

“Those Aren’t My Kids”: Secondary Pre-Service Teachers’ Attitudes Toward Students with Disabilities

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Purpose

The purpose of this pilot study was to determine the attitudes of a small group of secondary pre-service teachers toward people with disabilities.

Current Literature

- **While federal mandates continue to evolve more towards the idea of full inclusion for a large number of special education students, secondary teachers continue to express mixed feelings about working with students who are dealing with disabilities. Anecdotal as well as empirical evidence suggests that some secondary teachers' attitudes reveal anxiety about dealing with the behaviors of students with special needs in the regular classroom, and that teachers doubt their individual preparedness to educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom setting (Ajuwon, et al., 2012).**

Literature Cont.

In an analysis of the literature focusing on pre-service teachers' attitudes towards students with disabilities, Sze (2009), found that the attitude of the general education teacher is one of the most important predictors of successful integration of students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

Methodology

Participants

- **This study included a convenient sample of 15 teacher candidates enrolled in a four year secondary teacher certification program who were engaged in their student teaching experience.**

Methodology Cont.

Instrument

The Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP) is the most widely accepted and used research scale used in studying attitudes toward those dealing with disabilities. (Yuker & Block, 1986).

The ATDP form O, includes 20 items in a Likert format

Validity of the ATDP is high, using several approaches including content, predictive, concurrent, and construct validity (White et al., 2006).

Methodology Cont.

This scale takes about five minutes to administer and consists of 20 items pertaining to persons with disabilities. The instrument consists of a 6-point Likert scale.

A low score on this instrument indicates that the respondent perceives persons with disabilities as different from typical persons.

A high score indicates that the respondent perceives persons with disabilities as similar to those persons without disabilities (Matkin, Hafer, Wright, & Lutzker, 1983).

Sample Statements from ATDP Survey

Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP) Scale, Form O, by Yuker, Block & Young, 1970

Mark each statement in the left margin according to how much you agree or disagree with it. Please mark every one. Use the following numbers to indicate how you feel in each case:

+3 = I agree very much

-1 = I disagree a little

+2 = I agree pretty much

-2 = I disagree pretty much

+1 = I agree a little

-3 = I disagree very much

1. Parents of children with disabilities should be less strict than other parents.

2. Persons with physical disabilities are just as intelligent as non- disabled ones.

3. People with disabilities are usually easier to get along with than other people.

Methodology Cont.

Procedures

Institutional Review Board (Georgia Gwinnett College) approval of study

ATDP Survey administered and received by faculty representative who was not the professor of record for the class

Surveys were anonymous. We asked for no identifying information such as gender, subject taught, etc.

Respondent Number	Baseline Survey Score
1	40
2	42
3	62
4	33
5	40
6	41
7	60
8	40
9	38
10	36
11	53
12	40
13	38
14	38
15	42