

Rowan University

## Rowan Digital Works

---

Theses and Dissertations

---

5-1-2002

### Teacher attitudes toward inclusion

Megan E. Ireland  
*Rowan University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Educational Psychology Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Ireland, Megan E., "Teacher attitudes toward inclusion" (2002). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1457.  
<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/1457>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact [graduateresearch@rowan.edu](mailto:graduateresearch@rowan.edu).

TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSION

by  
Megan E. Ireland

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
at Rowan University  
May 1, 2002

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved 5/1/02

© 2002 Megan E. Ireland

## ABSTRACT

Megan E. Ireland  
TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSION  
2001/02  
Dr. Roberta Dihoff and Dr. John Klanderman  
Master of Arts in School Psychology

The purpose of this study was to examine the type of attitude towards inclusion that exists among regular classroom teachers, special education teachers, and specialist teachers in a middle school setting. Seventy-one subjects- forty-nine regular classroom teachers, ten special education teachers, and twelve specialist teachers- from a suburban New Jersey community were studied. Participants were given the Survey of Attitudes Toward the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs, a twenty item Likert-type scale. Data was analyzed using a one-way ANOVA and the Games-Howell post hoc test. Findings suggest that regular and specialist teachers believed that inclusion results in a lower amount of positive effects on children and setting than special education teachers. Regular and specialist teachers also held significantly higher attitudes in regard to the negative effects of inclusion on children and believed that inclusion results in a higher amount of work load for teachers. Significant results were also found regarding differences between teaching experience and attitudes toward inclusion. Those with more experience held significantly lower beliefs on the positive effects of inclusion, higher beliefs on the negative effects of inclusion, and higher beliefs on the amount of work load resulting from inclusion than those with less experience.

## **MINI-ABSTRACT**

Megan E. Ireland

**TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSION**

2001/02

Dr. Roberta Dihoff and Dr. John Klanderma

Master of Arts in School Psychology

This study examined the type of attitude towards inclusion that exists among regular classroom, special education, and specialist teachers in a middle school setting. Findings concluded that regular and specialist teachers have more negative attitudes toward inclusion than special education teachers. More experienced teachers had more negative attitudes toward inclusion than less experienced teachers.

Sincere appreciation and thankfulness  
is extended to my family and  
my boyfriend, Mike, for their  
patience, love, support, and  
understanding throughout this study.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM	1
The Need	1
Purpose	1
Hypothesis	2
Research Questions	2
Background	2
Definitions	9
Assumptions	11
Limitations	11
Overview	12
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RESEARCH	13
Across Grade Levels	14
Regular Classroom Teachers' Attitudes	14
Regular Classroom Teachers' Attitudes vs. Special Education Teachers' Attitudes	17
Physical Educators' Attitudes	18
Elementary	19
Regular Classroom Teachers' Attitudes	19
Regular Classroom Teachers' Attitudes vs. Special Education Teachers' Attitudes	20

Physical Education Teachers' Attitudes and Music Teachers'	
Attitudes	21
Middle School	22
Regular Classroom Teachers' Attitudes vs. Special Education	
Teachers' Attitudes	22
High School	22
Regular Classroom Teachers' Attitudes vs. Special Education	
Teachers' Attitudes	22
Summary	23
CHAPTER II: DESIGN OF THE STUDY	25
Hypothesis	25
Sample	25
Variables	27
Design	28
Methods	28
Summary	29
CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF RESULTS	30
Findings Related to Hypothesis	30
Summary	37
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	38
Conclusions	39
Discussion	39
Implications for Future Research	42

## TABLES

Table 3.1: Characteristics of Participating Teachers	26
--	----

Table 4.1: Mean Levels of Response (and Standard Deviations) to Attitude Survey by Teaching Field	31
--	----

## FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Means of Scale Factors Based on Teaching Field	33
--	----

Figure 4.2: Means of Scale Factors Based on Teaching Experience	36
---	----

REFERENCES	43
------------	----

APPENDICES	47
------------	----

Appendix I: Survey of Attitudes Toward the Inclusion of Students With Special Needs	48
--	----

Appendix II: Raw Scores	55
-------------------------	----



# **CHAPTER I**

## **THE PROBLEM**

### **THE NEED**

Special education children account for approximately ten percent of the school aged (3-21 years) population (Parkay & Stanford, 1998). In an effort to provide all these children with equal access to the same education, the educational ideology of inclusion has become widespread throughout many school districts. This legal requirement in the United States has forced many regular classroom teachers to educate a very diverse population, which includes children with disabilities. Therefore, teachers play a vital role in the implementation of this ideology. Their attitudes about inclusion not only affect their pupils, but also affect their teaching and the success of the inclusion process. A positive attitude towards inclusion may be more important in the success of inclusion than any other administrative or curricular strategy (Chow & Winzer, 1992).

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this study is to examine the type of attitude towards inclusion that exists among regular classroom teachers, special education teachers, and specialist teachers in a middle school setting.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

Regular classroom and specialist teachers will have a more negative attitude towards inclusion than special education teachers.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study will also attempt to examine if there are any gender issues related to teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The study will also try to establish differences that may exist due to subject matter taught, years of teaching experience, level of education, and age of participants.

## **BACKGROUND**

For centuries the education of ninety percent of children with disabilities took place in state-run institutions or private schools (Department of Education, 1999). Within these settings, children were lumped together with persons with mental retardation or illness, denied the opportunity to learn, and remained separated from their peers. These settings merely provided food, clothing, and shelter for these individuals, rather than assessment, education, or rehabilitation (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2000). However, in the 1950's and 1960's these conditions began to change when the United States federal government, supported by the advocacy of many family associations, began the development of special education practices (Department of Education, 1999).

The Training of Professional Personnel Act of 1959 launched the long process of federal legislation which makes up what is known today as special education and the

ideology of inclusion. Because of this act teachers were trained how to educate children with mental retardation (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2000). This new training was followed by The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-10), which permitted a multi-billion dollar grant program to help states in the education of children from low-income families (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 1999). Further amendments to this act authorized state and local grant programs for children with disabilities, (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 1999) making it "the basis upon which early special education legislation was drafted" (The Policy Partnership for Implementing IDEA, 1998).

The effects of this early legislation became evident with 30,000 special education teachers being trained and education for those with disabilities being received at the preschool, elementary, and secondary levels by 1968 (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2000). However, this was not enough. In 1970, United States schools were only responsible for the education of one in five children with disabilities and some states still contained laws that excluded deaf, blind, emotionally disturbed, and mentally retarded children from receiving an education (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2000).

Commonly referred to as "Section 504," the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was a beginning effort to try to change these practices. Along with the provisions of vocational assistance for disabled individuals, this law provided services to "all individuals, regardless of the severity of their disability" and outlawed discrimination against them (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 1999). Furthermore, for the first time "an appropriate education for all children with disabilities" was mentioned in the

Education Amendments of 1974 (The Policy Partnership for Implementing IDEA, 1998). Included in these amendments was the right of parents and children to examine student records (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 1999).

In addition to legislation, educational opportunities for disabled children were further increased through landmark court decisions. Both the 1971 Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania case and the 1972 Mills v. the Board of Education of the District of Columbia case, established state and local responsibility to educate disabled children (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2000). Therefore, it was demonstrated under the equal protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the United States Constitution that every child with a disability has the right to be educated (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2000).

Through these legislative practices children with disabilities did begin to move into public schools, but were restricted to receiving their education in self-contained classrooms away from the general population. However, in 1975 this practice of segregation was changed. That year Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142), which "guaranteed a free and appropriate public education to all children with disabilities (Parkay & Stanford, 1998)." In addition, this law provided federal funds to states in compliance with its mandates and has become the core of federal funding for special education (The Policy Partnership for Implementing IDEA, 1998). This comprehensive law brought together previous pieces of state and federal legislation regarding children with disabilities and formed one national public law (Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, 1999). Within this law four

purposes were defined, each to improve the education of children with disabilities. Included were efforts to identify disabled children, evaluation of these efforts, and provisions for due process protections for disabled children and their families (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2000).

The first component of Public Law 94-142 was "to assure that all children with disabilities have available to them... a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs (Education for All Handicapped Children's Act, 1975)." Therefore it was established that the education of a child with disabilities needed to be provided at the public expense, with no charge, and under the public direction and supervision (Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, 1999). It was further stressed that an educational program for each child needed to be tailored to his or her specific needs and conform to the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) (Education for All Handicapped Children's Act, 1975).

Parental involvement and due process were another aspect defined through Public Law 94-142. Through this act parental rights, which included the right to view their child's records, to request an independent evaluation of one's child, to receive notification of the initiation or change in a child's educational program (Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975), and the need to have written permission before an evaluation can be conducted (Payne, 2001), were established. Furthermore, parents were granted the right to receive all information regarding their child and his or her educational program in their native language (Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975). Along with their parental rights, the responsibility of parents in the designing and

carrying out their child's educational program was established (Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, 1999).

In the terms of special education practices of today, this act was the first to mandate what is known as the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Therefore, a child "must receive appropriate services in a setting which places the least restriction on his or her interaction with non-disabled students (Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, 1999)." In order to carry out the LRE, public schools have to provide alternative placements, such as special classes, special schools, home instruction, and institutional or hospital instruction, to meet the needs of disabled students (Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, 1999). Furthermore, this law mandates that placement in alternative settings only occurs when "the severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes cannot be achieved (Payne, 2001)." Under the LRE guidelines of PL-94-142, schools needed to make significant efforts to mainstream all children into the regular classroom.

The final cornerstone of this law was the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP is to be developed by an interdisciplinary evaluation team, a group of experts in various fields of education, such as a school psychologist, special education teacher, regular education teacher, and social worker. The IEP must also be designed to meet the individual needs of each disabled student. Under Public Law 94-142, this team needs to consist minimally of a representative of the local school district, the child's teachers, and the child's parents (Payne, 2001). The IEP serves the purpose of providing ongoing delivery of educational services on both a daily and annual basis (Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, 1999). According to the

law each IEP must include a child's present performance level in all related educational areas, annual goals, short-term instructional objectives, special education and related services, the projected dates for the initiation of services and duration of services, the appropriate objective criteria and assessment procedures, and a schedule to determine whether the instructional objectives are being met (Payne, 2001 & Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, 1999).

However the implementation of Public Law 94-142 was only a beginning of current special education and inclusion practices. Since 1975 there have been numerous amendments to the Education of the Handicapped Act. These amendments included the establishment of research to facilitate the transition from school to work for youths with disabilities, the extension of special education services to preschoolers, and the state-wide implementation of early intervention services for children from birth to age three (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 1999).

Among these amendments was the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA), the law that has essentially replaced Public Law 94-142 (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 1999). IDEA expanded the definition of special education to include areas outside of the classroom, extended related services, mandated that high school IEPs include transition services to prepare students to enter the adult world, and replaced the term 'handicap' with 'disability' (Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, 1999). A major addition of IDEA was that it included autism and traumatic brain injury as educational disabling conditions (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 1999).

In 1997, IDEA was amended with what is commonly referred to as IDEA '97 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997). This act was responsible for the refining of many special education procedures, including an increase in parent and student participation in decision-making, equal disciplinary procedures for disabled students, clarification of IEP team members and reevaluation processes, and making each IEP assessable to the student's regular education teacher and other service providers, such as special education teachers and occupational therapists (Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, 1999). Under IDEA '97, Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder were both listed as disabling conditions (Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, 1999). This current law regarding special education continues to reaffirm the basic principles set forth by PL 94-142.

Based on the specifications of IDEA and IDEA '97, public school districts needed to continue to integrate all students with disabilities into general education classrooms. From this process, the ideology of inclusion has surfaced. Inclusion goes beyond the simply mainstreaming, or physical inclusion, of disabled students in classes. Those who believe in inclusion feel that disabled students should receive the active support of special educators and service providers, as well as assistive technology, while participating in the regular classroom environment and school life (Parkay & Stanford, 1998). Through the use of inclusion it is believed that children with disabilities will not be associated with the label of their disability and will be less stigmatized as a result (Parkay & Stanford, 1998). Furthermore, the approach of full inclusion goes even farther and calls for "the integration of students with disabilities in the general education classrooms at all times



regardless of the nature of severity of the disability (Parkay & Stanford, 1998)."

According to this concept a child that needs support services should receive those services while in a regular classroom, not through the participation in a pull-out program.

Through the sustained federal leadership, the United States has become a leader in providing services to children with disabilities. Significant changes have occurred, in which "the nation has moved from paying little or no attention to the special needs of individuals with disabilities, to merely accommodating these individuals' basic needs, and eventually to providing programs and services for all children with disabilities and their families (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2000)." The federal legislation that lead to Public Law 94-142 and IDEA has enabled many children who were once placed in institutions to now receive an education while being included with their non-disabled peers in the regular classrooms of public schools.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Assistive technology-** Assistive technology consists of devices used by disabled students who need such accommodations so they may benefit from public education. These devices may include computers, calculators, and voice output communication aides.

**Disability-** A disability is the inability of a person to perform skills within his or her immediate environment, such as communication, personal care, locomotion, body disposition, and dexterity.

**Due Process-** Due process refers to the parental right to have a formal hearing carried out by the state educational agency in regards to a complaint in any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, or placement of their child.

**Handicap-** A handicap is the personal meaning of a disabling condition for the individual as he or she functions in society in various areas, such as employment, educational attainment, and leisure activities.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)-** An IEP is a written plan which sets forth present levels of performance, measurable annual goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks and describes an integrated, sequential program of individually designed instructional activities and related services necessary to achieve the stated goals and objectives (New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14, 1998).

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)-** The Least Restrictive Environment applies to the placement of a disabled child in the most advantageous setting for their needs, in order for them to experience the highest level of stimulation and experience with the general student population.

**Mainstreaming-** Mainstreaming is the process of placing handicapped or disabled children in regular school classes for a period of time during the school day.

**Pull-out Program-** A pull-out program is one in which a child with disabilities receives instruction partly in the regular classroom and is periodically pulled-out for special instruction that is tailored towards his or her disability.

**Regular Classroom-** A regular classroom is an instructional environment that exists with a regular education teacher and approximately fifteen to twenty-five heterogeneously grouped students who are approximately at the same age level.

**Related Services-** Related services are auxiliary services, such as speech pathology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, or counseling services, provided to children with disabilities.

**Self-Contained Classroom-** A self-contained classroom is a classroom made up entirely of disabled students within a regular school setting.

**Special Education-** Special education means specially designed instruction to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities including, but not limited to, subject matter instruction, physical education, and vocational training (New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14, 1998).

**Specialist Teacher-** A specialist teacher is one who teaches non-academic subjects, such as music, art, physical education, health, communication skills, smart labs, computers, or library skills.

## **ASSUMPTIONS**

It is assumed in the present study that all surveys were completed with integrity and honesty. The population used is assumed to be a random sample of individuals.

## **LIMITATIONS**

Limitations to the present study may include a limited sample size. This sample may also limit the study in that it may have a narrow representation of certain ethnicities, races, or socio-economic statuses.

## **OVERVIEW**

In Chapter 2, relevant research will be reviewed concerning teacher attitude towards inclusion. In Chapter 3, the design of the present study will be described. In Chapter 4, an analysis of data collected during the study will be presented.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RESEARCH**

A brief summary of research completed in the area of teacher attitudes toward inclusion will be presented in this chapter. This review will begin with an overview of the attitudes held by teachers across all grade levels. Regular classroom teachers' attitudes are presented as well as the differences between these attitudes and those of special education teachers. The attitudes of physical educators are also presented across all grades. This review continues with a synopsis of research regarding teacher attitudes at the elementary level, including the research on regular classroom teachers' attitudes and their comparison to the attitudes held by special educators. Studies on elementary physical educators' and music educators' attitudes are also summarized. Research of regular classroom teachers' and special education teachers' attitudes conducted at the middle school level is also reviewed. This review will conclude with an overview of the attitudes held by regular education teachers and special education teachers at the high school level.

## **ACROSS GRADE LEVELS**

### **REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS' ATTITUDES**

Wilczenski stated that "attitudes toward inclusive education are clearly multidimensional (1992)." Further research on the attitudes of regular classroom teachers toward inclusion has supported this finding with the discovery of positive, negative, and even neutral views on the subject (Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998; Olson, Chalmers, & Hoover, 1997).

Positive attitudes toward the concept of inclusion were found in a survey of 81 regular classroom teachers using a Likert scale (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000). Significant results at the .05 level were also discovered by Whitbread (2000), in which all surveyed items revealed a more positive attitude toward inclusion by teachers who worked in inclusive districts compared to those in non-inclusive districts.

Similar research by Lanter and Lanter (1996) has also found the existence of positive attitudes among regular classroom teachers, in which 88% of those surveyed agreed that inclusion was acceptable in the regular classroom. The evidence between the initial and final surveys in this study further supported the strength of these positive attitudes over a period of three to eight years. After classroom experience with inclusion, it was found that 47% of the responses had not changed from the original survey.

Furthermore, Cornoldi, Terreni, & Scruggs (1998), through a survey of 523 general education teachers in Italy, found evidence to support an optimistic view toward inclusion. Support for the concept of teaching disabled children in general classrooms was found to be 77.6% among those studied. Moreover, 75.8% agreed that inclusionary efforts were beneficial for those with disabilities.

However, negative or neutral views of inclusion have also been found. The findings of Monahan & Marino (1996) concluded that 72% of the 342 respondents studied felt that inclusion of students with disabilities would not be successful as a result of resistance among regular education teachers. Furthermore 67% of the South Carolina teachers surveyed preferred to send special needs students to special education teachers for services, rather than providing services in their own classrooms.

Other research in the area of teacher attitudes toward inclusion includes that of Jobe & Rust (1996), who found neither positive nor negative results. Among a survey of 162 regular classroom teachers from 44 states, the averaged attitudes found were neutral with an alpha reliability coefficient of .90. Therefore, it was concluded that there was no strong agreement or disagreement to the practice of inclusion.

However, the multidimensional aspect of teacher attitudes toward inclusion expands beyond positive, negative, or neutral views. Research by Snyder (1999) found that 55% of those surveyed felt that administration was not very supportive "of the needs of general education teachers regarding mainstreaming or inclusion." Similarly, a study by Cornoldi, et. al. (1998) on 523 general educators in Northern and Central Italy found only a 10.7% agreement for sufficient personnel support.

Insufficient training of teachers also has been found to be a factor related to attitudes regarding inclusion (Snyder, 1999; Turner, 1996). Cornoldi, et. al. (1998) reported only a 22.3% agreement among teachers as to sufficient training in his large (N=523) Italian study. Further support of the need for teacher training in inclusion was found in a recent British study that involved 81 teachers. It was reported that teachers with substantial training in special education held significantly higher positive attitudes

(M= 4.09) about inclusion than those with little or no training (M=3.34) (Avramidis, et. al., 2000).

The type of disability has also been found as a major factor regarding teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Turner, 1996). It was concluded by Wilczenski (1992) that children whose disabilities did not inhibit their learning or those with social deficits were favored for mainstreaming. As found in the research of 28 teachers in Georgia, a wide range of children were seen as acceptable for inclusion with the exception of students who had physical disabilities that would cause a distraction in the classroom (Lanter and Lanter, 1996).

However, three recent studies have found the opposite viewpoint. A national sample of 162 teachers and a survey of 188 general educators concluded that accommodations for physically disabled children were favored more than those for children with cognitive, emotional, or behavioral problems (Jobe and Rust, 1996; Soodak, et. al., 1998). The work of Turner (1996) also found a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions and the inclusion of children with cognitive delays, in which those with cognitive disabilities were perceived as not suited for education in regular classrooms.

Another influence on teacher attitudes toward inclusion has been found to be years of teaching experience and teacher age. Recent findings support that teachers' receptivity toward including students with disabilities diminishes with experience (Soodak, et. al., 1998). Leyser and Tappendorf (2001) found that those with the most years of teaching experience scored lower on the Benefits factor of the *Options Relative to Mainstreaming Scale* than those with less experience. Cornoldi, et. al. (1998) also



concluded that significantly ( $t(391)=3.67, p<.001$ ) more positive attitudes exist with teachers who were forty years old or younger than with teachers who were over the age of forty.

## **REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS' ATTITUDES VS. SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTITUDES**

Analysis of 258 questionnaires from regular and special education teachers in New York and Massachusetts reveals positive attitudes held by both groups toward inclusion (Eagan, 1998). A significant positive relationship ( $r=.36$ ) was also found between the number of students with disabilities included in regular classrooms and the attitudes of regular classroom teachers toward inclusion.

This finding is further supported through interviews of 18 central Texas teachers, both general educators and special education teachers across grade levels, in which no differences were found on attitudes toward inclusion (Heflin & Bullock, 1999). All of those interviewed believed that full inclusion would not serve the needs of all students and therefore it was indicated that individual decisions must be made for each student. This study also listed negative attitudes of both general and special educators including insufficient training and support.

However, further research does find differences between regular classroom teachers and special education teachers (D'Alonzo, Giordano, & Vanleeuwen, 1997). Classroom teachers have been found to be more willing "to broaden and redefine their job description," in which they would support inclusionary practices, than special educators in a survey of 160 professional educators in the mid-west (Levin, 1995).

A larger (N=289) study of these two types of teachers found more in depth differences (Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, 1999). Significant findings ( $F=4.89$ ,  $p=.0008$ ) revealed that special educators rated their understanding of inclusion and their abilities to motivate students as higher than general educators. Special educators also reported more confident feelings in regard to including disabled students in general education classrooms. Three quarters of the general educators studied lacked the opportunity for inservice training along with receiving less support than special educators. Therefore, it was concluded that general educators needed more training than special educators.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES**

Little research has been conducted on the attitudes of physical educators toward inclusion. Across all grade levels, Block and Rizzo (1995) studied the attitudes of 91 physical educators and discovered four important findings. The first finding revealed that attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities varied depending on the severity of the disability. Attitudes towards students with severe disabilities, those who require extensive ongoing support, were basically undecided ( $M=3.03$ ,  $SD=.80$ ), in which a neutral response on the *Physical Educators' Attitudes Toward Teaching Individuals with Disabilities-III* (PEATTID-III) would equal 3.0. Whereas, less favorable attitudes were found toward students with profound disabilities ( $M=2.49$ ,  $SD=.87$ ), those with the most severe physical disabilities that seriously impair their actions.

Furthermore, a dependant t-test found significant differences ( $t=7.51$ ,  $p<.001$ ) between attitudes toward the inclusion of those with severe and profound disabilities.

Block and Rizzo also found a significant positive correlation with academic coursework in special education for students with severe disabilities ( $F=12.67$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and perceived confidence toward teaching individuals with profound disabilities ( $F=10.02$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

A third important finding strongly linked attitudes toward inclusion of those with severe disabilities to quality of teaching ( $F=17.66$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and coursework in adaptive physical education ( $F=12.67$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Finally, coursework in special education ( $F=13.47$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and perceived competence in teaching ( $F=10.02$ ,  $p<.001$ ) were found to be strongly related to attitudes in the inclusion of students with profound disabilities.

## **ELEMENTARY**

### **REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS' ATTITUDES**

Cook (2001) conducted research designed to examine whether elementary teachers' attitudes toward their included students with disabilities differed based on the severity of the disability. Seventy general education teachers placed students in four categories based on their attitudes of the students. It was found that those with severe or obvious disabilities were overrepresented in the indifference category ( $X^2=3.82$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and those with mild or hidden disabilities were underrepresented in the rejection category ( $X^2=3.00$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Therefore, it was concluded that elementary teachers' attitudes favored the inclusion of students with mild or hidden disabilities.

Nevertheless, other research in the area of regular elementary classroom teachers' attitudes toward inclusion has found generally positive attitudes toward the success of placing disabled children in the regular classroom (Morgan, 1999). A related study qualified these positive attitudes based on the level of support and training received and

teacher's concept of their competency (Crosby and Hanzlik, 1994). As evidenced in this study, positive attitudes increased as teachers became more satisfied with the support they received for including students with disabilities in their classrooms ( $r=.45$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Data examination also indicated that when teachers felt more competent or successful at servicing disabled children, they held more favorable attitudes toward inclusion ( $r=.50$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

## **REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS' ATTITUDES VS. SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTITUDES**

Huszar Murray (1997) stated in a study of 56 elementary teachers that compared to general education teachers, special education teachers reported significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusion. Supportive evidence was supplied by McLeskey, Waldrom, and So (2001) who concluded from research that those who were involved in inclusive programs, such as special education teachers, had significantly more positive perspectives on inclusion than those who did not participate in inclusion.

On the other hand, some research indicated similarities among the perceptions of regular classroom teachers and special educators toward inclusion. The findings of Wolery, Werts, Caldwell, Snyder, and Lisowski (1995) concluded that 87% of the 158 special and regular classroom educators surveyed felt the need for more training on inclusionary practices and increased administrative support.

Daane, Beirne-Smith, & Latham's (2000) study involving 324 elementary general education teachers and 42 elementary special education teachers who were administered the *Regular Education Initiative Survey*, further substantiated the similar attitudes held

between these two types of educators. Evidence was found to support the agreement of special and regular classroom teachers on the increase in instructional load presented with inclusion and the perception that general education teachers are not fully skilled for the successful implementation of inclusion.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' AND MUSIC TEACHERS' ATTITUDES**

Few studies of physical education and music teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion exist. Nevertheless, overall perceptions have been moderately favorable between the two groups, with music teachers expressing higher attitudes, according to a study of 200 music and physical educators (Kohl, 1992). However, similar to attitudes held by regular classroom or special education teachers, Sideridis and Chandler's (1996) research proposes that the type and severity of a student's disability influences the inclusionary attitude of physical education and music teachers. Music teachers held significantly less positive ( $F=6.10$ ,  $p<.05$ ) attitudes on the *Teacher Integration Attitudes Questionnaire* toward the inclusion of students with emotional and behavioral disorders, whereas physical education teachers were significantly less favorable ( $F=4.94$ ,  $p<.05$ ) to the inclusion of children with orthopedic handicaps.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

### **REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS' VS. SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTITUDES**

Few research studies have focused on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion at the middle school level. Through the use of focus groups containing middle school regular classroom teachers and special education teachers, findings have shown no difference between the inclusionary attitudes of the two (Wilcox, 1995). In fact, the findings based on participant responses suggest a receptiveness on the part of both groups toward inclusion.

A parallel study conducted more recently of 347 New York regular educators and special educators supports the common views of special and regular educators (McLean, 2001). Moreover, these views circled around the preparedness of teachers to teach those with disabilities and the lack of training provided, in which 67.9% of the subjects expressed concern.

## **HIGH SCHOOL**

### **REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS' VS. SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTITUDES**

Research on teacher attitudes toward inclusion at the high school level has also been found to be lacking. In general, it was evidenced that a teacher's level of education affected one's perceptions of inclusion (Stoler, 1992). Therefore, it was concluded that more special education coursework provided more positive attitudes with the finding of

significant differences ( $F=8.312$ ,  $p<.001$ ) between the attitudes of those with special education training and those without training (VanReusen, Shoho, and Barker, 2000-2001).

Similar to research in other grade levels, type of disability was found to be a significant factor in teachers' attitudes at the high school level (Ferris, 1996). The majority of the general educators and special educators surveyed believed that inclusion was appropriate for students who had mild disabilities, but not for those with severe learning, emotional, or behavioral problems.

## **SUMMARY**

Thus teachers' attitudes toward the practice of inclusion has recently become the focus of much attention and research. Through this review it has been found that both positive and negative attitudes exist in regard to inclusion. However, despite the lack of definition, it can be concluded from the research that numerous factors influence teachers' attitudes regardless of the grade level that they teach.

As shown by the reviewed literature, insufficient administrative support and lack of training in the field of inclusion is one factor that effects one's views. This insufficient training may also explain the differences that may be seen between the attitudes of regular classroom teachers and those of special education teachers.

Another factor found that influences a teacher's attitude in regard to inclusionary practices is the type of disability an included student has. As a general trend, teachers' based their attitudes on either favoring or rejecting a student due to a physical disability or an emotional or behavioral disability. This finding was evident in which physical

education teachers were less positive toward including students with physical disabilities and music teachers were less positive toward including students with emotional or behavioral disabilities.

A final factor involved in a teacher's attitude was found to be a teacher's confidence level. This review found that teachers who were more confident in their ability to be successful with included students tended to have a more positive attitude toward inclusion. Therefore, from this finding it can be concluded that a teacher who feels he or she has the ability to handle a student with a disability is less likely to oppose the inclusion of that student in his or her classroom.

Despite these conclusions, there is much need for further research in this field of study in order to support these findings. Further research on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion is especially needed in the field of middle school teachers, as well as studies on physical educators and other school specialists, in which there currently is lacking evidence to make firm conclusions. A study at the middle school level is needed in order to provide the continuing investigation and inquiry necessary for the discovery of all the facets involved in teachers' attitudes toward the practice of inclusion.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

The following study on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion was conducted using teachers from a Cherry Hill, New Jersey middle school. Teachers taught grades sixth through eighth and were given a survey to complete. In the survey attitudes were measured using a Likert-type scale.

#### **HYPOTHESIS**

Regular classroom and specialist teachers will have a more negative attitude towards inclusion than special education teachers.

#### **SAMPLE**

The seventy-one subjects used in this study were all employed by the Cherry Hill School District in New Jersey, a suburban community located in Camden County. This sample consisted of both male (N=24) and female teachers (N=47). Teachers were categorized based on their teaching area. Forty-nine subjects in the sample were regular education teachers, ten were special education teachers, and twelve were specialist teachers. All teachers taught sixth through eighth grade students at Henry C. Beck Middle School. As seen in Table 3.1, the majority of subjects were in the age range of

**Table 3.1**  
**Characteristics of Participating Teachers**

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	24	33.8
Female	47	66.2
<b>Age</b>		
18-25	1	1.4
26-30	12	16.9
31-35	12	16.9
36-40	11	15.5
41+	35	49.3
<b>Field of Teaching</b>		
Regular/General Education	49	69
Special Education	10	14.1
Specialist	12	16.9
<b>Subject Taught</b>		
Math	11	15.5
Humanities	10	14.1
World Language	10	14.1
Language Arts	8	11.3
Science	10	14.1
Physical Education	5	7
Specials	7	10
<b>Years of Teaching</b>		
0-5	18	25.4
6-10	10	14.1
11-15	14	19.7
16-20	12	16.9
21-25	6	8.5
26+	11	15.5
<b>Education Level</b>		
Undergraduate	20	28.2
Some post undergraduate	22	31
Graduate	23	32.4
Some post graduate	5	7
Doctorate	1	1.4

Note. N=71

41+ (N=35, 49.3%), however 25.4% (N=18) of those surveyed had 0-5 years of teaching experience. The level of education completed by the subjects centered around undergraduate (N=20, 28.2%), some post undergraduate (N=22, 31%), and graduate (N=23, 32.4%) levels.

## **VARIABLES**

The researcher administered the *Survey of Attitudes Toward the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs* with the permission of its author (M.A. Winzer, 1992). This instrument consisted of a 20-item Likert-type survey scale to measure teachers' attitudes toward including children with special needs in the regular classroom. Positively and negatively worded items relating to inclusion were presented with five alternatives answers provided; strongly agree, slightly agree, undecided, slightly disagree, and strongly disagree. The wording of statements was based in a way to elicit expressions of attitudes rather than opinions based on knowledge or stereotypes on a particular group of exceptional individuals (Chow & Winzer, 1992).

Through the use of Cronbach's coefficient alpha, the overall reliability of this scale was 0.823, thus suggesting that it consistently measures teachers' attitudes on including students with special needs. Three factors were also found on this scale; positive effects of inclusion on students and setting, negative effects of inclusion on children, and teaching load incurred by inclusion. The reliabilities of each of the three factors were found to be 0.876, 0.724, and 0.730, respectively (Chow & Winzer, 1992).

In terms of validity, this scale was found to have the value of 0.985 on the goodness of fit index, 0.980 on the adjusted goodness of fit index, and 0.39 on the root

mean squared residual. Therefore, it can be concluded that this survey does measure teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion in the regular classroom of those with special needs (Chow & Winzer, 1992).

## **DESIGN**

This is a descriptive study in which survey methodology is used to determine the relationship of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion based on the educational area taught. Groups for this qualitative study were determined by the educational area taught by the participants and consisted of three groups; regular education teachers, special education teachers, and specialist teachers.

## **METHODS**

Forty-nine regular education teachers, ten special education teachers, and twelve specialist teachers at Beck Middle School were given the *Survey of Attitudes Toward the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs*. As well, information was requested regarding personal information, such as sex, age, subject taught, years teaching, and level of education. In order to maximize the response rate, surveys were distributed by the researcher at a faculty meeting where attendance was mandatory.

Once all the data was collected, items were scored on a scale of one to five, in which one corresponded to strongly disagree and five corresponded to strongly agree. Four scores were obtained from the data relating to the three factors of the scale and the full scale score. The highest possible score on the full scale that could be obtained was one hundred and the lowest possible score was twenty. On the first factor of positive

effects of inclusion on students and setting, the score could range from twelve (high level of positive effects) to sixty (low level of positive effects). On the second factor of negative effects of inclusion on children, the score range includes four (high level of negative effects) to twenty (low level of negative effects). The third factor of teaching load incurred by inclusion could have a score range of four (heavy load) to twenty (light load).

## **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this chapter was to present data concerning subjects used in this study, the measure employed, the study design, and the methods used by the investigator in the data collection. Also presented was the hypothesis and method of scoring each survey.

The researcher collected data using the *Survey of Attitudes Toward the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs* in order to determine the nature of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion at the middle school level. Data was collected from a sample of seventy-one teachers who fell into the fields of regular education, special education, or specialist subjects.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

The research was undertaken in order to assess whether middle school teachers, working in different teaching fields, held different attitudes toward children with special needs and the idea of inclusion. The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of the data concerning the comparison of the attitudes held by regular education, special education, and specialist teachers.

#### **FINDINGS RELATED TO HYPOTHESIS**

The hypothesis that regular classroom and specialist teachers will have a more negative attitude towards inclusion than special education teachers was accepted by the results found in this study.

Mean attitude scores and standard deviations were obtained for each scale factor and the full scale, as shown in Table 4.1. Furthermore, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) contrasts were computed to determine the existence of group differences. Significant differences were found between all the scale factors, including the full scale score, and each field of teaching. Another main effect for ANOVA was the years of teaching experience.

Table 4.1  
Mean Levels of Response (and Standard Deviations) to Attitude Survey by Teaching Field

	<u>Factor 1</u>				<u>Factor 2</u>				<u>Factor 3</u>				<u>Full Scale</u>			
	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Total Poss</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Total Poss</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Total Poss</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Total Poss</u>
Regular Education Teachers	49	40.0714	12.7189	60	49	11.0612	3.1319	20	49	15.8367	3.7380	20	49	66.9694	8.3056	100
Special Education Teachers	10	54.0000	2.5820	60	10	7.9000	2.3310	20	10	7.9000	3.0350	20	10	69.8000	2.8597	100
Specialist Teachers	12	26.1667	12.5614	60	12	12.7083	2.6497	20	12	17.5000	5.4020	20	12	56.3750	5.7727	100
All Samples	71	39.6831	14.0459	60	71	10.8944	3.2237	20	71	15.0000	4.9106	20	71	65.5775	8.4860	100

Total Poss = Total Possible Score

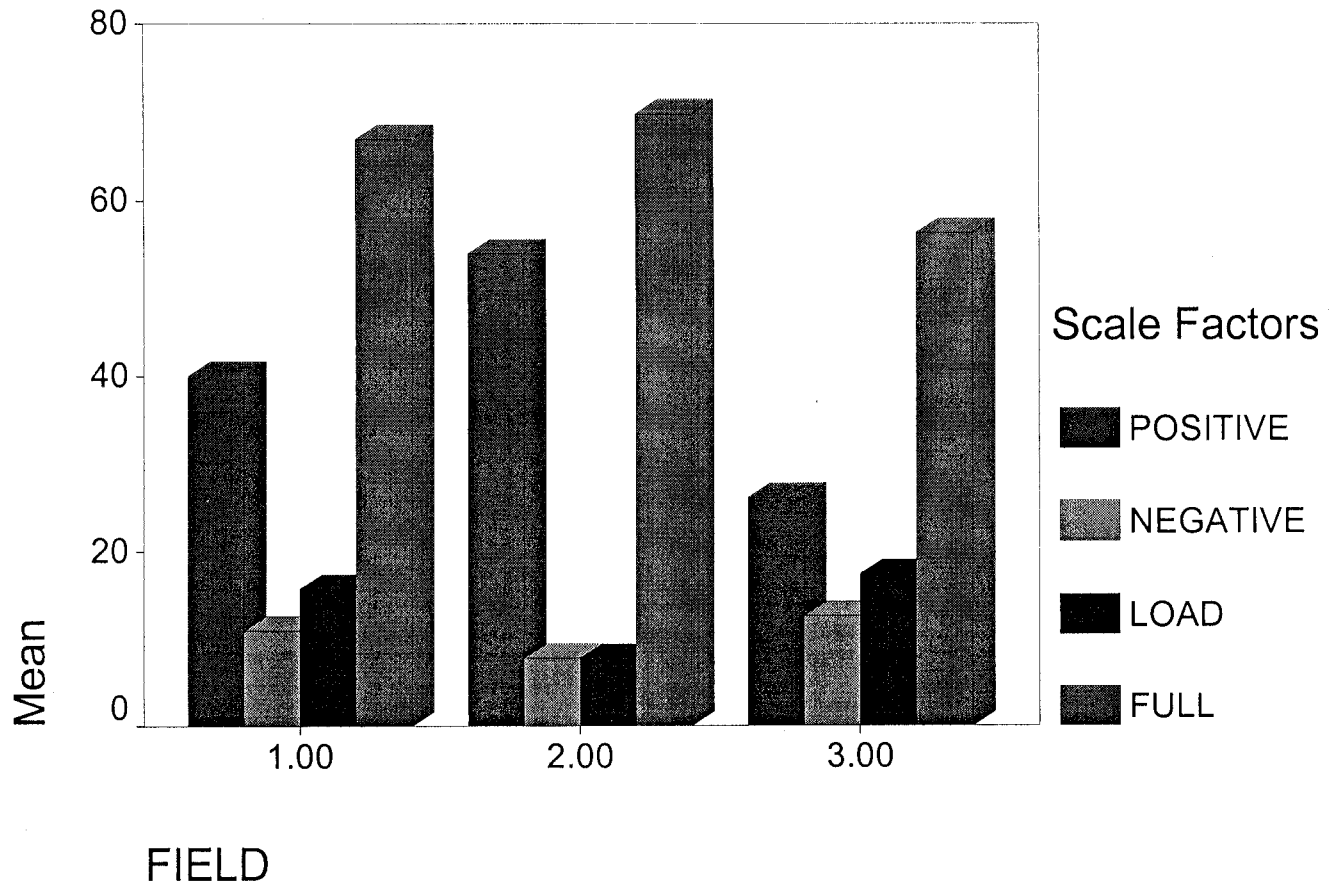
A significant difference ( $F [2]=15.112, p<.01$ ) was found between groups on the first scale factor of positive effects of inclusion on students and setting. Comparison of the mean scores for the first scale factor demonstrated that regular education ( $M=40.0714, SD=12.7189$ ) and specialist ( $M=26.1667, SD=12.5614$ ) teachers believe there are less positive effects of inclusion on students and setting than special education teachers ( $M=54.0000, SD=2.5820$ ). Examination of the data from Post hoc Games-Howell statistical procedures for this factor indicated that a highly significant difference, lower than the .01 level, existed between the attitudes of regular education teachers and special education teachers. A highly significant difference,  $p<.01$ , was also found between the attitudes of regular education and specialist teachers regarding the positive effects of inclusionary practices. Furthermore, between subjects analysis revealed a difference between the attitudes on this factor held by special education teachers and those held by specialist teachers. This difference was significant beyond the .01 level. Therefore, it was found that one's teaching field has a highly significant effect on their attitudes about the positive effects of inclusion on children and school setting.

As seen in Figure 4.1, review of the means demonstrates that regular education ( $M=11.0612, SD=3.1319$ ) and specialist ( $M=12.7083, SD=2.6497$ ) teachers believe there is a higher amount of negative effect on children due to inclusionary practices than special education teachers ( $M=7.9000, SD=2.3310$ ). Analysis revealed the existence of significant differences ( $F[2]=7.434, p<.01$ ) in relation the second factor of the scale. Post hoc tests (Games-Howell) revealed that highly significant,  $p<.01$ , attitude differences in regards to the negative effects of inclusion exist between regular education and special education teachers, in which regular education teachers felt that inclusion produced more



Figure 4.1

Means of Scale Factors Based on Teaching Field



negative effects on children than special education teachers. Highly significant,  $p < .01$ , differences were also found between special education and specialist teachers, in which specialist teachers held higher beliefs that inclusionary practices were negative for those children involved. However, no statistical differences were found between regular education teachers and specialist teachers in regard to attitudes about the negative effect of inclusion on children.

Means for the third scale factor represent a belief held by special education teachers ( $M=7.9000$ ,  $SD=3.0350$ ) that inclusionary practices incur a light teaching load, whereas means for regular education ( $M=15.8367$ ,  $SD=3.7380$ ) and specialist teachers ( $M=17.5000$ ,  $SD=5.4020$ ) demonstrate a belief that teaching load is heavy as a result of inclusionary practices. The one-way ANOVA for the scale's third factor revealed the presence of statistically significant ( $F[2]=19.408$ ,  $p < .01$ ) differences in attitude between the three teaching fields. Examination of post hoc tests (Games-Howell) show significance,  $p < .01$ , that regular education teachers, as opposed to special education teachers, believe that inclusionary practices result in a higher teacher work load. It is also found that significant differences,  $p < .01$ , between special education teachers and specialist teachers exist, in which specialist teachers feel that inclusion brings a higher work load for teachers. However, no statistically significant difference was found regarding attitudes on teaching load between regular education teachers and specialist teachers.

Overall, lower means for regular education ( $M=66.9694$ ,  $SD=8.3056$ ) and specialist ( $M=56.3750$ ,  $SD=5.7727$ ) teachers on the full scale were found and indicate a difference from those in the field of special education ( $M=69.8000$ ,  $SD=2.8597$ ). Full

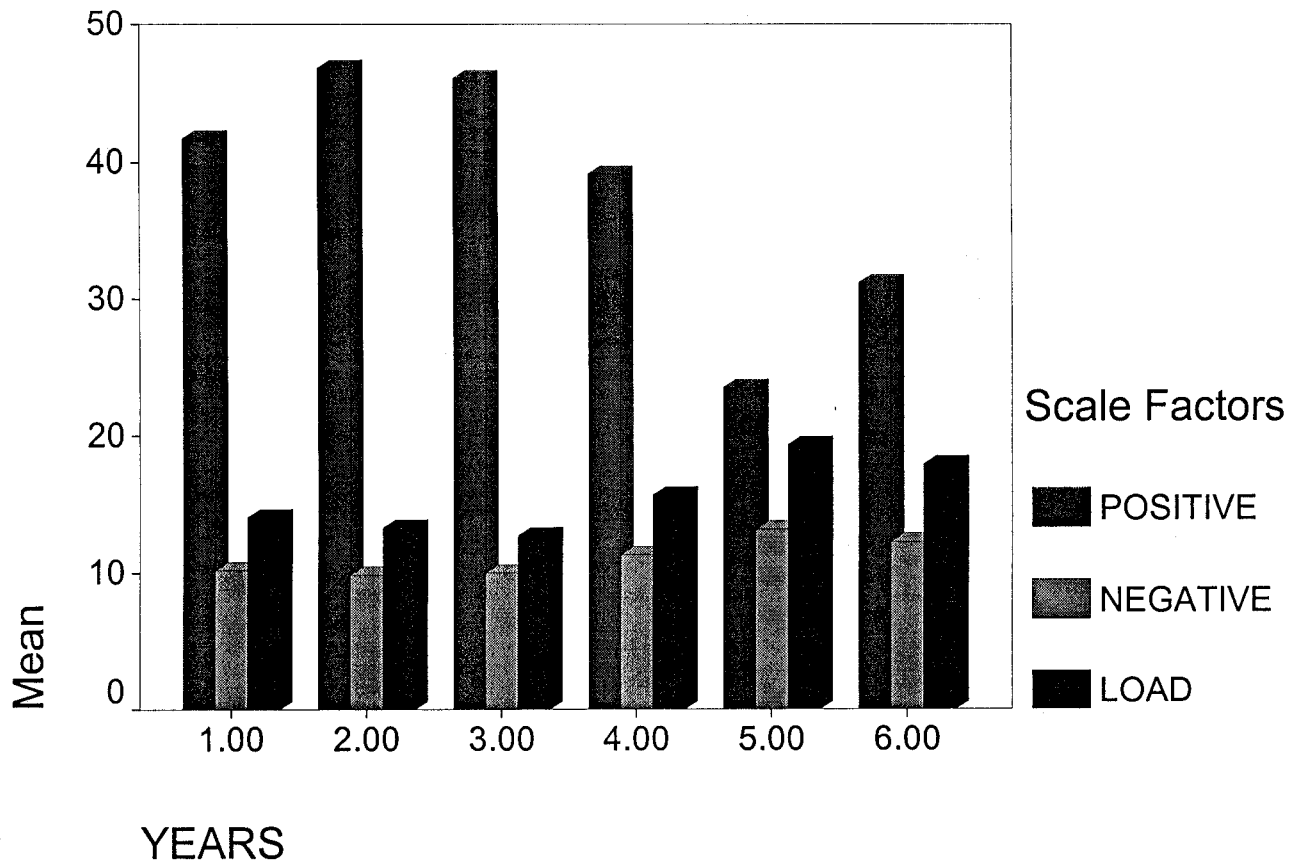
scale significance was also revealed through one-way analysis of variance ( $F[2]=11.687$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Statistically significant differences,  $p<.01$ , were present between regular education and specialist teachers and between special education and specialist teachers. However, no significance was revealed between regular education and special education teachers.

Comparison between the amount of teaching experience and the scale factors yielded some interesting results. In relation to years of teaching experience, significant differences in the attitude factors of positive effect ( $F[5]=4.440$ ,  $p<.01$ ), teaching load, ( $F[5]=3.149$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and full scale scores ( $F[5]=3.598$ ,  $p<.01$ ) were revealed by one-way ANOVA. Further analysis using a post hoc test (Games-Howell) showed that teachers with 21-25 years experience had significantly,  $p<.01$ , lower attitudes in regards to the positive effects of inclusion on children and setting than those who had been teaching from 0-20 years. In regards to attitude about the negative effects of inclusion on children, significant difference,  $p<.05$ , was found between those with 21-25 years experience and those with 0-5 years experience, as seen in Figure 4.2. Teachers with more experience (21-25 years) also expressed significantly,  $p<.05$ , higher scores in relation to the work load brought about by inclusionary practices than those with less experience (0-15 years).

Other teacher related variables- gender, age, level of education, and subject area taught- were examined for the total sample. In relation to the respondents' attitudes, none of these variables was found to be significant and therefore, no differences exist between the teaching fields.

# Figure 4.2

## Means of Scale Factors Based on Teaching Experience



## SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to present an analysis of the data concerning the comparison of attitudes held by regular education, special education, and specialist teachers in regard to inclusionary practices. Findings show that regular education and specialist teachers believed that inclusion results in a lower amount of positive effects on children and setting than special education teachers. Higher attitudes were also held by regular and specialist teachers than special education teachers in regards to the negative effects of inclusion on children. Furthermore, examination of the data indicates that regular and specialist teachers believe that inclusion results in a higher amount of work load for teachers. Interesting results were found regarding differences between years of teaching experience and attitudes toward inclusion. Those who had been teaching longer held lower beliefs on the positive effects of inclusion, higher beliefs on the negative effects of inclusion, and higher beliefs on the amount of work load resulting from inclusion than those with less experience. Overall, analysis of the results supports the hypothesis that regular education and specialist teachers have more negative attitudes toward inclusion than special education teachers.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the type of attitudes toward inclusion that exist among regular classroom teachers, special education teachers, and specialist teachers in a middle school setting. Seventy-one subjects- forty-nine regular classroom teachers, ten special education teachers, and twelve specialist teachers- from a suburban New Jersey community were studied. Participants were given the Survey of Attitudes Toward the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs, a twenty item Likert-type scale. Data was analyzed using a one-way ANOVA and the Games-Howell post hoc test. Findings suggest that regular and specialist teachers believed that inclusion results in a lower amount of positive effects on children and setting than special education teachers. Regular and specialist teachers also held significantly higher attitudes in regards to the negative effects of inclusion on children and believed that inclusion results in a higher amount of work load for teachers. Significant results were also found regarding differences between teaching experience and attitudes toward inclusion. Those with more experience held significantly lower beliefs on the positive effects of inclusion, higher beliefs on the negative effects of inclusion, and higher beliefs on the amount of work load resulting from inclusion than those with less experience.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Through analysis of the results it can be concluded that regular education and specialist teachers have more negative attitudes toward inclusion than special education teachers. Findings suggest that regular education and specialist teachers believed that inclusion results in a lower amount of positive effects on students and the regular classroom setting and a higher amount of negative effects on children than special education teachers. Furthermore, regular and specialist teachers also believe that inclusion results in a higher amount of work load for teachers. In regard to years of teaching experience, it can be concluded that those who have been teaching longer hold lower beliefs on the positive effects of inclusion, higher beliefs on the negative effects of inclusion, and higher beliefs on the amount of work load resulting from inclusion than those with less experience.

## **DISSCUSSION**

The present study provides insights into the attitude differences between regular education, special education, and specialist teachers concerning the practice of inclusion. In support of the hypothesis of this study, regular education and specialist teachers were found to have more negative attitudes than special education teachers. There are numerous explanations for this finding, including lack of training, lack of support, stress, and burn-out.

Many regular classroom teachers have received little or no training in the field of special education as opposed to the specialized training received by special education teachers. These teachers are not aware of behavior management techniques,

characteristics of certain disabilities, and how best to teach those with special needs.

Therefore, these teachers are unable to meet all the needs of the children who may be placed in their classrooms as a result of inclusion. This inability results in a belief held by regular classroom teachers that inclusion is not beneficial to both special needs and regular education students.

Lack of support also contributes to the negative attitudes held by regular classroom teachers concerning inclusion. Often, these teachers do not have aides in their classrooms to provide extra help to included students. If they do have in-class support, often the aides are not skilled or competent enough to provide the support needed and sometimes become another problem in the classroom. Regular teachers also feel that school administration does not support them in areas such as increased in-service training and reimbursement for on-going education.

This lack of training and support further leads to stress and burn-out experienced by regular classroom teachers. Since regular classroom teachers must deal with all types of students in their classrooms, the different learning styles of each, more parent accountability, and more involved record keeping for each student, they view the inclusion of children with special needs as another responsibility and an increase in their work load. These teachers often become burned-out and more negative toward inclusion as their work load increases, their amount of free time decreases, and no incentives are given to them.

Furthermore, specialist teachers receive even less training in the field of special education than those in the regular classroom setting. With this lack of education, many specialist teachers are unable to adequately instruct special needs students. In addition,



specialist teachers rarely have in-class support, such as aides, in order to meet the requirements of special needs students. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge and support given to specialist teachers is coupled with limited instruction time, leading to a negative view on inclusion. Overall, both regular and specialist teachers feel that special education teachers are more able to deal with children who have special needs because they feel that this is their area of expertise.

Differences were also found between the years of teaching experience and attitudes toward inclusion. Those who had been teaching longer felt that inclusion had little positive effect, lots of negative effects, and a higher work load for teachers as opposed to those with less experience. There are numerous explanations for this finding including a belief in a different educational model, less education, and less training.

Those who have been teaching longer often come from a different model of the classroom teacher's role in special education. Many times, more experienced teachers have received their degrees and knowledge when the educational philosophy pushed for pull-out programs in all subjects for those who had special needs. Therefore, these teachers are currently resistant to going against their training and including students with special needs in the regular classroom.

In addition to this philosophy, teachers who have been teaching for twenty or more years have received less education and taken few, if any, special education courses. Therefore, they are unaware of the needs of special education students and how to effectively meet those needs, as opposed to the teachers who have recently received their degrees and acquired the latest information on inclusion and special education. In addition to lack of education, teachers with more experience also lack training in special

education to update their knowledge. This lack of education and training explains why those with more experience negatively view inclusion.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Results of this study suggest many areas for further research in teacher attitudes toward inclusion. Primarily there is a need to ascertain the role played by factors such as gender, age, level of education, and subject area taught by the subjects. There is also a need to investigate teacher attitude toward inclusion with a larger sample size and across different socio-economic statuses. Furthermore, studies exploring the levels of support in a classroom in relation to teacher attitude should be conducted along with the examination of teacher training levels in the field of special education. Investigation into common planning time between special education, regular education, and specialist teachers would also prove valuable.

Finally, further research may identify the areas that are responsible for the negative attitudes of regular and specialist teachers found by this study. Through this identification, views on inclusion may change, in turn providing a better education for regular education students, as well as those with special needs.

## REFERENCES

- Avramidis, E., Bayliss, P., & Burden, R. (2000). A survey into mainstream teachers attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school in one local education authority. Educational Psychology, 20(2), 191-212.
- Block, M. & Rizzo, T. (1995). Attitudes and attributes of physical educators associated with teaching individuals with severe and profound disabilities. Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 20(1), 80-87.
- Buell, M., Hallam, R. & Gamel-McCormick, M. (1999). A survey of general and special education teachers' perceptions and inservice needs concerning inclusion. International Journal of Disability, Development, and Education, 46(2), 143-156.
- Chow, P. & Winzer, M.A. (1992). Reliability and validity of a scale measuring attitudes toward mainstreaming. Educational & Psychological Measurement, 52(1), 223-229.
- Cook, Bryan G. (2001). A comparison of teachers' attitudes toward their included students with mild and severe disabilities. The Journal of Special Education, 34(4), 203-213.
- Cornoldi, C., Terreni, A., & Scruggs, T. (1998). Teacher attitudes in Italy after twenty years of inclusion. Remedial and Special Education, 19(6), 350-356.
- Daane, C.J., Beirne-Smith, M., & Latham, D. (2000). Administrators' and teachers' perceptions of the collaborative efforts of inclusion in the elementary grades. Education, 121(2), 331-339.
- D'Alonzo, B., Giordano, G, & Vanleeuwen, D. (1997). Perceptions by teachers about the benefits and liabilities of inclusion. Preventing School Failure, 42(1), 4-12.
- Department of Education (1999). *IDEA '97 General Information*. Retrieved October 6, 2001, from <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA/overview.html>.
- Eagan, Kevin Christopher. (1998). Teacher attitudes toward inclusion: a survey of elementary special and regular education teachers in Massachusetts and New York. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Sciences, 59(6), 1902.
- Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (1975). *Public Law 94-142 (S. 6)*. Retrieved October 6, 2001, from <http://asclepius.com/angel/special.html>.

- Ferris, Edith Makin. (1996). The attitude of general and special secondary teachers toward inclusion practices and strategies. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Services, 57(5), 2001.
- Gennell-Crosby, S. & Hanzlik, J.R. (1994). Preschool teachers' perceptions of including children with disabilities. Education & Training in Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities, 29(4), 279-290.
- Hawkins, Geraldine Drake. (1992). Attitudes toward mainstreaming students with disabilities among regular elementary music and physical educators. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Services, 52(9), 3245.
- Heflin, L. & Bullock, L. (1999). Inclusion of students with emotional/behavioral disorders: a survey of teachers in general and special education. Preventing School Failure, 43(3), 103-112.
- Huszar Murray, Patricia Jo. (1997). The inclusion of special education students in general education classrooms: attitudes of special education and general education teachers. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Services, 58(6), 2070.
- Jobe, D. & Rust, J. (1996). Teacher attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms. Education, 117(1), 148-154.
- Lanter, N. & Lanter, W. (1996). The effects of experience on teachers' attitudes toward incorporating special students into the regular classroom. Education, 117(2), 234-241.
- Levin, Roxanne Beth Weiss. (1995). Staff attitudes regarding full inclusion of special needs children in regular classrooms. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Services, 56(1-A), 85.
- Leyser, Y. & Tappendorf, K. (2001). Are attitudes and practices regarding mainstreaming changing? A case of teachers in two rural school districts. Education, 121(4), 751-761.
- McLean, Shelia K. (2001). A survey of middle level teachers' perceptions of inclusion. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Services, 61(7-A), 2596.
- McLeskey, J., Waldrom, N., & So, T. (2001). Perspectives of teachers toward inclusive school programs. Teacher Education and Special Education, 24(2), 108-115.
- Monahan, R. & Marino, S. (1996). Teacher attitudes toward inclusion: implications for teacher education in schools 2000. Education, 117(2), 316-321.

- National Center for Learning Disabilities (1999). *Federal Laws Protecting Children & Youth with Disabilities*. Retrieved October 6, 2001, from <http://www.ld.org/advocacy/fedlaws.cfm>.
- New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14 (1998).
- Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (2000). *Twenty-five Years of Progress in Education Children with Disabilities Through IDEA*. Retrieved October 6, 2001, from [http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA25th/Lesson1\\_History.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA25th/Lesson1_History.html).
- Olson, M., Chalmers, L. & Hoover, J. (1997). Attitudes and attributes of general education teachers identified as effective inclusionists. *Remedial and Special Education*, *18*, 28-35.
- Parkay, F. W., & Stanford, B. H. (1998). *Becoming a teacher* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Payne, Shannon. (2001). *Public Law 94-142*. Retrieved October 6, 2001, from <http://www.nd.edu/~rbarger/www7/pl94-142.html>.
- Sideridis, G. & Chandler, J. (1996). Comparison of attitudes of teachers of physical and musical education toward inclusion of children with disabilities. *Psychological Reports*, *78*(3), 768-770.
- Snyder, Rebecca Finley. (1999). Inclusion: a qualitative study of inservice general education teachers' attitudes and concerns. *Education*, *120*(1), 173-180.
- Soodak, L., Podell, D. & Lehman, L. (1998). Teacher, student, and school attributes as predictors of teachers' responses to inclusion. *Journal of Special Education*, *31*(4), 480-498.
- Stoler, Robert Dennis. (1992). Perceptions of regular education teachers toward inclusion of all handicapped students in their classrooms. *Clearing House*, *66*(1), 60-63.
- The Policy Partnership for Implementing IDEA (1998). *The History of IDEA*. Retrieved October 6, 2001, from <http://ideapolicy.org/Relaunch/history.pdf>.
- Turner, Bobbiette. (1996). Teachers' perceptions of inclusionary practices in an urban school setting. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Sciences*, *57*(6-A), 2438.
- Van Reusen, A., Shoho, A., & Barker, K. (2000-2001). High school teacher attitudes toward inclusion. *High School Journal*, *84*(2), 7-21.

- Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency (1999). *Wayne County Parent Advisory Committee Handbook: The Laws*. Retrieved October 6, 2001, from [http://www.resa.net/sped/parent/the\\_laws.htm](http://www.resa.net/sped/parent/the_laws.htm).
- Wendt, Liam Hughes. (1999). A survey of regular education teachers' attitudes toward their included students. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Services, 60(2), 343.
- Whitbread, Kathleen Michele. (2000). The effects of the absence of separate special education settings on teacher attitude toward inclusion. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Services, 60(11), 3898.
- Wilcox, Steve Michael. (1996). Assessing attitudes of administrators, core content teachers, and special education teachers at the middle school level toward the inclusion of special education students into general education classes. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Services, 56(11), 4242.
- Wilczenski, Felicia L. (1992). Measuring attitudes toward inclusive education. Psychology in the Schools, 29(4), 306-312.
- Wolery, M., Werts, M.G., Coldwell, N., Snyder, E., & Lisowski, L. (1995). Experienced teachers' perceptions of resources and supports for inclusion. Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 30(1), 15-26.

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX I**  
**Survey of Attitudes Toward the Inclusion of Students with Special  
Needs**



**SURVEY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH  
SPECIAL NEEDS**

**M. A. Winzer, Ed.D.**

This research survey is being conducted for the use in the completion of my master's thesis in school psychology at Rowan University.

The following questionnaire is designed to assess the attitudes of regular education teachers, special education teachers, and specialist teachers toward the inclusion of students with special needs into the mainstream of education. Information obtained from this research will be used to increase the existing knowledge on this subject matter.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. All responses and personal information will be kept anonymous and confidential. Participation does not require that all questions in this survey need to be answered. If for any reason you do not wish to answer a question, simply leave it blank.

If you wish to participate, please sign and date this form. The survey consists of two parts, an information section, and a twenty item questionnaire. Please complete both sections. When you are finished, simply tear off this consent form and hand it in separate from your questionnaire.

If you have any questions concerning my research, this questionnaire, or its findings, you may contact me at (856)278-0170 or contact my advisors at Rowan University- Dr. John Klanderman at (856)256-4500 ext. 3797 or Dr. Roberta Dihoff at (856)256-4500 ext. 3783.

Thank you for your time and participation,

Megan Ireland

I have read and understand the above statements. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that all my information and answers will remain anonymous and be kept confidential. Therefore, I agree to participate in this research project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The following questionnaire is designed to assess the attitudes of teachers, teachers-in-training and non-educators toward the inclusion of students with special needs into the mainstream of education.

The Survey consists of two parts, an information section, and a twenty item questionnaire. Please complete both sections.

Participation is voluntary. If the questionnaire is completed it will be assumed that consent to use the data has been given. If you do not wish to complete the form, simply leave it blank and hand it in when all the forms are collected. Do not write your name on the form.

**SURVEY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE INCLUSION OF  
STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

**Section 1:**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Sex:

- 1. Male \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Female \_\_\_\_\_

Age:

- 1. 18 – 25 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. 26-30 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. 31-35 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. 36-40 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. 41+ \_\_\_\_\_

Field of Teaching:

- 1. Regular/General Education (including math) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Special Education \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Specialist (Music, Art, Physical Ed/Health, Communication Skills,  
Smart Lab, Computers, or Library Skills) \_\_\_\_\_

Subject area taught \_\_\_\_\_

Years of teaching:

- 1. 0-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. 6-10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. 11-15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. 16-20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. 21-25 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. 26+ \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Education Completed:

- 1. Undergraduate \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Some post undergraduate \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Graduate \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Some post graduate \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Doctoral \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2:

In this section, check the category which most clearly describes your attitude to the statement. Please answer all questions. . .

		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Undecided	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Including the exceptional child will promote his/her independence.					
2.	Teachers already have a heavy work load without the responsibility of students with special needs.					
3.	Students with special needs will find it much easier to mix with their peers after leaving school if they have been taught together in regular classrooms.					
4.	It is hypocritical to talk about the school representing a microcosm of society if it excludes those with special needs.					
5.	In the classroom, the child who is exceptional will take more than his/her share of the teacher's time.					
6.	The image of a particular school benefits from the presence of students with special needs.					
7.	The integration of general students with special needs into classes is beneficial to all pupils.					
8.	Extra costs involved in educating children who are exceptional should be borne by the parents.					
9.	The teacher cannot give equal time to all students if there are children with special needs in the classrooms.					
10.	Inclusion offers mixed group interaction which fosters understanding and acceptance of differences.					
11.	As a teacher, I would be willing to have a child with special needs in my classroom.					
12.	Classroom teachers should make the decision as to whether or not to take students with special needs in their classroom.					
13.	Inclusion will give students with special needs a better chance to readily fit into their community.					
14.	The child who is exceptional is likely to be socially isolated by regular students.					

		<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Slightly agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Slightly disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
15.	With the help of experienced teachers, support services and special equipment, students who are exceptional can do well in a general classroom environment.					
16.	The presence of students with special needs in the general classroom helps the regular child understand and accept them in an empathetic and realistic manner.					
17.	As a teacher I would be willing to take extra training so as to be better able to handle exceptional children in my classroom.					
18.	The parents of regular children will object to the presence of children who are exceptional in the regular classroom.					
19.	The contact regular class students have with included exceptional students may be harmful to the regular students.					
20.	Regular students quickly become accustomed to having pupils who have special needs in the school and naturally accept them as peers.					

**APPENDIX II**  
**Raw Scores**

	sex	age	field	subject	years	edu	positive	negative	load	full
1	2.00	5.00	2.00		3.00	2.00	54.00	10.00	5.00	69.00
2	2.00	4.00	2.00		4.00	3.00	50.00	12.00	13.00	75.00
3	2.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	2.00	22.00	17.00	20.00	59.00
4	2.00	4.00	3.00	7.00	3.00	3.00	52.00	9.50	5.00	66.50
5	2.00	5.00	1.00	2.00	6.00	3.00	26.00	16.00	20.00	62.00
6	1.00	5.00	1.00	2.00	5.00	3.00	18.00	14.00	16.00	48.00
7	2.00	5.00	1.00	3.00	4.00	1.00	26.00	12.00	20.00	58.00
8	2.00	5.00	1.00	2.00	4.00	3.00	21.00	13.00	20.00	54.00
9	2.00	3.00	1.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	42.00	5.00	15.00	62.00
10	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	50.00	8.00	17.00	75.00
11	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	49.00	7.00	11.00	67.00
12	1.00	5.00	1.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	51.00	7.00	15.00	73.00
13	2.00	5.00	1.00	3.00	6.00	4.00	43.00	13.00	19.00	75.00
14	2.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	43.00	13.00	19.00	75.00
15	1.00	3.00	3.00	6.00	1.00	1.00	22.00	15.00	19.00	56.00
16	2.00	5.00	2.00		3.00	2.00	54.00	8.00	9.00	71.00
17	2.00	4.00	1.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	43.00	10.00	20.00	73.00
18	2.00	5.00	1.00	4.00	3.00	2.00	54.00	9.00	13.00	76.00
19	2.00	5.00	1.00	5.00	6.00	3.00	53.00	10.00	11.00	74.00
20	1.00	5.00	3.00	7.00	5.00	2.00	23.00	12.00	20.00	55.00
21	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	57.00	7.00	12.00	76.00
22	2.00	4.00	2.00		2.00	2.00	54.00	8.00	5.00	67.00
23	2.00	3.00	1.00	5.00	3.00	2.00	23.00	12.00	20.00	55.00
24	2.00	4.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	38.50	10.00	20.00	68.50
25	1.00	5.00	3.00	6.00	6.00	1.00	22.00	15.00	19.00	56.00
26	2.00	2.00	2.00		1.00	1.00	57.00	7.00	4.00	68.00



	sex	age	field	subject	years	edu	positive	negative	load	full
27	1.00	5.00	1.00	5.00	6.00	4.00	53.00	6.00	14.00	73.00
28	1.00	5.00	1.00	4.00	5.00	3.00	23.00	12.00	20.00	55.00
29	2.00	5.00	2.00		4.00	2.00	53.00	10.00	6.00	69.00
30	2.00	3.00	1.00	5.00	2.00	1.00	54.00	12.00	13.00	79.00
31	2.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	53.00	10.00	11.00	74.00
32	1.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	4.00	2.00	50.00	11.00	17.00	78.00
33	1.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	53.00	10.00	11.00	74.00
34	2.00	5.00	3.00	7.00	6.00	5.00	23.00	12.00	20.00	55.00
35	2.00	5.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	50.00	11.00	17.00	78.00
36	2.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	1.00	26.00	12.00	18.00	56.00
37	2.00	2.00	1.00	4.00	1.00	3.00	48.00	11.00	12.00	71.00
38	2.00	3.00	2.00		2.00	2.00	57.00	6.00	9.00	72.00
39	2.00	2.00	1.00	5.00	2.00	2.00	53.00	8.00	16.00	77.00
40	1.00	2.00	1.00	4.00	2.00	3.00	51.00	7.00	9.00	67.00
41	2.00	5.00	1.00	4.00	6.00	3.00	23.00	15.00	20.00	58.00
42	2.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	42.00	16.00	14.00	72.00
43	2.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	23.00	15.00	20.00	58.00
44	1.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	23.00	15.00	20.00	58.00
45	2.00	5.00	3.00	6.00	5.00	1.00	28.00	13.00	20.00	61.00
46	2.00	5.00	1.00	5.00	1.00	2.00	38.00	12.00	16.00	66.00
47	2.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	55.00	8.00	12.00	75.00
48	2.00	5.00	1.00	3.00	4.00	2.00	26.00	15.00	20.00	61.00
49	1.00	5.00	1.00	5.00	4.00	2.00	29.00	17.00	20.00	66.00
50	2.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	50.00	4.00	12.00	66.00
51	2.00	4.00	2.00		3.00	2.00	50.00	8.00	7.00	65.00
52	2.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	36.00	12.00	16.00	64.00

	sex	age	field	subject	years	edu	positive	negative	load	full
53	2.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	3.00	22.00	14.00	20.00	56.00
54	1.00	5.00	3.00	7.00	6.00	2.00	21.00	14.00	20.00	55.00
55	1.00	5.00	3.00	7.00	4.00	2.00	13.00	14.00	20.00	47.00
56	2.00	2.00	3.00	7.00	1.00	1.00	13.00	14.00	20.00	47.00
57	1.00	5.00	3.00	7.00	5.00	3.00	23.00	15.00	20.00	58.00
58	1.00	5.00	1.00	5.00	2.00	3.00	23.00	13.00	19.00	55.00
59	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	42.00	10.00	16.00	68.00
60	2.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	1.00	59.00	7.00	7.00	73.00
61	1.00	2.00	1.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	54.00	12.00	12.00	78.00
62	1.00	5.00	1.00	5.00	1.00	3.00	48.00	10.00	11.00	69.00
63	1.00	4.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	48.00	10.00	11.00	69.00
64	1.00	2.00	3.00	6.00	1.00	1.00	23.00	13.00	20.00	56.00
65	2.00	4.00	3.00	6.00	1.00	1.00	51.00	6.00	7.00	64.00
66	1.00	2.00	2.00		1.00	3.00	57.00	6.00	9.00	72.00
67	1.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	4.00	31.00	8.00	16.00	55.00
68	1.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	46.00	12.00	15.00	73.00
69	2.00	5.00	2.00		4.00	2.00	54.00	4.00	12.00	70.00
70	2.00	5.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	1.00	46.00	11.00	13.00	70.00
71	2.00	5.00	1.00	2.00	5.00	1.00	26.00	13.00	20.00	59.00