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Survey of Teacher Attitude Regarding Inclusive Education Within an Urban School District

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A SURVEY OF TEACHER ATTITUDE REGARDING

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WITHIN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dissertation Approval

This is to certify that the thesis presented to us by ___Evangeline Kern___

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Psychology, has been examined and is

acceptable in both scholarship and literary quality.

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Abstract

It is anticipated that inclusion will become more prevalent in classrooms over the next ten years as a result of increasingly stringent federal and state mandates. In order for inclusion to result in adequate yearly progress for all subgroups, it must be implemented properly. Research has demonstrated that a key component for proper implementation is an understanding of baseline attitudes regarding inclusive education held by teachers. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of K-12 regular and special education teachers regarding inclusive education, in an urban Pennsylvania school district, the Chester Upland School District. The study examines attitudes held by teachers, their foundations of knowledge, attitudes and experiences that shape their attitudes; and possible implementation strategies that are predicted to be successful as forecasted by reported teacher attitude.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

To date there have been numerous acts of legislation that have ordered special education students out of isolated educational environments and into classrooms with their regular education counterparts. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990), in particular, allowed millions of special education students across the country access into regular classrooms for either a part of the day or the entire school day. IDEA mandated that, to the maximum degree appropriate, children with disabilities are to be educated alongside their typically developing peers, unless education in the general education classes with the use of supplementary aides and services can not be achieved satisfactorily. The Act also stipulated that children with disabilities, to the maximum extent possible, participate with children without disabilities in nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities.

More recently, the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) established provisions for all students, including subgroups of students identified in terms of their disability, socioeconomic status, language, race, and ethnicity. Specifically, all school students are required to take high-stakes assessments aligned with statewide learning standards (Allbritten, Mainzer, & Ziegler, 2004). In such a manner, districts will demonstrate that they are making adequate yearly progress for all students. No longer are districts allowed to exempt special education students from taking standardized assessments. In order to comply with the Act, and educate all learners, schools are required to merge general and special education into a single delivery system (Matlock, Fiedler, & Walsh, 2001). Such a delivery system is known as inclusion.

In Pennsylvania, in particular, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court (2005) in *Gaskins vs. Pennsylvania Department of Education*, ruled that students are not being educated within the least restrictive environment. The landmark settlement is a reminder to districts in

Pennsylvania and around the nation that inclusion is mandated by federal law. The Gaskins case emphasized the importance of regular education teachers playing a central role in the education of the special education student. Inclusion, however, is much more than a simple physical placement of a special education student in a regular education classroom. It is the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum. In order to make participation meaningful, it is crucial to examine the attitudes towards inclusion of the individuals who play such a central role in the process, that is, the attitudes of the regular education teacher.

Like most high-value educational practices, teacher attitudes regarding inclusive education vary widely. A review of the literature indicates that overall, teachers believe in the concept of inclusion. The studies suggest that teachers like what inclusion classrooms do for their students and they are generally interested in serving students in such a manner. However, studies also indicate that teachers do not believe they are receiving enough support and training in how to teach an inclusion classroom. It is this lack of support and training which prevents them from being the most effective teachers in the inclusion situation. Additionally, given the recent (2005) landmark Pennsylvania Supreme Court settlement on the Gaskins case, which reinforces existing federal mandates and stipulates that special needs students are required to receive their education within the least restrictive environment, there will likely be an increased push for inclusive classroom situations by school districts. If districts fail to utilize inclusive classrooms for service delivery, they will be violating students' rights.

Purpose of the Study

Given that regular teachers are the key service providers in teaching students with special needs in the inclusive classroom, their attitude towards inclusion is a contributing factor to its success or failure. For the purposes of this study, attitude is a combination of three conceptually distinguishable reactions to a certain object (Rosenberg & Holvand, 1960; Triandis, Adamopolous, & Brinberg, 1984). These reactions are specified as affective, cognitive, and

conative (intentions) components. According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), cognitive (knowledge about the disability), behavioral (intention to interact with the individual who has the disability and more specific than simply conative) and affective (feelings about the individual with the disability) factors influence the development of attitude toward disability. Teachers who are ill-prepared or uncomfortable with the concept of inclusion may pass that discontent onto the students, which in turn can undermine the confidence and success of those students. Conversely, teachers who support and believe in the concept of inclusion can provide special education students with confidence and a comfortable learning environment.

In the urban education situation, the issue of inclusion tends to be more complicated due to the high number of students identified with special needs. As indicated by the literature (Patton & Townsend, 1999; Gardner, 2001; and Salend, 2005) there exists a disproportionate number of special education diagnoses in the urban school system, particularly the diagnoses of mental retardation and emotional disturbance. Given that one key factor in success of inclusive education lies in the general educator's attitude and willingness to accommodate students who have disabilities, it is important to examine general educator's attitudes towards inclusion. This is vital since attitude is a significant contributing factor in determining success with the inclusive education model. Given that minimal data exists on teacher attitudes towards inclusion in urban education environments, this study will provide needed information in the process of inclusion in such an environment.

Generally, experts are in agreement that complete integration and acceptance of students with learning disabilities into the regular education classroom will happen only after there is a long-term change in attitude (Beattie, Anderson, & Antonak, 1997). It is important to discern the teachers' attitudes and using this information, address the aspects which make the process of inclusion successful and the aspects which are perceived as barriers to the process. The questions asked are: Are there differences in attitude about inclusion related to gender, age, educational level, teaching level, number of special education courses taken; What is the relationship between attitude and the number of years at the teachers' current teaching level, the

total number of years teaching, and the number of years teaching children with special needs in their classrooms; and What types of inclusive education training methods do teachers believe to be the most and least beneficial?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Background

More than five decades ago, the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision of the United

States Supreme Court changed the face of special education forever. This 1954 court battle

halted the segregation of schools and voided the idea of separate but equal. It established that the

Constitution guaranteed all students a fair and just education, no matter their color. In 1972, in

Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children vs. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the

courts ruled that students diagnosed as being mentally retarded should not be denied their right to

education. Again, the idea of equal education was reinforced. Not long after, the civil rights law

that prevented the discrimination of people with disabilities, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act,

was passed. Section 504 of this act allowed students who previously were not eligible for special

education services assistance to aid in their educational process.

In 1975, the cornerstone and foundation of special education was set into place with the

Education for All Handicapped Children Act, more commonly referred to as Public Law 94-142.

This act set guidelines for special services and outlined the concept of a free and appropriate

education (FAPE) for all students within the least restrictive environment. In 1990, the

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) evolved from P.L. 94-142 which provided

more legal protective services to students with disabilities. In 1997, this act was again amended

and new provisions were added. Specifically, it furthered the rights of students with special

needs and required that a significant effort be made to find an inclusive placement for such

students. This act guides much of special education even to this day and is the basis for inclusive

education practices (inclusionnetwork, 2005).

To date, there have been numerous acts of legislation that have ordered special education

students out of isolated educational environments and into classrooms with their regular

education counterparts. More recently, the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), established

provisions for all students including subgroups of students identified in terms of their disability, socioeconomic status, language, race and ethnicity. Specifically, all learners are required to take high-stakes assessment aligned with statewide learning standards (Allbritten, Mainzer, & Ziegler, 2004). In such a manner, districts will show that they are making adequate yearly progress for all students. No longer are districts allowed to exempt special education students from taking standardized assessments. In order to comply with the Act, to educate all learners, schools are required to merge general and special education into a single delivery system (Matlock, Fielder, & Walsh, 2001). That system is known as inclusion. The concept of inclusion is met with excitement by some and trepidation by others.

Inclusion, again, has been legally mandated by the *Gaskins vs. The Pennsylvania Department of Education* settlement (2005). The case reflects a 10-year struggle through the court system in which 280,000 special education students were represented in a class action suit. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that students were not being educated in the least restrictive environment (Gaskin, 2005). The landmark settlement is a reminder to districts around the nation that inclusion is mandated by federal law. The case emphasized the importance of regular education teachers accepting and incorporating methods for instructing special education students in the regular education curriculum. It reinforced the notion that inclusion is the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in the general education classrooms. It is much more than a simple physical placement.

Aspects of Inclusion

As with any issue in education, inclusion is both criticized and praised. Arguments against inclusion include the possibility that students with special needs may be tormented or ridiculed by classmates; that teachers may not be prepared for inclusive education; that teachers may not be capable of appropriately servicing special needs students; and that every classroom may not be equipped with the proper services (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004; Zionts & Callicott, 2002; Salend & Duhaney, 1999).

Proponents of inclusive education suggest that special needs students will benefit both in learning and social skills. It provides children with special needs an opportunity to learn by example from non-disabled peers. Since schools are a social arena, inclusion allows exceptional learners to be a part of their school community and identify with peers from whom they would otherwise have been segregated (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004). Inclusion essentially allows the special education student more opportunity for social acceptance and friendships, in addition to the benefits of higher learning (Salend & Duhaney, 1999). Vaughn, Elbaun, Schumm, & Hughes (1998) found that students with learning disabilities made significant gains on peer ratings of acceptance and overall friendship quality after being placed in inclusive education situations.

In addition to social benefits, elementary level students with mild disabilities demonstrated higher standardized test scores, better grades, more attentive types of behavior, a higher level of mastery in their IEP goals, and an overall more positive view towards school in inclusive environments (Hunt, Hirose-Hatae, Doering, Karasoff, & Goetz, 2000; Peetsma, 2001; Shinn, Powell-Smith, Good, & Baker, 1997). Elementary students identified with severe disabilities and mental retardation tended to have increased mastery of IEP goals, experienced more engaged and instructional time, and had more exposure to academic work than other students with severe disabilities in more restrictive types of special education situations (Hunt, Soto, Maier, & Doering, 2003; Freeman & Alkin, 2000).

Secondary students with mild disabilities tended to make better educational gains and transitions, attained higher grades in content area courses, earned higher standardized test scores, and attended school more regularly than their counterparts who were serviced in pull-out special education programs (Rea, McLaughlin, & Walter-Thomas, 2002; Cawley, Hayden, Cade & Baker-Kroczynski, 2002). There is also evidence that inclusive placement for students in grades 7 through 12 improves students' chances of obtaining high school diplomas, attending college, getting jobs, earning higher salaries, and living independently (Malian & Love, 1998).

At the other side of the debate, studies exist that suggest inclusive programming does not benefit all special education students. Some students with mild disabilities are not provided with sufficient delivery of their specially designed instruction within their inclusive education settings (Lloyd, Wilton, & Townsend, 2000; Baker & Zigmond, 1995). In another study with preschool and elementary level students, only higher functioning individuals tended to perform better and make more gains, both academically and socially, than those with lower-level functioning (Mills, Cole, Jenkins, & Dale, 1998).

With regard to high school level students, there has been an increasing trend to educate students with mental retardation in inclusive educational environments (Katsiyannis, Zhang, & Archwamety, 2002). However, there has been a decrease in the graduation rates of such students. Research completed by Billingsley and Albertson (1999) suggested that inclusive programs may not provide students who have severe disabilities with the required functional and living skills necessary for success.

Effects on Non-Exceptional Students

Non-exceptional students are affected positively by inclusive education practices. Through working side by side with an exceptional learner, students without disabilities will become more tolerant and respectful of differences. Thus, they will be establishing social skills that make them better members of society (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004; Zionts & Callicott, 2002).

In elementary age children, Hunt et al. (2000) noted that inclusive educational programming helped students become more accepting of each other and helped them to be more familiar with individual differences. However, when friendships were formed, particularly during non-instructional times, the majority of students in one study took on the role of caretaker rather than peer-friend (Staub, Scwartz, Galluci, & Peck, 1994).

For secondary school age students, survey research suggests that the attitudes of teenagers toward people with disabilities are positively influenced by inclusion practices. Middle school students who had the opportunity to be educated alongside disabled peers displayed a reduction

in fear of people with differences and a better understanding and tolerance for the differences. Secondary level students who were not educated in inclusive educational environments were more apt to stereotype and hold negative characterizations of peers with disabilities and diverse backgrounds (Krajewski & Hyde, 2000; Capper & Pickett, 1994). Hughes et al. (2002) added that middle and high school students who were educated alongside disabled peers held more positive views of inclusion. They also believed that the opportunity to interact with disabled classmates helped them to be more understanding of differences, the needs of others, their own ability to cope with disabilities in their own personal lives, and their ability to make friends with people who had some type of disability.

Regarding academic performance, research by Saint-Laurent, Dionne, Royer, Simard, and Pierard (1998) found that the academic performance of non-disabled elementary students was equal to or better than that of the non-disabled students educated in non-inclusive regular education classrooms. In addition, the inclusion of students with severe disabilities did not have a significant negative impact on the amount of teaching time provided to regular education elementary students in inclusive environments (McDonnell, Thorson, & McQuivey, 2000). Similar results were indicated for secondary level students. The presence of students with disabilities did not have a negative effect on their non-disabled classmates (Cawley et al., 2002). Copeland et al. (2002) actually suggested that academic performance of non-exceptional students was enhanced through the students' opportunities to provide peer support to their classmates who were identified as having moderate to severe disabilities.

Effects on Teachers

In addition to benefiting all students, inclusion provides benefits to teachers as well. Inclusion increases the diversity that exists in the classroom. Teachers are able to expand their skills that make them more effective and well prepared educators for all students (Carter, 1991). Teachers also have the opportunity to excel in conferencing skills and socialization skills, as they collaborate with special educators, IEP teams, and co-teachers (Mastroppieri & Scruggs, 2004).

Most importantly, teachers have the opportunity to make a difference in all of their students' lives (Cook, 2001).

The right of every student to access general education requires special and general education teachers to assume new collaborative roles by sharing expertise and engaging in joint problem solving (Matlock, Fiedler, & Walsh, 2001). More than five decades after *Brown vs. Board of Education*, inclusion is a way of life for special education and regular education departments. The success or failure of inclusive programming is significantly dependent on the teachers who implement it. Regular education teachers work with special education teachers to incorporate the special education students into the regular education classrooms as often as possible. Because the success or failure of inclusion is largely dependent on those who are charged with its delivery, it becomes important to measure teacher attitudes towards inclusion.

Inclusion is one of the most volatile topics in education today. An exception to this volatility lies in the published literature about the attitude of teachers towards an inclusion model for special education students. When it comes to inclusion and teacher attitude, there exists a consensus of opinion. Teachers support the concept and practice of inclusion, but feel they are not being provided enough training or support in its implementation. There has been much literature published about inclusion and its history. There likely exists an underlying attitude of support by those who designed it, and those who advocate for its use. It is important, however, to analyze the literature so that teacher attitudes about it can be determined. Specifically, it is the teachers' attitudes that have the largest impact on the student, and therefore the program's success or failure. Teachers who are not in favor of inclusion may pass that discontent onto the students. Ultimately, an unfavorable attitude can undermine the confidence and success of the students. Conversely, teachers who support and believe in the inclusion model can provide special education students with confidence and a comfortable, and ultimately successful, learning environment (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996).

Parent Attitudes

Attitudes of parents whose children have experienced inclusive education vary. Some parents believe that their children have benefited from participation in an inclusive educational program. Such views include the perception that their special needs child was provided access to positive role models, a more challenging curriculum, higher expectations and achievement, and better preparation for the real world situation. They also believed that their child experienced an improved self-concept, as well as better language and motor skills (Palmer, Fuller, Aurora, and Nelson, 2001; Seery, Davis, and Johnson, 2000; Hanson et al., 2001). Palmer et al (2001) also indicated that family members of children with special needs reported their belief that inclusive programming benefited students without disabilities, in that it allowed them to experience ways to cope with adversity and be sensitive to other people.

At the other end of the spectrum, parents of children with special needs indicated concerns about inclusive educational environments. Research by Palmer et al. (2001) and Seery et al. (2000), suggested that some parents feared their children would lose their individualized educational services, a functional curriculum, instructional accommodations, and community based instruction delivered by specially trained professionals. They also expressed concern that their children might be targets of verbal abuse, which they feared, would lower their children's self-esteem. Palmer et al. (2000) also reported that some parents of children with severe disabilities were concerned that their children's significant needs, classroom size, or behavior might prevent them from benefiting from the inclusive educational classroom.

Teacher Attitudes

An example of assessing teacher attitude and inclusive education practice, The CLASS Project (Creating Laboratory Access for Science Students), was examined. This project is a unique initiative offering training and resources to help educators provide students with a variety of disabilities, including physical, sensory, and learning disabilities, equal access in the science laboratory or field. To determine whether participants believed a 2-week residential workshop,

sponsored by CLASS, raised disability awareness and provided teacher training in inclusive science teaching, a multipoint Likert scale survey and questionnaire was completed by all participants in four workshops. Participants reported large gains in their preparedness to teach science to students with disabilities. Participants also reported gains in their familiarity with instructional strategies, curricula, and resources, as well as their ability to design, select, and modify activities for students with disabilities. Lastly, positive shifts in attitudes about teaching science to students with disabilities were noted (Bargerhuff & Wheatley, 2004).

A shift in attitude by pre-service (student) teachers toward students with disabilities was evident in the study conducted by Carroll (2003). The researcher investigated the negative teacher views towards inclusive practices in Australia. It was suggested that teacher preparation programs were inadequate in preparing teachers to work with special needs students. As a result, when teachers encountered a child with a disability, they felt discomfort, fear, uncertainty, vulnerability, and an inability to cope. The student teachers participated in a ten week course on teaching disabled children. At the end of the study, there was a noticeable improvement in the attitudes of the preservice teachers. Specifically, they felt less ignorant and more capable of knowing how to behave with a disabled child. It is also noteworthy that they demonstrated less pity and a greater focus on the individual, rather than on the disability.

Other studies which investigated teachers' attitudes toward inclusion reflected the need for training and resources for teachers. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) conducted a meta-analysis of survey data from 28 studies spanning 37 years (1958-1995) which included 10,560 general education and special education teachers. Chung (1998) surveyed 386 teachers to examine science teachers' instructional adaptations, testing, grading policies, and perceptions about inclusion. Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden (2000) conducted a survey which included teacher perceptions of inclusive education for special education students. The results from all three of the above studies indicated that teachers supported the concept of inclusion, but they did not believe that they had sufficient time, training, or resources to implement it (Barherhuff & Wheatley, 2005; Cook, 2001; Chung, 1998; Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996).

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) found that, for the most part, teachers are very supportive, on a personal level, with the concept of inclusion. In addition, they are supportive of the practice of inclusion in the classroom and they believe it is an effective teaching method for both general education students and special education students. Teachers who responded to the study were willing to teach inclusion classrooms. There was a far less satisfactory outlook, however, when they were asked about the level of support they felt they receive in regards to teaching an inclusive classroom. "Only 18.6% agreed that they were provided sufficient time for including students with special needs, while only 22.3% agreed that they had sufficient training." (p. 68)

Most studies recognize that teachers are in need of intensive training when it comes to inclusion of special education students in the regular education program. It is noteworthy that in Bargerhuff & Wheatley's study (2005), a minority of teachers believed that their coursework had included instruction on categories of disabilities, or on teaching students with disabilities. However, the majority of university educators surveyed indicated that they believed this information had been covered in their coursework.

Both general and special educators are challenged by the idea of including students with disabilities into the general curriculum. Often, it is difficult for them to envision how to teach and meet the needs of the student who is performing at a different level than the other students in the class. Physical proximity is not enough to ensure a student's active participation and progress in an inclusive classroom. Teachers need to know what accommodations and adaptations are successful for students with special needs.

Studies indicate that general education teachers receive minimal special education training as a component of their pre-service training. A discrepancy appears to exist as to what is perceived as being taught in teacher training programs and what is actually being taught. The reality is that general educators receive limited preparation to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities (Salend & Duhaney, 1999; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1998). In 1985, 33 states required only one undergraduate course on exceptionalities for general education teachers. In 1990, only 40 states required a single course on exceptional learners for the general education teacher (Matlock, Fiedler, & Walsh, 2001).

The previous studies measured the way in which teachers believe in the effectiveness of the training they had received when it came to teaching special education students in the general education classroom. The results indicate that they do not believe they were effectively prepared to handle special education students in their regular education classes. These results dovetail with the question of teacher attitudes about inclusion in their classrooms and seem to extrapolate to a poor attitude based on teacher lack of confidence and perceived lack of proper training in the area (Cook, 2001).

According to Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996), general education teachers' attitudes and beliefs about instructing students with disabilities are learned and appear to be influenced by the amount of knowledge and contact the individual teacher has with regard to a particular individual or group. Keenan (1997) argued that increasing the knowledge base of teachers about the integration of students with disabilities and ways to address their learning needs may be a means of minimizing negative attitudes towards inclusion. However, other studies have shown that even after completing staff development training, many teachers still question their ability to teach students with disabilities, and some doubt they will be provided with resources and support necessary for the programs (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Vaughn, et al., 1996; Kearney and Durand, 1992).

Comparison of Elementary and Secondary Teacher Attitudes

High school teachers face an entirely different set of challenges and circumstances when it comes to inclusion of special education students into the general education classroom. High school teachers are often typically assigned well over 100 students per day, as opposed to the 20 to 30 students that a regular elementary education teacher has in their elementary classroom. Furthermore, the majority of high school teachers are prepared as content specialists, and many are not inclined to make adaptations for individual students, such as the use of alternative curricula, adapted scoring/grading, or alternative plans (Matlock, Fiedler, & Walsh, 2001; Landrum, 1992). Moreover, many of today's high school teachers plan and direct their instruction toward the above average student with evaluation based on a norm or average level of performance (Cook, 2001). There are concerns about middle and high school special needs students, as well as fast paced environments, that may create teachers with negative views against inclusion, as they feel special education students hold back the pace (Bargerhuff & Wheatley, 2005).

Pace (2003) also found that a significant difference exists in how elementary school teachers view inclusion and how high school teachers view inclusion. Several reasons for the discrepancy appear to lie in the elementary teacher's smaller class size, fewer students, less rigorous curriculum, and an overall teacher perception of not having enough support and training for the inclusion classroom. Again, the studies cited above assessed the attitudes of the teachers about special education and inclusion because researchers believe that the attitudes of teachers have an impact on the students they teach.

Administrato Attitudes

Often times, teachers take their cues and attitudes from the principal and the other administrators at the school. In a recent study of principals and teachers regarding inclusion, it was discovered that principals were often more supportive of inclusion programs than the general education teachers who they supervised (Cook, 2001). It is possible that the

philosophical support experienced in the prior studies was also present in this current study. However, the general education teachers had to cope with the practical daily implementation of the inclusion program while the principals were able to approach it from a purely theoretical viewpoint. Thus, there existed a difference in attitude between teachers and principals when it came to including special education students into the regular classroom.

Pace's (2003) study recommended that principals and other administrators contemplating inclusive education programs need to consider teacher attitudes about inclusion prior to its implementation. The researchers determined that one-day workshops or one time orientation meetings were not effective. There must be a move away from a purely technical approach of inclusion to an understanding of the larger issues involved. Further, they recommended that in order to improve teacher attitudes towards inclusion, on-going workshops and professional development programs should address their concerns about inclusion.

Positive attitudes of key personnel were seen as critical prerequisites for successful inclusion. In a review of four decades of attitudinal research, Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) reported that 65% of general education teachers indicated support for the nebulous concept of inclusion. However, when items were termed more specifically, an average of only 40.5% of general education teachers conceptually agreed with inclusion (Cook, 2001). Additionally, only 38%, 29%, 28%, and 11%, respectively, reported that they had adequate material support, expertise or training, time, and personnel support for successful implementation of inclusion. These less than optimistic attitudes among general education teachers appear to portend difficulty in introducing and successfully implementing inclusive reforms. However, these attitudes, as well as their effects on included students, may be mitigated by positive attitudes of other influential school personnel (Cook, 2001).

Cook, Semmel, and Gerber (1999) also concluded that administrator support is necessary in the development of inclusion programs. Their study found that often, teachers are resistant to novel approaches to programs, such as inclusion types of classrooms. In order for change to occur, such as the implementation of the inclusive education model, administrators

must first provide support and technical assistance. Second, administrators need to help teachers gain a better understanding of the purpose of inclusion. Otherwise, teachers will lack the required commitment that is necessary to make such a program successful. The third outcome from the study indicated that people need to feel respected and have their work valued. In the inclusion process, administrators need to create a collaborative culture in the school and assist teachers to develop skills required for collaborative service delivery.

Cook, Semmel & Gerber's (1998) study asked and answered the important question of how much impact educator attitude has on the success or failure of inclusive programs. The outcomes suggested that the attitudes of administrators are less frequently measured than the well-documented attitudes of general education teachers. Second, despite the relative scarcity of research on these educators, their attitudes appear to be critical determinants of the success of inclusion reforms. Finally, the examination provided a unique comparison of those who determine school policy and school level resource allocation (i.e., principals) and those with the most training and experience regarding the instruction and management of students with mild disabilities (i.e., special education teachers).

It is theorized that attitudes toward inclusion vary as a function of proximity to the implementation of inclusion policies (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004). Principals are relatively detached from the practice of inclusion and are thus predicted to hold a more positive attitude towards the reform movement. Positive attitudes among principals may help to explain recent increases in inclusive programs. Alternatively, special education teachers, unlike principals, are directly involved in implementing inclusion, and are predicted to be unsupportive. The relative lack of support among special educators is hypothesized to both reflect and exacerbate deleterious effects of inclusion reforms on many students with mild disabilities (Cook, 2001). Cook's study also suggested that it is these conflicting attitudes among principals and special education teachers that may explain the paradoxical simultaneous expansion and disappointment associated with inclusion reforms.

Pace (2003) also examined the relationship between administrator attitudes towards

inclusion and the subsequent attitudes of the teachers who teach under that administrator. According to Pace, if a supervisor does not accept or is uncomfortable with a concept, such as inclusion, in all likelihood this will be communicated to the student teacher. Supervisors, either implicitly, by not reinforcing strategies that promote inclusion, or explicitly, in conversations about teaching and learning, will make their feelings known. Obviously, this can become a major barrier to educational change.

Special Education Teacher Attitudes

Research findings determined that it is not only the general education teachers who need to have positive attitudes for the success of inclusion programs. The results also indicated that successful inclusion is dependent upon the positive attitude of special education teachers as well. Special education teachers, who began their careers pre-inclusion, were accustomed to being in one classroom with a variety of disabled students, who receive their entire education from the teacher in that classroom. Inclusion creates an organizational nightmare for some teachers who are not able to multitask. This means that the special education teacher who is frustrated or not ready to embrace the inclusion program may pass that attitude not only to the general education teacher, but also to the disabled students who are taking part in the special education inclusion program (Cook, 2001). Cawley et al. (2002) found that special education teachers working in inclusive situations reported having a greater sense of belonging to the school community, an enriched view of education, a greater breadth of knowledge of the general education system, and a greater overall enjoyment of teaching.

Conversely, studies by Cook, Semmel, & Gerber (1999) and Fennick & Liddy (2001), suggested some concerns special education teachers have indicated concerning inclusive practices. Specifically, special education teachers indicated concern about job security. They also feared that the inclusive classroom would place them in a subordinate position to the regular education teacher. Some revealed concern that they may be viewed as a visitor or an aide by the students due to their perceived subordinate role in the general education classroom.

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Influence of Student Variables

Student variables also appear to play a role in teacher perception towards inclusion. Diebold & VonEschenbach (1991) found that teachers are generally more receptive toward including students with mild or high incidence disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities) and less receptive toward including children with severe or low-incidence disabilities (e.g., autism) in their regular education classrooms. General education teacher candidates were also more favorable toward including students with intellectual disabilities than for children with emotional or behavioral difficulties (Hastings and Oakford, 2003). Likewise, teachers in the Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden (2000) study also indicated that they are more willing to accept having a special education student in the classroom who is mildly disabled than they are willing to have a severely disabled student in the classroom. When questioned as to why they were less in favor of including more severely disabled students, teachers responded that they did not have the time to prepare for such students.

The 2001 study by Cook, specifically investigated whether teachers' attitude towards their included students with disabilities differed as a function of the disability's severity. For the purposes of this study, obvious disabilities were identified as mental retardation, autism, hearing impairments, multiple disabilities, orthopedic disabilities, visual impairments, and other health impairments. Hidden disabilities were identified as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Learning Disabilities, and Behavioral Disorders. The findings suggested a level of discomfort with knowing how to address the needs of the students identified as being severely disabled. This study, again, supported the need for teachers of inclusive classrooms to receive appropriate training so that they feel knowledgeable regarding appropriate instructional techniques to use with severe and obvious disabilities. The study also identified the need for the ongoing and systematic support of special educators and other inclusive teachers so that they do not feel ineffective when working with such students.

Inclusion of Intellectually Gifted Students

Another area of inclusion involves the gifted, disabled student. When a student is both gifted and learning disabled, it presents a particularly challenging situation for the general education teacher who has that student mainstreamed into his or her classroom. Many teachers believe that if a student is intellectually gifted, then the student's disabilities do not affect educational progress and, therefore, do not need to be addressed. This can present a challenge in the event that a gifted special education student is in a classroom where the teacher does not support the concept of inclusion. In addition, if the teacher believes he or she lacks the skills to teach an inclusion student, the urge may exist to treat the gifted disabled student as purely gifted and resent, or possibly ignore, the needs of the disability for that student (Hegeman, 2001).

The needs of minority students in gifted and talented programs are often overlooked. Ford (1998) indicated that Hispanic, Native Indian, and African-American students are underrepresented in programs tailored for such exceptional students. Ochos, Robles-Pina, Garcia, and Breunig (1999) further indicated that minority students have less access to programs geared to the gifted learner. In such situations where students are underrepresented, the strong possibility of denying access to services, programs, and resources specific to their needs exists. Inclusive programming may help to deliver services to the gifted, as well as disabled, students within the regular education curriculum.

Multicultural Issues

In 1968, Dunn raised concerns about the disproportionate representation of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds placed into special education categories. Concerns about the unbalanced representation of culturally diverse students in special educational placements have been in existence since Dunn's study which occurred over thirty years ago. At present, there continues to exist a high proportion of diverse students who are being educated within the urban school environment. Specifically, in such an environment, 51 percent or more of the student enrollment is an ethnic minority; it has a high percentage of low-

income households; and the school districts are located in or on the fringe of older cities (Dejong & Glover, 2003). The United States Department of Education defines urban school districts as "one in which 75 percent or more of the households served are in the central city of a metropolitan area" p. 16 (US Department of Education, 1993). Typical challenges associated with the urban school districts include: low academic achievement; invasive politics; financial crisis and limited funds; and education impacted by crime, drugs, vandalism, teen pregnancy and gang violence. In addition, difficulties frequently include a rapid turnover in administrators, conflicts with teachers' unions, disengaged or angry parents, and apathy, if not outright anatognism, from state lawmakers (Dejong & Glover, 2003).

A high percentage of students are identified as requiring special education services in impoverished urban school districts (Salend, 2005). African-American students, particularly males, are more likely to be placed in classes for individuals who are mildly mentally retarded or have a serious emotional disturbance (Gardner, 2001). Patton & Townsend (1999) noted that African-American and Native American males are overrepresented in terms of their classification as students with three main types of disabilities: learning disabilities, mental retardation, and emotional disturbance. In addition, the researchers found that the overrepresentation of such students in separate programs hinders their educational and social performance by limiting their access to the general education curriculum. The inclusive classroom would, therefore, enable such students to gain access to the regular education curriculum. The problem, however, continues to lie in the negative attitude teachers hold in regards to having students with emotional disorders in the general classroom. Teachers do not like having children with disruptive types of behaviors in their classroom (Gable & Laycock, 1991; Landrum, 1992). Aside from the apparent issues that arise with severe problematic behaviors in the classroom situation, research has suggested that teachers perceive the concept of inclusion as more work. They also are uncertain of their own abilities in regards to having the knowledge to teach such students. Lastly, teachers are not sure of the benefits to having such students in their regular classroom (Landrum, 1992; Carter, 1991). Kearney and Durand (1992)

noted that such results should not be surprising. After all, they note that it is virtually impossible for teachers to hold positive perceptions about teaching students with learning and/or behavioral disorders if they do not know how to help them.

Nieto (2003) and Scott (2002) concluded that multicultural education and inclusion are closely tied together. They share many challenges in the educational arena. Both seek to provide access and equality for all learners. The mutual goal is to provide excellence for all learners, not simply a certain group. In light of the No Child Left Behind Act, districts need to attain this level of excellence for all students. In addition, the researchers found that both multicultural education and inclusion focus individual's strengths and needs, as well as their diversity. In both circumstances, the use of reflective practices and differentiated instruction is utilized to support student learning and progress. Lastly, both areas recognize and seek to utilize the community and collaboration.

The issue of special education is a worldwide issue. In Italy, school districts used to have separate schools for students identified as having learning difficulties. In 1977, the nation abolished those schools and created neighborhood schools in which inclusion was a given element of education. After inclusion had been part of the school district for 20 years, a study was conducted to assess teacher attitudes about using and teaching inclusion classes. The study used 523 participants who were teachers in Northern and Central Italy schools. Surveys were administered to all participants and targeted common core items that had been taken from a review of previous survey questions. The end results suggested that teachers were generally supportive of inclusion as a concept, but had concerns with some of the specific areas of professional training and development about teaching inclusion students (Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1998).

The above cited study was somewhat different from American studies, as it did not include learning disabled students. The laws in Italy concerning disabled students are also different from the educational regulations in United States. Specifically, teachers generally have no more than one student with a disability in any class. Moreover, if a classroom contains a student with a

disability, that classroom can contain no more than 20 students in total; the maximum number of students otherwise is 25. For each student with a disability certification (between 1% and 2.5% of the population, not including students with learning disabilities) classroom teachers are supported for a period ranging from 6 to 18 hours per week by a special education teacher, referred to as a support teacher. This special education teacher holds the same training as a general education teacher, supplemented with support teacher training, but receives the same salary, and may be relatively dependent on the decisions of the general education teacher. Each support teacher can have no more than four students with disabilities in his or her caseload, with the mean ratio being one support teacher to 2.2 students with disabilities.

In another study of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion that was conducted in England, the results were similar to the studies conducted in the United States and Italy. Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden (2000) administered an "Attitude Towards Inclusion Scale" in one school district in one Local Education Authority in the southwest of England. The results replicated findings from both the United States and Italy. Two-thirds of the teachers surveyed agreed with the general concept of inclusion. However, only one-third or less believed they had sufficient time, skills, training, and resources necessary to implement inclusive programs.

The survey in the Italian study by Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs, & Mastropieri (1998) was administered to elementary and middle school teachers. The survey by Avarmidis, Bayliss, and Burden (2000) was administered to both elementary and secondary level teachers. The central questions targeted teacher attitudes about inclusion. The results revealed that teachers were generally supportive of the inclusion model. However, despite the more extensive supports provided to teachers in the United States, the teachers evidenced concern about the lack of sufficient training and support services provided to them in order to successfully implement the inclusion model. The positive view of the inclusive model appears to span across international lines. Likewise, the perception that teachers require more support and training to effectively implement inclusive programming for special needs students also spans across cultures.

Inclusion and Collaboration

Given the 2005 landmark ruling of the Gaskins case, which legally reinforces the fundamental premise behind IDEA (now IDEIA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2005) and states that students with disabilities are to receive services within the least restrictive environment, the question about the future of inclusion arises. The distinction between inclusion and collaboration has been blurred (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004). It seems that collaboration has been equated with inclusion, but the terms are not synonymous. Collaboration describes the relationship between people as they work toward a common goal. Sometimes that goal is supporting a student with disabilities in the general education environment. In such an instance, collaboration can facilitate inclusion but the terms do not equate to the same concept. At present, collaboration describes the relationship between people working toward a common goal. Sometimes that goal is supporting a student with disabilities in a general education classroom. Presently, in school terminology, collaboration is talked about as if it the way kids "are served" (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004).

Mastropieri and Scruggs's work defines co-teaching as a service delivery approach that involves a regular education teacher, combined with either a special education teacher or an aide, working together for the purpose of educating all students in the classroom. In a typical inclusion classroom, the aide or special education teacher are just as likely to assist a regular education student as they are a special education student. The same is true for the regular education teacher. The authors purport that it is a win-win proposition with students benefiting, as well as having plenty of teaching assistance in the classroom.

Inclusion is much more than physically placing a disabled student into a regular education classroom. It is misused when it is utilized to reduce special education services. All children can not be expected to learn the same way and regular education teachers can not be expected to teach children with special needs without the needed support (Keenan, 1997). Inclusion is best utilized when all students participate and are exposed to all aspects of school. This exposure can only occur when there exists collaboration between regular education teachers and special

education teachers and resources. In such a manner, strategies can be developed to accommodate the vast learning styles of all students.

As noted by Keenan (1997), attitudes and beliefs are not easy to change. If a teacher is under the belief that the separate special education classroom is the best place for a particular student's disability, particularly if that teacher has been traditionally accustomed to the notion that only special education teachers are the school personnel who know how to teach certain students, a shift in attitude is unlikely. The initial mechanism in altering such attitudes requires that all people involved with a student's educational process; that is all teachers, administrators, parents, and individuals in the community, examine their own philosophical beliefs on the issue. Individuals need to ask themselves questions pertaining to their own beliefs and be able to provide honest answers. Keenan (1997) asserts that prior to the implementation of inclusive practices, many preliminary meetings and the development of a task force is necessary. Through such avenues, various discussions on inclusion with representatives from all levels of personnel, parents, and community members can be initiated and concerns can be identified. It seems that people need to have the opportunity to explore their own feelings as well as have the opportunity to have questions and concerns addressed. Only then will teachers and other staff be ready to effectively accept the information in order to carry out their role in a way that contributes to effective inclusion.

It is important to note that changes need to occur within teacher preparation programs for the concept of inclusion to be fully understood and accepted. As noted in the Carroll (2003) study, in many universities, general and special education programs continue to operate under a dual system. Teacher training programs tend to utilize a model that prepares regular education teachers to expect that they will teach regular education students and special education teachers will teach special education students. Regular education teachers, therefore, feel ill equipped and overwhelmed by the prospect of teaching children who have special needs. Teaching programs need to prepare teachers to work with all children. Since teachers set the tone of classrooms, the success of inclusion programs may very well depend upon the attitudes of teachers as they

interact with students who have disabilities. Generally, experts are in agreement that complete integration and acceptance of students with learning disabilities will happen only after there is a long-term change in attitude (Beattie, Anderson, & Antonak, 1997).

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This study investigated teachers' attitude regarding inclusion of children with special needs in grades Kindergarten through 12 in a small Pennsylvania urban school district. This chapter is organized into four sections. These sections describe the research design utilized; the participants; the materials utilized; and the research procedures.

Research Design

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

As posed in Chapter I, the research questions for this study are as follows: Are there differences in attitude about inclusion related to gender, age, educational level, teaching level, and number of special education courses taken; What is the relationship between attitude and number of years at their current teaching level, total number of years teaching, and teaching children with special needs in their classrooms; and What types of inclusive education training methods do teachers believe to be the most and least beneficial?

The study consisted of quantitative analysis using descriptive statistics. Quantitative analyses were conducted using the results of the quantitative data. Frequencies and correlations were examined. ANOVAs were performed to identify relationships between the independent

variables of teacher gender, age, education levels, teaching level, teaching experience, teacher

education in teaching special education students, and grade level taught. For the purposes of the

statistical computations, the Total Attitude was utilized. Conceptually, the operational definition

of Total Attitude is the total score of the 42 question Teacher Survey Instrument, which is

comprised of five subdomains identified as integral components of teacher attitude in the review

of the literature. The subdomains are identified as Student Variables, Peer Support,

Administrative Support, Collaboration, and Training. In regards to the Total Attitude, the higher

the score, the more positive the attitude. The subdomains are not utilized in the statistical

computations, as they independently do not have statistical strength to allow for such calculations

to be performed. However, their frequencies are listed in Table 5 so that individual responses

within each subdomain can be examined in relation to the literature. Open ended questions

completed by teachers at the end of the survey instrument helped to identify the training methods

that teachers rated as being the most beneficial and least beneficial to obtaining training about

inclusion.

Participants

Teachers in a small, urban school district were chosen as the population for this study. It is

considered a convenience sample for the purposes of this research. A total of 312 certified

individuals were employed for the 2005-2006 school year, according to information obtained

from the district administration office. Though small, the National Center for Education Statistics

(NCES, 2004) identifies the district as being urban. It is located in Chester City, the oldest city

in Pennsylvania, and holds characteristics that research has identified as an urban district. That

is, it has low academic achievement; invasive politics; financial crises and limited funds; and

education impacted by crime, drugs, vandalism, teen pregnancy and gang violence (Dejong &

Troy, 2003). Sixty-one percent of the teachers hold a degree beyond the Bachelor's degree. The certified staff consists of the following: 241 regular education teachers, 49 special education teachers, 5 Psychologists, 7 counselors, and 4 social workers. According to the District's Office of Accountability, Chester Upland student enrollment as of October 1, 2005 was 4,788. The demographic information for Pre-K through grade 12 is as follows: 0% Asian, 90.4% African American, 6.7% Hispanic, 0% American Indian, 2.9% Caucasian, 49.4% Male, and 50.6% Female.

The district is comprised of three elementary schools, three middle schools, one high school, and one alternative education school. There are 18.3% of the students identified as requiring special education services while Pennsylvania's state average is 14%. Out of the 18.3%, or 876, students are identified as requiring special education services. The current district data reports the following information on the number of students identified in each of the disability categories: 583 Learning Disability,151 Emotional Disturbance, 62 Mental Retardation, 61 Speech or Language Impairment, 4 Autism, 4 Multiple Disabilities, 1 Visual Impairment, 2 Traumatic Brain Injury, 1 Deafness/Blindness, and 7 Other Health Impairment.

Out of the special education student population, 61.9% receive specially designed instruction in a part-time learning environment (defined as >60% time spent outside of the regular classroom); 26.5% receive specially designed instruction in a resource setting (defined as 21-60% time spent outside of the regular classroom); and 3.4% receive itinerant specially designed instruction (defined as <21% time spent outside of the regular classroom). The Pennsylvania state data reveals that statewide, 21.7% special education students receive specially designed instruction in a part-time situation; 12.6% of the students receive specially designed instruction in a resource room situation; and 37.2% of the students receive services as itinerant

support. It is evident that the district manner in serving students with special needs is more restrictive than the state average.

The survey, developed for this study, was distributed to each of the 241 regular education teachers and 49 special education teachers in the district; 290 teachers in total. It was anticipated that 162 teachers (56%) would have completed and returned the survey to the investigator. In order to accurately the analyze data, it was anticipated that at least 35 participants would have been obtained from each level (elementary, middle, and high). Each teacher was provided a cover sheet (see Appendix A) stating a general purpose for the study, that their identity and responses would be kept confidential, participation in the study was purely voluntary, and that their sending back the completed survey was their consent to participate in the study.

Materials

Because a review of the literature did not yield a specific instrument to address the information sought from this study, a survey was designed by the researcher. The information addressed issues pertaining to teacher perception on training, administrative support, peer support, collaboration, and student variables as they relate to inclusion. The survey was developed based on areas of concern identified through the Review of Literature. The survey, *Teacher Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education*, consists of Parts A, B, and C. (see Appendix B). Part A of the survey gathered teacher demographic information; specifically, gender, age range, educational level, current level the teacher is teaching, number of years teaching at the current level, number of years teaching in total, and the amount of training received in teaching children with special needs. Part B of the survey consists of 42 questions related to teacher attitudes regarding inclusive education. The teachers were instructed to circle their response on the 4 point Likert scale. They were instructed to SD (Strongly Disagree), D (Disagree), A (Agree), or

SA (Strongly Agree). Part C of the survey consists of open-ended responses related to the type of training teachers perceive would most benefit them in effectively implementing inclusion, and any other concerns they may hold in regards to teaching students with special needs in their regular classroom.

In order to establish face validity for the survey, the instrument was reviewed by ten expert reviewers, consisting of certified school psychologists from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Suggestions were incorporated into a revision of the instrument. The survey was administered to elementary, middle, and high school regular and special education teachers in the Chester Upland School District.

Research Procedures

After the approval of the research proposal, the following procedure was utilized to conduct the research. A letter was submitted to the superintendent for permission to conduct the research (see Appendix C). With approval, a cover letter (see Appendix A) and the *Teacher Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education* (see Appendix B) was provided to elementary, middle, and high school teachers. The letter clearly stated that informed consent is provided through the teacher completing and mailing the survey back to the researcher. The letter also indicated that teacher participation is voluntary, that respondent anonymity would be maintained at all times, that all information would be kept confidential, and that the participant could view the results of the study. The participants were provided with two ways in which to contact the researcher or the principle investigator of the study if they had concerns or questions. Participants were provided with a pre-stamped, self-addressed envelope in which they mailed the survey back to the researcher.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to determine teachers' attitude about the inclusion of

children with special needs in the regular classroom situation. The primary interest was to

identify differences and relationships in attitude with respect to gender, age, education, teaching

level, teaching experience, and experience with special education. In addition, perceived barriers

and training needs related to inclusive education were explored. This chapter presents the results

of the data collected, including data entry, a description of the demographics, and a statistical

analysis of the results.

Data Entry, Scoring, and Screening

The data collected included responses from teachers (N=77) who completed the Attitudes

Regarding Inclusive Education Scale. The data was placed into a Microsoft Excel file with each

question as a variable in order to set up the database. This Excel file was then transferred and

converted into a Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 11.5 for analysis. The

Attitudes Regarding Inclusive Education Scale, the scale developed for this particular study,

comprised of 42 questions, served as the primary measure of teacher attitudes. Higher scores on

each item suggested positive attitudes regarding inclusive education. In order to answer the

research questions, the Total Attitude score was used for the analyses.

The data were entered in three parts. Part A included all demographic information

provided by the subjects. Part B consisted of the appropriate Likert scale response (1 = Strongly

Disgree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree) based on individual responses from

the participants. Finally, Part C involved qualitative responses from those participants who

provided additional data. Descriptive statistical analyses were calculated to determine

frequencies and percentages of survey responses.

The data were then screened for extreme scores (outliers) that might influence the

statistical results. To accomplish this, standardized z-scores were computed on the attitude scale,

as well as years teaching at current level, total years teaching, and years teaching special needs

children. An extreme score was defined as a z-score of 3.29 or greater. A score of this magnitude

would be significantly different from the score distribution at the .01 level of significance. Using

this criterion, no extreme z-scores were identified and all data were retained for the four

continuous variables. The distributions of the four variables were then checked for the

assumption of normality and linearity. This was done by observing scatter plots, histograms,

skewness, and kurtosis. Observation of these indices showed that the data met the assumptions

adequately and that the statistical tests could be employed.

Demographics

The population for the study was comprised of certified teachers in a small urban

Pennsylvania school district. During the course of data collection, 290 certified teachers were

employed for the 2005-2006 school year. Seventy-seven teachers completed and returned the

survey. This sample of 77 teachers comprises the data used for the analyses presented below.

Table 1 provides the demographic characteristics of the sample. The number of

respondents and percentages are provided for the categorical variables with the means, standard

deviations, and ranges shown for the continuous variables. Complete data (N = 77) is shown for

the categorical variables. Not all participants completed information for the continuous variables,

and thus, the information is based on the number of subjects completing these variables, shown

in parentheses in Table 1.

There was a greater response rate from females than from males. Age 45 and greater comprised 62% of the sample and the majority of participants achieved a master's level or above in education. Only one respondent was at the doctoral level, and was included in the master +30 group for analysis. The level of teaching was well distributed among the three teaching levels. The number of special education courses received, categorized by the respondents who had received two or fewer courses and those who had taken three or more courses, suggested an equal split. Few participants reported having no special needs courses (4%). Years teaching current level, total years teaching, and years teaching students with special needs were similar, though a wide range of experience was shown within each area.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participating Teachers

Characteristics	f	%	M	SD	Range
Gender					
Male	14	18			
Female	63	82			
Age Range (years)					
< 36	13	17			
36 – 45	16	16			
> 45	48	62			
Educational Level					
Bachelor's	6	8			
Bachelor's +30hrs	10	13			
Master's	46	60			
Master's +30	15	19			
Current Level Teaching					
Elementary	38	49			
Middle	22	29			
High School	17	22			
Special Needs Courses					
2 or less	40	52			
3 or more	33	43			
No response	4	5			
Years teaching at current level (N=76)			14.61	10.38	1-38
Total years teaching (N=77)			19.84	10.04	2-38
Special needs teaching experience (N=73)			13.93	8.99	1-37

Analyses

This section reports the results associated with the research questions introduced in Chapter III. The questions are summarized as follows:

1) Are there differences in attitude about inclusion related to

    a. Gender

    b. Age

    c. Educational level

    d. Teaching level

    e. Number of special education courses taken

2) What is the relationship between attitude and

    a. Number of years at their current teaching level

    b. Total number of years teaching

    c. Number of years teaching children with special needs in their classrooms

3) What types of inclusive education training methods do teachers believe to be the most and least beneficial?

Question 1 analyses employed analysis of variance (ANOVA), while Pearson correlation was used for Question 2. Question 3 used percentages associated with teacher beliefs about the benefits of seven different training methods.

First, as an overall group, the mean for teachers ($N = 77$) on the attitude scale was 101.63, with a standard deviation of 9.04. The scores ranged from a low of 78 to a high of 125. The lowest possible score was 42, with the highest possible score being 168. Thus, the actual scores were well within the possible bounds. As discussed above, the screening for outliers, normality,

and linearity revealed that the score distributions met the assumptions underlying both ANOVA and correlational data analyses.

Table 2 provides the results for the analyses conducted related to Research Question 1. Cell sizes (n), means (M) being compared, standard deviations (SD), F ratios, and actual probabilities are listed from left to right for each analysis for ease of reading. For statistical significance, the .05 level was set as the criterion.

The analysis for age was statistically significant, with the actual probability being at the .03 level. No other differences were found. This is more obvious by looking at the means for education, teaching level, and experience where the means differ by less than two points.

Because the ANOVA F ratio only indicates if there is an overall difference between or among groups, it does not indicate where the difference, or differences, may be. When there are just two groups the difference, and its direction, can be easily determined by looking at the two means. When there are more that two means being compared, as with the age variable, a follow up analysis may be done to identify where the difference is. In the case of age, it can be seen that the age group that had the highest attitude was the '36 and under group', with a mean of 106.78. The lowest group was the '36 through 45 group', with a mean of 97.86. The difference between these two means was 8.92. This difference was significant at the .05 level. Analyses on the remaining two combinations of age groups found no other differences.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and ANOVAs for Differences in Attitude Towards Inclusive Education for Gender, Age, Educational Level, Teaching Level, and Number of Special Needs Courses

Variable	n	M	SD	F	p
Gender					
Male	14	98.54	8.81	2.02	.16
Female	63	102.31	9.02		
Age					
<36	13	106.78	8.40	3.76*	.03
36 -45	16	97.86	9.96		
>45	48	101.48	8.39		
Educational level					
Bachelor's degree	6	102.67	9.48	.08	.97
Bachelor's +30	10	101.16	11.67		
Master's degree	46	101.86	8.74		
Master's +30	15	100.80	9.04		
Teaching level					
Elementary	38	102.89	10.54	.74	.48
Middle	22	100.27	5.85		
High School	17	100.54	8.89		
Special needs courses					
Two or less	40	101.00	10.47	.75	.39
Three or more	33	102.86	7.23		

*$p < .05$

Table 3 shows the analyses employed on the three correlations conducted in relation to Research Question 2. The questions concerned the relationship between attitude and several measures associated with number of years teaching. The N for these analyses was 72, rather than 77, due to missing data. To reach statistical significance at the .05 level, the correlation had to reach .23 or greater, and as such, it may be seen that none of the three correlations (r) reached that level, suggesting little relationship with attitude.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations between Years Teaching at Current Level, Total Years Teaching, Years Experience Teaching Special Needs Students and Attitude Toward Inclusive Education (N = 72)

Variable	M	SD	r
Attitude	101.47	9.23	
Years at Current Level	14.61	10.38	.18
Total Years Teaching	19.84	10.04	.06
Special Needs Experience	13.93	8.10	-.14

The last part of the survey associated with Research Question 3 asked the participants about their beliefs about different methods of receiving information or training on inclusive education. Participants responded on a seven point scale from 1 (most beneficial) to 7 (least beneficial). The seven points were reduced to three categories for more parsimonious reporting. Responses of 1, 2, and 3 were labeled as "Most beneficial," the middle response of 4 was labeled as "Neutral," while responses 5, 6, and 7 were labeled "Least beneficial." Fifty-nine of the teachers responded to the question. Table 4 shows their rankings of the delivery methods associated with the three categories. Respondents rated out-of-district training as the most beneficial, with coursework ranking second, and district level in-service training being third. Clearly, being provided articles was ranked to be the least beneficial way to provide training. The remaining methods were distributed evenly.

Table 4

Ranking of Preferred Delivery Methods for Receiving Training about Inclusive Education
(N = 59)

Delivery Method	%
Out of district training	
Most beneficial	64
Least beneficial	20
Neutral	15
Coursework at college/university	
Most beneficial	59
Least beneficial	29
Neutral	12
District level in-service training	
Most beneficial	49
Least beneficial	39
Neutral	12
Consultation with special education teacher	
Most beneficial	42
Least beneficial	36
Neutral	22
School building level training	
Most beneficial	39
Least beneficial	41
Neutral	20
Consultation with school psychologist	
Most beneficial	39
Least beneficial	42
Neutral	19
Articles (provided)	
Most beneficial	9
Least beneficial	90
Neutral	2

Note. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 5

Frequencies of Total Individual Responses Within Each Subdomain on the Teacher Survey

Subdomain	Response			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree Strongly	Agree

Student Variables

Q7
Students who are 2 or more
years below grade level should
be in special education classes

| | 11.7% | 53.2% | 23.4% | 11.7% |

Q 8
Students who are diagnosed as
autistic need to be in special
education classes

| | 5.2% | 41.6% | 37.7% | 15.6% |

Q 9
All efforts should be made to
educate students who have
an IEP in the regular education
classroom.

| | 1.3% | 27.3% | 40.3% | 29.9% |

Q 10
Students who are diagnosed
as mentally retarded should be
in special education classrooms.

| | 2.6% | 24.7% | 49.4% | 23.4% |

Q 11
Students who are verbally
aggressive towards others
can be maintained in regular
education classrooms.

| | 23.4% | 42.9% | 31.2% | 2.6% |

Q 25
Students who are physically
aggressive towards others can
be maintained in regular
education classrooms.

| | 32.5% | 49.4% | 16.9% | 0% |

| | Response | | | |
Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree Strongly	Agree
Student Variables				
Q 26 All students who have an IEP for any reason need to receive their education in a special education classroom.	24.7%	62.3%	9.1%	2.6%
Q 27 Students who display speech and language difficulties should be in special education classes.	23.4%	63.6%	10.4%	1.3%
Q 38 Students who are 1 year below grade level should be in special education classes.	28.6%	59.7%	10.4%	1.3%
Q 39 Students who are identified as depressed but do not display overt disruptive behavior should be in regular education classes.	3.9%	22.1%	63.6%	10.4%
Peer Support				
Q 4 My colleagues are willing to help me with issues which may arise when I have students with an IEP in my classroom.	3.9%	11.7%	64.9%	19.5%
Q 22 I can approach my colleagues for assistance when needed if I have students with special needs in my classroom.	5.2%	9.1%	64.9%	19.5%
Q 29 My colleagues are approachable when I ask for their advise when I teach students with special needs.	1.3%	7.8%	66.2%	23.4%

	Response			
Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree Strongly	Agree

Peer Support

Q 37
I feel comfortable in approaching my colleagues for help when I teach students with special needs.

	2.6%	15.6%	59.7%	22.1%

Q 41
My colleagues will try to place all of their special needs students in my classroom if I start including students with an IEP in my regular classroom.

	23.4%	53.2%	16.9%	6.5%

Administrative Support

Q 3
I am encouraged by administrators to attend conferences/workshops on teaching students with special needs.

	32.5%	37.7%	24.7%	5.2%

Q 14
I can approach my administrators with concerns I hold teaching students who have special needs.

	18.2%	24.7%	40.3%	16.9%

Q 15
I feel supported by my administrators when faced with challenges presented by students with behavioral difficulties in my classroom.

	24.7%	32.5%	31.2%	11.7%

Q 20
My administrators provide me with sufficient support when I have students with an IEP in my classroom.

	29.9%	39.0%	24.7%	5.2%

	Response			
Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree Strongly	Agree

Administrative Support

Q 21 I am provided with enough time in order to attend conferences/ workshops in teaching students with an IEP in my classroom.	40.3%	42.9%	14.3%	1.3%
Q 31 I am provided with sufficient material in order to be able to make appropriate accommodations for students with special needs.	37.7%	41.6%	18.2%	2.6%
Q 35 I feel supported by my Administrators when faced with challenges presented by students with learning difficulties in my classroom.	27.3%	29.9%	33.8%	9.1%
Q 36 I am provided with monetary Support in order to attend conferences/workshops on teaching students with special needs.	67.5%	24.7%	7.8%	0%

Collaboration

Q 5 I feel comfortable in working collaboratively with special education teachers when students with an IEP are in my classroom.	3.9%	9.1%	50.6%	35.1%
Q 6 I welcome collaborative teaching when I have a student with an IEP in my classroom.	0%	6.5%	46.8%	45.5%

| | Response | | | |
Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree Strongly	Agree
Collaboration				
Q 12 Collaborative teaching of children with special needs can be effective particularly when students with an IEP are placed in a regular classroom.	2.6%	22.1%	61.0%	14.4%
Q 13 Special education teachers should teach students who hold an IEP.	0%	33.8%	48.1%	16.9%
Q 23 Regular education teachers should not be responsible for teaching children with special needs.	24.7%	49.4%	19.5%	5.2%
Q 24 I like being the only teacher in the classroom.	3.9%	45.5%	36.4%	3.0%
Q 28 I should only be responsible for teaching students who are not identified as having special needs.	19.5%	63.6%	9.1%	7.8%
Q 30 Both regular education teachers and special education teachers should teach students with an IEP.	3.9%	13.0%	59.7%	32.4%
Q 40 Special education teachers might lose their jobs if I teach children with an IEP.	41.6%	48.1%	7.8%	2.6%

Subdomain	Response			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree Strongly	Agree

Training

Q 1
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students with cognitive delays and deficits in daily living skills.

	11.7%	35.1%	15.6%	15.6%

Q 2
I need more training in order to appropriately teach students with an IEP for learning problems.

	15.6%	22.1%	49.4%	13.0%

Q 16
My district provides me with sufficient out of district training opportunities in order for me to appropriately teach students with disabilities.

	53.2%	40.3%	5.2%	1.3%

Q 17
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students with behavioral difficulties.

	16.9%	39.0%	33.8%	10.4%

Q 18
My educational background has prepared me to teach students with special needs.

	11.7%	28.6%	42.9%	15.6%

Q 19
I am provided with sufficient in-service training through my school district which allows me the ability to teach students with an IEP.

	42.9%	35.1%	18.2%	2.6%

Q 32
My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students with speech impairments.

	5.2%	26.0%	55.8%	13.0%

Subdomain	Response			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree Strongly	Agree
Training				
Q 33 My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach studens who are 1 year below level.	22.1%	18.2%	53.2%	6.5%
Q 34 I need more training in order to appropriately teach students with an IEP for behavioral problems.	36.8%	18.4%	42.1%	2.6%
Q 42 My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students who are 2 or more years below level.	9.1%	24.7%	51.9%	14.3%

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitude of K-12 teachers regarding inclusive education. Specifically, the question as to whether differences in attitude about inclusion exist based on teachers' gender, age, educational level, teaching level, and number of special education courses taken. Additionally, relationships were examined between: attitude and number of years teachers are teaching at their current teaching level; attitude and the total number of years teaching; and attitude and the number of years teaching children with special needs in their classroom. Lastly, the types of inclusive education training methods teachers believe to be the most and least beneficial were examined. Due to the indication that inclusion will likely become more prevalent in classrooms over the next ten years, as a result of numerous acts of legislation that have ordered special education students out of isolation and into classrooms with their regular education counterparts, it is important to ascertain teacher attitudes regarding inclusive education. Given that regular education teachers are key service providers in teaching students with special needs in the inclusive classroom, their attitude regarding inclusive education is a contributing factor to its success or failure.

The results of this study suggest that no significant difference exists between male and female teachers in relation to their attitudes regarding inclusive education. Although not statistically significant, the gender difference suggests the possibility that female teacher attitudes may be more positive towards inclusion than that of the male teachers.

According to the results, both male and female teachers generally hold a neutral attitude regarding inclusion. The results are consistent with the existing research that suggests that

teachers, overall, are not adverse to the concept of inclusion (Barherhuff & Wheatley, 2005; Cook, 2001; Chung, 1998; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

A difference was found in regards to attitude and teacher age. Teachers below the age of 36 hold a significantly higher (more positive) attitude ($p<.05$) towards inclusive education than teachers in any other age bracket specified for this study (i.e., 36-45 and above 45). According to Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996), general education teachers' attitudes and beliefs about instructing students with disabilities are learned and appear to be influenced by the amount of knowledge they have with regard to a particular individual or group. Similarly, Cook (2001) revealed that teacher attitudes about inclusion in their classrooms stemmed from their lack of confidence and perceived lack of proper training in that area.

Research has shown that general educators receive limited preparation to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities (Salend & Duhaney, 1999; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1998). However, as time progresses, it seems more courses are offered to teachers in their training programs. In 1985, 33 states required an undergraduate course in exceptionalities for general education teachers. In 1990, the number of states increased to 40 that required an undergraduate course on exceptional learners for the general education teacher (Matlock, Fielder, & Walsh, 2001). Thus, it is likely that teacher training programs, in more recent years, are including more coursework on exceptional learners.

Given the relationship between attitude and exposure or training, the significantly higher attitude measured in teachers below the age of 36 may be attributed to their having more exposure to teaching exceptional learners than their older counterparts who may not have been exposed to the teaching of exceptional learners in their teacher preparation training. Given this information, it would likely be very beneficial for university level teacher training programs to ensure that coursework in teaching children with special needs be provided to the trainees,

particularly given the indication that inclusion will likely become more prevalent in the classrooms over the next ten years as a result of the increasingly more stringent federal and state mandates promoting inclusive education. Again, research has demonstrated that a key component for proper implementation of inclusive education lies in teacher attitudes toward it. A more positive attitude is held by teachers who have had exposure to courses in teaching children with special needs. Teachers who hold a more positive attitude toward inclusive education tend to have more success in including children with special needs into their classrooms.

Ultimately, it is the students, both the exceptional and non-exceptional learners, who reap the benefits of inclusive education. Those benefits might include the exceptional learners at the elementary level who demonstrate higher standardized test scores, better grades, more attentive types of behavior, a higher mastery of their IEP goals, and an overall more positive view towards school (Hunt, Hirose-Hatae, Doering, Karasoff, & Goetz, 2000; Peetsma, 2001; and Shinn, Powell-Smith, Good, & Baker, 1997). Vaughn, Elbaun, Shumm, & Hughes (1998) found that students with learning disabilities made significant gains on peer ratings of acceptance and overall friendship quality after being placed in inclusive education situations.

At the secondary level, students with mild disabilities tend to make better educational gains and transitions, attain higher grades in content area courses, earn higher standardized test scores, and attend school more regularly than their counterparts who were serviced in pull-out special education programs (Rea, McLaughlin, & Walter-Thomas, 2002; Cawly, Hayden, Cade & Baker-Kroczynski, 2002).

For the non-exceptional learners, previous research indicated that these students tend to be more accepting and tolerant of exceptional learners. They will be able, as a result, to establish

social skills to make them better members of society (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004; Zionts & Callicott, 2002).

When examining the educational level of teachers, no difference in attitude was detected in teachers who hold a Bachelor's degree, Bachelor's +30 hours, Master's degree, or Master's +30 hours. Similarly, no difference in attitude was found with teachers who teach at the elementary, middle, or secondary level. Interestingly, previous research suggested that a difference in attitude towards inclusive education exists among elementary, middle, and high school level teachers. High school teachers face an entirely different set of challenges and circumstances when it comes to inclusion of special education students into the general education classroom.

High school teachers are often faced with over 100 students per day, as opposed to the 20 to 30 students with whom a regular elementary education teacher works. Furthermore, the majority of high school teachers are prepared as content specialists, and many are not inclined to make adaptations for individual students, such as the use of alternative curricula, adapted scoring/grading, or alternative plans (Matlock, Fiedler, & Walsh, 2001; Landrum, 1992). Moreover, many of today's high school teachers plan and direct their instruction toward the above average student, with evaluation based on a norm or average level of performance (Cook, 2001). There are concerns about middle and high school students, as well as fast paced environments, that may create teachers with negative views against inclusion as they feel special education students hold back the pace (Bargerhuff & Wheatley, 2005).

Pace (2003) also found that there exists a significant difference in how elementary school teachers view inclusion and how high school teachers view inclusion. Several reasons for the discrepancy appear to lie in the elementary teacher's smaller class size, fewer students, less

rigorous curriculum, and an overall teacher perception of not having enough support and training for the inclusion classroom.

Interestingly, no significant difference in attitude was detected between teachers who took two or less courses in teaching special needs children and teachers who took three or more courses in teaching children with special needs. It appears that a positive attitude is held so long as the teachers have some, even if minimal, exposure to teaching exceptional students.

The number of years teaching at their current teaching level did not appear to influence teacher attitude. The attitude remained generally positive no matter how long the teachers have been working at their current teaching level.

The total number of years teaching also did not influence teacher attitude towards inclusive education. Again, the attitude was generally positive.

The number of years teachers spent teaching children with special needs in their classroom did not appear to have an influence on the measure of attitude. Teachers indicated a generally neutral attitude despite the numbers of years they spent teaching students with special needs in their class.

Part C of the survey was associated with Research Question 3 that asked the teachers about their beliefs in respect to different methods that might benefit them the most in receiving training on inclusive education. They responded on a seven point scale from 1 (most beneficial) to 7 (least beneficial). The seven points were reduced to three categories for more parsimonious reporting. Responses of 1, 2, and 3 were labeled as "Most beneficial," the middle response of 4 was labeled as "Neutral", while responses 5, 6, and 7 were labeled "Least beneficial". Fifty-nine of the teachers responded to the question. Table 4 shows their rankings of the delivery methods associated with the three categories. Teacher respondents revealed that out-of-district training was believed to be most beneficial, with coursework ranking second and district level in-service

training being third. Providing articles was clearly believed to be the least beneficial way to provide training. The remaining methods were fairly evenly split. Given the research that indicates that exposure and training in teaching children with special needs influences teacher attitude toward inclusive education, it is worthwhile to examine how teachers believe training delivery methods are best delivered to them. Specifically, the need for regular education teachers to receive training through methods that they perceive as being the most beneficial is essential. This additional training is particularly important given the reality that inclusion will be more prevalent in schools in the very near future as a result of the more recent legal mandates in support of inclusive education. Additionally, as indicated by research, the lack of appropriate training is a key factor in preventing positive teacher attitudes in regards to inclusion. It would likely follow that teachers would be more receptive and make more gains from training programs they perceive as having the most value to them.

Although not found to be statistically strong, and therefore, not included in the analysis, it is noteworthy to examine some correlations in the variables associated with teacher attitude. The variables, which comprise the *Attitudes Regarding Inclusive Education*, are identified as Peer Support, Administrative Support, Training, and Collaboration.

Administrative Support correlated with Peer Support (.295 at the .05 level). Cook, Semmel, and Gerber (1999) concluded that administrator support is necessary for successful inclusion programming. Their study found that teachers are resistant to novel approaches to educational practices, such as inclusion types of classrooms. In order for change to occur, such as the implementation of the inclusive education model, administrators must first provide support and technical assistance.

Another outcome from the study indicated that people need to feel respected and have their work valued. Administrators are key individuals who need to create a collaborative culture

in the school and assist teachers to develop skills required for collaborative service delivery. They may be able to assist teachers to develop necessary skills through providing teachers the opportunity to obtain needed coursework, either through out-of-district training, college level course work, or appropriate district level training. Through the creation of such an environment, it would likely follow that peers would be more likely to be more supportive of each other.

Another correlation was identified between Peer Support and Collaboration (.365 at the .01 level). It would follow that collaboration among teachers would likely occur in a culture where peers are more supportive of each other and teachers have knowledge from appropriate training. Collaboration may be considered another mechanism for learning. Collaboration describes the relationship between two people as they work toward a common goal. In an inclusion classroom, the special education teacher and regular education teacher would collaboratively teach the class. In such a manner, consultation is being provided to the regular education teacher in a very hands-on manner. As noted by Kratochwill and Pittman (2002), teachers believe they learn the most through direct intervention, specifically, watching others perform the particular task. Thus, having a supportive administration, the support of peers, and direct consultation through collaboration, the likelihood of more positive attitudes towards inclusive education would seem likely to exist.

In examining individual responses, it is of note that teachers' responses were relatively consistent with what is indicated by the review of literature. Within the Student Variable Subdomain, teachers were in general agreement that students with mild disabilities (e.g., speech/language impairments, 1 year below level, no overt behavioral problems) should be educated within the regular classroom. In addition, students with mental retardation could be educated within the regular education environment. However, students who exhibit more severe disabilities (e.g., autism, 2 or more years below level, verbal or physical aggression) should be

educated within the special education environment. In the urban school setting where there often exists a higher prevalence of overt behavioral difficulties, a less positive attitude towards inclusive education may have resulted.

Within the Peer Support Subdomain, teachers were in general agreement that they have the support of their peers when education students with special needs in the regular classroom setting. The support of peers is a key factor in the attainment of a positive attitude, as indicated by the literature.

In regards to the Administrative Support Subdomain, teachers evidenced some ambivalence in this area. Most believed that they could approach their administrators with concerns they hold when teaching students with special needs. However, most believed that their administrators did not provide sufficient support, materials, or time to attend conferences addressing issues surrounding educating students with special needs in the regular classroom.

Within the Collaboration Subdomain, teachers reported they were in general agreement that collaboration between the regular education teacher and special education teacher has a positive outcome. They were also in agreement that both special education and regular education teachers should be accountable for teaching special needs students.

In regards to the Training Subdomain, teachers believed that their training equipped them well enough to teach students with disabilities, such as speech and language impairments and learning disabilities. Most teachers did not believe their educational background adequately prepared them to teach students with cognitive delays and delays in daily living skills. Most also believed that they needed more training to teach students with an IEP for learning problems. There was a relatively even split between teachers who believed their educational background equipped them to teach students with behavioral difficulties. Most teachers reported they needed more training to appropriately teach students with an IEP for behavioral problems. Most

teachers also reported that they strongly believed that the district did not provide them with sufficient in-service training to teach students with an IEP.

Limitations

A significant limitation of this study lies in the small sample size. The survey was provided to 241 teachers in the district. It was anticipated that approximately 135 (56%) would have completed and returned the survey to the investigator. However, at the time the survey was distributed, the district was in the process of undergoing significant organizational changes due to financial constraints and many teachers were fearful of losing their jobs. As a result, the completion and returning of the survey was likely not a priority and did not occur.

Another limitation included starting with a relatively small sample size. There would likely have been a higher sample size and more information, and possibly more significant results, if more than one urban district was utilized in this study.

Additionally, given the impending changes in the district, the possibility exists that only teachers who felt a sense of comfort and security completed the survey. Thus, the sample may not be representative of all teachers in the district.

Another aspect to teacher attitude regarding inclusive education is teacher attitude toward education in general. Overall, satisfaction towards their job may influence their attitude towards inclusive education. Job satisfaction attitude was not independently ascertained and may have impacted attitude toward inclusive education.

Lastly, the instrument utilized was developed solely for this study. Though it was reviewed and approved by a peer group prior to its administration, it has not been empirically tested and approved as being a valid and reliable instrument. Thus, it is possible that an empirically supported instrument may have yielded more identifiable results.

Suggestions for Future Research

Given the important role of administrators in shaping teacher attitudes towards inclusive education, obtaining administrator attitudes towards inclusive education would be of value. Being that parents are another strong force in a student's educational experience, it would be valuable to ascertain parent attitude towards inclusive education. Due to the correlation between administrative support and peer support in shaping positive teacher attitudes towards inclusive education, further study into this correlation may provide more information. Given the correlation between peer support and correlation in shaping positive teacher attitudes towards inclusive education, further study into this correlation may yield valuable information in the area of inclusive education practices. Since inclusive education will likely become more prevalent in classrooms over the next ten years due to increasingly stringent federal and state mandates, it may be useful to obtain student attitudes in regards to its implementation and use. Due to the likelihood of increased inclusive education practices in the next few years as a result of increasingly stringent federal and state mandates, and due to the results that indicated teachers below the age of 36 held a significantly better attitude towards inclusive education, it may be useful to investigate how teacher training programs are operating. Discerning overall teacher attitude toward their jobs prior to assessing attitude toward inclusive education could provide more valuable information as the two factors would be compared and overlap could be identified. The inclusion of gifted students might be a topic for further exploration. Lastly, the possibility of developing a qualitative study around teacher attitude regarding inclusive education might provide additional teacher perspectives into this important topic

Summary

In summary, the significant findings of this research suggest that teachers under the age of 36 hold a significantly better attitude towards inclusive education practices. No other factors appear relevant to the attitude held by teachers. However, the total attitude is the compilation of five subdomains that include; student variables, peer support, administrative support, collaboration, and training. The urban education environment poses unique challenges to teachers which were identified within each subdomain and likely impacted upon the final outcome of this study.

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APPENDIX A

PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

IRB APPROVAL

· March 27, 2006

Ray Christner, Psy.D.
Department of Psychology
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine
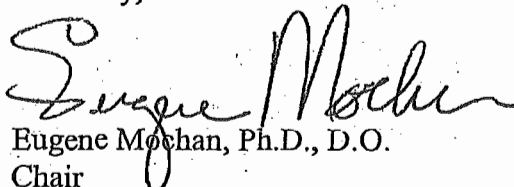4190 City Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19131

RE: **A survey of teacher attitudes regarding inclusive education within an urban school
        district** (Protocol #H06-018X – student research by E. Kern)

Dear Dr. Christner:

        This is to inform you that your above-referenced protocol has been reviewed and ·
approved. It has been determined that this protocol is exempt from informed consent
requirements under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(4) - existing data, documents, records, pathological
specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information
is recorded in such a manner that the human subjects cannot be identified, directly or through ·
identifiers linked to the subjects.

        Best wishes with your proposed research. Please notify immediately the Institutional
Review Board if you anticipate any changes to the protocol.

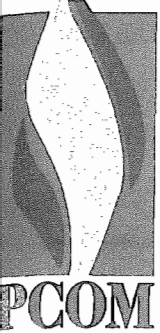   Sincerely,

                                    Eugene Mochan, Ph.D., D.O.
                                    Chair

cc: E. Kern

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO TEACHER

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
215-871-6442
215-871-6458 FAX
psyd@pcom.edu E-MAIL

Dear Teacher:

I invite you to participate in a doctoral research project examining the manner in which you believe students who hold Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are best educated within your district. Your input is very valuable to the outcome of this study.

Your answers are of great value to this study whether or not you have much experience teaching students identified as having a special needs in your general education classroom. By completing and returning the enclosed survey, you are providing your consent to participate in this study. Every effort will be made to safeguard your identity and any information you provide will remain anonymous.

Your responses are important in order to have complete and useful data on the project as well as contributing to the larger goal of helping meet teacher and student needs. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Dr. Christner at (215) 871-6386. A copy of the results summary will be available upon request.

Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Evangeline Kern
School Psychology, Psy.D. Candidate
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

Ray W. Christner, Psy.D.
Assistant Professor
Director, Educational Specialist Program
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

APPENDIX C

TEACHER ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
QUESTIONNAIRE

Part A
Teacher Attitude Towards Inclusive Education Demographic Information:

1. Gender: (please circle) Male   Female

2. Your age range: (please circle)
      below 25   25-35   36-45 46-55 55+

3. Your educational level (please circle):
      Bachelors

      Bachelors + 15

      Bachelors + 30

      Masters

      Masters + 15

      Masters + 30

      Doctoral

4. Current level you are teaching: (please circle)
      Elementary Middle High School

5. Number of years teaching at this level:_____

6. Number of years teaching in total:_____

7. Amount of courses received in teaching children with special needs: _____

8. Amount of experience with teaching children with special needs in your classroom:_____

Teacher Survey

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

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

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

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

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

41.	My colleagues will try to place all of their special needs students in my classroom if I start including students with an IEP in my regular classroom.	SD	D	A	SA
42.	My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students who are 2 or more years below level.	SD	D	A	SA

Part C

What type of delivery method do you believe would benefit you most in receiving training regarding including special education students in your classroom?

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

_____ District level in-service training

_____ Out of District training

_____ Coursework at college/university

_____ School building level training

_____ Article(s) provided to you

_____ Time for consultation with school psychologist

_____ Time for consultation with special education teachers

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

_____

_____

_____

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

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INPUT.

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENT

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
215-871-6442
215-871-6458 FAX
psyd@pcom.edu E-MAIL

753 Wesley Court
West Chester, PA 19382
Phone: (610) 431-5773
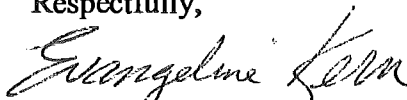E-mail: Gkern5@yahoo.com

Dear Dr. Grantham:

I, Evangeline Kern, am a graduate student at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic
Medicine. For my dissertation, I am assessing teachers' attitudes regarding the inclusion
of students with special needs in their regular education classroom. This research also
seeks to identify barriers to a positive attitude towards inclusive education and to develop
professional opportunities to better serve the teacher's needs. Given the high number of
special education students in the Chester Upland School District, compounded by the
recent Gaskins Settlement that clearly mandates that specially designed instruction is to
be provided within the least restrictive environment, I believe this research will provide
valuable information and help to meet both teacher and students needs. If you agree for
your district to participate in this study, I am requesting permission to use the *Attitudes
Towards Inclusive Education Questionnaire* (see attached) that will be distributed to all
teachers in the district.

The research study I am conducting is in partial fulfillment of a Doctor of Psychology
Degree in School Psychology at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. The title
of my proposed study is "Regular Education Teachers Attitudes Regarding Inclusive
Education in the Urban School District."

With your permission, I will be giving surveys to all of the teachers in the district. I will
be providing teachers self-addressed and stamped envelopes in which to return the survey
to me at my home address. I am requesting that the teachers who choose to participate
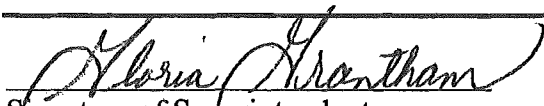return the survey to me within a two week period from the time I distribute them.

Participation in this study is voluntary and anonymous. This is stressed in the cover letter
provided to the teachers (see attached). All information will be kept secured and
confidential. All participants can request to view the results summary.

Respectfully,

Evangeline Kern
Evangeline Kern, Graduate Student

Ray W. Christner
Ray W. Christner, Psy.D., NCSP
Assistant Professor
Dissertation Chair

Gloria Grantham
Signature of Superintendent