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EDUCATORS KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE REGARDING NJ's CORE  
CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS

by  
Amy H. Crossley

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master in Special Education Degree in the Graduate  
Division of Rowan University  
May, 1998

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved 5/19/98

## **ABSTRACT**

Amy H. Crossley

Educator's Knowledge and Attitude  
Regarding NJ's Core Curriculum Content Standards

1998

Dr. S. Jay Kuder

Special Education

This study examined the knowledge of teachers regarding NJ's Core Curriculum Content Standards and their attitudes towards those standards. A survey was distributed and collected from 35 participants. Items on the survey were factored into three categories. These categories described how well informed educators were regarding NJ's CCCS, their feelings towards the standards and how well prepared they as educators felt they were. Results reveal that educators have "some" knowledge regarding NJ's CCCS, however, that knowledge-base must be broadened. Results also showed that the majority of educators have either a "positive" attitude or an "indifferent" attitude towards implementing NJ's CCCS and that showed that only half of the participants had a copy of NJ's CCCS. Practical applications of research implications are discussed and suggestions for future research are provided.

## **MINI ABSTRACT**

Amy H. Crossley

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Dr. S. Jay Kuder

Special Education

This study examined the knowledge of teachers regarding NJ's Core Curriculum Content Standards and their attitudes towards those standards. Results reveal that educators have "some" knowledge regarding NJ's CCCS, however, that knowledge base must be broadened. Results also showed that the majority of educators have either a "positive" attitude or "indifferent" attitude towards implementing NJ's CCCS. The knowledge and attitude differences between those teaching "regular" education and those teaching students with "special" needs was not as decisive as was anticipated.

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# CHAPTER I

## THE PROBLEM

### **Introduction:**

The New Jersey core curriculum content standards were established in an attempt to define the meaning of “Thorough” in the context of the 1875 State constitutional guarantee that students would be educated within a, “Thorough and Efficient system of free public schools.” They describe what all students should apprehend and be able to do upon completion of a thirteen-year education (Klagholz & Reece, 1996). In 1990, Public Law 101-476, The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) was passed. The Individuals with Disabilities Act changed EHA’s (Education of the Handicapped Act) name; broadened scope of eligible disabilities; placed emphasis on preparing students for life after special education, adding, for example the areas of assistive technology , transition services, and rehabilitation counseling; enhanced services to younger children and minorities; and changed overall focus from handicapping conditions to individual.

Regardless of where a student lives, educators work hard every day to provide the essential skills and knowledge that will aid all students to grow to their potential. With the twenty-first century right around the corner, New Jersey finds itself struggling along with the rest of the nation to educate citizens who will be competitive in the international marketplace of the future. The standards came forth from the labor of two different groups that worked in succession for a total of fifteen months in 1992-93 and 1995.

In 1992-93, panels made of educators, business people and other ordinary citizens created introductory draft standards in seven academic areas and career education. In 1995, additional but similar groups of people made additions to the introductory standards which were then presented to the public for a review process. After many revised drafts, in 1995, there were 85 standards made up of 1195 indicators to the Department of Education. The Department of Education reviewed the proposed standards and determined that there were five cross-content workplace readiness standards which applied to all areas of instruction. The 85 standards were reduced to 56 which are covered in seven academic subjects. The New Jersey Department of Education requires that all districts incorporate these standards into their curricula.

The Department of Education is making change in education through the core curriculum content standards. These changes are sure to effect all students and educators. All students will be given the opportunity to learn these skills. All students should be challenged to reach their maximum potential. To be competitive in a worldly, information-based economy, the students that educators prepare must be able to solve real problems, reason effectively, and make logical decisions. New Jersey is striving to implement these standards as many other states and countries already have done so with much success. It is a continually growing and learning process for all that are involved. Given the importance and potential impact of these standards how well known are they in the education community? How are educators informed of these core curriculum standards that they are required to teach on a daily basis?

Are there training sessions created to aid educators with the transitions in education?  
Should Special Education be included? There are many questions regarding the core curriculum content standards-this study hopes to gain some insight and understanding from those who will need to implement them.

### **Research Question:**

The research question to be examined by this study is (1) are teachers attending graduate courses knowledgeable about the core curriculum content standards. Are they aware of what they are or what they cover? (2) How do teachers perceive the effects of the core curriculum content standards on education in the state of New Jersey. (3) Do attitudes differ among regular educators and special educators? Who will be most affected?

### **Hypotheses**

1. Special educators taking graduate courses will have greater knowledge of the core curriculum content standards than regular educators.
2. Special educators will perceive the core curriculum content standards to have a greater impact on education than regular educators.
3. Regular educators, who are attending graduate courses, will have a more positive attitude, regarding the core curriculum content standards than special educators.

## **Definitions**

1. Attitude: A state of feeling or mind regarding a person or situation. It may be favorable or unfavorable.
2. Core Course Proficiencies initiative: Ensures that all students, regardless of where they reside, have equal access to the fundamental knowledge and skills critical to achieving success.
3. Regular Educator: A teacher who holds a certificate for the grade he/she teaches. He/she is not certified to teach special education.
4. Special Educator: A teacher who holds a certificate in special education.

## **Scope of Problem & Procedure:**

This study concerning regular and special educators will involve the participation of educators attending graduate courses at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. It is planned to use a survey to acquire this information.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to gain some knowledge from educators currently working in the field regarding their awareness on the core curriculum content standards. The content standards that educators are expected to implement are eliminating the differences that exist between regular and special education students. All students will be treated as equals with the hope that they all are given a “thorough” education.

The results of this study will give some indication as to how much knowledge both

regular and special educators have regarding the core curriculum content standards. It will also give some indication as to how well districts have informed their staff. If educators are not well informed, that would indicate that districts would need to set up in service sessions. If our current educators are not aware of the core curriculum content standards, how could they be giving every student a “thorough” education. If educators are well informed and the content standards are being implemented, then there must be studies done to see how they are impacting students.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

A major focus of policy makers at all levels (local, state and federal) has been education reform. The most recent reform efforts began in 1983 when *A Nation at Risk* was published. State legislators responded by establishing higher academic credit requirements for graduation, requiring more standardized testing of both students and teachers, calling for no pass/no play rules, and imposing other relatively blunt policy instruments of solve the rigor problem (Kirst & Massell,1994). The purpose of this *standards-based reform*, as it is sometimes called, is to provide top-down (state level) support of and direction to bottom-up (school site based) reform (Osers,1996).

Another part of this reform movement is represented by the nation's Educational Goals 2000 Vision. This vision is made up of six goals that call for the following:

1. By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn. (school readiness)
2. By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent. (school completion)
3. By the year 2000, United States students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages civics and government, arts, history, and geography, and every school in the United States will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so students may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our Nation's modern economy. (student achievement and citizenship)

4. By the year 2000, United States students will be first in the world in mathematics and science. (mathematics and science)
5. By the year 2000, every adult United States citizen will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. (adult literacy and lifelong learning)
6. By the year 2000, every school in the United States will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning. (safe, disciplined and drug-free schools) (Dottin, 1996).

Ten principles were extracted from these goals. There were additional signs for reform from federal legislation. Title 1 of the *Improving America's Schools Act of 1995* backs up these reforms by requiring states to include disadvantaged children in the execution of higher standards. A nation's public schools have a duty to educate *all* students to their potentials. Various school districts across the country have diverse standards for the skills and knowledge that students should acquire in each grade. Detailed guidelines/standards provide clarity where there is now confusion (Hirsch, 1991). What are core curriculum standards? Who should be creating these standards? Within these standards, the definition of "all students" needs to be clarified. Finally, how are educators going to be trained to teach these standards?

### **Creation of Core Curriculum Standards**

There are numerous states across the country that are implementing core curriculum standards, for example New Jersey, Vermont, Colorado, Georgia and Maryland to name a few. Curriculum standards are broad descriptions of the knowledge and skills students should acquire, and performance standards that define and provide concrete examples of the desired levels of student achievement expected by the content

standards (Osers,1996). These standards are not meant to serve as a statewide curriculum guide. They define the expected results but do not limit district strategies for how to ensure that their students achieve these expectations (Klagholz & Reece,1996). In addition to outlining what students should know, content standards also guide instruction and assessments at the classroom, school, district and state levels.(Osers,1995).

### **Who is Affected?**

The best way to help disadvantaged and minority students overcome educational injustice is to impart to them a universally shared core of knowledge. Unless this is done, many disadvantaged and minority students will continue to lag behind their peers in academic achievement (Hirsch,1991). Research conducted indicates that school systems with the greatest success rates are those that have core standards that students are exposed to at the elementary level. School systems that have not implemented standards show a lack of fairness to educate all students. When standards are implemented, everyone has definite expectations and clear accountability which focuses everyone's performance. French, German, and Swedish elementary schools have decreased the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students in the early years of schooling by implementing core standards that students must learn at each grade level (Hirsch,1991).

The Center for Policy Research on the Impact of General and Special Education Reforms located in Virginia conducted a study regarding this topic of core curriculum standards.



The study covered 18 states that are currently implementing standards in their school districts. The study found that special education was not well represented when state standards were developed. In New Jersey, the core curriculum content standards are intended for all students. The term “**all students**” includes students who are college-bound, career-bound, academically talented, those whose native language is not English, those with disabilities, students with learning deficits, and students from diverse socioeconomic (disadvantaged or advantaged) backgrounds (Klagholz & Reece, 1996). Profoundly handicapped students are exempt from many of the standards. However, the majority of special needs students should have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which is linked to the curriculum standards

### **Implementation of Curriculum Standards**

Creation of Core Curriculum Standards is not something that is done overnight. States that are or have developed standards all pride themselves that their standards consist of quality academic standards. Expectation levels for students are high. The make up of state standards varies from state to state. Some of the variables are content of the standards (generic vs. subject specific), focus ( academic vs. comprehensive, disciplinary vs. interdisciplinary), and level of knowledge and skills (Osers, 1996). For instance, New Jersey has created only content-specific student outcomes. New Jersey expects “all students will use a variety of estimation strategies and recognize situations in which estimation is appropriate (Klagholz & Reece, 1996). In contrast, Connecticut and

New Mexico have broad generic goal statements, but indiscreet academic areas (Oser,1996). The initiation and creation of curriculum standards is very time consuming. Vermont took two and one-half years to develop its Common Core of Learning so it could directly engage citizens in the definition of the state's education goals (Osers,1996). Similarly, New Jersey took fifteen months to create a first draft and then met again two years later to make modifications.

The development of curriculum standards also requires input from many individuals. The New Jersey Department of Education gratefully acknowledged the contributions of over 200 educators, parents, business persons and other citizens (Kladholz & Reece,1996). In the survey done on 18 states by The Center for Policy Research on the Impact of General and Special Education Reforms, it was found that special education has not played a major role in the development of either state content standards or specific curriculum frameworks and urges special educators to become involved with the committees that research and design the standards.

To have these standards implemented into school districts around the United States, it will involve the cooperation and patience of many individuals. District and school administrators will play a big role. They will need to provide opportunities for teachers to meet together so that discussions can take place. They need to show support by encouraging their faculty and providing them with resources. The community, corporations and outside individual can also lend support. Teachers should collaborate

with each other to explore new teaching strategies in their own classrooms that will result in high achievement by all students (Klagholz & Reece,1996).

### **Conclusion**

Core curriculum standards are being implemented in almost every state. The standards are to be taught to *all* students. Truly including all student in standards based reforms is not simple. All students represents an extraordinary range of ability, learning styles, and interest. One of the main issues that needs to be researched further is not whether special education should become part of the standards based reform movement, but how (Oser,1996).

Since many of the states are still creating their standards or are in the process of just implementing them, there is little research available. However, as states begin to implement their standards, studies will be done to see what is effective and what is not. Regarding special education and their involvement in the state standards, this is an area that needs to be monitored closely. With the high expectations that are placed on all students, this could have a great effect on students with special needs and on the teachers who teach these students.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHOD OF PROCEDURE**

**Preparation of the survey.** A “degree of importance” method of answering the questions was utilized along with some objective “yes/no” questions. To thoroughly cover all the areas, these survey questions were decided upon after much research into the core curriculum standards. The author felt that more accurate replies would result if the participants did not have to sign their names to the mimeographed forms. An explanatory letter was distributed, by the author, which accompanied each survey.

**Survey of participants.** Educators attending Graduate classes at Rowan University were utilized as the test groups. The test groups were further defined. Test group A was made up of eleven educators attending Special Education Graduate classes. Test group B was compiled of seventeen educators attending “regular” education graduate classes and Test group C was made up of seven “non-teachers”.

A copy of the survey and the total of responses may be found in Chapter Four.

At Rowan University two graduate classes were utilized. One that gave instruction in Special Education Services and one which covered regular education services.

A total of 35 educators, attending Graduate classes, participated.

---

**Table 1**

---

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS (35 TOTAL)**

**Number of “regular” education teachers = 17**

**Number of “special” education teachers = 11**

**Number of “non-teachers” = 7**

<b>Age</b>	<b>20-25 yrs.</b>	<b>26-30 yrs.</b>	<b>31-40 yrs.</b>	<b>41-50 yrs.</b>	<b>Over 50 yrs.</b>
	7	15	8	4	1

**Years of Experience**

<b>1-5 yrs.</b>	<b>6-10 yrs.</b>	<b>11-20 yrs.</b>	<b>21-30 yrs.</b>	<b>Zero yrs.</b>
18	9	2	2	4

---

**Introduction and administration of the survey.** Through the complete cooperation of the professors at Rowan University, each educator participating was supplied with a survey and a letter of explanation. The surveys were distributed before the Graduate students allotted class time. Each participant was given a ten minute time frame to complete the survey. All surveys were then immediately collected with a hundred percent participation represented from all tests groups.

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**Table 2**

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**Letter That Introduces the Survey to the Educators Attending Graduate Classes**

Dear Educators:

The purpose of this survey is to gain some knowledge from educators currently working in the field regarding their awareness on NJ's core curriculum content standards.

This is being done for two reasons: (1), I am interested to see how different districts are educating their staff on the core curriculum standards that are required to be implemented throughout the state of New Jersey; (2), I am a graduate student in the Masters in Special Education program.

All necessary approvals have been granted from Rowan University for this study.

The survey will be anonymous. It will be given in two parts: A, your background; B, the two page survey.

In view of the preceding information, would you kindly fill out the following survey.

Thank you for your very kind cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Amy Crossley  
Rowan University Graduate Student

---

**Table 3.1**

---

**AGE:**

20-25                  26-30                  31-40                  41-50                  OVER 50

---

**EDUCATION:**

----- Attending regular education graduate courses.

----- Matriculated student

----- List degree or certificate you are pursuing.

----- Attending special education graduate courses.

----- Matriculated student.

----- List degree or certificate you are pursuing.

---

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE:**

----- 1-5 YRS.    ----- 6-10 YRS.    -----11-20 YRS.    ----- 21-30 YRS. PLUS

**STUDENT BODY CURRENTLY TEACHING:**

----- Regular Education

----- Special Education

List Classroom Setting: -----

List current school district: -----

---

**Table 3.2**

---

**SURVEY QUESTIONS**

5	<i>VERY WELL INFORMED</i>
4	<i>WELL INFORMED</i>
3	<i>SOME KNOWLEDGE</i>
2	<i>VERY LITTLE KNOWLEDGE</i>
1	<i>NO KNOWLEDGE</i>

**PLEASE RATE HOW WELL INFORMED YOU ARE REGARDING THE FOLLOWING:**

- 1.) YOUR OVERALL KNOWLEDGE OF NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS.
- 2.) THE CONTENT AREAS COVERED IN NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS.
- 3.) YOUR KNOWLEDGE REGARDING THE LEARNING POPULATION THAT IS COVERED UNDER NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS.
- 4.) THE RATIONAL AS TO WHY THE NJ CREATED THE CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS.
- 5.) RATE HOW MUCH INFORMATION YOUR DISTRICT HAS SUPPLIED YOU WITH REGARDING NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS.
- 6.) YOUR KNOWLEDGE REGARDING THE TIME FRAME TO IMPLEMENT NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS.

---

5	<i>VERY POSITIVE</i>
4	<i>POSITIVE</i>
3	<i>INDIFFERENT</i>
2	<i>NEGATIVE</i>
1	<i>VERY NEGATIVE</i>

**PLEASE RATE YOUR FEELINGS REGARDING NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS:**

- 7.) WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL FEELING REGARDING NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS?
- 8.) WHAT KIND OF EFFECT WILL NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS HAVE ON "REGULAR" EDUCATION STUDENTS?
- 9.) WHAT KIND OF EFFECT WILL NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS HAVE ON STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS?



- 10.) WHAT KIND OF EFFECT WILL NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS HAVE ON "REGULAR" ED. STUDENTS GRADUATING FROM SCHOOL?
  - 11.) WHAT KIND OF EFFECT WILL NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS HAVE ON STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS GRADUATING FROM SCHOOL?
  - 12.) WHAT KIND OF EFFECT WILL NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS HAVE ON "REGULAR" ED. STUDENTS TAKING STANDARDIZED TESTS?
  - 13.) WHAT KIND OF EFFECT WILL NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS HAVE ON STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS TAKING STANDARDIZED TESTS?
- 

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| 5 | VERY WELL PREPARED |
| 4 | WELL PREPARED      |
| 3 | MODERATLY PREPARED |
| 2 | NOT WELL PREPARED  |
| 1 | NOT PREPARED       |

PLEASE INDICATE HOW WELL PREPARED YOU ARE TO IMPLEMENT NJ's CCCS.

- 14.) YOUR DISTRICTS OVERALL PREPAREDNESS TO IMPLEMENT NJ's CONTENT STANDARDS.
  - 15.) YOUR OVERALL PREPAREDNESS TO IMPLEMENT NJ's CONTENT STANDARDS.
- 

**PLEASE INDICATE THE FOLLOWING: YES OR NO**

- 16.) DO YOU HAVE A COPY OF NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS?
- 17.) HAS YOUR DISTRICT SUPPLIED YOU WITH A COPY OF NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS?
- 18.) DID YOU OBTAIN A COPY OF NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS ON YOUR OWN?
- 19.) HAS YOUR DISTRICT HAD ANY MEETINGS TO ADDRESS NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS?
- 20.) HAS YOUR DISTRICT HAD ANY INSERVICE SESSIONS TO ADDRESS NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS?
- 21.) HAS YOUR DISTRICT SUPPLIED YOU WITH ANY SUGGESIONS AS TO HOW YOU CAN/SHOULD IMPLEMENT NJ's CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS?

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

The purpose of this study was to gain some knowledge from educators currently working in the field regarding their awareness of NJ's core curriculum content standards. As it is now mandated by the state to have these standards implemented, the survey was conducted to get an idea as to how well versed teachers, who are actively teaching, in the field are regarding the core standards. This survey was also looking for any significant differences between those teaching "special" education as to those teaching "regular" education. Do teachers anticipate a certain population of students to be highly effected by these core curriculum content standards?

The researcher anticipated that those teaching "special" education would have a better knowledge of NJ's core curriculum content standards as opposed to those teaching "regular" education. It was also believed that teachers, teaching students with special needs, would have greater concerns regarding the effects the standards would have on their students. A prediction was made that those teaching "regular" education would have a very positive attitude towards the implementation of the core curriculum standards, as they should only benefit the students that they educate.

The results of the survey were very interesting. (See table 4) Of the thirty-five participants, thirty three had knowledge regarding NJ's Core Curriculum Content Standards. The degree of that knowledge varied from those that were "very well informed" (3 total) to those that were "well informed" (9 total) to the majority that had "some knowledge" (18 total) to those with "very little knowledge" (3 total).

Sixteen participants had an overall "positive" feeling regarding the CCCS. Fifteen were "indifferent" towards the standards and only 4 had a "negative" feeling about NJ's CCCS.

Twenty-two participants felt that the CCCS would have a "positive" effect on "regular" education students. Twelve participants felt the effect would be "indifferent" and only 1 felt the effect would be a "negative" reaction.

Eleven participants felt that the CCCS would have a "positive" effect on students with "special" needs. Seventeen felt the effect would be "indifferent" and 7 felt there would be a negative effect.

Thirteen participants felt that they were either "not well prepared" or "prepared at all" for the implementation on NJ's CCCS. Eleven feel either "very well prepared" or "well prepared".

The final statistics (See tables 5,6 &7) did not show a significant difference among the different education populations regarding them being "well informed" about NJ's CCCS. "Regular" educators, interestingly, did have a higher percentage that had "some knowledge" as opposed to the two other groups.

As area that showed where “regular” educators were better informed than “special” educators was the time frame for implementation of the standards (7 were “well informed” compared to the 3 in “special” education settings.).

Eleven out of 17 “regular” educators have a “positive” feeling regarding NJ’s CCCS as opposed to the one out of 11 teaching “special” education. The majority of Special educators had an “indifferent” feeling regarding the CCCS and the effects the standards will have on students with “special” needs.

Of the thirty-five participants, more than half (12 of 17) of the “regular” educators had a copy of NJ’s CCCS, 10 of which were supplied to them by their districts. The results of those teaching “special” education showed that only 5 out of 11 had a copy of NJ’s CCCS supplied to them by their districts.

More than half of the participants (20 out of 35) indicated that their districts had some kind of in-service sessions to address NJ’s CCCS, however, only 15 out of 20 stated that the districts gave them suggestions as to how to implement the standards.

One other area that showed some interesting results were the questions that asked them the effect the standards would have on students with “special” needs. There were two specific questions that addressed one regarding standardized test taking and the other was about graduating from high school. The surveyor was surprised that the majority of all of the participants had an “indifferent” feeling.

Table 4

**SURVEY QUESTIONS WITH SUMMARY OF RESPONSES OF ALL PARTICIPANTS (35 TOTAL)**

QUESTIONS	DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE				
	Very Well Informed	Well Informed	Some Knowledge	Very Little Knowledge	No Knowledge
Rate how well informed you are regarding the following:					
1. Your overall knowledge of NJ's core curriculum content standards (CCCS).	3	9	18	3	2
2. The content areas covered in NJ's CCCS	2	9	15	8	1
3. Knowledge regarding the learning population covered under NJ's CCCS.	2	6	17	7	3
4. Rational as to why NJ created the CCCS.	5	7	13	4	5
5. Rate how much info. your district has supplied you with regarding the CCCS.	5	8	9	4	8
6. Your knowledge regarding the time frame to implement NJ's CCCS.	3	11	5	10	6
Rate your feelings regarding NJ's CCCS.	Very Positive	Positive	Indifferent	Negative	Very Negative
7. What is your overall feeling regarding NJ's CCCS?	2	14	15	3	1
8. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on "regular" education students?	3	19	12	0	1
9. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on students with special needs?	1	10	17	6	1
10. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on "regular" ed. students graduating?	5	13	15	1	1
11. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on students with special needs graduating?	2	8	18	6	1
12. The kind of effect NJ's CCCS have on "regular" ed. student taking standardized tests.	3	15	12	4	1
13. The effect NJ's CCCS have on students with special needs taking standardized tests.	2	6	18	7	2
Indicate how well prepared your are to implement NJ's CCCS.	Very Well Prepared	Well Prepared	Moderately	Not Well Prepared	Not Prepared
14. Your districts overall preparedness to implement NJ's CCCS.	3	10	10	3	8
15. Your overall preparedness to implement NJ's CCCS.	4	7	11	5	8

Indicate the following “Yes” or “No”	YES	NO
16. Do you have a copy of NJ’s CCCS?	18	17
17. Has your district supplied you with a copy of NJ’s CCCS?	17	18
18. Did you obtain a copy of NJ’s CCCS on your own?	6	29
19. Has your district had any meetings to address NJ’s CCCS?	20	15
20. Has your district had any in-service sessions to address NJ’s CCCS?	20	15
21. Has your district supplied you with any suggestions on how you should/can implement NJ’s CCCS?	15	20

Table 5

## SURVEY QUESTIONS WITH SUMMARY OF RESPONSES OF REGULAR ED. TEACHERS

QUESTIONS	DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE				
	Very Well Informed	Well Informed	Some Knowledge	Very Little Knowledge	No Knowledge
Rate how well informed you are regarding the following:					
1. Your overall knowledge of NJ's core curriculum content standards (CCCS).	3	4	10	0	0
2. The content areas covered in NJ's CCCS	2	6	9	0	0
3. Knowledge regarding the learning population covered under NJ's CCCS.	1	3	7	6	0
4. Rational as to why NJ created the CCCS.	4	4	6	2	1
5. Rate how much info. your district has supplied you with regarding the CCCS.	2	6	5	3	1
6. Your knowledge regarding the time frame to implement NJ's CCCS.	3	7	1	5	1
Rate your feelings regarding NJ's CCCS.					
	Very Positive	Positive	Indifferent	Negative	Very Negative
7. What is your overall feeling regarding NJ's CCCS?	1	11	3	2	0
8. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on "regular" education students?	1	12	4	0	0
9. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on students with special needs?	1	5	9	2	0
10. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on "regular" ed. students graduating?	2	8	6	1	0
11. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on students with special needs graduating?	1	4	10	2	0
12. The kind of effect NJ's CCCS have on "regular" ed. student taking standardized tests.	1	6	6	4	0
13. The effect NJ's CCCS have on students with special needs taking standardized tests.	1	2	8	5	1
Indicate how well prepared your are to implement NJ's CCCS.					
	Very Well Prepared	Well Prepared	Moderately	Not Well Prepared	Not Prepared
14. Your districts overall preparedness to implement NJ's CCCS.	2	6	5	1	3
15. Your overall preparedness to implement NJ's CCCS.	3	3	6	3	2

<b>Indicate the following “Yes” or “No”</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
16. Do you have a copy of NJ’s CCCS?	12	5
17. Has your district supplied you with a copy of NJ’s CCCS?	10	7
18. Did you obtain a copy of NJ’s CCCS on your own?	3	14
19. Has your district had any meetings to address NJ’s CCCS?	11	6
20. Has your district had any in-service sessions to address NJ’s CCCS?	10	7
21. Has your district supplied you with any suggestions on how you should/can implement NJ’s CCCS?	7	10



Table 6

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**SURVEY QUESTIONS WITH SUMMARY OF RESPONSES OF SPECIAL ED. TEACHERS**


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QUESTIONS	DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE				
	Very Well Informed	Well Informed	Some Knowledge	Very Little Knowledge	No Knowledge
Rate how well informed you are regarding the following:					
1. Your overall knowledge of NJ's core curriculum content standards (CCCS).	0	4	4	2	1
2. The content areas covered in NJ's CCCS	0	2	5	4	0
3. Knowledge regarding the learning population covered under NJ's CCCS.	0	3	6	1	1
4. Rational as to why NJ created the CCCS.	0	2	5	2	2
5. Rate how much info. your district has supplied you with regarding the CCCS.	3	2	2	1	3
6. Your knowledge regarding the time frame to implement NJ's CCCS.	0	3	3	4	1
Rate your feelings regarding NJ's CCCS.	Very Positive	Positive	Indifferent	Negative	Very Negative
7. What is your overall feeling regarding NJ's CCCS?	0	1	9	1	0
8. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on "regular" education students?	1	4	6	0	0
9. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on students with special needs?	0	1	6	4	0
10. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on "regular" ed. students graduating?	2	1	8	0	0
11. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on students with special needs graduating?	0	1	7	3	0
12. The kind of effect NJ's CCCS have on "regular" ed. student taking standardized tests.	1	5	5	0	0
13. The effect NJ's CCCS have on students with special needs taking standardized tests.	0	2	8	1	0
Indicate how well prepared your are to implement NJ's CCCS.	Very Well Prepared	Well Prepared	Moderately	Not Well Prepared	Not Prepared
14. Your districts overall preparedness to Implement NJ's CCCS.	1	2	5	2	1
15. Your overall preparedness to implement NJ's CCCS.	1	2	4	2	2

Indicate the following “Yes” or “No”	YES	NO
16. Do you have a copy of NJ’s CCCS?	5	6
17. Has your district supplied you with a copy of NJ’s CCCS?	5	6
18. Did you obtain a copy of NJ’s CCCS on your own?	2	9
19. Has your district had any meetings to address NJ’s CCCS?	7	4
20. Has your district had any in-service sessions to address NJ’s CCCS?	8	3
21. Has your district supplied you with any suggestions on how you should/can implement NJ’s CCCS?	6	5

Table 7

## SURVEY QUESTIONS WITH SUMMARY OF RESPONSES OF NON-TEACHERS

QUESTIONS	DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE				
	Very Well Informed	Well Informed	Some Knowledge	Very Little Knowledge	No Knowledge
Rate how well informed you are regarding the following:					
1. Your overall knowledge of NJ's core curriculum content standards (CCCS).	0	1	4	1	1
2. The content areas covered in NJ's CCCS	0	1	1	4	1
3. Knowledge regarding the learning population covered under NJ's CCCS.	1	0	4	0	2
4. Rational as to why NJ created the CCCS.	1	1	2	0	3
5. Rate how much info. your district has supplied you with regarding the CCCS.	1	0	2	0	4
6. Your knowledge regarding the time frame to implement NJ's CCCS.	0	1	1	1	4
Rate your feelings regarding NJ's CCCS.	Very Positive	Positive	Indifferent	Negative	Very Negative
7. What is your overall feeling regarding NJ's CCCS?	1	2	3	0	1
8. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on "regular" education students?	1	3	2	0	1
9. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on students with special needs?	0	4	2	0	1
10. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on "regular" ed. students graduating?	1	4	1	0	1
11. What kind of effect will NJ's CCCS have on students with special needs graduating?	1	3	1	1	1
12. The kind of effect NJ's CCCS have on "regular" ed. student taking standardized tests.	1	4	1	0	1
13. The effect NJ's CCCS have on students with special needs taking standardized tests.	1	2	2	1	1
Indicate how well prepared your are to implement NJ's CCCS.	Very Well Prepared	Well Prepared	Moderately	Not Well Prepared	Not Prepared
14. Your districts overall preparedness to Implement NJ's CCCS.	0	2	0	0	5
15. Your overall preparedness to implement NJ's CCCS.	0	2	1	0	4

Indicate the following "Yes" or "No"	YES	NO
16. Do you have a copy of NJ's CCCS?	1	6
17. Has your district supplied you with a copy of NJ's CCCS?	2	5
18. Did you obtain a copy of NJ's CCCS on your own?	1	6
19. Has your district had any meetings to address NJ's CCCS?	2	5
20. Has your district had any in-service sessions to address NJ's CCCS?	2	5
21. Has your district supplied you with any suggestions on how you should/can implement NJ's CCCS?	2	5

## Chapter V

### **Summary:**

The New Jersey core curriculum content standards were established in an attempt to define the meaning of “Thorough” in the context of the 1875 State constitutional guarantee that students would be educated within a, “Thorough and Efficient system of free public schools.” New Jersey finds itself struggling along with the rest of the nation to educate citizens who will be competitive in the international marketplace of the future. To be competitive in a worldly, information-based economy, the students that educators prepare must be able to solve real problems, reason effectively, and make logical decisions. The Department of education is hoping to guarantee a “thorough” education through the implementation of the core curriculum content standards.

Given the importance and potential impact of these standards, this studies purpose was to gain some insight from educators, currently teaching, about their knowledge of NJ’s core curriculum content standards and their attitude towards implementing the standards to all students.

### **Conclusions:**

The final results of this study regarding NJ’s CCCS and teacher’s knowledge and attitude towards the implementation of the standards, were not as decisive as anticipated. Thirty-three of the thirty-five participants had knowledge regarding NJ’s CCCS. The degree of

that knowledge varied from those “very well informed” to those that had “very little knowledge”. Interestingly, only 4 participants had a “negative” feeling regarding the implementation of the standards, where as, the remaining participant’s feelings were either “positive” or “indifferent” towards the implementation. The majority of participants felt the standards would be a “positive” experience for those students in “regular” education. Surprisingly, only seven participants out of the total thirty-five felt the standards would be something “negative” for students with “special” needs. The remaining participants felt the experience would be either “positive” or have a neutral effect.

The researcher predicted that educators teaching “special” education would have a more vast knowledge of NJ’s CCCS then those educators teaching “regular” education. The results of the study showed that 7 out of 17 educator teaching “regular” education were “very well or well informed” regarding their knowledge of NJ’s CCCS as opposed to 4 out of 11 “special” educators. The “special” educators also had 3 participants with very little or no knowledge of NJ’s CCCS where as the ”regular” educators did not have any participants that fell into these categories. The majority of participants that were non-teachers had at least some knowledge of NJ’s CCCS and only one representative with no knowledge of the standards.

The prediction that “regular” educators would have a more positive attitude towards NJ’s CCCS was accurate, as 12 out of 17 “regular” educator participants were either “very

positive or positive”. The “special” educators showed only one participant as “positive” with the majority of them showing an attitude of “indifference”. The majority of non-teachers also showed an attitude of “indifference”. The overall attitude of all participants was either “positive” or “indifferent” (17 positive/15 indifferent).

The study also showed that all three participating groups did not have an extremely strong concern as to how NJ’s CCCS would effect students with “special” needs. The results showed that 11 participants thought the CCCS would be a “positive” thing for students with “special” needs. 17 participants were “indifferent” as to the how the CCCS would effect “special “ needs students and only 7 felt there would be a negative effect.

The overall conclusion of this study is that educators, regardless of the student body they teach, should have thorough knowledge regarding NJ’s CCCS. It seems as though that “knowledge base” needs to be enhanced for all educators. All educators should be “well informed”. If all NJ educators are to implement these standards within their classrooms, in an effort to ensure that all students are getting a “thorough” education, then districts throughout NJ must do a better job of education their staff.

There are numerous states across the countries that are implementing CCCS. Research conducted indicates that school systems with the greatest success rates are those that have core standards that students are exposed to at the elementary level. School systems that have not implemented standards show a lack of fairness to educate all

students. More in depth studies should be conducted in the future to see how the CCCS are effecting both “regular” education students and those in “special” education. The Center for Policy Research on the Impact of General and Special Education Reform conducted a study covering 18 states that are currently implementing standards in their school districts. The study found that “special” education was not well represented when the standards were developed. There should be a focus on standardized test taking and the requirements to graduate from high school. These two areas should give educators a lot of feedback. With that feedback, if modifications were necessary, the Department of Education could make the proper adjustments.

If this study were to be conducted again in the future, it would be beneficial to have a larger population of participants. Participants would again need to come from those teaching “regular” education and those teaching students with “special” needs. A larger study could be conducted in NJ alone or one could be conducted in two different states. States, which are already enforcing core curriculum standards, could be compared with each other to determine the educator’s knowledge base, their attitudes and their reactions to the effects the standards are having on all students within their state. It would also be insightful to have the participants document questions that they may have regarding CCCS to see what area districts need to address.



### **Recommendations:**

As mentioned above, more in depth studies need to be done to see how NJ's core curriculum content standards are going to effect all students. Now that all students are going to be treated as "equals", the Department of Education needs to track what areas are improved as a result of the standards and which areas need to be modified. After future studies are done, it may be determined that students with "special" needs are not getting a "thorough" education by having the same standards that "regular" education students have.

This study revealed that all educators need to be more informed and better-educated towards NJ's core curriculum content standards. First, all districts need to make sure that their staff has a copy of NJ's core curriculum content standards. It would be difficult to implement something that you have not knowledge of. Second, all districts should have in-service sessions to address the implementation of the standards and to offer suggestions as to how to implement them.

The Department of Education should also refer to the studies that other states have conducted regarding the implementation of their own state standards. Studies conducted in other states should give some insight as to what was successful and what was not.

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