, are influenced by what their district offers as supports for their program. Therefore, this study investigated the relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of supports for inclusion classrooms and their attitudes toward inclusion education. This study further suggested what resources were available for inclusion teachers in one particular district, and the satisfaction with the current program. The following literature provided no evidence of a correlation between the attitudes of regular classroom teachers toward inclusion education and what supports they thought were available. Thus, the hypothesis stated that there was no relationship between attitudes of teachers toward inclusion education and their perceptions of the inclusion classroom supports provided by their school.

The Law

The implementation of the Public Law 94-142: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, (IDEA) initiated an educational revolution for students with mental retardation and other and disabilities. It "mandates that all children receive a free, appropriate, and public education regardless of the level or

severity of their disability. It provides funds to assist states in education of students with disabilities and requires that states make sure that these students receive an individualized education program based on their unique needs in the least restrictive environment possible" (Public law 94-142, revised 1992).

The law requires that special needs students are able to learn in the same place as their non-disabled peers. The legislation specifically states, "unless a child's individualized education program requires some other arrangement, the child is to be educated in the school which he or she would attend if not disabled." It further demands that a student should only be removed from the regular classroom when participation in the regular class "with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily" (Public law 94-142, revised 1992).

The NEA Today newspaper (March, 1995) interviewed the Department of Educations Office about what the IDEA demands of the schools. The legislation clearly considers the regular classroom as the primary choice for the least restrictive environment. However, to place disabled students in the regular classroom without needed aides and supports (NEA Today, March, 1995) is considered a federal violation. The rights of the non-disabled students are preserved by the clause which declares a disabled student cannot be included in the regular classroom if his or her inclusion severely disrupts the education of the other students. Finally, when deciding upon student placement, the social and

academic benefits of regular versus special education classrooms must be evaluated; as well as the degree of disruption which would occur if the disabled student was included in the regular classroom (NEA Today, March, 1995).

Definition

The accepted version of inclusion was not clearly stated in the literature. Full inclusion was defined as "the placement of children with disabilities in a regular education classroom with children who do not have disabilities" (Haas, 1993: 34). Sapon-Sapin stated that there should be full inclusion implemented in schools, where all students needs were met inside the regular classroom (O'Neil, 1995). Other advocates stated that when special needs students were separated from their non-disabled peers, they missed opportunities to develop social and communication skills. (Haas, 1993).

Other education specialists argued over the degree of inclusion education which was appropriate for students (O'Neil, 1995). Staub and Peck (1995) interpreted inclusion as "the full-time placement of children with mild, moderate, or severe disabilities in regular classroom. It assumes that regular class placement must be considered as a relevant option for all children, regardless of disability. It does not preclude the use of pull-out services or instruction in self contained settings when appropriate" (Staub and Peck, 1995:36). Kauffman in support of this interpretation, stated "there is not anything wrong with

meeting special needs students outside of the classroom if that is required, inclusion is not always a solution" (O'Neil, 1995:7). Kauffman and others found studies which indicated students to have more success in pull-out programs than in regular class (O'Neil, 1995. Smelter, Rasch, Yudewitz 1995).

The Debate Over Inclusion

DePutnam, Spiegal, and Bruininks (1995) stated in their literature review, that the debate continued over whether schools should implement inclusion education or keep special education programs separated. In support of pro-inclusion; Van Dyke, Stallings and Colley (1995) and Joan Yatvin (1995) observed that disabled students benefitted socially from an inclusion setting, because biases were avoided, as they were considered part of the class community.

York and his colleagues (1989) found interaction between disabled and non-disabled students provided social and academic role models for the disabled. When disabled students associated with their same age peers they adapted age appropriate values and life skills (Berg, 1996). This learning environment also encouraged regular students to accept their disabled peers without stereotypes (York, 1989).

Providing further support for the inclusion philosophy, one study indicated that regular students were not negatively effected academically nor socially by inclusion classrooms (Sharpe, York, Knight, 1994). In addition, Staub and Peck (1995) found in their

literature that regular students' academic progress did not decline.

Students who interacted with disabled peers had more accepting attitudes toward disabled, than those who did not interact with their disabled counterparts (Kishi and Meyer 1994). Another finding (Evans, Salisbury, Palomboro, Goldberg, 1994) indicated that regular students in inclusive settings considered their disabled counterparts as equal. However, other researchers found the nature of these relationships to be unequal. They observed regular students assuming a care taker role of special needs students (Evans, Salisbury, Palomboro, Goldberg, 1994).

Originally segregated classrooms were considered acceptable interpretations of the least restrictive environment. This view was opposed by parents and educators on the basis that segregated classrooms did not adequately prepare students for later life. The Arc and other pro-inclusion organizations believed that schools should adapt the following principles in order to provide special needs students education which will prepare them for later life:

> "All schools should value all students and include them in all aspects of school life" (Berg, 1996:1).
>
> "Preparation for life in the backgrounds and abilities learn and socialize together in classroom and other school settings" (The Berg, 1996: 1).
>
> "Each student with a disability belongs in an age appropriate classroom with peers who are not disabled" (Berg, 1996: 1).
>
> "Each student has a right to receive an individualized education which provides choices, meets his or her needs, and offers necessary supports" (Berg, 1996: 1).

There is an increasing national trend toward educating all students

in programs which address the above principles (Berg, 1996).

Stainback and Stainback (1988) regarded this trend toward inclusion education, as a reflection of a society which valued equality and acceptance of its different members. The 1993 Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public schools indicated that most of the public (67%) believed physically disabled students should be in the same classroom with their non disabled peers (Parkay and Stanford, 1995).

Despite the ongoing controversy among the educational experts, the records of the U.S. Department of Education held, as cited by Putnam, Spiegel and Bruininks 1995, that at least 68.6% of students requiring special educational services were served in general education classes for part or all of the school day. Therefore, it appears that teachers must begin to prepare for this transition.

Attitudes of General Educators Toward Inclusion

Fortunately, general studies have found elementary school teachers in favor of including students with disabilities into their classrooms (Putnam, Spiegel, Bruininks, 1995; Eiserman, Shisler and Healy 1995; Barton, Michele, 1992). One group of experienced, general educators, attributed their successful inclusion program, to the unanimous faculty support. This united front gave classroom teachers confidence in the special education staff to be readily accessible (Rankin, Ban, Hartley, Bost, Uggla 1994).

Fritz and Miller (1995) cited a study where the degree of

staff effort was positively related to the success of the inclusion program. The findings described "building teams" consisting of administrators, teachers, and parents, were more effective implementers than "teams" limited to district administration. Finally, teachers were more likely to consider training programs beneficial when they selected the training.

Another example of team effort toward improving inclusion education is The Inclusion Network. This Utah based organization trained teams of administrators, general educators, special educators, service providers to successfully implement inclusion. These teams in turn trained their colleagues (Berg, 1996).

There was evidence found that the feelings of teachers about inclusion were related to other factors. For example, the attitudes of the classroom teachers toward inclusion were negatively related to the degree of student disability (Eiserman, shisler, and Healy, 1995). Another study found a correlation between general educators' perceived ability to implement inclusion, and their thoughts concerning special needs children taught in inclusive settings (Eiserman, shisler, and Healy, 1995).

Some educators felt inclusion programs were implemented without planning strategies to make the program work (Fritz and Miller, 1995). For example, the NEA president, Keith Geiger, declared during a school staff coalition, "There may be no single educational innovation that has been as poorly implemented as the inclusion of students who have special needs in regular classroom" (NEA, 1994). The absence of school supports for inclusion programs

was found to negatively affect teachers' perception of success with inclusion (Wolery, Werts, Caldwell, Snyder, Lisowski, 1995).

Needed Supports for Inclusion

Since the initiation of the inclusion movement, concerned parties have been voicing their opinions about needed improvements. During a school staff inclusion conference, The San Ramon's Golden Review Elementary School developed a contract that demanded inclusion classroom teachers the following supports; release time for workshops on inclusion as well as assistance with lesson plans and teaching strategies from an inclusion specialist. The spokes person concluded that when inclusion takes place without providing the needed resources the situation can be "educationally harmful" (NEA Today, March, 1994).

Proctor (1995) stated that schools must "restructure" their programs in order to accommodate the diverse needs of students in inclusion settings. He commended a Professional Development School (PDS) which focused on individualizing education. The responsibility of teaching was shared by a team, which allowed for more flexibility in instruction and management. He also described a School-Wide Assistance Team (SWAT) which assisted teachers in solving problems related to specific students.

Fritz and Miller (1995) also claimed that successful inclusion requires the restructuring of the present school system. Fritz and Miller (1995) and Haas (1993) found that general educators and special educators joined forces in the form of team teaching, to

effectively meet the needs of students. Haas (1993) also stated that parents and related service providers were considered part of the inclusion team. Fritz and Millers' article described the building principal as an integral support to the staff. The principal allowed planning time for team teachers and offered in-services before implementation of inclusion. He also shared the successes and failures of the inclusion program with staff and parents (Fritz and Miller, 1995).

The following is an overview of what other researchers necessary for "responsible inclusion":

> There should be an overall agreement by the faculty to implement inclusion.
> The roles and responsibilities of the teachers and administrators must be defined.
> There should be on going staff development.
> Willing teachers should be identified and trained.
> Guarantee that each IEP are in the best wishes of the learner
> There should be a series of alternative placements (Fritz and Miller, 1995).

Proctor (1995) and Haas (1993) both agreed that in order for inclusion to succeed, students and teachers must receive the necessary supports such as, extra personnel, special equipment, materials, and training. The 90% response rate to a questionnaire (N=158) which compared perceived needed supports for inclusion and what supports perceived available; reflected more specific desires from educators. The resources reported most needed were: (94%) beginning year and (90.5%) on-going in-services; (87%) observations of other teachers, (81.1%) support personnel, (88.8%) support from family of disabled, (88.8%) principal, and (86.2%) special education consultants; and (81.1%) meetings with special education

staff (Wolery, Werts, Caldwell, Snyder, Lisowski, 1995). Parents of special needs students preferred similar supports in order to allow their children to be included in the regular classroom (Myles and Simpson 1990).

Chapter III
Procedure and Design

Introduction

The following correlational study examined the possible relationship between the two variables; attitudes of classroom teachers toward inclusion and the degree of supports classroom teachers perceived available for inclusion. The research used a close ended questionnaire which was in Likert scale type form. The study used a convenience type population.

Population

This study used a non-random convenience population. The members of this population taught in a district where special needs children were included in the regular classrooms. Some of these children also received extra instruction outside of the classroom. The defining characteristics of the subjects were that they all taught in a regular kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, or fifth grade classroom. The population consisted of classroom teachers from two elementary schools of a common district. The total population was thirty-nine elementary classroom teachers.

Design

The following correlational study examined the relationship between two variables. The design required a non-random, convenience population of at least thirty subjects. The members of

this population completed a close ended questionnaire. This questionnaire measured the attitudes of elementary classroom toward inclusion and their perceptions of available, inclusion classroom supports.

The questionnaire (see appendix A) contained questions concerning their teaching background and their attitudes toward the inclusion program in their school. The questionnaire included space for respondents to write any questions, comments, or concerns they might of had.

Procedure

The researcher received permission from the building principal to distribute a pre-constructed, close ended, questionnaire to the classroom teachers at the closing of a faculty meeting. The researcher verbally explained the general purpose of the questionnaire. The researcher also attached a letter which introduced the researcher as a student teacher in their school, a brief description of the study, and the procedures for completing the survey (see appendix B). The letter ensured the confidentiality of its participants, in addition to expressing the voluntary nature of the survey. Finally, it requested that all respondents place completed questionnaires in a designated box in the main office.

In order to increase the size of the population, the researcher received permission from the building principal to distribute questionnaires to another school. The researcher's

clinical teacher assisted in distribution and collection of the supplemental surveys. The same cover letter, authorized by the building principal, was attached to explain the rationale of the questionnaire. The clinical teacher collected a portion of the completed surveys, while the remainder were returned through interschool mail.

Instrument

The instrument used to obtain data was a close ended questionnaire. It was divided into two content sections which were in Likert-type scale form. The first section assessed the regular classroom teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. The second section assesses the general education teachers' perceptions of available supports needed for inclusion classrooms.

After compiling the completed questionnaire, an expert in the educational research field conducted a content validity check. With permission from this expert, the researcher did not conduct a reliability check.

The survey was constructed of items from several scales found in the related research. The first section adapted items from The Attitudes Toward Mainstreaming Revised (ATMS-R) which demonstrated sufficient reliability, validity and cross validity measures (Berryman, Neal and Berryman, 1980). The term mainstreaming is interchangeable with the term inclusion. The first section also used items from an attitude inventory scale created by Michele L. Barton (1992). There was no documented validity or reliability

measures, however the items' content were appropriate for this study.

The second section adopted items from an supports for inclusion inventory, which at least 50% of the respondents thought were necessary supports for inclusion classrooms (Wolery, Werts, Caldwell, Snyder and Lisowski, 1995). This strategy improved the validity of the items selected for the "supports available for inclusion" section of the questionnaire.

The final section of the questionnaire requested general teaching history of respondents such as, the number of years he or she taught at the elementary level; whether he or she presently taught in an inclusion setting; and whether he or she had taught in an inclusion classroom in the past.

Identification of gender and grade placement were not requested in order to preserve complete anonymity of respondents. The questionnaire also provided space for additional comments.

Chapter IV
Analysis of Findings

Introduction

This research sought to support the null hypothesis which stated that there was not a significant relationship between the attitudes of elementary, classroom teachers toward inclusion education and the degree of supports they perceived available for inclusion classrooms. The investigator dispersed closed-ended questionnaires to a population of thirty-nine classroom teachers.

All members of the population taught in one district where special needs students were included in regular classrooms. The common characteristic of the subjects was that they all taught in a first, second, third, fourth, or fifth grade classroom (see chart 1).

Data yielded from the questionnaires further defined the population in terms of their professional background. The majority (79%) had taught for at least eleven years. Eight percent taught between six and ten years, and twelve percent had taught five years or less. While over half (58%) presently taught in an inclusion classroom, and the majority (84%) had past experience teaching in an inclusion setting. Finally, only twenty percent indicated they had any formal training related to inclusion education.

chart 1 (n=39)
Professional Background

years teaching	%
11 or more	79
6-10	08
5 or less	12
currently teach in inclusion classroom	
yes	58
no	52
taught in inclusion in the past	
yes	84
no	16
training	
yes	20
no	80

Tabulation of Raw Scores

The results of the survey were in the form of interval and nominal data. The attitude assessment portion yielded interval data. It required respondents to select from the following responses: "agree", "undecided", "disagree". The researcher coded the responses three, two and one for scoring. The highest possible score for this section was fifty-four.

The data derived from the second portion of the questionnaire was nominal. The respondents selected either "yes", "don't know", or "no", to questions about perceptions of available supports for inclusion. The investigator then merged the "no" and "don't know" answers into one group, since both selections implied the support was not available in reality or to the knowledge of the respondent. The author coded the "yes" response as two and the "no" and "don't know" responses as one. The highest possible score for this

section was thirty-six.

The researcher determined separate total scores for the attitude assessment and perceived available supports assessment portions of the questionnaires (see charts 2 and 3). The following descriptive statistic measurements were used to analyze the general characteristics of the interval data: 1. frequency distribution 2. central tendency 3. standard deviation.

The highest attitude score recorded was fifty-four. The lowest attitude score was twenty-three. The range of scores for attitudes toward inclusion was thirty-one, the average score was forty-three, and the mode was forty-one. The standard deviation for the attitude scores was 7.435.

chart 2 (n=39)
Attitudes of Teachers

Subject	Score	Subject	Score
1	37	21	51
2	42	22	51
3	35	23	46
4	44	24	49
5	44	25	40
6	35	26	38
7	52	27	36
8	41	28	37
9	23	29	43
10	37	30	46
11	30	31	38
12	29	32	53
13	33	33	45
14	41	34	35
15	47	35	49
16	52	36	51
17	48	37	53
18	39	38	49
19	45	39	54
20	39		

range:31 mean:43 median:43
mode:41 standard deviation:7.435

chart 3 (n=39)
Available Supports

Subject	Score	Subject	Score
1	20	21	27
2	30	22	31
3	34	23	36
4	25	24	33
5	29	25	32
6	31	26	34
7	36	27	32
8	34	28	26
9	24	29	31
10	22	30	26
11	32	31	33
12	29	32	27
13	29	33	30
14	31	34	23
15	29	35	29
16	29	36	22
17	33	37	34
18	18	38	26
19	25	39	34
20	33		

The researcher created attitude categories based upon the normal distribution of scores (see table 1). Thirty-eight percent of the respondents selected "disagree" and "undecided" for most questions concerning the benefits of inclusion, and were considered to have weak attitudes. Forty-one percent of the respondents selected a combination of "undecided" and "agree" responses, and were classified as having moderate attitudes. Finally, twenty-one percent selected "agree" for the majority of their responses. These subjects were considered to have high attitudes toward inclusion.

table 1 (n=39)
Frequency Distribution on Teachers' Attitudes

score	frequency of score	%
18-39 (low)	15	38
40-49 (moderate)	16	41
50-54 (high)	08	21

The scores obtained from the supports available assessment (see table 2) were also divided into categories based upon the normal distribution of responses. Eighteen percent of the subjects responded "no" or "don't know" to most questions. They assumed there were minimum inclusion supports available in their school. Forty-eight percent selected a combination of "yes", "no", and "don't know" responses. These respondents considered the amount of supports to be moderate. Finally, thirty-three percent of the respondents answered "yes" to most questions. Therefore, they perceived a high amount of supports available.

table 2 (n=39)
Frequency Distribution on Available Supports

score	frequency of score(n)	%
18-25 (low)	07	18
26-31 (moderate)	19	48
32-36 (high)	13	33

Tabulation of Chi Squares

The researcher calculated the chi square formula to determine whether there was a significant correlation between the attitudes

of teachers toward inclusion and the following nominal data:

1. the level of supports subjects thought were available
2. current inclusion teaching status of subjects
3. past experience of subjects teaching in an inclusion classroom.

The chi square was also used to evaluate the relationship between the perceived level of available supports and the following variables:

1. the level of satisfaction they felt with their current inclusion program
2. current inclusion teaching status of subjects
3. past experience of subjects teaching in an inclusion classroom.

Finally, the researcher calculated the chi square formula to detect any relationship between responses to specific attitude statements from the questionnaire, concerning professional issues of inclusion education and the degree of supports subjects perceived their school to provide (see appendix A). This was done in order to identify any distinctions between attitudes toward the correctness of the inclusion philosophy and those toward the professional responsibilities inclusion teachers must assume. The level of significance accepted for the chi square calculations was at the .05 level or less.

There was no significant relationship (X^2= 3.066 n.s. $p<.05$) found between the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion and whether they currently taught in an inclusion setting (see table 3). A relatively even distribution of current and not current inclusion teachers indicated moderate attitudes. Another relatively even distribution of current inclusion and non inclusion teachers indicated high attitudes. However, more current inclusion

teachers indicated low attitudes than teachers who were not in an inclusion setting.

table 3
Attitudes and Current Inclusion Teachers Status

Attitudes	Yes	No
low	11 (28%)	4 (10%)
moderate	7 (18%)	9 (23%)
high	5 (13%)	3 (8%)

X^2=3.066 df=2 n.s. p<.05

There was also no significant relationship (X^2= 1.88 n.s. p< .05) found between the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion and if they had past experience with inclusion. The majority of the population had experienced inclusion in the past and had either low or moderate attitudes.

table 4
Attitudes and Past Experience as an Inclusion Teacher

Attitudes	Yes	No
low	14 (36%)	1 (3%)
moderate	13 (33%)	3 (7.7%)
high	6 (15%)	2 (5.1%)

df=2 X^2= 1.88 n.s. p<.05

The current inclusion teaching status of respondents and the degree of supports they recognized as available were not significantly related (X^2= .21 n.s. p< .05) (see table 5). The responses were moderately dispersed across all categories. However, the most populated category was current inclusion teachers

who perceived moderate supports available.

table 5
Available Supports and Current Inclusion Teachers Status

Supports	Yes	No
low	4 (10%)	3 (8%)
moderate	12 (31%)	8 (20%)
high	7 (18%)	5 (13%)

df=2 X^2= 0.21 n.s. p< .05

There was no significant relationship (X^2= .42 n.s. p<.05) found when the researcher compared the perceptions of available supports and their past experience with inclusion (see table 6). The responses were moderately dispersed across all categories. However the largest percentage of respondents had inclusion experience and thought there were moderate supports available.

table 6
Available Supports and Past Experience as an Inclusion Teacher

Supports	Yes	No
low	6 (15%)	1 (3%)
moderate	15 (38%)	4 (10%)
high	10 (26%)	2 (5%)

df=2 X^2= .42 n.s. p<.05

Tabulation of Pearson R Formula

The Pearson R correlation formula was used to determine whether there was a correlation between the attitudes teachers had concerning inclusion and the following interval data:

1. the amount of teaching experience
2. the degree of satisfaction felt with their current inclusion program.

The level of statistical significance accepted for the Pearson R correlations was at the level of .05 or less.

There was no significant relationship found when the researcher calculated the Pearson R correlation for the attitudes of teachers concerning inclusion and the number of years they had been teaching (r= .131 n.s. p< .05).

Analysis Related to Particular Purpose of Hypothesis

According to the chi square tabulation below, there was not a significant relationship (X^2= 4.748 n.s. p<.05) found between the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion and the degree of supports they perceived available (see table 7). This data supported the null hypothesis which stated that no relationship existed between the two variables.

There was an even distribution of respondents who had low attitudes among each available support category. Although there was not a significant relationship found, 25% of respondents held moderate attitudes and considered moderate supports available. Furthermore, a very small concentration of subjects held moderate or high attitudes and thought there were low supports available.

table 7
Attitudes about Inclusion and Perceived Level of Available Inclusion Supports

Attitudes	low	moderate	high
low	5 (12.8%)	5 (12.8%)	5 (12.8%)
moderate	1 (3.2%)	10 (25%)	5 (12.8%)
high	1 (3.2%)	4 (10.7%)	3 (7.7%)

df=4 X^2= 4.748 n.s. p<.05

A small percentage of the subjects responded "poor" when they were asked to rate their current inclusion program "fair", "poor", or "excellent". An equally small percentage rated the current program as "excellent". Therefore, the researcher combined the "poor" and "fair" responses into one category and the "good" and "excellent" responses into a second category.

Almost half of the respondents rated the inclusion program poor to fair; and slightly more than half rated it good to excellent (see table 8).

table 8 (n=39)
Frequency distribution of Level of Satisfaction with Inclusion Program

Level of satisfaction	%
poor-fair	48.7
good-excellent	51.2

The researcher then compared the attitudes of teachers with the level of satisfaction they felt toward the current inclusion program using the Pearson R formula. Since a significant correlation was found between them ($r=.393$, $p<.05$) it indicated that there was a relationship between the quality of the current inclusion program and how the respondents felt about inclusion education. Thus, providing indirect evidence that disproved the null hypothesis.

There was also a significant relationship ($X^2= 8.162$ $p<.05$) found between responses to the statement, "Given a choice to accept a special needs student in your classroom; you would accept that student;" and the degree of inclusion supports subjects assumed

available to them (see table 9). Sixty-one percent of the respondents agreed with this statement and the remaining 38.5% were undecided. The smallest percentages of respondents who either agreed or were undecided also considered low supports available. Over half would choose to accept a special needs student in their class, and also considered the level of inclusion support in their school to be either moderate or high. This data indicated that the attitudes of teachers toward teaching in an inclusion classroom were related to the degree of supports they thought were available. This data also disproved the null hypothesis.

table 9
Choose Inclusion and Perceptions of Available Supports

Choose inclusion	low	moderate	high
undecided	3 (7.7%)	6 (15.4%)	6 (15.4%)
agree	4 (10.3%)	9 (23%)	11 (28.2%)

df= 2 X^2= 8.162 p<.05

Over half of the population agreed, 20% were undecided, and 23% disagreed with the following statement; "It is feasible to teach gifted, normal, and special needs students in the same class". The chi square indicated no significant relationship (n.s. X^2= 5.15 p<.05) between teaching different ability levels in one classroom and the level of inclusion supports subjects thought were available (see table 10). However, the majority of those who agreed also considered a moderate or high degree of inclusion supports available. Most subjects who were undecided thought there were moderate supports available. Finally, a greater percentage of

respondents who disagreed considered low or moderate supports available than high supports.

table 10
It is Feasible to Teach Different Ability Levels and Perceptions of Available Supports

Is it feasible	low	moderate	high
disagree	3 (8%)	5 (13%)	1 (2%)
undecided	2 (5%)	4 (10%)	2 (5%)
agree	2 (5%)	9 (23%)	11 (28%)

df=4 X^2= 5.15 n.s. p<.05

Over half of the population considered themselves qualified to teach in an inclusion setting, 18% were undecided, and the remaining 15.5% did not feel they were qualified .

Theree was no significant relationship (X^2= 2.79 n.s. p<.05) found between those who considered themselves qualified, and the level of inclusion supports they thought were available (see table 11). Most respondents who did not think that they were qualified inclusion teachers still considered a moderate amount of supports available. Another 10.3% were undecided and considered a corresponding moderate amount of supports available. Finally, the majority of those who rated themselves qualified inclusion teachers considered moderate or a high amount of inclusion supports available.

table 11
Qualified to Teach and Perceived Available Supports

Qualified to teach inclusion	low	moderate	high
disagree	1 (2.6%)	4 (10.3%)	1 (2.6%)
undecided	1 (2.6%)	4 (10.3%)	2 (5.1%)
agree	5 (12.8%)	11 (28.2%)	10 (25.6%)

df=4 X^2= 2.46 n.s. p<.05

There was a relatively even distribution of subjects who agreed, disagreed, and were undecided, with the following statement, "Teachers should be expected to teach children with special needs in their classroom" (see table 12). The researcher did not find a significant relationship between the level of inclusion supports they perceived available and these responses (X^2=2.29 n.s. p<.05).

There were no outstanding differences among those who disagreed and the level of supports they perceived available. However, most respondents who were undecided perceived a moderate amount of supports available. The majority of those who agreed that teachers should be required to teach in an inclusion setting also considered a moderate or high amount of inclusion supports available.

table 12
Expected to Teach Inclusion and Perceived Available Supports

Expected to teach	low	moderate	high
disagree	3 (7.7%)	5 (12.8%)	3 (7.7%)
undecided	3 (7.7%)	7 (17.9%)	3 (7.7%)
agree	1 (2.56%)	6 (15.2%)	8 (20.5%)

df=4 X^2 =2.29 n.s. p<.05

There was no significant relationship (X^2=5.63 p<.05) found between the level of satisfaction toward the current inclusion program and the degree of perceived supports available (see table 13). However, the chi square coefficient approached significance. The greatest percentage of respondents thought there was a moderate amount of inclusion supports available regardless of how satisfied they were with the current program. However, more subjects who rated their program "good to excellent" considered moderate or high inclusion supports available than low supports. Finally, a greater proportion thought their were low supports available and rated their satisfaction "poor to fair" than "good-excellent."

table 13
Level of Satisfaction and Perceived Available Supports

level of satisfaction	low	moderate	high
poor-fair	6 (15.4%)	9 (23.1%)	4 (10.3%)
good-excellent	1 (2.6%)	10 (25.6%)	9 (23.1%)

df=2 X^2= 5.63 n.s. p<.05

Conclusion

When the researcher compared the overall attitudes of teachers concerning inclusion and the degree of inclusion supports they thought were available; there was no statistically significant correlation found. Thus, supporting the null hypothesis which stated that there was no relationship between the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion and the level of inclusion supports they perceived available. However, there was evidence that teachers who held moderate attitudes most likely considered moderate supports

available. It was unlikely to find subjects who held moderate or high attitudes and considered low supports available.

The researcher also found data which conflicted with this finding. There was a statistically significant correlation found between responses to the item, "Given a choice to accept a special needs student in your classroom; you would accept that student;" and the degree of inclusion supports subjects thought were available. There was also a significant correlation between the level of satisfaction subjects rated the current inclusion program and their attitudes about inclusion education. Thus, providing evidence which supported the relationship between the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion and the level of inclusion supports available.

Additional characteristics such as the number of years teaching, present or past experience as an inclusion teacher, were not statistically correlated with the attitudes of teachers concerning inclusion or the degree of supports they thought were available.

Chapter V
Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter reviews the statement of the problem, the null hypothesis, the procedure for research, and the findings yielded from this study. The author also discusses how the results related to the null hypothesis as well to the educational field. Finally, the author suggested ways to improve the research design and what other variables were worth investigating of future research.

Summary of the Problem

It is possible that the opinions of educators concerning inclusion education, is influenced by what their district offers as supports. Therefore, if teachers are unhappy about their classroom situation, their attitudes toward teaching and actual performance might be negatively affected. Thus, one must investigate the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion to determine the sources for their attitudes.

Summary of the Hypothesis

Since there was not any literature which identified a relationship between the two variables, the following null hypothesis was stated: There was no statistically significant relationship between the attitudes of classroom teachers toward inclusion education and the degree of inclusion supports which

they assumed were available.

Summary of the Procedure

The researcher conducted a correlational study which investigated the relationship between the following variables; attitudes of classroom teachers toward inclusion and the degree of inclusion supports they perceived to be available. The researcher compiled a close ended questionnaire which assessed the attitudes toward inclusion; the perceptions of inclusion supports available; and general teaching backgrounds of subjects.

The researcher distributed the questionnaires to a population of thirty-nine elementary classroom teachers from one common district. The questionnaire results yielded interval and nominal data. The chi square formula was used to analyze the variables involving nominal data and the Pearson R coefficient correlation formula was used for the interval data.

Summary of Findings

The majority (79%) of the population were experienced teachers who had taught for at least eleven years. Over half (58%) of them were current inclusion teachers, while 84% had previous experience teaching in an inclusion setting. Finally, most indicated they never received any formal training related to inclusion education.

There was a normal distribution of subjects across the three attitude categories. The largest group of respondents held moderate attitudes toward inclusion (41%); the next largest group

held low attitudes toward inclusion (38%); while the smallest held high attitudes (21%). There was also a normal distribution of subjects across the three perceived, available support categories. The largest group of respondents thought there were moderate supports available (48%); the next largest group considered a high amount of supports available (33%); while the smallest group assumed there were low supports available (18%).

There were no statistically significant correlations found when the researcher compared the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion and their teaching experiences. However, current and past inclusion teachers who had low attitudes compiled the largest groups. The inclusion experiences of teachers were also not statistically related to the supports they considerred available. Finally, the researcher did not find a significant relationship between the amount of teaching experience subjects had and the attitudes they held about inclusion education.

The researcher found inconsistent evidence related to the null hypothesis. There was no significant relationship found between the attitudes teachers held concerning inclusion education and the level of support they thought was available. Whereas, the Pearson R correlation coefficient revealed a significant relationship between the level of satisfaction subjects felt with their inclusion program and their personal attitudes. In addition, there was a statistically significant correlation found between the level of support subjects thought available and whether they would choose to accept a special needs student in their classroom.

There were no statistically significant relationships found when the investigator analyzed the perceived level of available supports in relation to whether respondents thought it was possible to teach different ability levels in one classroom; if they considered themselves qualified inclusion teachers; and whether they should be expected to teach in an inclusion setting. However, the relationship between the level of satisfaction toward the inclusion program and the degree of support respondents thought was available approached significance at the .05 level.

Discussion

Since the literature had suggested most elementary school teachers were in favor of including students with disabilities into their class (Putnam, Spiegel, Bruininks, 1995; Eiserman, Shisler and Healy 1995; Barton, Michele, 1992), it was surprising that the most substantial percentages held moderate attitudes (41%) and low attitudes (38%) concerning inclusion. Selected written comments of subjects offered explanation for these findings. Many felt compelled to select "undecided" for attitude items regarding the benefits of inclusion, as their opinions fluctuated according to type and degree of disability the student(s) had. One subject stated,

> "A lot of my answers are `undecided' because I feel the answer(s) depend(s) upon the specific needs of the child..."

A slightly smaller group held stronger opinions, for instance, one declared,

"I disagree with including those students who would interrupt

> the learning of other students, such as those who are emotionally disturbed or too immature to adapt to the classroom."

The vast array of inclusion situations which exist might have inhibited some from choosing a strong positive response. Furthermore, problems which occur in inappropriate, inclusion scenarios could have been a source for negative attitudes.

The literature discussed the negative correlation between lack of supports and the perceived success of teachers with inclusion (Woelery et al 1995); while also correlating the perceived ability to succeed with inclusion and their feelings toward the appropriateness of it (Eiserman, Shisler, and Healy, 1995). Therefore, I expected the level of supports teachers perceived to be available at their school, to coincide with their level of attitudes.

Unfortunately there were inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between what subjects felt about inclusion and their knowledge of available inclusion supports. From a numerical standpoint, those who held moderate attitudes corresponded to those who considered a moderate level of supports accessible; and a similar pattern occurred for high attitudes and high supports. However, there was a higher frequency of low attitudes than of those who thought there were low supports.

These results portrayed a sufficient supports system as a potential source of favorable attitudes toward inclusion education. While lower perceptions did not seem to influence negative attitudes in the same manner.

The recorded level of satisfaction respondents felt toward the current inclusion program was an alternative measure of their perceptions of the level of supports available. Thus, the correlation between the level of satisfaction and attitudes toward inclusion was unanticipated. Apparently, the perceived supports section of the questionnaire was not a sufficient measure of their satisfaction toward the current inclusion program. It was feasible that certain supports impacted the level of satisfaction more than others. While another explanation might have been that selected resources were available, but the quality or quantity was insufficient.

The last significant finding demonstrated a relationship between responses to whether subjects would choose to include a special needs student in their classroom and the level of inclusion supports they considered available. Since attitudes and perceived available supports were previously found statistically unrelated; the former relationship was unforeseen.

One can interpret this inconsistent data as a need to refine the broad definition of "inclusion attitudes." Many questionnaire items assessed attitudes about their beliefs in the correctness of the inclusion philosophy. Although, responses to the item above reflected attitudes of subjects concerning their desire to implement inclusion. Certainly respondents were able to confirm that children should be included in the classroom, regardless of what resources they thought were available. However, the previous finding suggested that attitudes regarding the personal

participation of subjects in inclusion education, was related to the resources available in the school system.

Implications and Recommendations

This study successfully yielded evidence which supported as well as disproved the null hypothesis. This could have been due to vague operational definitions for the following terms:

attitudes toward inclusion
available supports
satisfaction with inclusion program

Since this was an initial research project, future researchers could refine this study by:

increasing the sample size.

operationally defining satisfaction with inclusion program.

creating an interval scale for the perceived available supports section of the questionnaire which assessed the quality and quantity of supports available.

devising separate scales which assess attitudes regarding inclusion as a philosophy and as a reality.

Future research should also investigate if the type of disability of the student relates to the attitudes of classroom teachers concerning participation with inclusion.

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Appenix A

INCLUSION EDUCATION INVENTORY

Please circle Agree/ Undecided/ Disagree:

1. Children with special needs should be included in the regular classroom.

Agree Undecided Disagree

2. Given a choice to accept a special needs student in your classroom; you would accept that student.

Agree Undecided Disagree

3. Special needs students in regular classroom settings learn positive social interaction skills.

Agree Undecided Disagree

4. Children with special needs make better academic gains in a inclusive classroom than in a self-contained, special education classroom.

Agree Undecided Disagree

5. Special needs students receive effective academic instruction in an inclusion classroom.

Agree Undecided Disagree

6. The regular classroom teacher should have high expectations for their special needs children.

Agree Undecided Disagree

7. Special needs students do not take away too much instructional time from the other students in the classroom.

Agree Undecided Disagree

8. The regular classroom teacher should actively promote positive relations between special needs and regular students.

Agree Undecided Disagree

9a. Special needs children benefit socially from inclusion education.

Agree Undecided Disagree

Please continue to the next page.

9b. Special needs children benefit academically from inclusion education.

Agree Undecided Disagree

10a. Regular children benefit socially from inclusion education.

Agree Undecided Disagree

10b. Regular children benefit academically from inclusion education.

Agree Undecided Disagree

11. Inclusion education can help regular students understand and accept differences in other people.

Agree Undecided Disagree

12. In general, inclusion education is desirable.

Agree Undecided Disagree

13. All students have the right to be included in regular classrooms.

Agree Undecided Disagree

14. It is feasible to teach gifted, normal, and special needs students in the same class.

Agree Undecided Disagree

15. I am qualified to teach in an inclusion setting given the supports my school and community provides.

Agree Undecided Disagree

16. Teachers should be expected to teach children with special needs in their classroom.

Agree Undecided Disagree

Please answer yes /don't know/ no:
Does your school provide the following for inclusion classroom teachers?

17. in-service workshops that offer training for inclusion classroom teachers:

yes don't know no

Please continue to the next page.

18. regular faculty conferences to discuss instructional and classroom management techniques:

yes don't know no

19. opportunity to observe other teachers in inclusion settings:

yes don't know no

20. access to educational materials needed for special needs students:

yes don't know no

21. limit student enrollment:

yes don't know no

22. school time meetings with specialists such as speech pathologist, special education teacher, etc.:

yes don't know no

23. school time for conferences with parents of special need students:

yes don't know no

24. community volunteers:

yes don't know no

25. instructional aids:

yes don't know no

26. speech language pathologist:

yes don't know no

25. physical therapist:

yes don't know no

26. occupational therapist:

yes don't know no

27. psychologist:

yes don't know no

Please continue to the next page.

Please circle yes /don't know/ no:

Do inclusion teachers receive personal support from:

28. families of special needs children?
yes don't know no

29. general community?
yes don't know no

30. school district administration?
yes don't know no

31. special educational consultant?
yes don't know no

32. other specialist personnel within the building?
yes don't know no

Please circle one:

33. Number of years teaching at the elementary school level:
5 or less 6-10 11 or more

34. Do you presently teach in a inclusion classroom?
yes no

35. Have you ever taught in an inclusion classroom?
yes no

36. Have you ever had formal training for teaching in an inclusion classroom?
yes no

37. Rate your level of satisfaction toward the current inclusion program:
excellent good fair

Please use this space and the back of this page for additional comments, concerns, and suggestions:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

Appendix B

My name is Lisa Minkin and I am presently student teaching in Marjorie Dyer's first grade classroom. I am participating the Master of Science in Teaching (M.S.T.) program of Rowan College, which requires its students to develop and complete a research study related to education. I will be examining the views of classroom teachers concerning inclusion education.

Enclosed is an anonymous questionnaire that examines the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion education. **Inclusion education is defined for this research as, "the full-time placement of children with mild to severe disabilities in a regular classroom. It does not preclude the use of pull-out services or instruction in self-contained settings when appropriate"** (Staub and Peck, 1995). This questionnaire also examines the supports are needed for these classrooms to be successful.

This survey should take approximately ten minutes to complete. Please answer all questions, and place completed questionnaires in the designated box in the main office. All respondents are guarenteed complete anonymity. Participation is voluntary, but greatly appreciated. Any additional comments or questions can be written in the space provided at the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Lisa Minkin

VITA

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