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TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSION:  
WHAT DID THEY SAY?

by  
Lisa R. Waligore

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
at  
Rowan University  
(May 9, 2002)

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

Date Approved 5/9/2002

## ABSTRACT

Lisa R. Waligore  
TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSION:  
WHAT DID THEY SAY?  
2002/03  
Dr. Joy Xin  
Master of Arts in Special Education

This study used a survey to obtain information regarding regular education teachers and special education teachers' attitude toward inclusive education and other related issues in inclusive classrooms, such as co-teaching, teaching strategies, instructional planning, learning capabilities, accommodations, and mutual respect. Two hundred copies of the surveys were distributed to 7 public schools, 105 were returned. Of those, 60 were elementary teachers, 14 were special education teachers, 16 were middle school teachers, and 10 were high school teachers.

The responses were analyzed using 1-5 points, 1 to indicated strongly agree, 2 to indicate agree, 3 to indicate neither agree nor disagree, 4 to indicate disagree, and 5 to indicate strongly disagree. A factor analysis was used to categorize 20 survey items into 6 factors. Mean and standard deviation were computed. An ANOVA analysis was used to compare the difference between regular and special education groups.

Results show a significant difference between regular education teachers and special education teachers on their perspectives of co-teaching. College courses pertaining to special education may benefit regular education teachers, and hopefully prepare them for the job of teaching students with disabilities.

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Regular and special education teachers responded to a questionnaire to determine what competencies are necessary to work with students with disabilities in inclusive settings. Results show a significant difference between regular education teachers and special education teachers on their perspectives of co-teaching. There are not significant differences on teaching strategies, instructional planning, learning capabilities, accommodations, and mutual respect as they reported.

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## Chapter 1

### Statement of Problems

The term “inclusion” has been defined as serving students with and without disabilities in the regular education classroom with appropriate in-class support (Bennett, Bruns, & DeLuca, 1997). The goal of this approach is to integrate children with special needs with their non disabled peers. In an inclusive learning environment, regular education teachers are responsible for teaching a class with both regular and special students. In order to provide instruction to diverse students, teachers need adequate knowledge and skills to teach their students, especially those with disabilities (Bennett, Bruns, & DeLuca, 1997). To make the inclusion experience successful, they also need to be trained to work in such a new educational environment (Cochran, 1998).

To date, many studies have been conducted to investigate ways to make inclusion a successful experience for teachers (Cochran, 1996). It is believed that several factors contribute to the success (Bennett, Bruns, & DeLuca, 1997). First, teachers need to accept their job responsibility for the learning process of students with disabilities . Second, parents need to be informed of the goals and objectives in the support program for their children. Third, inclusion requires the shared expertise of both special and regular educators working together towards a common goal (Bennett, Bruns, & DeLuca, 1997). Furthermore, regular educators need to believe that every child can learn including those with disabilities, and accommodations for individual students’ needs are important (Marino & Monahan, 1996). The present study continued to survey teachers and to



examine their attitude change after years of their experiences in inclusive classrooms.

## Background

Fifteen to twenty years ago, regular education teachers had little or no preparation when discussing how to educate students with disabilities (D'Alonzo & Giordano, 1996). In recent years, the movement of inclusion has been advocated to include students with disabilities in regular education settings. Undoubtedly, inclusion has had an impact on education system, because it has impacted the role of the educators to meet the needs of diverse students in classrooms (D'Alonzo & Giordano, 1996). It is assumed that regular teachers may need to take more responsibilities in inclusive classrooms. Thus, teachers need to acquire knowledge, and prepare themselves in order to work students with and without disabilities.

The demands on regular education teachers have grown in the past decade (D'Alonzo & Giordano, 1996). It is reported that teachers in inclusive classrooms feel overwhelmed to be responsible to meet a wide range of student needs, and the challenges teachers are facing may require additional support (Baumgart, Doyle, & Giangreco, 1995). It appears that inclusion needs to be pursued in a thoughtful manner not only by teachers, but also other professionals, administrators and parents (Wood, 1998).

According to Chalmers, Hoover, and Olson (1997) teachers' attitude and beliefs toward students with disabilities are the most important issues that influence collaborative efforts between special and regular educators in inclusive classrooms. The goal of the collaborative relationships is to provide effective services to both regular and special students. To accomplish this goal, two issues are pertinent. The first is the time factor. Collaboration requires planning time which is crucial to the success of inclusion. The second and most important, is a relationship between the regular and special

education teachers. The collaborative effort made by both teachers will ensure the success of inclusive education, and avoid segregation and separation within the school system (Stoler, 1992).

To collaborate and work together to reach the goal, it is important for special and regular education teachers to acquire the necessary skills (Conte, 1994). In-service training is recommended for teachers to learn how to instruct all students at diverse levels in classrooms (Bennett, Bruns, & DeLuca, 1997). The training not only will increase teachers' confidence, but enhance a positive attitude. With training, teachers will realize their strengths and weaknesses, which will enable them to learn from each other and work together (Stoler, 1992). This, in turn, will ensure the possible success of inclusion.

Inclusive education is an approach that has the potential to have a positive influence on students' education (Baumgart, Doyle, & Giangreco, 1995). Educators have realized the importance of this approach as students with disabilities are being integrated into regular education classrooms (Stoler, 1992). To date, inclusive education has been implemented by many school districts (Synder, 1999). Those in favor are convinced that it is the most effective way of providing services to all students (Finely, 1999). In contrast, those opposed to inclusion strongly recommend further research before implementing this approach (Kirk, 1998). The pros and cons of inclusion need to be further discussed, and there remains much to learn. The goal of inclusion as well as preparation of teachers and school systems is an ongoing debate in the field of education (Lanier & Lanier, 1996).

#### Significance of the Study

As students with disabilities are included in regular education settings, educators

are facing diverse students with and without disabilities. Many teachers feel overwhelmed to be responsible for accommodating strategies to meet the need of a wide range of students (Baumgart, Doyle, & Giangreco, 1995). When teachers are recognizing the importance of integrating students with special needs into a regular education classroom, they also understand the changes of their responsibilities. The alternative is to create a climate in which both the regular and special educators can combine their skills and experience to create a classroom conducive to teaching and learning (Baumgart, Doyle, & Giangreco, 1995).

Research has indicated that teachers' positive attitudes are enhanced when they are in a supportive school environment (Lanier & Lanier, 1996). Studies have demonstrated that when teachers are provided with education or training, their attitude will become positive and continue with time and practice (Lanier & Lanier, 1996). It seems important to examine attitudes and teachers' willingness to accept students with disabilities into the regular classroom. The present study will examine attitudes of the regular and special educators, and how it relates to job satisfaction in teaching students with disabilities. The objective of the study is to explore the extent of teacher's training on inclusion, and to examine how teacher's attitude impacts the learning process of students with disabilities.

#### Statement of Purpose

The purposes of this study are (a) to investigate regular education teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities (b) to examine if regular education teachers' educational background, experience and in-service training will impact their attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities (c) to investigate special education teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities (d) to examine if special

education teachers' education background, experience and in-service training will impact their attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities.

#### Research Questions

1. What are regular education teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities?
2. What are special education teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities?
3. Do teachers' educational background , experience, and in-service training impact their attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities?

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

A teacher's perspective toward inclusion is crucial for successful integration of children with disabilities in regular classrooms with their non disabled peers (Lanier & Lanier, 1996). Appropriate education and training promote teachers' positive attitudes, and increase their confidence to teach students in diverse classrooms (Kirk & Helene, 1996). The support of the school system and personnel also impacts teachers' positive attitudes toward inclusion (Kirk & Helene, 1996). This chapter will review inclusive education and its challenges in school systems, teachers' challenges in inclusive environment, teachers' attitudes, administrators' roles, and how a teacher's training impacts his or her attitude toward inclusion.

#### Inclusive Education and its Challenge in School Systems

P.L. 94-142 has provided an opportunity for individuals with disabilities to have full access to educational programs within the public schools, along with support services to meet their educational needs (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). In 1990, Public Law 94-142 was reauthorized, and the name was changed to the Individuals with Disabilities of Education Act (IDEA) (Synder, 1999). One component that is essential to this law is the notion of "least restrictive environment." Under this aspect, students with disabilities are educated in regular school settings with their peers, and the least restrictive environment provides an opportunity for students to attend school in the most integrated setting possible (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). According to Schumm and Vaughn (1995), this inclusive environment that refers to inclusion can be defined as students being educated to the maximum extent appropriate in their neighborhood school within the regular education

classroom, and with their age appropriate peers, and with all the necessary supports and services.

Finley and Synder (1999) has focused on three major components that complement the inclusive movement. First, the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 mandates to prohibit discrimination of individuals with disabilities. Second, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits all recipients of federal funds from discriminating in services and employment on the basis of the disability. Lastly, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) of 1975 entitles all students with disabilities, a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (Finley & Synder, 1999).

The manner of integration varies with different school systems. A child with disabilities may be placed in a special class, then assigned a regular class for a period of time. Another way that may be used is to place a child who is assigned in a regular classroom, but receives remediated instruction part of the day in the resource room from a special education teacher. At the other extreme, a child may be placed in a regular classroom full-time with no specialized assistance (Marston, 1996). It is realized that whatever service delivery model is established, there needs to be continuous evaluation and adjustment (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995).

According to Schumm and Vaughn (1995), when inclusion happens, the first consideration should be the academic or social progress of students with disabilities in regular education classrooms. Their study further highlighted that once the student is placed in the regular education classroom, it is critical to the success of inclusion for ongoing assessment, monitoring and proper adjustment. In contrast, Schumm and Vaughn (1995) examined another approach in which placement was considered first, and the

academic and social progress was secondary, and concluded that the decision making about placement should be student centered in both approaches.

Successful inclusion requires an abundance of resources (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). Inclusion is not an opportunity to reduce the cost of services to students with disabilities, but in fact, successful programs for special need students based on differential resources tend to be costly (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). These resources include additional teachers and teaching assistants, as well as other resources, such as books, computers, and materials. Schumm and Vaughn (1995) conducted teacher interviews and found that lacking of adequate resources hindered successful inclusion. In addition, teachers also expressed concerns that they would not be provided with sufficient materials in order to meet the needs of the special education students. They also feared that the resources that were currently available such as the specially trained teachers would diminish after inclusion was implemented. Educators and school personnel must understand it does require a considerable amount of resources in order for inclusion to be successful (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995).

According to Marston (1996), many positive perceptions of teachers on the inclusion approach have been found. For example, students are less likely to carry a label, because special education teachers become more aware of their students' function in the regular education classroom. Teachers become aware of different teaching strategies, and different adults in class which promotes collaboration. Students' behavior is generally better, and there is an increase in the students' self-esteem (Marston, 1996).

In contrast, Marston (1996) also found negative perceptions of teachers on inclusion. First, it may not address individual needs. Teachers felt there were some students who were significantly behind, and needed more intense instruction than what

their regular education classroom offered. Second, regular education teachers did not want other teachers in their classrooms due to a lack of work space. Third, teachers felt inclusion was not appropriate for students with severe disabilities due to their inability to learn in a large group, rather than one to one. Finally, teachers felt the size of inclusive classes was big and felt students preferred a smaller classroom environment, so that they could receive more attention and support from a special education teacher.

#### Teachers' Challenges in Inclusive Classrooms

As the inclusion movement is advocated and inclusive education is implemented in school systems, teachers are facing many challenges (Bunch & Valeo, 1998). These challenges relate to their roles and responsibilities, workload, and their preparation and readiness.

Inclusion has called for teachers to reestablish their responsibilities and educational roles (Bunch & Valeo, 1998). Abernathy, Butera, Lesar, and Semmel (1991) found that seventy-four percent of regular education teachers were in significant agreement that they should be solely responsible for regular education students only. Teachers felt that placing special education students in regular classrooms demand specific teaching skills, and individualized instruction which requires more time to achieve class goals. Furthermore, Bunch and Valeo (1998) found that regular education teachers believe that special education teachers have the expertise and special knowledge, therefore it would be better for them to deliver instruction to the students with special needs. The regular education teachers felt their acquired knowledge did not fit the needs of the students with disabilities. Willingness to include students with disabilities, and being better prepared for inclusive classrooms may be the first challenge for teachers. Evans, Duchnowski, Hocutt, and Townsend (1996 ) indicated that teachers with dual



certification in both special and regular education are better prepared to teach special need students. This may need to be investigated further, and innovative practices should be explored in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities in inclusive environments.

Another challenge teachers face is enhancing planning and instruction to effectively meet the needs of students with disabilities (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). Regular education teachers showed enthusiasm to improve instruction for all learners, but were less willing to implement instruction that met only the needs of students with disabilities (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). This seemed to require more instructional planning for particular students. It was also found that teachers wanted instruction plans for a whole group that would require minimal preplanning. Meanwhile, teachers found it difficult to have adequate time to explain content at the same time to monitor the progress of students with disabilities. Therefore, specific approaches to instructional practices that enhance learning for all students without an increase of the teacher workload should be considered (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995).

Teachers feel they are not prepared to face the challenge of inclusion, because teachers believe that they lack time, skills, training or the resources necessary for inclusive education to succeed (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1996). Schumm and Vaughn (1995) focused on several components of inclusion that would help teachers understand effective inclusion. First, teachers are provided opportunities to participate in inclusive classrooms with their choices. Second, school personnel must realize that there is a need for ongoing professional development to better prepare teachers for the different types of educational programs. Third, teachers need to develop and discuss their own philosophy on inclusion. However, regular education teachers do not feel prepared to meet the academic and behavioral needs of students with disabilities. Thus, professional

development, such as training, needs to be provided to meet teachers' needs. An ongoing service is necessary to meet the everyday challenges teachers face (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995).

#### Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusion

Positive attitudes among regular and special educators are necessary for the success of inclusion (Cook, Gerber, & Semme 1999). A review of the literature shows how course work and in service training impact teachers' attitudes.

According to Lanier and Lanier (1996), teacher training would help educators better deal with special education students that are placed in regular education classrooms. Two ways of training that would result in teacher satisfaction were addressed. First, courses provided by colleges and universities should include greater emphasis on inclusion techniques. Second, in-service training which includes course work, written materials, and workshops should be ongoing. It is indicated that when training is provided, it not only results in a positive attitude of participants, but a willingness to accept students with disabilities into regular classrooms (Lanier & Lanier, 1996).

Cook, Gerber, and Semme (1999) found positive attitudes existed among special education teachers due to their expertise and knowledge in the educational field. They indicated how these professionals have roles that are dedicated specifically to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Happendorf and Leyser (2001) explored attitudes and practices regarding inclusion using an attitude scale. They found that special education teachers as compared to regular education teachers perceive themselves as more competent in teaching students with disabilities because of their professional training. Bennett, Bruns, and DeLuca (1997) indicated that training had increased teacher

confidence and promoted a positive attitude. In turn, teachers with positive attitudes would be more likely to seek out additional training. The results also showed a positive correlation between teacher training and their attitudes toward inclusion, indicating the need for ongoing training for regular education teachers (Bennett, Bruns, & DeLuca, 1997).

Jobe and Rust (1996) studied the attitudes of teachers who completed course work or in-service training to see how the differing levels of training affect attitudes. As a result of the study, one hundred eighty-two teachers with more in-service experience on inclusion were more likely to have a positive attitude toward inclusion. The study also provided evidence that teachers' attitudes toward inclusion are related to special education experience and in-service training (Jobe & Rust, 1996).

Stoler (1992) pointed out that in service training might not be accomplished in one day workshops. In fact, training must be comprehensive, and be in-depth before the process of inclusion takes place. Topics may include techniques on team teaching, collaboration, and the ability for teachers to recognize any physical or emotional problems students may exhibit. It was found that teachers who received in-service training in special education showed more positive attitudes toward inclusion than those without any training (Stoler, 1992). It was also emphasized that more research on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion might be needed (Stoler, 1992).

In contrast, teachers lack of training might demonstrate negative attitudes (Lobosco & Newman, 1992). Lobosco and Newman (1992) analyzed the fact that teachers were hesitant toward the inclusion movement. They indicated that teachers without training not only demonstrated negative attitudes, but lacked confidence in their instructional skills to teach students with disabilities. Hence, they found the more

exposure regular education teachers had to special education students , the more willingness they had to include students with disabilities in their classrooms. It is clear that there is a need for extensive training on the expectations and methods for working with special needs children (Lobosco & Newman, 1992).

Another reason teachers have negative attitudes toward inclusion is due to the fact that they feel unprepared to teach students with special needs (Beirne, Daane, & Latham, 2000). According to Baumgart, Doyle, and Giangreco (1995) , teachers who feel unprepared tend to feel overwhelmed to be responsible for accommodating special need students, and assumed the special education teacher to take the responsibility. Therefore, this leaves no room for collaboration. It appears that more communication between the regular and special educators, more professional collaboration should be ideal, and becomes an integral part of any educational program. According to Jobe and Rust (1996), teachers' attitude was also impacted by different levels of education. It was interesting to realize that the higher the education level, the more negative attitudes toward inclusion. It is also found that teachers who were educated many years ago, with years of experience, demonstrated negative attitudes toward inclusion (Jobe & Rust, 1996).

#### Administrator's Role in Inclusion

Administrators need to play an active role in implementing inclusive education (Finley & Synder, 1999). For inclusive education to succeed, administrators need to prepare regular education teachers by providing training, support, or leadership (Finley & Synder, 1999).

Administrators' attitudes toward inclusion would represent a powerful influence. With a positive attitude, administrators, especially principals would support ongoing

professional development for teachers (Cook, Gerbel, & Semmel, 1999). According to Beirne, Daane, and Latham (2000), principals realized a need for teachers to attend workshops on instructional modifications for students with disabilities. These workshops would be beneficial for both regular and special education teachers to learning strategies to instruct of a diverse class, management of different students, and collaboration of different teachers (Beirne, Daane, & Latham, 2000).

It seems that the presence of students with disabilities in the regular education classroom has increased the instructional load of the regular education teacher (Beirne, Daane, & Latham, 2000). This should be understood by administrators in order to provide appropriate schedules and planning time. As one principal indicated in a study, principals recognized that teachers had problems in adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities, and a majority of the principals realized that regular education teachers did not have the instructional skills to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities. It is called for principals to provide support to their teachers (Beirne, Daane, & Latham, 2000).

Bennett, Bruns and DeLuca (1997) studied how administrators provided teachers time to collaborate, communicate, and cooperate in school. The administrator's support seemed essential to offer the necessary physical resources such as additional instructional assistants that enable the special need students to receive more attention and assistance, or to reduce class size if applicable, or to provide planning time and available training. Most important was the emotional support including communication and conversation with teachers on a regular basis. This administrative support to address the concerns expressed by teachers has enhanced their confidence not only in teaching, but in

themselves as well (Bruno, D'Alonzo, and Giordano, 1997).

#### Teacher's Training Impacts Teacher's Attitude

In order to meet the needs of individual students, teachers must prepare lessons and unit plans, use media and technology, maintain classroom discipline, motivate students, use textbooks and curriculum guides, and adapt instruction effectively (Campbell, 1996). Teaching requires skills and strategies, and formal or informal training will prepare teachers in order for them to develop confidence in their instruction (Campbell, 1996).

The formal preparation includes teacher education programs. Education programs focused specifically on special education methodologies are available in most colleges nation-wide. These programs are usually completed by teachers who want to specialize in teaching students with disabilities (Marino, Miller & Monahan, 2000). However, these courses are not normally required for preparing regular education teachers due to time constraints of their programs. It is clear that the more course work teachers complete on special education, the more positive attitudes they would have toward inclusion (Brissie, Jobe, & Rust, 1996).

Kirk (1998) investigated the effects of an inclusion course on teachers' attitudes, and found no significant change in attitudes after the teachers had completed a course on inclusion. All the teacher participants felt more training was needed to better prepare themselves for their inclusive classrooms. Suggestions were made. These included specific adaptations and modifications for successful instruction, and curriculum, and assessment in an inclusionary setting. The other suggestion was to expose teacher candidates an environment with exceptional students, so that any myths or misunderstandings of those students could be clarified. Also, providing preservice

teachers a variety of strategies was suggested to prepare them for working with diverse learners, in order for future teachers to be confident and competent when entering the teaching profession.

According to Carey (1997) one of the most important lessons for teacher candidates is to learn a variety of learning situations that not only promote a positive attitude, but encourage inclusion. In Carey's (1997) classroom strategies to help the inclusion of diverse students in regular education classroom were identified. These strategies included cooperative learning, collaborative learning, partner learning, peer tutoring, and creative problem solving. In the study, all the strategies were discussed and modeled, and then put into practice by the preservice teachers. It is found both in-service and preservice education programs prepare teachers in these important areas so they can develop confidence in their teaching ability.

In addition, Evans, Duchnowski, Hocutt and Townsend (1996) reported that innovative practices such as dual certification would better prepare teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities in an inclusive environment. It was also found that positive attitudes result from teachers who have professional certification, training, and higher levels of education. This indicates that training should not only be a consideration for teachers who are already in service, but a priority for preservice teachers.

Inclusion demands that both the regular and special education teachers work as a team to educate children with special needs (Chalmers, Hoover, & Olson, 1997).

Chalmers, Hoover, and Olson (1997) indicated in-service training on inclusion was successful among regular and special education teachers. Both teachers received training on disabilities and how to create an inclusive classroom environment. Such in-service

training was designed specifically to develop collaborative skills for problem-solving and team teaching. In addition, principals may need to be involved in training. For example, principals who had previously worked in the field of special education could provide input and share experiences of their training that may impact the involvement of other school administrators. Meanwhile, principals may work with teachers to identify topics and areas for further professional development for teachers and administrators. Those activities and support systems would promote a positive attitude toward implementing inclusive education.

In contrast, teachers with negative perceptions of inclusion may be because of insufficient training, and lack of knowledge in special education (Synder, 1999). Maimlin (1999) investigated a school district as an example. Despite the best intention of inclusive education, the district failed to fully understand and implement the inclusive programs. It was found that teachers struggled for using effective instructional strategies to teach students and lacked training. The only training regular education teachers received was a two hour in-service, which did not provide sufficient knowledge in learning curriculum instructional strategies because of the limited time period (Maimlin, 1999).

In order for the inclusion movement to be successful, the regular education teachers must be trained to be competent to work with students with disabilities (Synder, 1999). In the study, Synder (1999) found that regular education teachers had little confidence in working with students with disabilities due to the limited training and knowledge, and all regular education teachers did not have one course or an in-service workshop in the field of special education. Because of this situation, teachers who graduated years ago did not feel prepared to effectively deal with special education students. Teachers who were not satisfied with the implementation of inclusive



programs, felt overwhelmed due to their limited training. Synder (1999) concluded that for regular education teachers to succeed in inclusive programs, they must have the necessary skills to teach students with special needs.

According to Daane, Latham and Smith (2000), in-service training might be a good format to help alleviate the uncertainty many educators feel toward inclusion (Daane, Latham, & Smith 2000). In their study, Daane, Latham, and Smith (2000) investigated three groups of regular education teachers and found all teachers indicated that they were not prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities. It was found that regular education teachers lacked confidence, especially in the area of curriculum adaptation. Teachers also felt that they were not provided with training strategies that would prove to be helpful in teaching students with special needs. They expressed that workshops on instructional modifications for students with special needs were necessary. It seems that there needs to be continuous pre service and in service education that focuses on attitudes that will enable all teachers to work effectively with special need students (Nevin, Meyers, Thousand, & Villa, 1996).

#### Summary

According to Stoler (1992) the inclusion movement has high hopes and strong beliefs, but its value has yet to be determined. This movement is a new challenge to teachers. Some teachers are confident to face the challenge with positive attitudes, and some are not. Support may be needed during school system reform and change. This support may come from school administrators and personnel that provide resources and assistance to teachers when needed. Teacher's training is an informational resource, and plays an important role to change teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. This type of training can be an educational course at a university that will provide background

information related to inclusion and practice. In- service training which includes course work, written materials, and workshops may serve as another resource. The responsibility for such training rests with the local school system and the teacher. It appears to be a need for training, because inclusion increases teachers' efforts in their job responsibilities, career preparation, and knowledge and skills to work with different students and educators.

To date, some research has been conducted to investigate teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. It seems that researchers continuously explore teachers' attitudes and their impact on inclusion. This present study will continue to follow the previous studies to further evaluate teachers' attitudes on inclusion, and their professional development to assist them.

## Chapter 3

### Methods

This study is implemented to determine regular and special education teachers perspectives on professional training, their feeling of job competencies, and their attitudes toward special education students in inclusive classrooms. The following research questions are proposed for the study:

1. What are regular education teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities?
2. What are special education teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities?
3. Do teachers' educational background, experience, and training impact their attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities?

#### Samples

A total of one hundred teachers participated in the study to respond to the survey items. There were 86 regular education teachers. Of these, 60 were elementary teachers, 16 were middle school teachers, and 10 were high school teachers. There were 14 special education teachers. Of these, 11 were elementary, and 4 were middle school teachers. All teachers had experience in inclusive classrooms working with students with disabilities in 7 public schools, at two counties in southern New Jersey, the United States of America (see Table 1).

#### Research Design

The study used a survey only design. A questionnaire with twenty questions was used. The source of the raw data consisted of teachers responses to the attitudinal questionnaire which was measured using a 5 point Likert Scale, i.e. strongly agree, agree,

neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree.

### Measurement

A self-reported survey was developed based on the research conducted by Mario, Miller and Monahan (1996) focusing on teacher attitude toward inclusive education. In this study, a questionnaire was used with 31 statements to examine the teacher attitude toward coteaching and collaboration to meet the instructional needs of diverse students in inclusive classrooms. This self-reported survey used 5 point Likert Scale to investigate teacher's attitudes towards inclusive education. It contained 4 pages. In the first page it included an introduction to the purpose of the survey followed by demographic information about respondents' educational background, teaching experience, grade level taught, professional training received, gender and age ranges. A total of 20 questions/statements were listed afterwards. Underneath each item, 5 choices were provided. They were strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree to represent rating scores from 5-1 (see Appendix A).

### Procedures

Regular and special education teachers from each of the seven participating schools took the survey. A designated teacher of each school volunteered to take the responsibility to distribute the survey in each teacher's mailbox at school. By 2 weeks, the voluntary participating teachers would complete the survey and return it to the mailbox of the designated teacher according to the instruction listed in the survey. It was anonymous and voluntary to respond to the survey.

### Data Analysis

The questionnaire was tabulated in the form of codes using Microsoft excel, and the organization of scores was listed and analyzed. Subsequently, a factor analysis was

used to analyze the data, and the correlated data were grouped into 6 categories that were named as coteaching, teaching strategies, instructional planning, learning capabilities, accommodations, and respect. Significant differences were noted.

The mean and standard deviation were computed for each group within a category. An ANOVA analysis was used to see if there was a significant effect for questions on survey scores between the two groups, regular education teachers and special education teachers.

**TABLE 1**  
**GENERAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPATING TEACHERS**

<b>AGE GROUP</b>	<b>20-25</b> 10 (10%)	<b>26-30</b> 16 (16%)	<b>31-35</b> 10 (10%)	<b>36-40</b> 12 (12%)	<b>41-45</b> 16 (16%)	<b>46+</b> 36 (36%)
<b>GENDER</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>				
	13 (13%)	87 (87%)				
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>BA</b>	<b>MA</b>				
	86 (86%)	14 (14%)				
<b>YEARS TEACHING</b>	<b>1-5</b> 36 (36%)	<b>6-10</b> 14 (14%)	<b>11-15</b> 9 (9%)	<b>16-20</b> 9 (9%)	<b>20+</b> 32 (32%)	
<b>TRAINING</b>	<b>WORKSHOP</b>	<b>INSERVICE</b>	<b>COLLEGE</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>NONE</b>	
	18 (18%)	11 (11%)	15 (15%)	22 (22%)	24 (24%)	

## Chapter 4

### Results

#### Introduction

This study was designed to analyze, correlate and evaluate data in order to determine teachers' competencies, perceptions and attitudes toward students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. It is attempted to determine how adequately teachers were prepared to teach those students, and which competencies were ranked highest, and which, if any, factors such as age, sex, training, education and teaching experience would impact a teacher's attitude toward students with disabilities in inclusive settings.

#### General Information of Respondents

Of the two hundred survey forms sent out, one hundred and five were returned. Of these, two were eliminated because of incomplete information. The return rate was 52%.

The sample was heavily weighted toward the female with a ratio of six females to each male respondent. One third of the sample were over forty-six years of age, with the smallest group falling in the 20-25 age level. The sample was made up largely of teachers with 1-5 years experience. Thirty-two percent of the respondents reported having twenty or more years experience.

More than half of the sample (86 percent) reported Elementary Education as their undergraduate major. A master's degree was held by 14 percent of the sample though some had indicated course work beyond their bachelor's degree (see Table 1).

#### Results

A factor analysis was conducted with SPSS program and data were generated into

6 factors. The factors were categorized and named as coteaching, teaching strategies, instructional planning, learning capabilities, accommodations, and mutual respect. Figure I presents the results.

The mean and standard deviation were analyzed for each item in the survey. Figure II presents the results.

An ANOVA Analysis was analyzed for each item in the survey. It yielded a significant effect for Question 15 (knowledge of co-teaching) on survey scores between two groups, regular education teachers and special education teachers. The responses of the special education teachers (mean of 4.0) were much higher than those of the regular education teachers (mean of 3.2). Figure III shows the results.



**Figure I**  
**Factor Analysis on Survey Items**

<b>Factor and Item Numbers</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b><u>1. Coteaching</u></b>						
16. I am interested in learning more about coteaching.	.65					
18. Non special education students would benefit from coteaching.	.76					
19. In service training is necessary for coteaching to work.	.68					
20. Coteaching benefits the students in my class.	.77					
<b><u>2. Teaching Strategies</u></b>						
3. I am aware of the individual capabilities of students and adapt accordingly.		.64				
4. I employ classroom management strategies that are effective with students with disabilities.		.55				
7. I provide encouragement and reinforcement.		.68				
9. I plan assignments and activities that allow students with disabilities and without disabilities to be successful.		.68				
10. I expect the best from all the students in the classroom and am aware of their capabilities.		.67				
<b><u>3. Instructional Planning</u></b>						
6. I help students of all abilities learn to find appropriate avenue to express feelings and needs.				.47		
14. It is necessary to modify instruction for special education students.				.60		
15. I have adequate knowledge of the coteaching model.				.52		
17. Daily planning is difficult to coordinate with coteaching.				.53		
<b><u>4. Learning Capabilities</u></b>						
2. I believe all children are capable of learning in an inclusive setting.					.64	
11. Special education students learn no differently than regular education students.					.60	
13. Special education students benefit from instruction in the regular classroom.					.64	
<b><u>5. Accommodations</u></b>						
5. "Pull out" resource room is the best way for accommodating special education students.						.34
8. I am comfortable communicating with the special education teacher.						.57
12. I spend more time teaching a special education students than a regular education student.						.49
<b><u>6. Mutual Respect</u></b>						
1. I respect student with disabilities as individuals with differences as I respect all children in my classroom.						.20

Note: Factor loadings above .45 are included except question 1, and 5.

**Figure II**  
**Mean and Standard Deviation of Regular Education Teachers and Special Education Teachers**

<u>Survey Items</u>	<u>Regular Educators (n=86)</u>		<u>Special Educators (n=14)</u>	
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
1. Respect students with disabilities.	4.8	.56	5.0	0.0
2. All children are capable of learning in inclusive settings.	3.1	1.1	3.4	1.5
3. Aware of individual capabilities.	4.4	0.7	4.8	0.4
4. Employ management strategies.	4.3	0.5	4.6	0.5
5. "Pull out" is the best way for accommodating students.	3.2	1.0	2.8	0.7
6. Find avenues to express needs.	4.3	0.7	4.3	1.5
7. Provide encouragement and reinforcement	4.8	0.4	4.9	0.3
8. Communication with special education teacher.	4.5	1.0	4.0	2.0
9. Activities and assignments that help students be successful.	4.3	0.7	4.4	1.5
10. Expect the best of all students.	4.6	0.5	4.8	0.4
11. Special education students learn no differently than regular education students.	1.9	0.7	1.9	1.1
12. More time is spent teaching a special education students.	3.1	1.1	3.2	1.5
13. Special education students benefit from instruction in regular classroom.	3.3	1.1	3.7	0.9
14. It is necessary to modify instruction for special education students.	4.1	0.9	4.4	0.5
15. Knowledge of the coteaching model.	3.2	1.2	4.0	0.9
16. Interested in learning about coteaching.	3.6	1.0	4.1	0.4
17. Planning is difficult to coordinate with coteaching.	2.9	1.2	3.1	1.0
18. Regular education students benefit from coteaching.	3.5	1.3	4.0	0.7
19. In service training is necessary for coteaching.	3.9	1.0	4.3	0.5
20. Coteaching benefits all students.	3.4	1.3	4.1	0.8

**FIGURE III**  
**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF SURVEY ITEMS FOR QUESTION 15**

<b>Source of Variance</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P-value</b>
Between Groups	7.15		7.15	4.83	.030
Within Groups	144.95		1.47		

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

Despite the philosophical controversy concerning inclusion, it continues to grow as an instructional placement for children with disabilities. In an inclusive classroom, regular education classroom teachers take responsibilities for the instructional needs of all children, including those with disabilities. Thus, they become a very important part of inclusive education.

This study identifies certain abilities, knowledges, proficiencies and attitudes, which were indicated by teachers to be very important factors in successfully working with students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. This study also suggests certain factors which may be of value in determining those individuals who may be better prepared or more proficient in working in such an environment.

The factor analysis revealed 6 factors. They are co-teaching, teaching strategies, instructional planning, learning capabilities, accommodations, and mutual respect.

An ANOVA analysis showed that there is a significant difference between regular education teachers and special education teachers on the survey question on co-teaching. The responses of special education teachers had a mean of 4.0, and regular education teachers had a mean of 3.2. Furthermore, this question addressed how teacher's knowledge on co-teaching impacts their attitude toward co-teaching. It seems that special education teachers have a significant higher mean when it came to the co-teaching model of instruction, because they have the special education training. In addition to their training, it seems those with special education certification are better prepared in working in an inclusive setting. Consequently, regular education teachers lack preparation in the

area of special education and students with disabilities. In conclusion, college courses pertaining to special education may benefit the regular education teacher because of continuing contact with current changes in procedures, program, and philosophies. It seems that the more information they receive, the more willing they are to try new approaches. This in turn enables them to prepare themselves for the job of teaching students with disabilities.

One difference, though not significant was that special education teachers responded more positive (a mean of 3.7) compared to regular education teachers (a mean of 3.3) on the survey item 13 that special education students benefit from instruction in the regular classroom.

Another difference, though not significant, was the survey item 20 that co-teaching benefits all students because special education teachers had a mean of 4.1 and regular education teachers had a mean of 3.4. Special education teachers had a higher mean for 80 percent of the questions.

No significant differences were found, however, between the regular education teacher and the special education teacher on the survey item 11 that special education students learn no differently than regular education students.

No significant differences were found for the survey item 4 dealing with employing classroom management strategies that are effective with students with disabilities. Both the regular education teacher, and the special education teacher had the same mean of 4.3.

No significant differences were found for the survey item 6 of helping students of all abilities learn to find appropriate avenues to express feelings and needs. Both the regular education teacher, and the special education teacher had the same mean of 4.3.

Age and years of teaching both seemed to be indicators of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. The greatest percentage of teachers fell within the over 46 year old age group and they felt inclusion does not benefit all students. Furthermore, "pull out" was the best way for accommodating special need students to compensate for learning deficits. This suggests that years of teaching experience may have an impact on attitudes towards including students with disabilities in regular classrooms.

Teachers with more special education training seem to support that in service training is necessary for co-teaching to be successful. This suggests that teachers with special education training have the knowledge to understand student learning differences in their classrooms.

The results of this project seem to indicate that teachers feel certain knowledge and training are important in working with students in inclusive classrooms. The results also seem to identify certain indicators which may be useful in identifying teachers who seem more proficient in working with students with disabilities in inclusive settings.

#### Recommendations

In order to validate the results of this study, this study may need to be expanded to include different school districts in or out of the state. This would add more data to the study. Because of this survey only study, the results may need to be validated by other research methodologies, such as observations or experiments.

For the survey, perse, it may need a comment section in the questionnaire to provide more valuable information. This section would place additional emphasis upon the respondent to provide comments so that a greater percentage of respondents can be obtained. In addition, the questionnaire may also include a section to determine what type of college courses and in-service programs were most helpful, and what additional

types of courses and in-service should be added.

In conclusion, this study exposed regular education teachers' and special education teachers' attitudes toward students with disabilities in inclusive settings. The results seemed to indicate that special education teachers feel more confident and possess a better attitude in working with mainstreamed children in a regular classroom, because they feel special education students benefit in an inclusive class. This information may encourage colleges to evaluate their teacher preparation programs in regular education to see if they include sufficient information and provide practice for teaching students with disabilities. Certain components may prove to be valuable in determining individuals who may be better prepared or trained in working in an inclusive setting in light of evidence cited in this project.

APPENDIX  
QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN THE STUDY



Dear Teachers:

Your position in education is an important one.

Your concern for your students and your school is demonstrated by the position that you hold. As a teacher, you are a key person in many ways. You are an important link between school and community. Your decisions have great importance for your students and their school.

A teacher's position is important. You are well aware of the serious responsibilities that you have. Your decisions affect children daily, and may very well affect them for the rest of their lives.

I am doing a master thesis study at Rowan University, Glassboro, New Jersey that is concerned with inclusion, and as an educator, you are of particular interest to this study. Permission has been secured from the principal to request your cooperation.

We share a common interest and concern for education. It is on this basis of a common goal of increased knowledge about education that I am requesting your cooperation in filling out the enclosed questionnaire.

The questionnaire contains three pages. The first page requests personal information about you. The second two pages are concerned with the responsibility of managing special education children who are mainstreamed into your classroom.

You need not sign the questionnaire and you are assured that your response will remain anonymous and confidential. Your participation is, of course, voluntary.

Please answer all of the questions and return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope as soon as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours truly,  
Lisa Waligore, Special Education Teacher

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please give us the following information that is important for the study. Your responses will be anonymous.

1. Education

Check the appropriate categories:

<u>Degree Held</u>	<u>Major</u>	<u>Certification</u>
BA _____	Elementary _____	Elementary _____
MA _____	Special _____	Special _____
	Other: _____	Other: _____

2. Teaching Experience

Number Of Years In Teaching \_\_\_\_\_

Present Grade And Subject You Are Teaching \_\_\_\_\_

3. Training: Check to what extent are you, or have been involved in special education training (check as many as possible).

workshop \_\_\_\_\_ in-service training \_\_\_\_\_ college course \_\_\_\_\_

4. Present Age: 20-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, over 46

5. Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

6. How Many: State the number of students of each classification in your class:

Specific Learning Disability _____	Neurologically Impaired _____
Emotionally Disturbed _____	Multiply Disabled _____
Auditorily Impaired _____	Communication Impaired _____
Cognitively Impaired _____	Orthopedically Impaired _____

In your present position as a classroom teacher, with the responsibility of managing special education children who are mainstreamed into your classroom--how important is it that you possess the following knowledge and ability? (Circle one of the five choices underneath each item.)

1. I respect students with disabilities as individuals with differences as I respect all children in my classroom.

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

2. I believe all children are capable of learning in an inclusive setting.

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

3. I am aware of the individual capabilities of students and adapt accordingly.

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

4. I employ classroom management strategies that are effective with students with disabilities.

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

5. "Pull out" resource room is the best way for accommodating special education students.

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

6. I help students of all abilities learn to find appropriate avenues to express feelings and needs.

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

7. I provide encouragement and reinforcement.

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

8. I am comfortable communicating with the special education teacher.

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

9. I plan assignments and activities that allow students with disabilities and without disabilities to be successful.

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

10. I expect the best from all students in the classroom and am aware of their capabilities.

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

**11. Special education students learn no differently than regular education students.**

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

**12. I spend more time teaching a special education student than a regular education student.**

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

**13. Special education students benefit from instruction in the regular classroom.**

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

**14. It is necessary to modify instruction for special education students.**

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

**15. I have adequate knowledge of the co teaching model.**

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

**16. I am interested in learning more about co teaching.**

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

**17. Daily planning is difficult to coordinate with co teaching.**

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

**18. Non special education students would benefit from co teaching.**

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

**19. In-service training is necessary for co teaching to work.**

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

**20. Co teaching benefits the students in my class.**

strongly agree    agree    neither agree nor disagree    disagree    strongly disagree

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