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REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATORS'
ATTITUDES TOWARDS DUAL CERTIFICATION

by
Beth Anne DeLuca

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduated Division of
Rowan College of New Jersey
May 2, 1996

Approved by _____
Professor

Date Approved 5/2/96

ABSTRACT

Beth Anne DeLuca

The Attitudes of Regular and Special
Educators' Towards Dual Certification

1996

Dr. Jay Kuder

Special Education

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of regular and special education teachers' towards dual certification. In this study the attitudes of elementary, special and dual certified teachers are compared.

An attitude survey designed by the researcher was administered to 62 subjects. From this population, approximately 31 of the subjects were certified as regular education teachers, 17 were certified as special education teachers and 14 were certified in both special and regular education.

Tests of significance and percentages of subjects responses were conducted to analyze the data. Also, a Scheffe F-test was conducted to determine precisely which groups were significantly different.

The results indicate that the dual certified teachers had a more favorable attitude towards present teachers becoming dual certified than the elementary and the special education teachers.

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The purpose of the study was to determine the attitudes of regular and special education teachers' towards dual certification. In this study the attitudes of elementary, special and dual certified teachers are compared. Results indicate that the dual certified group had a more favorable attitude towards present teachers becoming dual certified than the elementary and the special education teachers.

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CHAPTER I
THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Until the passage of Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Act in 1975, few students were educated in regular classrooms. This act guarantees every handicapped child, a free and appropriate public education (Mercer 1992). The law requires that:

"to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities occur only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be attained satisfactorily."

According to Gallagher (1993), regular classroom teachers are now presented with an increasing number of diverse students with diverse developmental variations, disabilities and large classroom sizes. Many educators feel that the regular classroom teacher is inadequately prepared to educate children with such diverse needs in the regular classroom (Kearney 1992). Wood (1989) indicates that regular classroom teachers often do not have the necessary skills to meet the needs of the special need students due to a lack of training

in specific intervention strategies during their preservice coursework.

My experiences as a regular classroom teacher, have led me to believe that it was necessary to become certified as a Teacher of the Handicapped. I felt it was important to become dual certified in order to gain the knowledge and skills required to effectively fulfill the needs of all the students in the classroom.

Problem

Since teacher attitudes usually dictate the success of a new program, it is important to examine the attitudes of regular education teachers towards dual certification and whether or not they feel it is necessary.

Research Question: What are the attitudes of regular classroom teachers towards dual certification?

Hypotheses

1. Regular classroom teachers will feel less confident than special education teachers that their preservice training provided them with the skills to effectively teach special need students.
2. Regular classroom teachers will have a significantly negative attitude towards present teachers becoming dual certified.
3. Special education teachers will have a significantly positive attitude towards present teachers becoming dual certified.
4. Regular and special educators will have a positive attitude towards future teachers becoming dual certified.

Definitions

1. **Attitude:** A significantly positive or negative feeling towards dual certification.

2. **Regular Classroom Teacher:** A teacher who holds a certificate for the grade level or subjects taught and does not have a Teacher of the Handicapped Certificate.
3. **Special Education Teacher:** A teacher who holds a Teacher of the Handicapped Certificate and works with special need students.
4. **Dual Certification:** A teacher who holds a Certificate for the grade level or subjects taught as well as a Teacher of the Handicapped Certificate.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to evaluate and analyze the data concerning the attitudes of regular and special educators' towards dual certification. The information from this study may be used to encourage the designing of new teacher training programs. Also, the findings may be used as evidence to incorporate teacher in-services which provide teachers with teaching strategies and techniques for special need students.

Overview

The Literature Review will examine the studies which relate to dual certification, such as the teacher training programs and the attitudes and effectiveness of regular classroom teachers towards teaching children with disabilities. The research design will be discussed in Chapter Three. The data will be presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Teachers who are dual certified have received training in both regular and special education. These teachers have earned certification in both systems and are capable of teaching both types of classes.

One reason for producing dual certified teachers is that they can provide schools with staffing flexibility (Bell 1986). Ferrara, Hushand and Levin (1983) suggest that where many rural school districts have difficulty in employing special education teachers, by producing teachers who are capable of teaching in more than one area, schools would be able to better serve students with special needs.

Another reason for dual certification is that the regular education teacher who has training in special education may benefit students, parents and special educators. They are more aware of the special needs these students require and may better be able to contribute and assist during IEP meetings and parent conferences.

Perhaps the most pertinent reason for producing

teachers who are dual certified has been the implementation of the Regular Education Initiative (REI). In 1984, the U.S. Department of Education, The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services developed the REI out of concern that there have been growing numbers of individuals labeled and placed in special education (Hinders 1995). According to Kinders (1995), the REI proposed that students requiring referral for special education services and individuals currently receiving special education services be educated within regular education classrooms, by the regular classroom teacher.

The REI has generated much interest from those who support the motion and those who do not. Advocates of the REI believe that labeling students and segregating them from regular classrooms results in stigmatization (Semmel, Abernathy, Butera and Lesar 1991). They also believe that all children can be provided a high quality education without identifying or labeling students as different. They have contended that regular classroom teachers can appropriately implement effective instruction for all of the children in the class. They believe that the enrolling of handicapped children in regular classrooms does not require that the teacher become a special educator, since the purpose is to allow the child to experience a normal and regular educational program as possible (Spodek, Saracho and Lee 1987).

There are others who contend that not all teachers are equipped to teach special needs children. They believe that classroom organization and practices must be adapted to accommodate the special learners and the regular classroom teacher is untrained and unprepared to do this. Tetish and Greenan (1991) report that the regular classroom teacher have neither the time nor skills to teach mainstreamed students.

Perceptions of Regular Educators

Many studies have examined the perceptions of regular classroom teachers attitudes' towards teaching special need students in the regular classroom. Semmel, Abernathy, Butera and Lesar (1991) found a relatively high percentage of regular classroom teachers believed that full time placement of students with mild disabilities in the regular classroom could negatively effect the distribution on instructional classroom time. The study revealed that regular education teachers do not perceive themselves as having the necessary skills for adapting instruction to successfully meet the needs of the special learners in the regular classroom.

A study conducted by Schumm and Vaughn (1992) surveyed regular education teachers and asked them to rate themselves in regards to their planning practices for the special needs student in the regular classroom. They report that 98% of the K-12 grade teachers surveyed viewed their planning

practices excellent for the general education students. When asked how they view their skills for planning for the special needs student, only 39% viewed themselves as being excellent or good.

Baker and Zigmund (1990) report that general educators make very few major modifications in their instruction for the special need students. They report that regular classroom teachers taught in single, large groups and their lessons incorporated little or no differentiation based on student need. Fuchs, Hamlett, Phillips and Karns (1988) found that among 110 general educators, only one in four made revisions in their instructional plans for the child in the class who had special learning needs.

The studies which were reviewed are not comforting in regards to the quality of education special need students are receiving in regular classrooms. They suggest the possibility that the regular educator may not be successful in making instructional adaptations which are necessary to fulfill the special students individual needs. In reviewing the literature, numerous studies illustrate a negative perception of general educators toward instructing special need students in the regular classroom. The Bender, Vail and Scott study (1995) suggests that teachers who have a less positive attitude towards mainstreaming did not frequently use the instructional strategies which are said to be effective in teaching handicapped students.

Bender, Vail and Scott (1995) administered surveys to 127 general educators who had students in the classroom with special needs. They found that 62% of the teachers frequently individualized instruction and that 67% varied the instructional level in the classroom. As far as the instructional strategies are concerned, 48% conducted cooperative learning activities and 72% frequently utilized peer tutoring strategies.

More importantly the study reports a number of effective instructional strategies which were not utilized by regular classroom teachers. For example, 69% of the teachers did not use a token economy system and only 35% of the teachers utilized advanced organizers. Finally, 28% of the teachers indicated that they use direct and daily measurement rarely.

One factor which effects general educators towards effectively teaching special needs students are teacher attitudes (Bender, Scott and Vail 1995). Another contributing factor is a lack of knowledge in special education (Wood 1989). Brown and Fresno (1987) report that the teacher's positive attitude and professional skills are essential for fulfilling the needs of the special learner.

Blair (1983) reports that regular classroom teachers feel there is a need for additional information concerning handicapped learners during their preservice training. The study indicated that the teachers surveyed felt a great need

for information in the areas of developing teaching activities and selecting teaching materials.

Stephens and Braun (1980), assessed the attitudes of regular classroom teachers towards instructing handicapped children in the regular classroom. They found that the teachers who had taken courses in special education were more willing to accept handicapped students into their classes than those who had not taken courses in special education. They report that the willingness increases as the number of special education courses are taken. They also report that the teachers who were more confident in their ability to instruct special need students were more willing to accept them in the classroom. Naor and Milgram (1980) report that a one semester preservice training program that focuses on teaching handicapped students improved the knowledge and general attitudes of the teachers towards these students in the regular classroom. Larivee (1981) suggests that the more knowledge attainment and interactions educators have with handicapped individuals, the better in forming a more positive attitude in educating them.

These studies suggest that by having a knowledge base in educating special need students, one develops a more favorable attitude towards teaching them in the regular classroom. This raises questions concerning teacher training programs and are they preparing future teachers to

work and feel confident in instructing these students. Brown and Fresno (1987) recommend that teacher training schools implement teaching programs which focus on preparing future teachers to work with special need students in their regular classroom.

Implications of Teacher Training Programs

A study conducted by Kearney and Durand (1992) examined the hypothesis that postsecondary schools of education are sufficiently preparing regular education teachers to work with effectively in mainstreamed classroom settings. Questionnaires were administered to fifty eight chairpersons of postsecondary education departments in New York State. The questions pertained to the education of teachers preparing for regular classroom settings, including mainstreamed students. The study concluded that over half of the programs surveyed required one or less courses in special education. Kearney and Durand report that their study did not support their initial hypothesis that postsecondary schools provide sufficient coursework and field experience to prepare general education students for mainstreamed classroom settings.

Powers (1992) conducted a study to determine if minimally required coursework in special education had any significant effect upon the attitudes and instructional competencies of preservice general educators and their ability to provide special need students with a free,

appropriate, public education. One hundred and eighty six preservice teachers were administered a pre-post test instrument which was designed to measure twenty two attitudinal responses and fourteen instructional competencies. The data indicated significant differences in attitudes and instructional competencies in preservice teachers after one required special education course was taken. Powers suggests that even though there was a positive significant difference, a single special education course was not acceptable.

Larivee (1981) recommends that teacher training programs should train teachers to provide positive feedback to students and to give sustaining feedback when students answer incorrectly. Also, teachers should be trained to establish a classroom environment that is well organized and highly structured in which teacher time is appropriately allocated to meet the needs of the students.

Donaldson (1980) recommends that preservice and in-service training should include the following:

1. Interaction experiences with handicapped people
2. Knowledge concerning specific handicapped conditions
3. Strategies on adapting materials and instructional methodologies to meet the needs of special students

Carlson and Dunn (1981) report that the regular

education teacher will benefit from the materials and methods received in a teacher training program that focuses on both regular and special education. A program like this will produce a stronger, flexible and effective teacher.

Certification Requirements

There have been many studies which have examined the certification requirements for regular education teachers. These studies have examined the quantity and quality of special education training regular educators received for initial teacher certification. Wood (1989) states that teachers often do not have the knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of students who require special education. This is due to a lack of training in specific intervention strategies during their preservice coursework. Bell (1986) suggests that the dual certification option is one means by which the regular and special education teachers can become more effective.

A study conducted by Smith and Schindler (1980) examined the certification requirements of regular classroom teachers concerning special need students. Questionnaires were administered to the superintendents of all fifty states including the District of Columbia. The questions on the survey asked whether or not the preservice general educators in their state had to met any requirements in their coursework relative to the characteristics and needs of exceptional learners. With all of the states responding, as

well as the District of Columbia, they concluded that twenty five states were either considering or anticipating such a requirement in the near future. Fifteen of the states required all preservice teachers to be exposed to a course which concerns the needs and characteristics of exceptional children. Smith and Schindler suggests that the results of this study indicate that a very large number of general education teachers will be unprepared to work with special need students.

In a similar study conducted by Patton and Braithwaite (1980), the initial special education requirements that the regular education teacher must have for initial certification were examined. The researchers were interested in discovering if any changes had been made by the states to meet the requirements for providing services to special need students since the passing of Public Law 94-142. Patton and Braithwaite conducted this study once in 1980 and then again in 1990.

In both studies, questionnaires were administered to all fifty states, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. The 1980 study concluded that 21% of the state departments of education required regular education teachers to complete coursework in special education as a necessary requirement for certification.

The 1990 study reported that 71% of the states had required regular education teachers to complete coursework

in special education. The results obtained from the 1990 study indicate a rapid and dramatic change in the coursework requirements in special education for certification.

Jones and Black (1994), examined the certification requirements for regular education teachers regarding students with disabilities. Questionnaires were sent to each state as well as the District of Columbia. The questionnaire consisted of seven questions concerning how they perceive their state's certification requirements are for preparing regular educators to successfully work with students with disabilities. It was concluded that 78% of the states felt their certification requirements were inadequate for preparing regular educators to instruct students with special needs. The study also indicated that the 73% of the surveyed supervisors did not feel their certification requirements were adequate and recommend that universities offer more courses to prepare regular classroom teachers to work with special need students.

In reviewing the literature, it seems obvious that something needs to be changed in the way regular classroom teachers are educated. Dr. Bell (1986) reports that the elementary school teacher who is dual certified, received a thorough knowledge base of strategies used in special and regular education. This knowledge base will allow the dual certified teacher to be more effective in meeting the needs of special needs students in the regular classroom.

Since a number of regular educators are teaching special need students in the regular classroom, and had little or no training in special education during their preservice teaching program, it is important to determine their perceptions towards dual certification. This study will determine if regular educators feel there is a need to become dual certified to better instruct special need students in the regular classroom. This information will be useful towards designing teacher training programs which include training in special education.

Chapter III

Design of the Study

Subjects

Teachers who were enrolled in a graduate teaching course at Rowan College were subjects in this study. Teachers from the Upper Township Elementary School, Winslow School No. 3, Bancroft and Archway Schools were also subjects in the study.

The population of subjects consists of 62. From this population, 31 of the teachers are certified in elementary education, 17 are certified as special education teachers and 14 are certified in both special and elementary education.

Measurement

The measurement which was used to assess the attitudes was a survey constructed by the researcher. The survey was designed based on questions and answers that were of interest to the researcher. The questionnaire consists of 10 items which use the 5-point Likert scale (5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=don't know, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree).

The questions were broken into four areas. Items 1-4 on the questionnaire reflect the teachers' perceptions of their instructional skills and qualifications on effectively

teaching special need students. Items 5-7 reflect their attitudes on future and present teachers becoming trained in special education. Items 8-10 reflect their attitudes on future and present teachers becoming dual certified.

Procedure

Teachers who were enrolled in a teacher graduate course at Rowan College were administered a survey. Special permission was granted by the Professor of the course to allow the researcher to administer the surveys at the beginning of two graduate classes.

The subjects were told they would be participating in a survey about teacher training and certification. They were also told that their time and cooperation was greatly appreciated. The surveys were then distributed to the subjects and they were immediately collected by the researcher. The population of subjects who were teachers taking a graduate course at Rowan College were 51.6% of the total subjects surveyed.

The other subjects selected in the study are teachers from various schools. The teachers from the schools were administered the survey and collected immediately. From these subjects, 19.2% are teachers from the Archway School, 11.2% are teachers from the Bancroft School, 9.6% are teachers at Winslow School No. 3 and 8% are teachers at the Upper Township Elementary School.

Since the intent of this paper is to compare the

attitudes of the elementary, special and dual certified teachers, the researcher organized the subjects into groups according to their certifications and not the schools where they were surveyed.

Once the surveys were all collected, the subjects were placed into a group according to their certification. From a total population of 62 subjects, 31 subjects were placed in Group I, teachers with elementary certification, 17 subjects were placed in Group II, teachers with special education certification and 14 subjects were placed in Group III, teachers who are certified in special and elementary education.

Individual scores were computed and the attitudes of the three groups were analyzed and compared. An Analysis of Variance Test was conducted to determine if significant differences existed between the attitudes of elementary, special and dual certified teachers towards dual certification. A Scheffe F- Test was also conducted to determine exactly where the significant differences existed between the three groups. The results of this study are presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes' of elementary and special education teachers towards dual certification. In this study the attitudes of elementary, special and dual certified teachers towards dual certification are compared. An attitude survey was distributed and collected from 62 teachers. From these 62 subjects, 31 were certified elementary education teachers, 17 were certified special education teachers and 14 were certified in both elementary and special education.

Results

The questions on the survey were broken into three areas: education (questions 1-4), training (questions 5-7) and certification (questions 8-10). The subjects consisted of three groups: elementary teachers (Group 1), special education teachers (Group 2) and dual certified teachers (Group 3).

Table 1A represents the frequencies and percentages of scores obtained from Group I, for questions 1-4. Table 1A

indicates that 45.1% elementary teachers strongly agree and agree that they possess effective instructional skills to teach special need students and 41.87% disagree and strongly disagree.

Table 1A shows that 25.8% of the elementary school teachers agreed they have received sufficient training where as 70.9% strongly disagree and disagree.

Table 1A indicates that 45% elementary teachers feel they are qualified to teach special need students and 38.6% disagreed. Table 1A shows that 45% of the elementary teachers believe they are effectively meeting the needs of the special need student, and 41.8% believe they are not.

Table 1B shows the frequencies and percentages of scores obtained from Group 2, for questions 1-4. The table indicates that 94% of the special education teachers agree and strongly agree they possess the necessary skills to provide effective instruction to special need students. Table 1B indicates that 83.3% of the special educators strongly agree and agree they received sufficient training and 99.9% strongly agree and agree they are qualified to teach special need students. The table indicates that 88.1% of the special educators strongly agree and agree they are effectively meeting the needs of their special need students.

Table 1C shows the frequencies and percentages of scores obtained from Group 3, for questions 1-4. The table

indicates that 92% of the dual certified teachers strongly agree and agree they possess the necessary instructional skills to effectively teach special need students. Table 1C indicates that 71.4% strongly agree and agree they have received sufficient training and 92.7% strongly agree and agree they are qualified to teach special need students. The table shows that 78.5% of dual certified teachers strongly agree and agree they are effectively meeting the needs of their special need students.

Table 2A shows the frequencies and percentages of scores obtained from Group I for questions 5-7. The table indicates that 93.4% of the elementary teachers strongly agree and agree that future teachers should be trained in both special and regular education. Also, 51.6% of the elementary teachers strongly agree and agree that future teachers should be dual certified. The table indicates that 90.2% of the elementary school teachers strongly agree and agree that regular classroom teachers would better be able to fulfill the needs of the special need student if they were trained in both regular and special education.

Table 2B shows the frequencies and percentages of scores obtained from Group II for questions 5-7. The table indicates that 98% of the special educators strongly agree and agree that future teachers should be trained in both regular and special education. Table 2B shows that 64.6% of the special education teachers strongly agree and agree that

future teachers should be dual certified and 94.1% strongly agree and agree that regular classroom teachers would better be able to fulfill the needs of the special need student if they were trained in both regular and special education.

Table 2C shows the frequencies and percentages of scores obtained from Group III for questions 5-7. The table indicates that 99.9% of the dual certified teachers strongly agree and agree that future teachers should be trained in both regular and special education. The table shows that 92.8% dual certified teachers agree and strongly agree that future teachers should be certified in both and 99.9% strongly agree and agree that classroom teachers are more effective in meeting the needs of the special need student if they are trained in both special and regular education.

Table 3A shows the frequencies and percentages of scores obtained for Group I for questions 8-10. The table indicates that 67.6% elementary teachers strongly agree and agree that regular teachers would better be able to teach special need students if they were dual certified. The table shows that 83.7% strongly agree and agree that the students and the teacher would benefit if they were dual certified. Table 3A indicates that 25.7% of the elementary school teachers strongly agree and agree that present teachers should be dual certified.

Table 3B shows the frequencies and percentages of scores obtained for Group II for questions 8-10. The table

indicates 70.4% of the special education teachers strongly agree and agree that regular classroom teachers would better be able to teach special need students if they were dual certified. The table shows that 76.4% strongly agree and agree that students and teachers would benefit if they were dual certified and 64.6% agree and strongly agree present teachers should be dual certified.

Table 3C shows the frequencies and percentages of scores obtained for Group III for questions 8-10. The table indicates that 85.6% of the dual certified teachers strongly agree and agree that regular classroom teachers would better be able to teach special need students if they were dual certified. The table shows that 92.8% of the dual certified teachers strongly agree and agree that students and teachers would benefit if they were dual certified and that present teachers should be dual certified.

To examine the differences in attitudes between the three groups, an Analysis of Variance Test was conducted. Table 4 represents a comparison of the elementary, special and dual certified teachers' responses to each question. The results indicate that questions 1,2,3,4,6 and 10 are statistically significant.

In order to determine precisely which groups were significantly different a Scheffe F-Test was done. Table 5 shows where the differences existed between the three groups.

For question 1, Table 5 indicates there is a significant difference between elementary and special education teachers as well as the elementary and dual certified teachers towards possessing effective instructional skills. The results indicate that the teachers who were trained in special education had a more positive attitude towards their instructional skills.

Question 2 asked each group if they believed they had received sufficient training to successfully teach special need students. The results indicate a significant difference between the elementary and special education teachers as well as between the elementary and dual certified teachers. The results show that the special and the dual certified teachers have a more positive attitude towards their training than the elementary teachers.

For question 3, a significant difference exists between the elementary and special education groups as well as the elementary and dual certified group towards being qualified to work with special need students. The special and the dual certified teachers have a more positive attitude towards being qualified to teach students with special needs.

For question 4, a significant difference exists between the elementary and special education group as well as the elementary and dual certified group towards effectively meeting the needs of the special need student. The special and the dual certified teachers have a more positive

attitude towards meeting their special students needs.

For question 6, a significant difference exists between the elementary and dual certified teachers towards future classroom teachers being certified in both regular and special education. The dual certified teachers have a more positive attitude.

For question 10, a significant difference exists between the elementary and the dual certified group and the special and dual certified group towards believing that present teachers should be dual certified. The dual certified teachers had a more positive attitude towards dual certification than the other two groups. The results also indicate that the special education teachers had a more favorable attitude towards dual certification than the elementary teachers.

Table 1A
Group I: Frequencies and Percentages for Questions 1-4

Elementary	N	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		SA	SA	A	A	N	N	D	D	SD	SD
1. Possess effective instructional skills	31	2	6.4	12	38.7	4	12.9	10	32.2	3	9.67
2. Received sufficient training	31	0	0	8	25.8	1	3.2	17	54.8	5	16.1
3. Qualified to teach special need students	31	3	9.6	11	35.4	5	16.1	9	29	3	9.6
4. Effectively meeting their needs.	31	3	9.6	11	35.4	4	12.9	10	32.2	3	9.6

Table 1B
Group II: Frequencies and Percentages for Questions 1-4

Special	N	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		SA	SA	A	A	N	N	D	D	SD	SD
1. Possess effective instructional skills	17	9	52.9	7	41.1	0	0	1	5.8	0	0
2. Received sufficient training	17	3	17.6	11	64.7	3	17.6	0	0	0	0
3. Qualified to teach special need students	17	9	52.9	8	47	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Effectively meeting their needs.	17	6	35.2	9	52.9	2	11.7	0	0	0	0

Table 1C
Group III: Frequencies and Percentages for Questions 1-4

Dual Certified	N	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		SA	SA	A	A	N	N	D	D	SD	SD
1. Possess effective instructional skills	14	7	50	6	42	0	0	1	7.1	0	0
2. Received sufficient training	14	5	35.7	5	35.7	1	7.1	3	21.4	0	0
3. Qualified to teach special need students	14	9	64.2	4	28.5	0	0	1	7.1	0	0
4. Effectively meeting their needs.	14	8	57.1	3	21.4	2	14.2	1	7.1	0	0

Table 2A

Group I: Frequencies and Percentages for Questions 5-7

Elementary	N	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		SA	SA	A	A	N	N	D	D	SD	SD
5. Believe future teachers should be trained in both	31	19	61.2	10	32.2	1	3.2	0	0	1	3.2
6. Believe future teachers should be certified in both	31	8	25.8	8	25.8	3	9.6	10	32.2	2	6.4
7. Better able to teach if trained in special education	31	15	48.3	13	41.9	3	9.6	0	0	0	0

Table 2B

Group II: Frequencies and Percentages for Questions 5-7

Special	N	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		SA	SA	A	A	N	N	D	D	SD	SD
5. Believe future teachers should be trained in both	17	8	47	8	47	1	5.8	0	0	0	0
6. Believe future teachers should be certified in both	17	5	29.4	6	35.2	2	11.7	4	23.5	0	0
7. Better able to teach if trained in special education	17	11	64.7	5	29.4	0	0	1	5.8	0	0

Table 2C

Group III: Frequencies and Percentages for Questions 5-7

Dual Certified	N	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		SA	SA	A	A	N	N	D	D	SD	SD
5. Believe future teachers should be trained in both	14	12	85.7	2	14.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Believe future teachers should be certified in both	14	10	71.4	3	21.4	0	0	1	7.1	0	0
7. Better able to teach if trained in special education	14	12	85.7	2	14.2	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3A

Group I: Frequencies and Percentages for Questions 8-10

Elementary	N	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		SA	SA	A	A	N	N	D	D	SD	SD
8. Better able to teach if certified in both	31	11	35.4	10	32.2	7	22.5	3	9.6	0	0
9. Teachers and students benefit by dual certified teachers	31	11	35.4	15	48.3	4	12.9	1	3.2	0	0
10. Present teachers should be dual certified	31	2	6.45	6	19.3	11	35.4	10	32.2	2	6.4

Table 3B

Group II: Frequencies and Percentages for Questions 8-10

Special	N	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		SA	SA	A	A	N	N	D	D	SD	SD
8. Better able to teach if certified in both	17	6	35.2	6	35.2	1	5.8	4	23.5	0	0
9. Teachers and students benefit by dual certified teachers	17	9	52.9	4	23.5	1	5.8	3	17.6	0	0
10. Present teachers should be dual certified	17	8	47	3	17.6	3	17.6	3	17.6	0	0

Table 3C

Group III: Frequencies and Percentages for Questions 8-10

Dual Certified	N	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		SA	SA	A	A	N	N	D	D	SD	SD
8. Better able to teach if certified in both	14	9	64.2	3	21.4	1	7.1	1	7.1	0	0
9. Teachers and students benefit by dual certified teachers	14	8	57.1	5	35.7	1	7.1	0	0	0	0
10. Present teachers should be dual certified	14	8	57.1	5	35.7	1	7.1	0	0	0	0

Table 4
Analysis of Data Between Elementary, Special and Dual Certified Teachers

	Group I (Elementary)			Group II (Special)			Group III (Dual)			F	P
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.		
Education											
1. Possess effective instructional skills	31	2.83	1.1	17	4.4	.795	14	4.571	.514	24.031	.0001
2. Received sufficient training	31	2.38	1.0	17	3.82	.951	14	3.929	1.207	15.12	.0001
3. Qualified to teach special need students	31	3.03	1.19	17	4.52	.514	14	4.571	.646	19.978	.0001
4. Effectively meeting their needs.	31	3.03	1.2	17	4.17	.809	14	4.286	.994	9.577	.0003
Training											
5. Believe future teachers should be trained in both	31	4.4	.851	17	4.41	.618	14	4.857	.363	1.777	.1782
6. Believe future teachers should be certified in both	31	3.3	1.35	17	3.7	1.16	14	4.571	.852	5.176	.0085
7. Better able to teach if trained in special education	31	4.2	.78	17	4.52	.8	14	4.857	.363	3.06	.0544
Certification											
8. Better able to teach if certified in both	31	3.9	.998	17	3.82	1.18	14	4.5	.855	1.953	.1509
9. Teachers and students benefit by dual certified teachers	31	4.1	.779	17	4.05	1.19	14	4.429	.646	.706	.4978
10. Present teachers should be dual certified	31	2.7	.956	17	3.41	1.12	14	4.357	.929	12.265	.0001

Table 5

Significant Differences Between Groups

	Group	MD	Scheffe F
Question 1	E/S	-1.57	35.49*
	E/D	-1.73	16.509*
	S/D	-.16	.112
Question 2	E/S	-1.436	10.011*
	E/D	-1.541	10.127*
	S/D	-.105	.037
Question 3	E/S	-1.497	13.794*
	E/D	-1.539	12.806*
	S/D	-.042	.008
Question 4	E/S	-1.144	6.209*
	E/D	-1.253	6.545*
	S/D	-.109	.04
Question 6	E/S	-.383	.555
	E/D	-1.249	5.176*
	S/D	-.866	1.979
Question 10	E/S	-.638	2.241
	E/D	-1.583	12.134*
	S/D	-.945	3.44*

Chapter V

Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of regular and special education teachers towards dual certification. In this study the attitudes of elementary, special and dual certified teachers were compared. Since the implementation of the Regular Education Initiative (REI), special needs children are more frequently being educated in the regular classroom by the regular teacher.

The main research problem was to determine the attitudes of the elementary teachers and if they agree that there is a need to become trained in special education since they are teaching special needs students in their classrooms.

Discussion

In this study the attitudes of the elementary, special and dual certified teachers were analyzed and compared. The analysis reveals that there were a number of significant differences between the elementary teachers and the special and the dual certified teachers.

It was hypothesized that the elementary teachers would feel less confident towards teaching special need students than those teachers who were trained in special education. Previous research, as well as the results presented in this study, support this hypothesis. According to Wood (1989), a reason for this is that regular classroom teachers often do not have the knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of the special students who are being educated in their class. Furthermore, Wood (1989) reports this is due to a lack of coursework in special education during their preservice training.

Research indicates that the more training a teacher receives in special education, the better in forming a positive attitude in teaching special need students (Larivee 1981). This is interesting because the findings presented in this study show that the elementary teachers did not perceive themselves as possessing the necessary instructional skills to effectively teach these children. They also believe that they did not receive sufficient training in special education to effectively teach the special need students who are in their classroom. From these responses one would hope that these teachers would want to receive special education training in order to improve their ability to teach special need students. This does not seem to be the case since these teachers were found to have a negative attitude towards present teachers

becoming dual certified.

These findings suggest that the elementary teachers are aware of the benefits of being trained and certified in special education but have little interest in becoming dual certified. Unfortunately, this finding supports the hypothesis that elementary teachers have a significantly negative attitude towards present teachers becoming dual certified. This may be due to a lack of interest or willingness to devote their time to become dual certified or perhaps they fear their jobs may be in jeopardy if dual certification becomes mandatory for all teachers.

As far as future teachers becoming dual certified, it was found that 51.6% of the elementary teachers had a positive attitude. This supports the hypothesis that elementary teachers have a positive attitude towards future teachers becoming dual certified.

It is interesting that the elementary teachers believe that future teachers should become dual certified but present teachers should not. Perhaps this is due to a lack of interest or desire among the elementary teachers to participate in a special education training program. Whatever their reason may be, it is inconsistent with their previous responses. For example, it was reported that in question 7, 90.2% of the elementary teachers agreed and strongly agreed that regular classroom teachers would be able to teach special need students better if they were

trained in special education. In question 9, 83.7% of the elementary teachers agreed and strongly agreed that teachers as well as students will benefit by having a regular classroom teacher who is certified in both regular and special education. As mentioned before, these findings are not consistent and suggest that for the elementary teachers, training in special education is easier said than done.

Furthermore, the results from this study indicate that special and dual certified teachers had a more positive attitude towards their training, qualifications and ability to meet the needs of their special education students. Elementary teachers were not as confident in their ability to teach special need students. The results reveal that those teachers who were trained and certified in special education were very confident. Once again this is consistent with previous research that suggests, the more training a teacher receives in special education, the better in forming a positive attitude in teaching special need students (Larivee 1989).

Limitations

In this study, I decided not to factor in the demographic information that was included in each survey. This was done because I wanted to compare the attitudes between the three groups and the demographic information was unnecessary. This limited my study due to the fact that I was unable to determine if the number of years teaching

experience, grade level teaching or number of special need students taught had any effect on their responses.

For the elementary teachers, I should have asked if they would be willing to return to school to receive training in special education. Also, I should have added another question which specifically asks if present teachers should be trained in special education. Although I did ask if present teachers should be dual certified, it would have been interesting to compare the responses from these two questions. Furthermore, my groups were not even in the number of subjects surveyed and I would liked to have included more teachers who were dual certified. I would also liked to have asked the dual certified teachers their reasons for becoming dual certified.

Implications

The findings from this study should be used for many purposes. First of all this paper should be used to shed light on the fact that regular classroom teachers are not confident in teaching special need students and believe there is a need for training in special education.

Secondly, this paper can be used as evidence to incorporate special education courses during preservice teacher training programs. This will allow future classroom teachers to feel more confident in their ability to provide a quality education to all of their students.

Thirdly, this paper can be used to develop new

standards for teachers receiving initial certification in regular education. This study revealed that elementary teachers believe they could benefit by being trained in special education but it needs to be done during their preservice training and before they receive their certification.

Finally, for those teachers who need special education training, this information can be used by schools to develop in-services and workshops which focus on special education.

Furthermore, additional studies are needed to address the needs of the elementary school teachers and exactly what information they would find useful in teaching special need students who are being educated in their class.

Conclusion

This study attempted to gather information about regular classroom teachers' perceptions towards their education, training and certification in special education.

This study indicates that elementary teachers do not feel confident in their instructional skills and training in special education. Also, they feel they are not qualified to teach special need students in their classroom.

Special education involves the use of various teaching techniques and strategies as well as programs designed for maintaining appropriate behaviors when teaching special need students. Teachers who have been trained in special

education are exposed to these various areas and receive a knowledge base about their special students.

Since the implementation of the REI, many special need students have been receiving their education in the regular classroom, by the regular classroom teacher. Many of these teachers did not benefit by engaging in a teacher training program that included training in special education. Advocates of the REI do not require that regular teachers become a special educator, because the purpose is for the child to experience a "normal and regular" education (Spodek, Saracho and Lee 1987). This means that regular classroom teachers are expected to provide these children with a quality education, even though they realize they are not qualified to do so. Furthermore, if special need students are to continue to receive their education in the regular classroom, these teachers should be trained in special education so they feel confident in teaching these special children.

I believe that future and present classroom teachers can improve their teaching skills by becoming trained in special education. This belief is supported in this study, since the results indicate that those teachers who had received training in special education have a more positive attitude towards their ability to teach special need students.

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APPENDIX

Your participation in this survey assists in the completion of a Master's thesis project at Rowan College of NJ.

Please circle what you teach: Regular or Special Education

Age: _____ Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

Grade Teaching: _____ Number of years teaching experience _____

Degree: _____

Certifications: _____

Number of special need students taught

_____ 0-10 _____ 10-25 _____ 25-40 _____ 40 or more

Please circle the response which best applies to you.

	strongly agree	agree	don't know	disagree	strongly disagree
1. I believe I possess the necessary instructional skills to effectively instruct special need students who are in my classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I believe that I have received sufficient training in special education to effectively teach the special need students in my classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I believe that I am qualified to work with special need students in my classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I believe that I am effectively meeting the needs of the special need students in my class.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I believe that future classroom teachers should be trained in both regular and special education.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I believe that future classroom teachers should be certified in both regular and special education.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I believe that regular classroom teachers would be able to teach special need students better if they were trained in special education.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I believe that classroom teachers would better be able to teach special need students if they were certified in both regular and special education.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I believe that teachers as well as students will benefit by having a regular classroom teacher who is certified in both regular and special education.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I believe that present teachers should be dual certified.	5	4	3	2	1

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION!

Your participation in this survey assists in the completion of a Master's thesis project at Rowan College of NJ.

Please circle what you teach: Regular or Special Education

Age: _____ Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

Grade Teaching: _____ Number of years teaching experience _____

Degree: _____

Certifications: _____

Number of special need students taught

_____ 0-10 _____ 10-25 _____ 25-40 _____ 40 or more

Please circle the response which best applies to you.

	strongly agree	agree	don't know	disagree	strongly disagree
1. I believe I possess the necessary instructional skills to effectively instruct special need students who are in my classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I believe that I have received sufficient training in special education to effectively teach the special need students in my classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I believe that I am qualified to work with special need students in my classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I believe that I am effectively meeting the needs of the special need students in my class.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I believe that future classroom teachers should be trained in both regular and special education.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I believe that future classroom teachers should be certified in both regular and special education.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I believe that regular classroom teachers would be able to teach special need students better if they were trained in special education.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I believe that classroom teachers would better be able to teach special need students if they were certified in both regular and special education.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I believe that teachers as well as students will benefit by having a regular classroom teacher who is certified in both regular and special education.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I believe that present teachers should be dual certified.	5	4	3	2	1

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION!