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# Factors Affecting Parent Perceptions of Children's Performance In Inclusive Classroom Settings

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Factors Affecting Parent  
Perceptions of Children's Performance  
In Inclusive Classroom Settings

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Date of Approval: Aug. 11, 1995

Abstract

The subjects of this study included parents of forty - five students with learning disabilities who were integrated in the regular education classroom from rural Virginia. A self developed questionnaire was used to collect the data. Thirteen (28%) of the questionnaires were returned. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results showed that divorced parents, married couples working between 20 to 29 hours per week, married parents who both had finished college, single / divorced parents who had finished High School only, and parents who had one child or all children in the family receiving Special Educational services strongly agreed on variables affecting the child's school performance.

Thank you to all of the school systems for allowing me to conduct this study, and to all of the parents who took the time to complete the questionnaire and return it. Without all of you, this study would not have been possible.

Last, but certainly not least, thank you to all of the special education and psychology professors at Longwood College. The enthusiasm that all of you demonstrate when teaching is contagious. I hope to take all of the lessons that you have taught me into the teaching field and to pass it on to my future students.

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Third, a big thank you to all of the school systems for allowing me to conduct this study, and to all of the parents who took the time to complete the questionnaire and return it. Without all of you, this study would not have been possible.

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have examined what regular and special education teachers think about

inclusion but educators

these children

to define as such

the nature of severity of the disabilities, within the regular education

class

Professors debate the subject of inclusion. Yet, few

professionals can define inclusion adequately. Each school division has

its own definition of inclusion. For example, many school systems use a

percentage of time within the regular education classroom to define

inclusion. Full inclusion is defined in some school systems as students

with disabilities being included within the regular education classroom

for on less than 80% of the school day.

School systems use three different types of inclusion. The first

one, resource, occurs when the special education teacher teaches a class

such as math, with only special education students. The second type is

pull-out. This is when the special education teacher pulls the student

out of the regular education classroom and works with them. The

difference between resource and pull-out is that with resource, the

special education teacher sets the objective. While with pull-out, the

regular education teacher sets the objective that the special educator

works on. The third type, team-teaching, is when the special education

teacher teaches with and in the same room as, the regular education

teacher.

Educators debate not only the definition of inclusion, but also

its success in teaching children with learning disabilities. Educators

have examined what regular and special education teachers think about inclusion but educators have not yet determined what the parents of these children think of full inclusion. Full inclusion, therefore, can be defined as encompassing all students with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of the disabilities, within the regular education classroom (Learning Disabilities Association of America, 1993).

#### History of Full Inclusion

Miller (1990) examined 20 years of innovative research and practice in schools. Miller (1990) focused on the current movement to restructure schools and the similarities between this movement and the Regular Education Initiative. In the final section, Miller (1990) argued for the development of a partnership between special education teachers and regular education teachers. According to Miller, the "first wave" of school reform was prompted by the publication of A Nation At Risk by the National Commission in 1983, calling for increased time-on-task, more accountability, and regulation from the state. The "first wave" focused on regulations, however, the "second wave" focused on making the school a better learning environment for students and a better working environment for teachers. Improving the learning environment for students means examining both content and context (i.e. how content is being taught). The "second wave" of reform asks questions to sort out which practices are worth keeping, which ones require reinforcement, which should be discontinued, and which new practices needed to be invented to teach all children more efficiently.



Miller (1990) believed that the regular education initiative and the "second wave" of reform are about the same. They both are directed towards many of the same ends. They are both examining a major rethinking and reshaping of how schools are organized and how teaching and learning occurs. Miller (1990) stated that special education teachers and regular education teachers must work to form a partnership to improve how teaching and learning occur within the school for all students. Miller (1990) believed that such a partnership will not be easy but that it is essential. Miller stated that it is through collaborative actions that change happens within the schools.

Welch (1989) examined the "second wave" of educational reform. Welch (1989) examined some of the misunderstandings and problems that occurred during the "first wave." Then, he compared these problems to some of the problems that are predicted to reoccur with the "second wave" if changes are not made. Welch (1989) believed that the new wave is similar in many ways to the mainstreaming movement during the mid-1970s. Welch (1989) believed that important lessons learned from the past, such as the resistance of teachers on the integration of handicapped students into the regular education classroom, must be recalled. The factors that contribute to teacher reluctance are found to be limited knowledge, lack of experience working with students with disabilities, and lack of technical support from specialists. Welch (1989) stated that in order to avoid the mistakes of the past the current culture should be examined before implementing changes. The changing roles and responsibilities for serving special education



students has raised concern, and perhaps even fear, on the part of teachers. Welch (1989) believed that teachers most likely felt isolated, alone, and perhaps betrayed when left without adequate support. Regular Education Initiative(REI) is an extension of the mainstreaming movement, but not a movement completely on its own. Welch believed that the process of change is difficult, but that change may happen. According to Welch (1989) if the process of change is carefully carried out in small program increments that allow flexibility for modification that the REI may succeed. Welch believed that if the "second wave" moves too quickly that the professionals will fall off of the bandwagon, voicing frustration and all voice "We knew all along that it wouldn't work."

Byrnes (1990) responded to an article by William Davis (1989) who opened the issue of the REI for consideration and discussion from professionals. Byrnes (1990), who is a local education agency (LEA) administrator, accepted this invitation to discuss her view on the REI. Byrnes (1990) believed that good teachers adapt to individual differences in learning style and rate. Byrnes explained that it is the teacher's responsibility to identify children who have significant learning problems and provide the maximum amount of mainstreaming necessary to help students prepare for the unassisted and nonadapted world of adulthood. Byrnes then explained how these differences are seen in the students and determines their amount of need. Byrnes described Terry, who was seriously burned as a toddler, how she lost several fingers and was severely scarred. Then, she described Jake, who

was diagnosed as severely autistic and retarded. Jake sometimes becomes assaultive toward others, and other children are often frightened by his unpredictable behavior.

Byrnes (1990) explained how the REI wants to increase placements into regular education classrooms for students like Terry. Since the 1960s, special education has been developing a system that commits to the student's success. The system is convinced that teachers, principals, and parents who work together for special education is the answer to schools' learning problems. Questions addressed by Byrnes included: "What do we tell people if we change to the REI system? All the work over the last 20 years was simply wrong. The successes over those years were not real. Can the REI program guarantee more student growth?"

Byrnes (1990) explained that many systems have a team teaching approach. She explained that team teaching increases the regular teacher and special educators knowledge. Team teaching, at its best, provides opportunities for both professionals to learn from the partnership. Teaching strategies are expanded and all children benefit. In team teaching, at its worse, the special educators become aides or tutors. The special educator removes a small group of needy children to a corner for assistance. The children are now segregated in full view of their other classmates, who can easily observe their struggling through modified materials. Byrnes considers the key to be flexibility, and to be able to use both options. The challenge is to identify the best environment and problem for each child, within our context. The



environment should be in the classroom, if appropriate, but it may be a resource room or a more restrictive option. Any change in the system should emerge from an active collaboration of all individuals. These individuals, such as teachers, parents, and administrators should share a positive view of these changes for it is to be productive for the children. These individuals must be involved in these debates. If they aren't involved, then where is the partnership that we have tried so hard to develop gone. For REI to succeed there must be collaboration and a positive outlook.

Reynolds (1988) wrote an article on the regular education initiative, in response to the series of articles on the regular education initiative. Historically, children have been placed in special education not because it will enhance their lives, but because they were difficult to serve or "tolerate" in the regular education classroom. Then, the ability test became available. This test was used by the schools to decide which students should be put in undemanding slow classrooms. Later, a special category of students was created for those students, based on test data, who were predicted to fail. These students were labeled "learning disabled", which is now the largest and least well defined category in special education. When Public Law 94-192 was passed, policies began to change. First, they insisted that placement be based on advantages for the child and that adaptations be made in instruction for mainstreaming. Reynolds believed that mainstreaming is where the blame is placed when problems arise.

According to Reynolds the problem lays with the current diagnostic procedures and not with mainstreaming.

McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager and Okhee (1993) conducted a comparative study of how general education teachers' behaviors toward mainstreamed students with learning disabilities and their behavior toward students without disabilities. The sample included 60 general education teachers' classrooms, K-12, that included students with learning disabilities. The instrument of choice was the Classroom Climate Scale. The main purpose of this instrument was to examine to what extent regular education teachers would accommodate and make adaptations for students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

Reynold's findings indicated that students with learning disabilities were treated by their general education teachers much like other students without disabilities. They found that instruction in mainstreamed classes was not differentiated to meet the needs of students with disabilities, and few adaptations are provided. The study indicated that because so little of the class work is adapted to meet individual learning needs, that most of the students with learning disabilities are not engaged in the learning process. It was indicated that students who have little prior or background knowledge of what is being taught may find that limited interaction on their part is an effective strategy for getting through the school day with minimum difficulty. It was indicated that little is asked of them by the general education teacher. The observational analysis of the elementary



classroom showed that conformity was an important behavior for successful accommodation of LD students within the regular education classroom. The positive side of the elementary conformity was that there was very little personal ridicule. The negative side was that LD students did not ask for help or assistance or volunteer to answer questions. This study showed that even an effective teacher does little to make adaptations and that many teachers feel that some adaptations are not feasible. There were three limitations to this study: the sample wasn't randomized, they compared classrooms as a whole and not student-by-student, and the only classes observed were social studies and science classes.

#### Effect Of Regular Education Initiative

Carnine and Kameenui (1990) conducted a study that analyzed the general education initiative and its implications for the special education community and learners with special needs. They discussed concerns that were previously investigated and asked new questions that also need to be investigated. The consensus indicated that the students in the greatest need of help are benefitting very little from recent major reforms in general education. Their major concern was that regular classroom teachers did not have the ability to gear up for at-risk students. This is a significant issue when considering that 312 students with learning disabilities drop out of school every day. They believed that if students from low income backgrounds continue to fail

at school, then both the proportion and absolute number of drop outs will grow rapidly in the future. Their findings determined that the mainstream programs work but only for certain types of students. They believed that pull-out programs would work better for the above average students. They stressed that special education programs should be more individualized. They say if nothing else, let us be remembered for this: "We were the first to shout that the emperor wore no clothes."

#### Modifications

Slavin (1990) examined the changes that need to be made to the regular education initiative to make it a reality. He found that there is really one major problem that needs to be taken care of before the regular education initiative can succeed. Traditional instruction methods present the same materials at the same rate in the same way to students. Students tend to have different learning rates and styles and schools seem to have difficulty responding to these differences. What tends to happen are those students who learn like the norm and fit into the mold do fine, and those who can't, fail. Slavin believed that if we intended to implement the REI into the system, then we need to improve services and prevention needs to be the major focus. One way is to improve classroom instructing by implementing comprehensive programs. Slavin then goes into depth describing many comprehensive programs. He describes and explains how to use these programs and shows how they are effective. He stated that shifting our resources to prevention, early intervention and improving classroom practices would be on such a major



scale of change and funds that it would require legal and governmental policies to change. Slavin stated that the REI is more of an idea than a policy or a practical plan for it to become reality.

Baker and Zigmond (1990) conducted a study that examined education practices in regular education classrooms to determine what changes are required in order to use a full inclusion program for students. The students involved were labeled as learning disabled, grades kindergarten through 5th grade. They used informal and formal observations and interviews and surveys of students, parents, and teachers. Their research showed that the teachers were orderly and had well behaved classrooms. They also found that the teacher's were sat on conformity and not accommodation. Baker and Zigmond believe that any student who didn't conform most likely would not succeed. They stated that for REI to occur and succeed within the school systems that there must be some changes. Teachers would have to increase time devoted to teaching, and would have to use wide ranges of techniques for teaching reading, and increase the time they spend reading. Teachers would have to use activities that involve more interactive tasks that involves the students in the learning process. Teachers need to vary the size and composition of groups having pairs of students work together. Baker and Zigmond believe that in-service training and technical assistance in effective instruction is required for the regular education initiative to succeed.

Integration Of Special Education Students

Sawyer, McLaughlin, and Winglee (1994) conducted a study to determine to what extent students with various disabilities have been integrated into general education classrooms. In this study, they used placement data on children served under the IDEA, chapter 1, and State Operated Programs. The data was on all students who received special education and related services with public funding. General education classroom placement can mean up to 21% of a day outside of the general education classroom. This means that integration doesn't rule out the use of resource rooms or pull-out models. The study showed that students with specific learning disabilities are integrated into the regular education classroom for more time than in the past. The study also showed variation across states and local districts in integration. They found that many things can effect integration, such as special education funding formulas.

Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) (1993) published a paper on full inclusion of students with learning disabilities in the regular education classroom. The LDA stated that during the 1990 to 1991 school year that 2,117,087 children in the public school system were identified as learning disabled. This number is more than 50% of all students identified in special education. They defined full inclusion as a term to describe a popular practice in which all students with disabilities, regardless of the severity or need for related services, receive their total education within the regular education classroom. The LDA found that decisions regarding students



with disabilities and placement in education would be more useful if based on the individual needs of each student rather than administrative convenience or budgetary considerations. The educational placement should be the results of a cooperative effort involving parents, educators, and students when appropriate.

Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) examined the inclusive schools movement and special education reform. They compared their findings to the findings of the REI. Their findings indicated that many leaders of the inclusive school movement want to have no special education classrooms and that all children, especially students with disabilities, should be in regular classrooms. Also, that many leaders believed that special education is the cause of what is wrong with general education. They, the leaders, believe that special education's very existence is responsible for regular education's failure. Educators can't accommodate the needs of many students. The leaders believed that special education serves as the "dumping ground." This has made it easy for regular education to rid itself of its "undesirables" and "unteachables." The leaders of the inclusive school movement believe that eliminating special education will force regular educators to deal with children that they would normally avoid. This will transform regular education into a more responsive, resourceful, and humane system.

According to Silver (1991) who reviewed the regular education initiative and remembers in 1960 the move to deinstitutionalization. Although deinstitutionalization sounded good in theory, it did not show

the expected benefits in reality. Silver fears that REI will result in the same way as the deinstitutionalization movement did.

The history of inclusion is relatively short. The regular education initiative has been analyzed mostly after it had been integrated into the school system. Doctors, teachers and parents seem to have their own perceptions of inclusion.

#### Teacher Perceptions

Gersten and Woodward (1990) investigated the regular classroom teacher's perceptions of special education and placement. The regular education teachers viewed special education placement as a dumping ground. These students would not experience success in the regular education classroom. The major focus is a fear that once a student is placed in special education programs, that the student never leaves. They found that placement is the greatest fear, but the more work done together the less a fear it becomes. Gersten and Woodward also agree with Will (1986) who observed that in many instances that pull-out services fail to meet the educational needs of special education students. They determined that this creates a barrier in the education of special education students.

Rich and Ross (1991) investigated regular education classrooms versus resource rooms for students with disabilities. They found that the resource room provided more learning time and students demonstrated more on-task time in the resource room placement. They also stated that the resource room seems "to be organizationally designed to maximize



learning time" (Rich and Ross, 1991). The purpose of their paper was to measure the use of time, not achievement. They felt that on-task time was a factor that is related to student educational progress. They also stated that future research is needed to address the other variables, and should include a broader definition of achievement.

Coates (1989) conducted a study to analyze the opinions of regular classroom teachers towards inclusion. Their findings showed that many regular education teachers did not agree with inclusion and they believed that resource rooms are more effective than inclusive settings. The leaders of the inclusive movement believed that special education students can be educated entirely within the regular classroom, when effective methods and support are given. All of the regular education teachers in the study had access to a curriculum consultant, a special education consultant, a school psychologist, a school social worker, and a speech pathologist. The teachers still seemed to believe that resource rooms are an essential service. Many teachers felt that not only should pull-out programs be mandatory, but they should be expanded to give more concentrated assistance or provide service to students who are not eligible for assistance.

Sammel, Abernathy, Butera, and Lesar (1991) examined how teachers perceived the regular education initiative, specifically full inclusion. Their study indicated that teachers were not dissatisfied with the full inclusion program. They tended to prefer pull-out programs for special education and did not favor the current inclusion program. A high percentage believed that full-time placement of students with

disabilities in regular classrooms could negatively effect instructional classroom time.

Davis (1989) examined the regular education initiative debate. Davis looked at current articles that discussed some very debated issues involving regular educators. He examined some of the promises and problems of the regular education initiative. Davis believed that as the debate over merging special education and regular education intensifies that many special educators feel that they have to choose sides. Davis believed that special educators need to stop debating this issue exclusively among themselves, and that they should have collaborative discussions with regular educators.

Many researchers seemed to find that many teachers prefer pull-out programs for special education students, compared to the full inclusion model currently being used in many schools. The educators themselves have not decided if the full inclusion model works better than the pull-out model. Some educators even believed that eliminating special education teachers all together will make regular education teachers better and more equipped to handle students with disabilities. What the educators think is very important, but what is more important is what the parents of the special education students think.

#### Parent Perceptions of Full Inclusion

Carr (1993) examined a mother's thoughts on inclusion. According to Carr the mother believed that the year 1993 would be known as the year that individuals with learning disabilities lost their special



education services. The mother believed that inclusion will take special education away from the special education students. The mother fears that if inclusion becomes a reality, the drop-out rate for learning disabled students will soar. She also felt that the number of teenagers using drugs or alcohol will soar and teenage suicides will also increase. She believed that support and assistance for special education students in the regular classroom will be limited because of cost. She also was fearful about reducing the number of special education teachers. Regular education teachers will not be able to modify everything to meet individual needs and because special education funds will be cut that the regular education teachers won't have the support and assistance needed to handle the case load.

Many teachers and parents believed that special education students are not being served to the fullest extent with the inclusion model. Although parent perceptions of full inclusion can be either positive or negative, researchers have not yet examined the factors which may affect a parent's perception. For example, the number of siblings in the household, the number of siblings receiving special education services, and the amount of homework children have may alter a parent's perception of inclusion. In addition, demographic factors, such as marital status, employment, and working schedule may contribute to positive or negative parental perceptions about inclusion. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to determine factors affecting a parent's perception of full inclusion.

## Method

Survey research methods were used in this study to obtain perceptions regarding inclusion of parents having children with learning disabilities. A self - developed questionnaire was used to collect data.

### Subjects

The subjects were forty-five parents with children having learning disabilities from five schools in Rural Virginia. These children were ages seven to eleven or grade level two through five. All children were included a minimum of 80% of the school day, according to the school divisions.

### Instrument

The instrument used was a self - developed questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire contained demographic and experiential variables regarding the parents. Part two of the survey used a Likert type scale and contained questions on variables such as homework and skill development. The Likert scale score ranged from 1 to 5. Value of 1 represented a strong negative perception, value of 5 represented a strong positive perception, and value of 3 represented undecided. Definitions were included at the end of the questionnaire.

Procedures

The questionnaire was pilot tested among 12 parents of children with learning disabilities in a school system within rural Virginia.

Permission for research was obtained from the appropriate administrative office. The school systems were asked to mail the survey packages to parents, the names of the parents were not disclosed to the researcher to secure confidentiality.

Each survey package contained a questionnaire, a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, with a brief definition of inclusion, and a self - addressed stamped envelope. A reminder letter with the original survey package was sent out to the school systems after two weeks.



## Results

### Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a descriptive analyses. Forty-five questionnaires were mailed through the school to the subjects. Of the forty-five questionnaires 13 (28%) were returned.

### Profile of the Respondents

As shown in Table 1, the subjects first responded to section one of the questionnaire. Of the 13 respondents 10(76%) were married, 2(15%) were single and 1(7%) was divorced.

Of the 10 married respondents 2(20%) did not graduate from high school. For 3(30%) respondents only one parent graduated from high school and the other did not. On 3(30%) questionnaires both parents graduated from high school. In 1(10%) case one parent went to college and the other did not graduate from high school, and in 1(10%) instance both parents went to college.

Of the 2 single respondents, 1(50%) did not graduate from high school and 1(50%) went to college. The 1 divorced respondent graduated from high school. Of the 13 respondents 1(7%) had between 0 to .25% of their children receiving special educational services, 5(38%) had between .26% to .50%, 2(15%) had between .51% to .75%, and 5(38%) had between .76% to 1.00%.

For hours worked, of the 10 married respondents, 4(40%) of the respondents worked between 20 to 29 hours per week, 3(30%) worked between 30 to 39 hours per week, and 3(30%) worked between 40 hours per week and more. Of the 2 single respondents 2(100%) worked 40 hours per week and more. The 1 divorced respondent worked 40 hours per week or more.

#### Relationship Between Marital Status and Response to Part II Questions

Response to question number one which asked parents to indicate if their child spends more than 45 minutes on homework, showed that 10% of the married respondents strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 20% disagreed, and 50% strongly disagreed. One hundred percent of the single respondents disagreed. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents disagreed (Figure 1).

In regard to question number two which inquired about their child spending more than 30 minutes on homework, the response showed that 70% of the married respondents agreed and 30% strongly disagreed. Fifty percent of the single respondents strongly agreed and 50% agreed. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents agreed (Figure 1).

Question number three, inquiring about the benefit of their child being in the regular education classroom, showed that 60% of the married respondents strongly agreed, 10% agreed, 20% were undecided and 10% disagreed. Fifty percent of the single respondents strongly agreed and 50% agreed. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents strongly agreed (Figure 1).

The fourth question asked parents about an increase in social skills. The response showed that 20% of the married respondents strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 40% were undecided, and 10% disagreed. Fifty percent of the single respondents agreed and 50% were undecided. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents strongly agreed (Figure 1).

In regard to question number five, inquiring about an increase in reading skills, the response showed that 40% of the married respondents strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 10% were undecided, 10% disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed. Fifty percent of the single respondents strongly agreed and 50% agreed. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents agreed (Figure 1).

Question number six, inquiring about an increase in math skills, showed that 30% of the married respondents strongly agreed, 50% agreed, 10% were undecided, and 10% strongly disagreed. Fifty percent of the single respondents agreed and 50% were undecided. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents strongly agreed (Figure 1).

Response to question number seven, inquiring about the parent's belief that their child receives adequate services by the inclusion model, showed that 40% of the married respondents strongly agreed, 40% agreed, and 20% were undecided. Fifty percent of the single respondents strongly agreed and 50% were undecided. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents strongly agreed (Figure 1).



Relationship Between Parent's Education and Response to Part IIQuestions

Question one asked parents to indicate if their child spends more than 45 minutes on homework. It showed that 50% of the married respondents who did not graduate from high school agreed, and 50% strongly disagreed. Thirty-three percent of the married respondents, when one parent graduated from high school and the other did not, strongly agreed, 33% disagreed, and 33% strongly disagreed. Thirty-three percent of the married respondents, when both parents graduated from high school, agreed, and 66% strongly disagreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when one parent went to college and the other did not graduate from high school, disagreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when both parents went to college, strongly disagreed (Figure 2). One hundred percent of the single respondents, who did not graduate from high school disagreed. One hundred percent of the single respondents who went to college disagreed. 100% of the divorced respondents who graduated from high school agreed (Figure 3).

Response to question number two which inquired about their child spending more than 30 minutes on homework, showed that 50% of the married respondents who did not graduate from high school agreed, and 50% strongly disagreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when one parent graduated from high school and the other did not, agreed. Sixty-six percent of the married respondents, when both parents graduated from high school, agreed, and 33% strongly disagreed. One

hundred percent of the married respondents, when one parent went to college and the other did not graduate from high school, agreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when both parents went to college, strongly disagreed (Figure 2). One hundred percent of the single respondents who did not graduate from high school agreed. One hundred percent of the single respondents who went to college strongly agreed. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who graduated from high school agreed (Figure 3).

Question number three, inquiring about the benefit of their child being in the regular education classroom, showed that 50% of the married respondents who did not graduate from high school agreed, and 50% were undecided. Thirty-three percent of the married respondents, when one parent graduated from high school and the other did not, strongly agreed, 33% were undecided, and 33% disagreed. Sixty-six percent of the respondents when both parents graduated from high school strongly agreed, and 33% agreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when one parent went to college and the other did not graduate from high school, agreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when both parents went to college, strongly agreed (Figure 2). One hundred percent of the single respondents who did not graduate from high school agreed. One hundred percent of the single respondents who went to college strongly agreed. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who graduated from high school strongly agreed (Figure 3).

For question number four, inquiring about an increase in social skills, the results showed that 50% of the married respondents who did



not graduate from high school agreed, and 50% were undecided. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when one parent graduated from high school and the other did not, were undecided. Sixty-six percent of the married respondents, when both parents graduated from high school, strongly agreed, and 33% agreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when one parent went to college and the other did not graduate from high school, disagreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents who both went to college agreed (Figure 2). One hundred percent of the single respondents who did not graduate from high school agreed. One hundred percent of the single respondents who went to college were undecided. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who graduated from high school strongly agreed (Figure 3).

The fifth question asked parents about an increase in reading skills. The results showed that 50% of the married respondents who did not graduate from high school agreed, and 50% were undecided. Thirty-three percent of the married respondents, when one graduated from high school and the other did not, strongly agreed, 33% agreed, and 33% disagreed. Sixty-six percent of the married respondents, when both parents graduated from high school, strongly agreed, and 33% strongly disagreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when one went to college and the other did not graduate from high school, agreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when both parents went to college, strongly agreed (Figure 2). One hundred percent of the single respondents who did not graduate from high school agreed. One hundred percent of the single respondents who went to college strongly



agreed. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who graduated from high school agreed (Figure 3).

The response to question number six, inquiring about an increase in math skills, showed that 50% of the married respondents who did not graduate from high school agreed, and 50% were undecided. Thirty-three percent of the married respondents, when one parent graduated from high school and the other did not, strongly agreed, and 66% agreed. Sixty-six percent of the married respondents, when both parents graduated from high school, strongly agreed, and 33% strongly disagreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when one parent went to college and the other did not graduate from high school, agreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when both parents went to college, agreed (Figure 2). One hundred percent of the single respondents who did not graduate from high school agreed. One hundred percent of the single respondents who went to college were undecided. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who graduated from high school strongly agreed (Figure 3).

Question number seven, inquiring about the parent's belief that their child receives adequate services by the inclusion model, showed that 50% of the married respondents who did not graduate from high school agreed, and 50% were undecided. Thirty-three percent of the married respondents, when one graduated from high school and the other did not, strongly agreed, 33% agreed, and 33% were undecided. Sixty-six percent of the married respondents who both graduated from high school strongly agreed, and 33% agreed. One hundred percent of the married

respondents, when one went to college and the other did not graduate from high school, agreed. One hundred percent of the married respondents, when both parents went to college, strongly agreed (Figure 2). One hundred percent of the single respondents who did not graduate from high school were undecided. One hundred percent of the single respondents who went to college strongly agreed. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who graduated from high school strongly agreed (Figure 3).

#### Relationship Between Percentage of Children in the Family Receiving Special Educational Services and Part II Questions

Question number one asked parents to indicate if their child spends more than 45 minutes on homework. It showed that 100% of the respondents with between 0 to .25% of their children receiving special educational services strongly disagreed. Twenty percent of the respondents with between .26% to .50% agreed, 60% disagreed, and 20% strongly disagreed. Fifty percent of the respondents with between .51% to .75% strongly agreed, and 50% strongly disagreed. Forty percent of the respondents with between .76% to 1.00% agreed, 20% disagreed, and 40% strongly disagreed (Figure 4).

In regard to the second question which asked parents to indicate if their child spends more than 30 minutes on homework, the responses showed that 100% of the respondents with between 0 to .25% agreed. Twenty percent of the respondents with between .26% to .50% strongly agreed, 60% agreed, and 20% strongly disagreed. Fifty percent



of the respondents with between .51% to .75% agreed, and 50% strongly disagreed. Eighty percent of the respondents with between .76% to 1.00% agreed, and 20% strongly disagreed (Figure 4).

Question number three asked parents to indicate about the benefit of their child being in the regular education classroom. The results showed that 100% of the respondents with between 0 to .25% strongly agreed. Sixty percent of the respondents with between .26% to .50% strongly agreed, and 40% agreed. One hundred percent of the respondents with between .51% to .75% were undecided. Eighty percent of the respondents with between .76% to 1.00% strongly agreed, and 20% disagreed (Figure 4).

The fourth question asked parents about an increase in social skills. The response showed that 100% of the respondents with between 0 to .25% were undecided. Sixty percent of the respondents with between .26% to .50% agreed, 20% were undecided, and 20% disagreed. One hundred percent of the respondents with between .51% to .75% were undecided. Sixty percent of the respondents with between .76% to 1.00% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, and 20% were undecided (Figure 4).

In regard to question number five, inquiring about an increase in reading skills, the responses showed that 100% of the respondents with between 0 to .25% strongly agreed. Forty percent of the respondents with between .26% to .50% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, and 20% strongly disagreed. Fifty percent of the respondents with between .51% to .75% were undecided, and 50% disagreed. Forty percent of the respondents with between .76% to 1.00% strongly agreed, and 60% agreed (Figure 4).



Response to question number six, inquiring about an increase in math skills, showed that 100% of the respondents with between 0 to .25% strongly agreed. Sixty percent of the respondents with between .26% to .50% agreed, 20% were undecided, and 20% strongly disagreed. Fifty percent of the respondents with between .51% to .75% agreed, and 50% were undecided. Sixty percent of the respondents with between .76% to 1.00% strongly agreed, and 40% agreed (Figure 4).

Question number seven, inquiring about the parent's belief that their child receives adequate services by the inclusion model showed that 100% of the respondents with between 0 to .25% strongly agreed. Forty percent of the respondents with between .26% to .50% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, and 20% were undecided. One hundred percent of the respondents with between .51% to .75% were undecided. Sixty percent of the respondents with between .76% to 1.00% strongly agreed, and 40% agreed (Figure 4).

#### Relationship Between Hours Worked Per Week and Response to Part II Questions

The first question asked parents to indicate if their child spends more than 45 minutes on homework. The results showed that 25% of the married respondents who worked between 20 to 29 hours per week strongly agreed, 25% disagreed, and 50% strongly disagreed. Thirty-three percent of married respondents who worked between 30 to 39 hours per week agreed, 33% disagreed, and 33% strongly disagreed. Thirty-three percent of the married respondents who worked between 40 hours per week and more

agreed, and 66% strongly disagreed (Figure 5). One hundred percent of the single respondents who worked 40 hours per week and more disagreed. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who worked 40 hours per week and more agreed (Figure 6).

The second question, asked parents to indicate if their child spends more than 30 minutes on homework, the results showed that 100% of the married respondents who worked 20 to 29 hours per week agreed. Sixty-six percent of the married respondents that worked 30 to 39 hours per week agreed, and 33% strongly disagreed. Thirty-three percent of the married respondents that worked 40 hours and more agreed, and 66% strongly disagreed (Figure 5). Fifty percent of the single respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed, and 50% agreed. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who worked 40 hours and more agreed (Figure 6).

Question number three asked parents to indicate about the benefit of their child being in the regular education classroom. The response showed that 50% of the married respondents who worked 20 to 29 hours strongly agreed, 25% were undecided, and 25% disagreed. Sixty-six percent of the married respondents who worked 30 to 39 hours strongly agreed, and 33% were undecided. Sixty-six percent of the respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed, and 33% agreed (Figure 5). Fifty percent of the single respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed, and 50% agreed. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed (Figure 6).



Response to question number four, inquiring about an increase in social skills, showed that 25% of the married respondents who worked 20 to 29 hours strongly agreed, and 75% were undecided. Thirty-three percent of the married respondents who worked 30 to 39 hours agreed, 33% were undecided, and 33% disagreed. Thirty-three percent of the married respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed, and 66% agreed (Figure 5). Fifty percent of the single respondents who worked 40 hours and more agreed, and 50% were undecided. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed (Figure 6).

The response to question number five, inquiring about an increase in reading skills, showed that 50% of the married respondents who worked 20 to 29 hours strongly agreed, 25% agreed, and 25% disagreed. Sixty-six percent of the married respondents who worked 30 to 39 hours agreed, and 33% were undecided. Sixty-six percent of the married respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed, and 33% strongly disagreed. Fifty percent of the single respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed, and 50% agreed. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who worked 40 hours and more agreed (Figure 6).

The sixth question, inquiring about an increase in math skills showed that 50% of the married respondents who worked 20 to 29 hours strongly agreed, and 50% agreed. Sixty-six percent of the married respondents who worked 30 to 39 hours agreed, and 33% were undecided. Thirty-three percent of the married respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed, 33% agreed, and 33% strongly disagreed (Figure 5).



Fifty percent of the single respondents who worked 40 hours and more agreed, and 50% were undecided. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed (Figure 6).

In regard to question number seven, inquiring about the parent's belief that their child receives adequate services by the inclusion model, the response showed that 50% of the married respondents who worked 20 to 29 hours strongly agreed, 25% agreed, and 25% were undecided. Sixty-six percent of the married respondents who worked 30 to 39 hours agreed, and 33% were undecided. Sixty-six percent of the married respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed, and 33% agreed (Figure 5). Fifty percent of the single respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed, and 50% were undecided. One hundred percent of the divorced respondents who worked 40 hours and more strongly agreed (Figure 6).

## Discussion

Overall, the results were acceptable. The data displayed in Figure 1 indicated that divorced parents had a more positive attitude towards inclusion than married and single respondents. Their answers to the questions on the Part II of the questionnaire showed that they strongly agreed with variables affecting the child's school performance.

Second, the data displayed in Figures 2 and 3 indicated that the married parents who had both attended college and the single and divorced parents who had graduated from high school had positive attitudes about inclusion. These two groups strongly agreed on the questions in Part II of the questionnaire concerning variables affecting the child's school performance. The third difference in (Figure 4) indicated that parents who had low percentages ranging from 0 to .25% and high percentages of .75% to 1.00% of their children receiving special educational services also strongly agreed on questions in Part II of the questionnaire. They strongly agreed on variables that affect the child's school performance. The final difference, displayed in (Figures 5 and 6), indicated that married parents who worked between 20 to 29 hours per week were in strong agreement on the questions in Part II of the questionnaire concerning variables affecting the child's school performance.

Exactly why these results were obtained is uncertain. It could be that parents who have more education agree more with inclusion, or that parents who work less time have more time to understand this model. Until parents are given a more thorough questionnaire and a more thorough investigation is conducted, it would be hard to conclude why some parents with certain demographics agreed with integration of their children.

#### Limitations

This study had several limitations, which included the randomization of the sample, the sample size, and the concise nature of the questionnaire. One limitation was the sample size. The size of the sample population was small, but the small percentage of returns made the sample even smaller. To avoid this problem, two issues could be addressed. One, the sample size could be made much larger. This may help to ensure that the percentage of return is larger. Second, the method used to track the parents could be more precise than colors for the school division. It could track the parents of the students instead of the school divisions. This might also increase the percentage of returns.

The questionnaire itself also had limitations. First, the demographic questions were very general, giving only a few types of responses. The questionnaire could be more detailed with more specific answers. Lastly, the questions in Part II of the questionnaire were very short, with only seven questions. The results might have been



different if the questions had been more detailed and if more than seven questions had been asked.

Another limitation was that there was no question asking the parent exactly how much time their child was included in the regular classroom. The researcher was not able to gather information about how much time the child was included. This would have provided more accurate information about the parents' perceptions of inclusion and would have allowed for other than simple descriptive statistics to be used.

### Recommendations

For additional studies, the following recommendations are made: First, a more in-depth questionnaire could be used to get better results about how a parent feels about the integration of their child into the regular education classroom and about the actual percentage of time within the regular classroom. It might also eliminate some of the "undecided" responses.

Second, using a Pearson-r, or some other correlational statistical method might give a better picture and make the results easier to understand.

Finally, the more in-depth the completed study the better the information that will come out of it. This will take more time for the researcher, but the results will be more complete and accurate.

Increasingly, more research is being done to look at not only how effective inclusion is, but also how the parents of these children are

viewing the integration movement. There are factors in our environment and in our backgrounds that seem to have a direct effect on the parent's perception of inclusion. The more we know about these factors that effect a parent's perception, the sooner we can start looking at why they effect a parent's perception. If we can determine those factors affecting parental perceptions of inclusion then perhaps we can modify them to change negative perceptions in a more positive direction.

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Parent Perceptions of Full Inclusion

45

(Name of Person), (Office Title)  
(Name of School System)  
(Address)  
\_\_\_\_\_, Virginia \_\_\_\_\_

Dear (Director):

I am a graduate student in the Department of Special Education at Longwood College.

As a requirement of my graduate program is the completion I wish to conduct a research on determining the parent perceptions of their child's performance when integrated in the regular education classroom.

I request your consideration and approval to conduct this survey in your school system in a confidential manner, so that no students' names or parents' names are shared with me. I request that you send me the addresses of such parents, but not their names, so that I can forward to them the survey. I request that you make parental opinions regarding the inclusion model of instruction. If this is not appropriate, then may I send you the survey package and have your office send them out.

I shall be happy to answer any questions and to share the results of the survey with you.

I trust that you will look with favor upon this request.

Sincerely,

Amy M. Johnson  
1706 Galloway Dr.  
Charlottesville, VA  
22901



(Name of Person), ( Office Title)  
(Name of School System)  
(Address)  
\_\_\_\_\_, Virginia \_\_\_\_\_

Dear (Director):

I am a graduate student in the Department of Special Education at Longwood College.

As a requirement of my graduate program is the completion I wish to conduct a research on determining the parent perceptions of their child's performance when integrated in the regular education classroom.

I request your consideration and approval to conduct this survey in your school system in a confidential manner, so that no students' names or parents' names are shared with me. I request that you send me the addresses of such parents, but not their names, so that I can forward to them the approved survey instrument, which seeks parental opinions regarding the inclusion model of instruction. If this is not appropriate, then may I send you the survey package and have your office send them out.

I shall be happy to answer any questions and to share the results of the survey with you.

I trust that you will look with favor upon this request.

Sincerely,

Amy M. Johnson  
1706 Galloway Dr.  
Charlottesville, VA.  
22901

April 2, 1995

Dear Parent(s):

I am a college graduate student conducting a survey to examine how you, parent(s) of students with learning disabilities, feel about the change within the school system to inclusion. Full inclusion is defined as including students with disabilities in the regular education classroom for more than 80% of the day. This means that students with disabilities are either pulled out of class to work individually with the special education teacher, or the special education teacher supports the student within the regular classroom. Support meaning, adapting work assignments, offering help in areas that the student is weak. It will help greatly if you could take the time to answer the enclosed questionnaire. Once you have finished the questionnaire, send it back in the enclosed pre-addressed and stamped envelope. Please return within ten days. Thank you.

Appendix B

Letter To Parents

Sincerely,

Ray B. Johnson  
Rt. 2, Box 224  
Palmyra, VA. 22962

Parent Perceptions of Full Inclusion

48

April 2, 1995

Dear Parent(s):

I am a college graduate student conducting a survey to examine how you, parent(s) of students with learning disabilities, feel about the change within the school systems to inclusion. Full inclusion is defined as including students with disabilities in the regular education classroom for more than 80% of the school day. This means that students with disabilities are either pulled out of class to work individually with the special education teacher, or the special education teacher supports the student within the regular classroom. Support meaning, adapting work assignments to make them individualized for the student or offering help on areas that the student is weak. It will help greatly if you could take the time to answer the enclosed questionnaire. Once you have finished the questionnaire, send it back in the enclosed pre-addressed and stamped envelope. Please return within ten days. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Amy M. Johnson  
Rt. 2, Box 824  
Palmyra, VA. 22963



Questionnaire

Please refer to the definitions of new terms at the end of this questionnaire. Thank you.

1. Please check the appropriate answer or write number when asked to specify.

1. Marital Status ..... Single ..... Married ..... Divorced

2. Gender ..... Male ..... Female

3. Age ..... 15-20 ..... 21-25 ..... 26-30 ..... 31-35 ..... 36-40 ..... 41-45 ..... 46-50 ..... 51-55 ..... 56-60 ..... 61-65 ..... 66-70 ..... 71-75 ..... 76-80 ..... 81-85 ..... 86-90 ..... Over 90

Appendix C

4. a) Did you graduate from high school? ..... Yes ..... No

b) Did your spouse graduate from high school? ..... Yes ..... No

Questionnaire

5. a) How many years did you attend college? .....

..... 0 ..... 1-2 ..... 3-4 ..... Over 4

b) How many years did your spouse attend college?

..... 0 ..... 1-2 ..... 3-4 ..... Over 4

6. How many children do you have? ..... 1-2 ..... 3-4 ..... Specify

7. How many of your children receive special education services? ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... Specify

8. a. Do you have a full-time job? ..... Yes ..... No

b. How many hours do you work per week?

..... 15-20 ..... 21-29 ..... 30-39 ..... 40 and over

c. Does your spouse have a full-time job? ..... Yes ..... No

d. How many hours does your spouse work per week?

..... 15-20 ..... 21-29 ..... 30-39 ..... 40 and over

Questionnaire

Please refer to the definitions of some terms at the end of this questionnaire. Thank you.

I. Please check the appropriate answer or write number when asked to specify.

1. Marital Status .....Single .....Married .....Divorced
2. Gender .....Male .....Female
3. Age .....16-20 .....21-25 .....26-30 .....Over 30
4. a) Did you graduate from high school? .....Yes .....No  
 b) Did your spouse graduate from high school? .....Yes .....No
5. a) How many years did you attend college? .....  
 .....0 .....1-2 .....3-4 .....Over 4  
 b) How many years did your spouse attend college?  
 .....0 .....1-2 .....3-4 .....Over 4
6. How many children do you have? .....1-2 .....3-4 .....Specify
7. How many of your children receive special education services? .....0 .....1 .....2 .....Specify
8. a. Do you have a full-time job? .....Yes .....No  
 b. How many hours do you work per week?  
 .....15-20 .....21-29 .....30-39 .....40 and over  
 c. Does your spouse have a full-time job? .....Yes .....No  
 d. How many hours does your spouse work per week?  
 .....15-20 .....21-29 .....30-39 .....40 and over

II. Circle the number that best shows your feelings.

	Strongly	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly
	Disagree				Agree
	1	2	3	4	5

1. My child spends more than 45 minutes a night on homework

	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

2. My child brings home around 30 minutes of homework

	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

3. My child is benefiting from being in the regular classroom

	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

4. My child's social skills\* have increased

	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

5. My child's reading skills have increased

	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

6. My child's math skills have increased

	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---



7. I believe by inclusion  
my child receives adequate  
services

1

2

3

4

5

\*Definition:

Social skills are the ability to interact with peers and teachers, participation in games and after school activities, and behavior within the classroom is compliance to the classroom rules.

Table 1  
Profile of the Respondents

	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	4	70%
Single	1	15%
Divorced	1	15%
<b>Education</b>		
<b>Married</b>		
Neither graduated from HS	1	20%
One graduated from HS	1	20%
Both graduated from HS	1	20%
One went to college, other...	1	20%
...did not graduate from HS	1	20%
Both went to college	1	20%
<b>Single</b>		
Did not graduate from HS	1	20%
Went to college	1	20%
<b>Divorced</b>		
Graduated from HS	1	100%
<b>Children Receiving special Educational services</b>		
0 to .25%	1	7%
.25% to .50%	1	10%
.51% to .75%	1	10%
.76% to 1.00%	1	10%
<b>Hours Worked</b>		
<b>Married</b>		
20 to 29 hrs.	1	40%
30 to 39 hrs.	1	30%
40 hrs. & up	1	30%
<b>Single</b>		
40 hrs. & up	1	100%
<b>Divorced</b>		
40 hrs. & up	1	100%

Appendix D

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1  
Profile of the Respondents

	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	10	76%
Single	2	15%
Divorced	1	7%
<b>Education</b>		
Married		
Neither graduated from HS	2	20%
One graduated from HS	3	30%
Both graduated from HS	3	30%
One went to college, other..		
..did not graduated from HS	1	10%
Both went to college	1	10%
Single		
Did not graduated from HS	1	50%
Went to college	1	50%
Divorced		
Graduated from HS	1	100%
<b>Children Receiving Special Educational Services</b>		
0 to .25%	1	7%
.26% to .50%	5	38%
.51% to .75%	2	15%
.76% to 1.00%	5	38%
<b>Hours Worked</b>		
Married		
20 to 29 hrs.	4	40%
30 to 39 hrs.	3	30%
40 hrs. & up	3	30%
Single		
40 hrs. & up	2	100%
Divorced		
40 hrs. & up	1	100%



Appendix E  
Figures

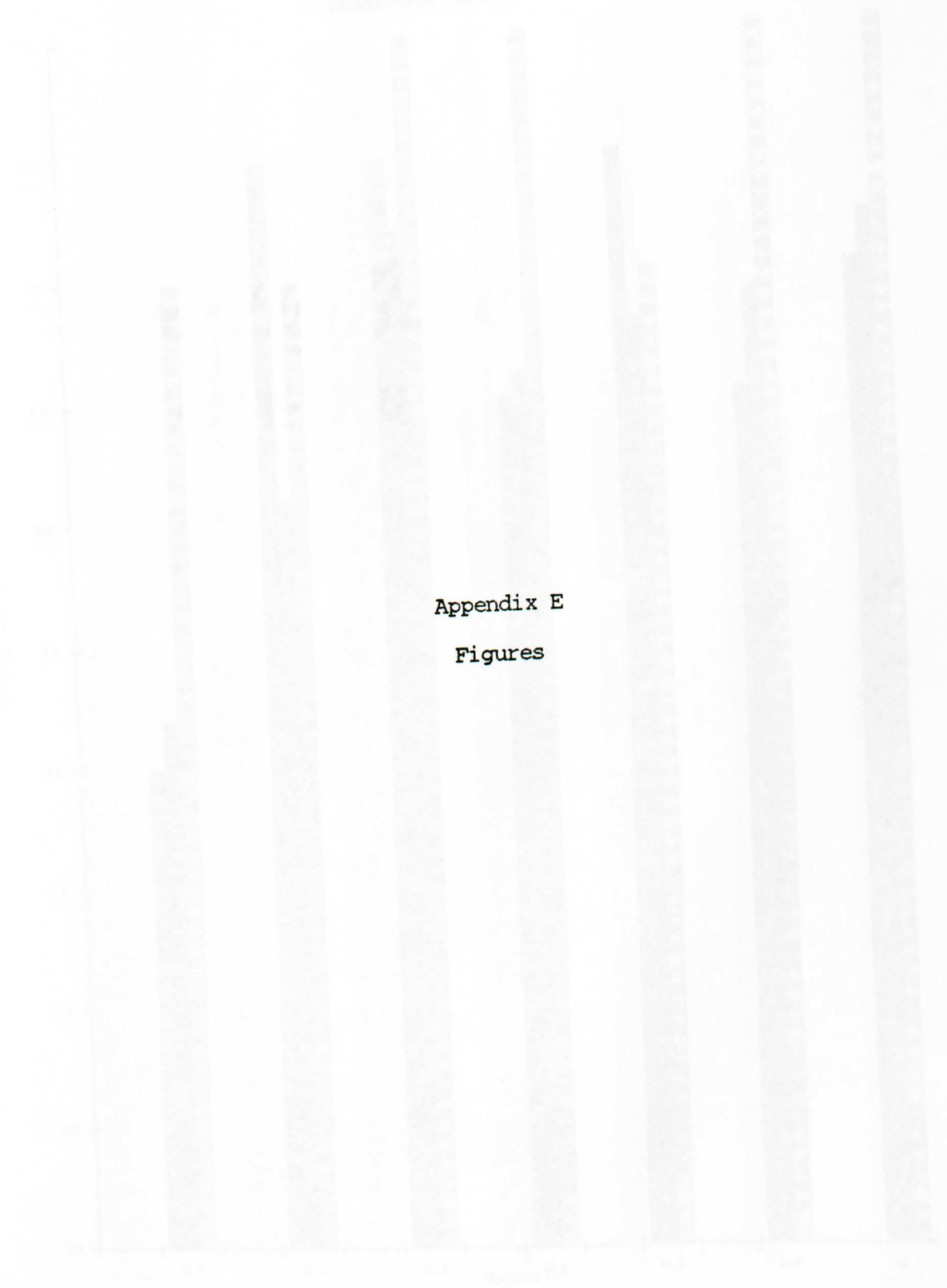


Figure 1

### Marital Status

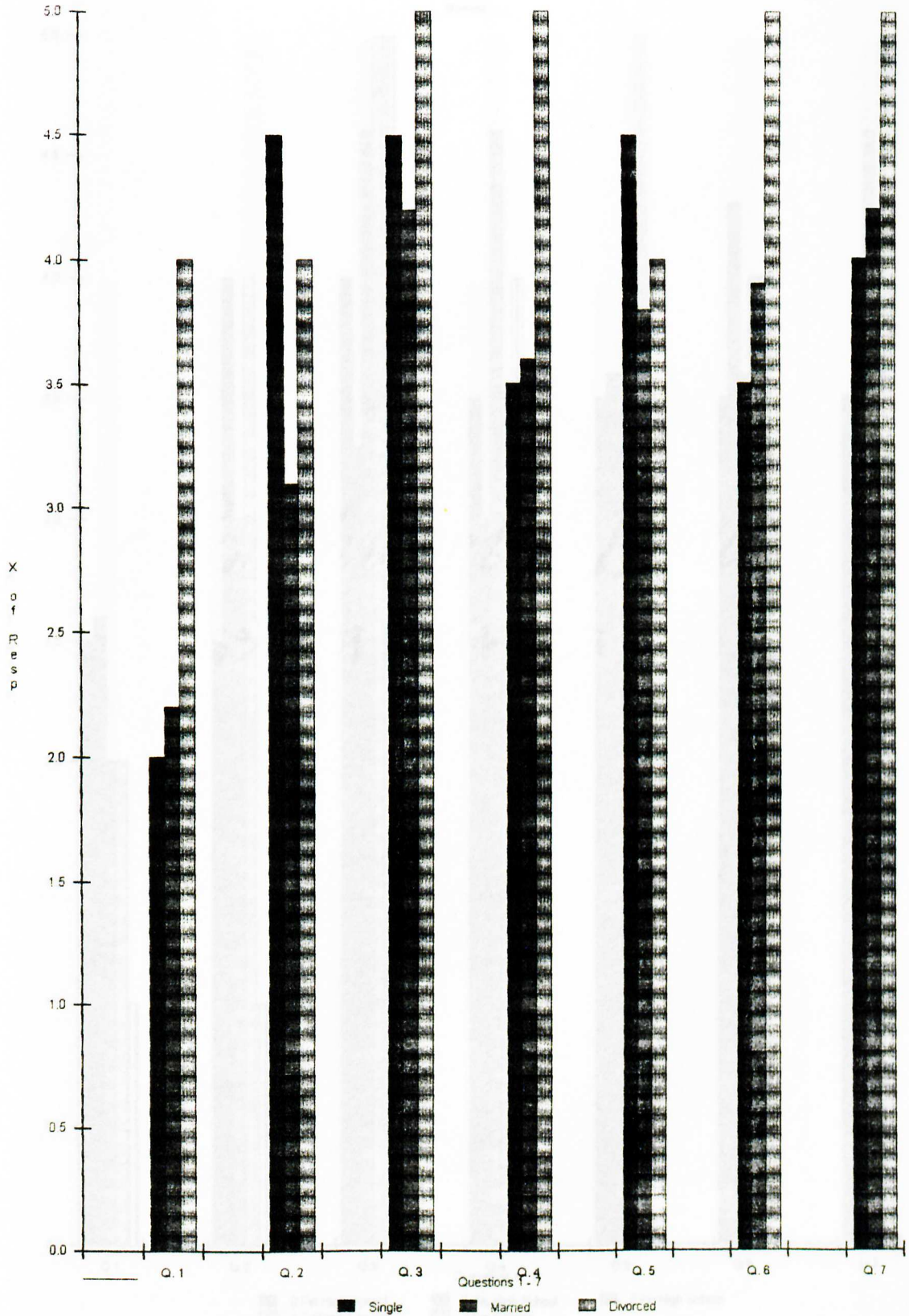


Figure 2

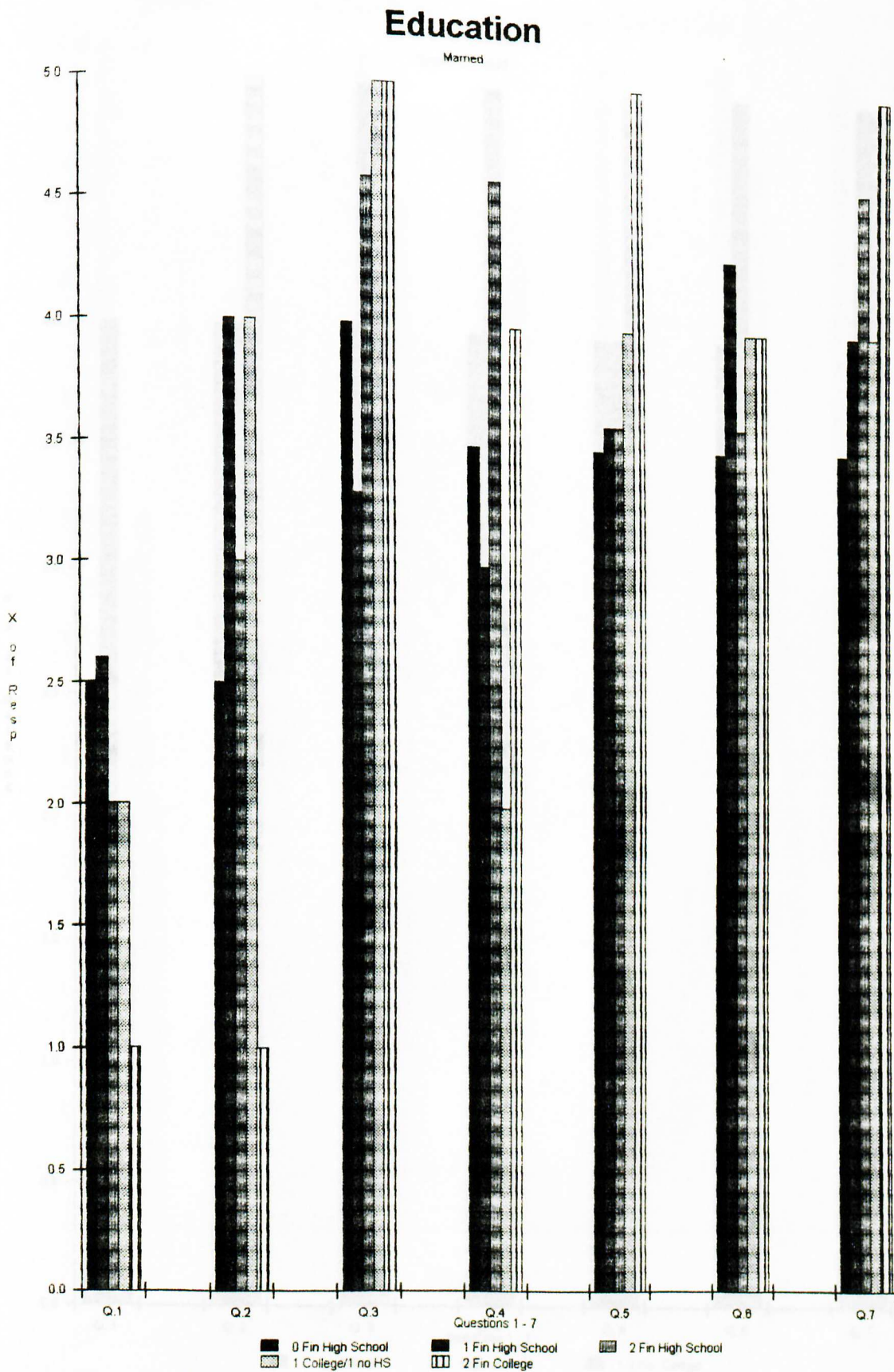




Figure 3

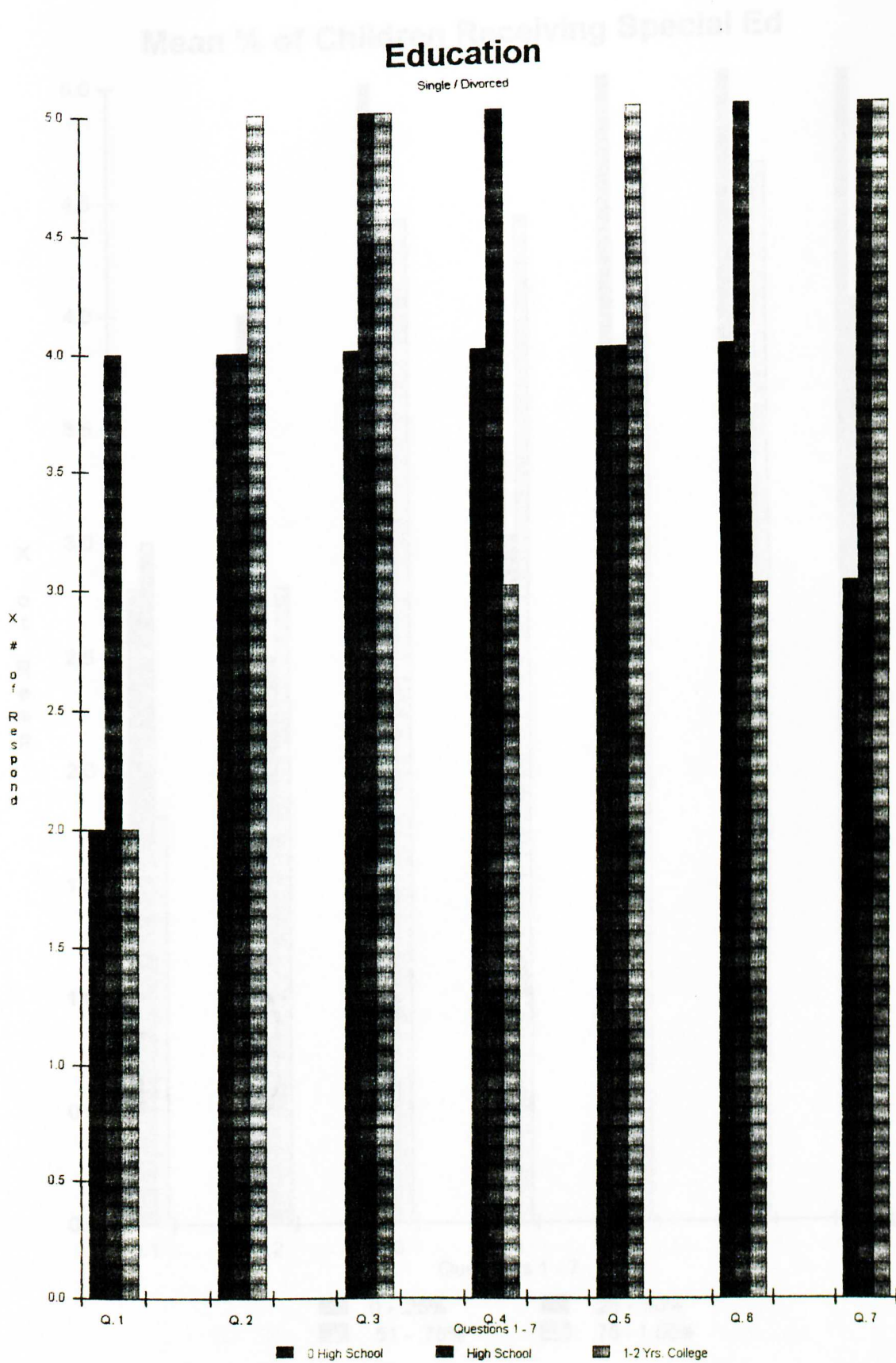


Figure 4

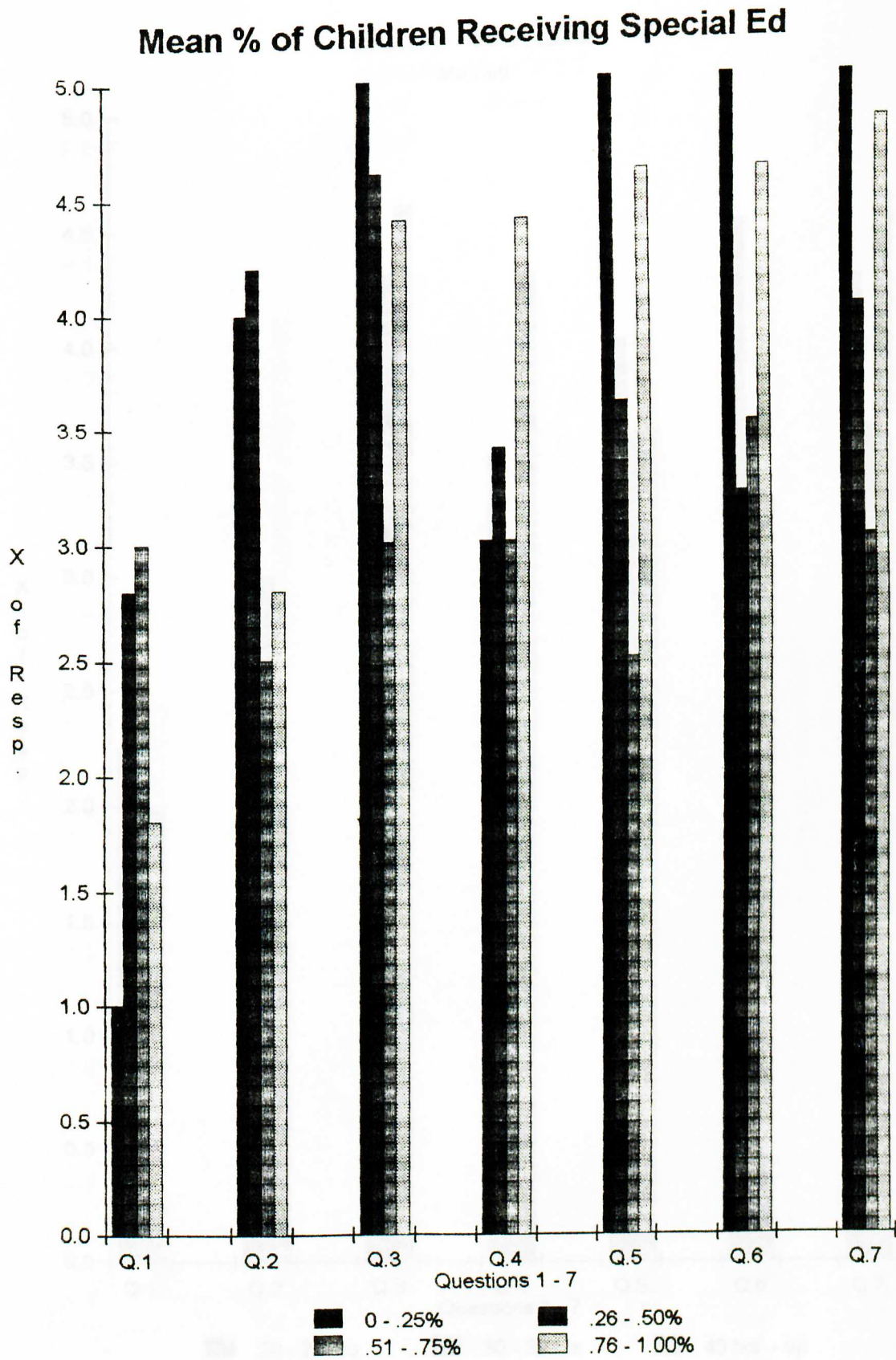


Chart 5

# Hours Worked

Married

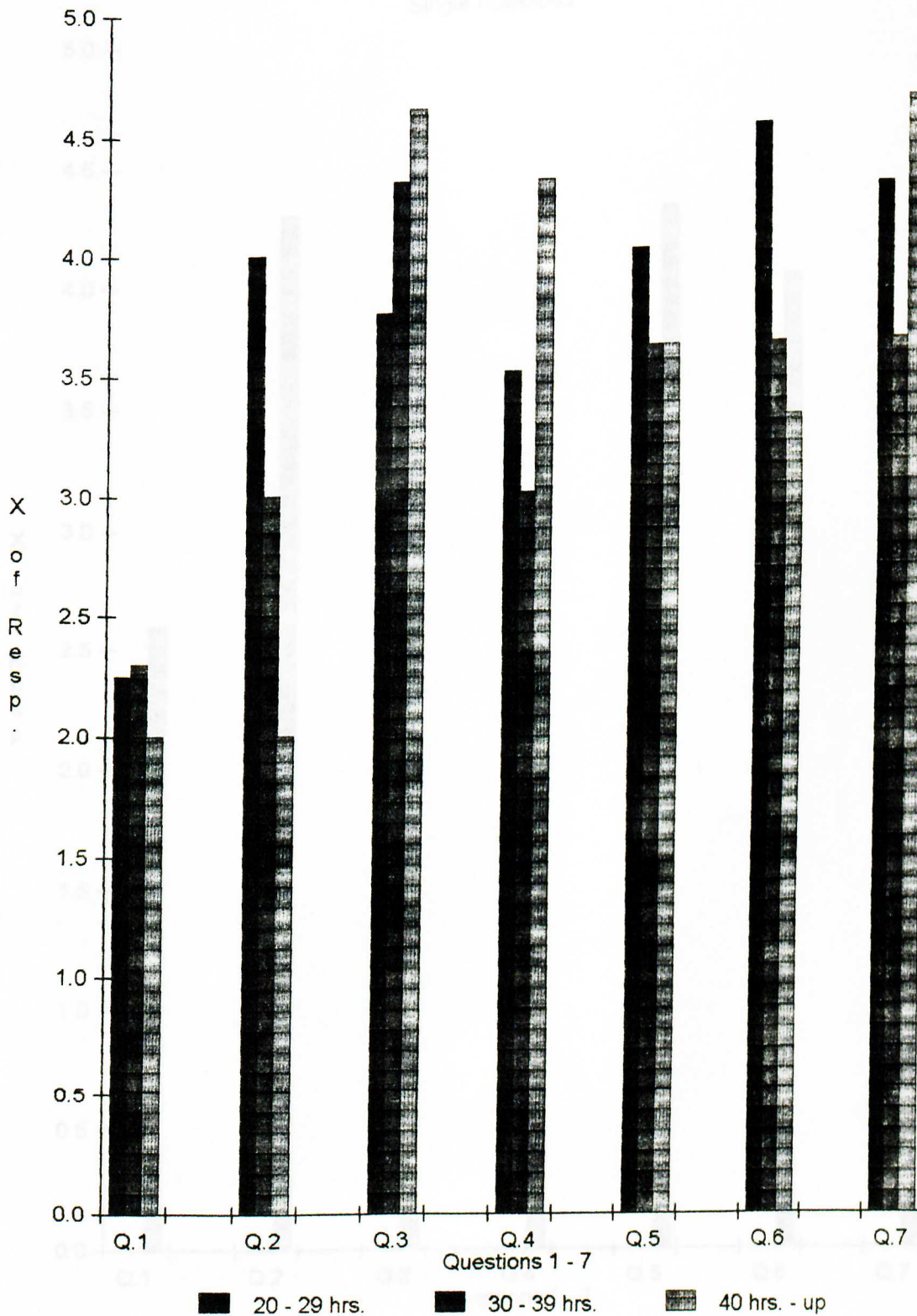




Figure 6

