

Arcadia University

ScholarWorks@Arcadia

Graduate Theses & Dissertations

Graduate Works

Summer 8-25-2020

Attitudes, Beliefs and Self-Efficacy of Elementary Teachers Towards Inclusive and Equitable Education in a Diverse Suburban School

Rachel Mcclellan-Kirksey
rmcclellan_01@arcadia.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.arcadia.edu/grad_etd



Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Mcclellan-Kirksey, Rachel, "Attitudes, Beliefs and Self-Efficacy of Elementary Teachers Towards Inclusive and Equitable Education in a Diverse Suburban School" (2020). *Graduate Theses & Dissertations*. 30.
https://scholarworks.arcadia.edu/grad_etd/30

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Works at ScholarWorks@Arcadia. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@Arcadia. For more information, please contact hessa@arcadia.edu, correllm@arcadia.edu.

Attitudes, Beliefs and Self-Efficacy of Elementary Teachers Towards Inclusive and Equitable
Education in a Diverse Suburban School

Arcadia University
Doctorate Program in Educational Leadership

Rachel McClellan-Kirksey

A DISSERTATION
IN
EDUCATION

Presented to the Faculties of Arcadia University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Education

2020

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of Doctor of Education

Dissertation Defense Date: August 25, 2020

Special committee directing the doctoral work of

Rachel McClellan-Kirksey

Graciela Slesaransky-Poe, Ph.D.
Professor in the School of Education
Arcadia University

Ellen Skilton, Ph.D.
Professor in the School of Education
Arcadia University

Priscilla Jeter-Iles, Ed.D.
Professor in the School of Education
Arcadia University

ABSTRACT

Merging the two philosophies of inclusive and equitable education has significant advantages for all students in the general education classroom. Moving beyond the inclusion of students with disabilities, and focusing on all students, especially those historically marginalized or with diverse needs in today's classrooms is crucial. This raises the importance about how teachers and school principals might further learn to better support all students in the general education classroom, and to make schools a more productive and engaging experience for all students, despite their diverse learning needs (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017). Therefore, examining teachers' attitudes, beliefs, self-efficacy, and self-disclosed needs towards inclusive and equitable education is needed. According to Fuchs (2010), teachers' attitudes and beliefs about inclusion influences teacher beliefs about their own ability to educate all learners. This focused small-scale qualitative study sought to examine the attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy of elementary teachers in a K-4 Pennsylvania diverse suburban elementary school. Specifically, the three research questions examined were: 1) What are the attitudes and beliefs of teachers towards inclusive and equitable education in a diverse suburban elementary school; 2) How does teacher efficacy affect their outcomes related to inclusive and equitable education in this school; and 3) What do elementary teachers report is needed in order to foster a more inclusive and equitable education for all of their students? Data were collected through an electronic survey, professional development efforts, classroom observations, document reviews, teacher feedback, and input from the school principal. The study revealed the attitudes, beliefs, self-efficacy, and self-disclosed needs of the teachers related to the diverse needs of their students.

Keywords: inclusive education, equitable education, diverse students, diverse needs, diverse learner needs, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, students of color, historically marginalized populations, race

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISSERTATION DEFENSE DATE.....	1
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION.....	2
LIST OF TABLES.....	7
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	8
Inclusive and Equitable Education Philosophy.....	9
Theory into Practice.....	14
Attitudes and Beliefs.....	16
Self-Efficacy.....	17
The Study.....	19
Research Questions.....	20
Summary.....	21
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	23
Moving Towards an Inclusive and Equitable Education.....	24
Theoretical Framework.....	27
Naraian and Bandura in Practice.....	33
Influencing Attitudes, Beliefs, and Self-Efficacy.....	34
Changes in School and Classroom Practices.....	34
Institutional Response.....	38
Classroom Practices without Judgment.....	40
Where it Begins.....	41
Summary.....	47

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	49
Context of the Study	49
Rationale and Significance of the Study	52
Role of the Researcher	53
Participant Selection	54
Data Collection	55
Data Analysis	61
Trustworthiness.....	63
Summary.....	64
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS.....	65
Recruitment.....	65
Survey Instrument.....	67
Data Analysis.....	68
Open-Ended Questions.....	75
Additional Findings.....	79
Research Questions.....	82
Aggregated Data.....	84
Measuring the Responses using Naraiian’s Principles.....	85
Naraiian’s Theoretical Framework.....	97
Disaggregated Data.....	97
Summary.....	100
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	102
Prominent Findings.....	102

Literature Review.....	104
Open-Ended Questions.....	105
The Interpretations of the Study Findings.....	107
Teacher Attitudes and Beliefs at NOVA.....	108
Teacher Self-Efficacy.....	108
Unexpected Findings.....	109
Connections to the Theoretical Framework.....	111
Implications for Practice.....	113
Disaggregated Data.....	114
Conclusion.....	117
Limitations.....	119
Recommendations for NOVA.....	120
Future Research.....	120
Summary.....	123
REFERENCES	125
APPENDICES	142
Appendix A: Consent Form for Participation in an Electronic Survey.....	142
Appendix B: Introduction Email.....	144
Appendix C: Invitation and Online Survey Email.....	145
Appendix D: Online Survey.....	146
Appendix E: Professional Development Agendas	151
Appendix F: Aggregated and Disaggregated Data Results.....	157

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: NOVA School District Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity.....	51
Table 2: Demographic Data: Teacher Participant Credentials.....	66
Table 3: Demographic Data: Teacher Participant Years in Education.....	67
Table 4: Survey Responses for Students with Disabilities.....	71
Table 5: Survey Responses for English Language Learners.....	73
Table 6: Survey Responses for Students of Color.....	75
Table 7: Prominent Themes.....	78
Table 8: Disaggregated Data	98
Table 9: Disaggregated Data.....	99
Table 10: Disaggregated Data.....	100

Chapter One

Introduction

Meeting the needs of all students in the general education classroom should be a top priority in today's schools. The over-identification and over-representation of student groups in special education programs continues to be concerning. Educators need to acknowledge the diverse needs of students in the general classroom, and seek to meet those needs through the use of intentional inclusive and equitable practices. This shift in thinking and behaving supports the educational needs of all students, and creates an inclusive classroom community for all learners to succeed.

Educators have used inclusion for so many years as a way to bring students with disabilities into the general education setting accompanied by appropriate supports. However, most of the research regarding inclusion, in this author's view, is outdated and does not support all the diverse needs of students today. Merging the two philosophies of inclusive and equitable education is needed in order to promote engagement, enrichment, and the achievement of all students. This can be done by embracing the wealth of diversity that we currently have in schools, identifying and nurturing students' cultural strengths, validating students' personal experiences, and examining their place in the world (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Therefore, moving beyond the inclusion of students with disabilities, and focusing on all students, especially those historically marginalized or with diverse needs, is crucial in today's schools and classrooms.

This study took place at NOVA Elementary School which is a pseudonym for the actual study site located outside of the metropolitan area of Philadelphia. The study was conducted throughout the 2019-2020 school year. The suburban school serviced a heavily diverse

community with a large number of students including those; in the English language program, special education program, receiving related services, as well students in the upper grades designated by the state as being historically underperforming. At the time of the study, there were three English language teachers, six special education teachers, and various related service providers used to support the diverse learner needs at NOVA. This team approach involving the expertise of specialists and general education teachers in the inclusive environment is important not only to the general education program, but more importantly to the school as a whole. Such a philosophy shows that a school values the unique needs of all students, while also showing they seek to meet those needs.

Inclusive and Equitable Education Philosophy

Inclusive and equitable education should be understood, not as a decision about the placement of students, but rather a school-wide philosophy dedicated to the spirit and resources needed to truly provide education for all (Braunsteiner and Mariano-Lapidus, 2014). It is equally paramount for all stakeholders in a school to understand how inclusive and equitable education improves the school as a whole. Simply because inclusive and equitable education is not only for students with disability labels, but also for all students with diverse learning needs (Choi, Meisenheimer, McCart, and Sailor, 2017). This clearly means, the future of inclusion relies on a cultural shift that supports and nurtures differences. To truly promote inclusive values and differences, cultural differences must be included in all curricula, not solely within special education (Braunsteiner and Mariano-Lapidus, 2014). In this study, this blending of perspectives and philosophies among general education, special education, and valuing differences, is referred to as inclusive and equitable education.

Defining Inclusive Education

In today's schools, there continues to be a need for inclusive education in order to look at a myriad of ways that students differ from one another, and to find the value in delivering instructional practices for those differences (Sapon-Shevin, 2007). The term inclusion is used to mean a service-delivery model whereby students with and without disabilities are taught the same content, and in the same setting, with modifications and accommodations as necessary (Dev & Haynes, 2015). Inclusion is more than a delivery of instruction model for special education students, but rather a way to level the playing field for all learners, regardless of their needs, zip code, and personal experiences. In this study, inclusion will refer to not only educating students with disabilities in the general education environment, but having a more critical perspective in that the focus is on inclusion of students with a broad range of historically marginalized differences.

In an inclusive and supportive environment, all students matter, all students are afforded the same opportunities, and teachers are happy to participate in this important work. According to Lawrence-Brown & Sapon-Shevin (2014), inclusion is culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy built on acknowledging and valuing student diversity. To facilitate this inclusive thinking and behaving in schools, teachers, all school staff, and the principal must be armed with knowledge about diversity and the pedagogy needed to embark on their practice with confidence, and see diversity as a positive addition to the classroom and school environment as a unit (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014). Using these definitions about inclusive environments will help move beyond the inclusion of students with disabilities, and focus more on all the diverse student needs in today's classrooms.

Defining Equitable Education

Equitable education involves issues of social justice in a complex educational system, rooted in a political, cultural, and economic context (Muzvidziwa, 2015), especially for those students who have been historically marginalized. The differences with such students could include, but are not limited to cultural/linguistic/racial backgrounds, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, family composition, religion, varying reading levels, English language proficiency, homelessness, trauma, depression, related services, and other mental and behavioral health challenges. In this study, these differences are referred to as diverse needs, diverse student needs, or diverse learner needs.

Inclusive and Equitable Education

Most of the studies on inclusive education places the emphasis on the role of the principal or the educational system as a whole, in order to have a school culture that captures the true essence of inclusive and equitable practices. One study by Irvine, Lupart, Loreman, & McGhie-Richmond (2010), uncovered supportive administration-related reasons for the reported success of a rural school district that was operating a district-wide program of inclusive education. Another study by Gavaish (2017) indicated it is proper leadership that leads to the implementation of more authentic inclusive education. This study focused on elementary teachers, and the support they required from their principal to cultivate an inclusive and equitable education for all their students.

Role of the Principal. As an elementary principal at the time of the study and public school educator for almost 25 years, I continue to see the value in inclusive education, the need to cultivate more equitable practices in the general education classroom, and to better meet the needs of our diverse student population that I am privileged to serve each day. The need for

inclusive classrooms to go beyond just placing students in a general education environment, to providing fundamental changes in the core of educational practices, has been an educational vision since Elmore (1996). This raises the point about how principals, as well as teachers might further learn to better include all students in the general classroom, in order to make schooling a productive and engaging experience for all learners, despite their diverse needs (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017).

Inclusive and equitable education requires supports not only for the students, but also for the teachers who serve them. For example, the academic, special services, related services, and extracurricular support services in a school building provided to students with an IEP (Individualized Education Plan), can be disseminated in the general education classrooms across all students who are in need, not just to those who have an IEP. This form of creative resource distribution supports the definition of inclusive and equitable education for all diverse student needs. However, teachers need to be trained in doing so, and understand the reasoning behind this shift in resources and support. Principals also need to lead such a shift in school culture, and support teachers along the way.

Modeling a Progressive School Culture. Traditional inclusion models seen in many schools focus primarily on a deficit model, rather than utilizing inclusive strategies to benefit all students, not just those with a known disability. The promotion of an inclusive school culture requires that all school personnel, especially the principal, value diversity and view differences as assets, in order for this progressive culture to grow (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014). This mindset promotes a model of differences and diversity serving as a resource for individual learning and development, for not only the students in the classroom, but also for the teachers and principal who cultivate this kind of environment while positioning themselves as facilitators

and learners along the way. This progressive thinking and overall school culture must be an investment and modeled each day by the school principal, in order for it to be sustainable.

Role of the Teacher. The role of the teacher is a critical element in the successful implementation of inclusive and equitable education. Many teachers report feeling unsure and unprepared to teach children with diverse needs (Forlin, Keen, & Barrett, 2008; Glazzard, 2011), mainly because much of their training and preparation has been to teach only a narrow range of students. Teaching in today's general classrooms one faces significant student representation from the special education program. This representation gives students with IEPs access to the general education setting through LRE (least restrictive environment), along with an increased number of students requiring related services, and have 504 Plans (medical related plans). The inclusion of students is not only required by law, but is also encouraged in schools where inclusive and equitable practices are an integral aspect in the overall vision of the school community.

Agents for Social Justice. To achieve equitable and quality education, it requires leadership and agents for social justice. In schools, social justice is about equalizing opportunities for students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. Chiu and Walker (2007) describes social justice as a concern for improving the opportunities and prospects for the disadvantaged members of society. It is not about just caring, but serving others, especially those with diverse needs. The quality of education is measured when the type of instruction provided meets the needs of all diverse student populations the school serves. Teachers must develop a knowledge and appreciation of diverse cultures, explore how equitable and inclusive practices can be implemented in schools, and imagine strategies for supporting the diverse learner. Idialu

(2010) believes that change is inevitable if schools as organizations are to produce quality and equitable education for all learners, especially those historically marginalized.

To better equip the current and next generation of teachers to advocate for educational equity, teacher educators and principals must commit to fostering learning that examines how to meet the social and academic needs of all diverse student populations. The approach is meant to promote engagement, enrichment, and achievement of all students by embracing a wealth of diversity, identifying and nurturing students' cultural strengths, and validating students' lived experiences and their place in the world (Villegas & Lucas, 2007).

An important part of teaching students with disabilities and diverse needs in the same setting is developing teachers as agents of inclusion and social justice. Such an encompassing approach is premised on open views of all children's potential for learning, seeks to ensure that teachers provide opportunities for everyone, shows beliefs about students' capacity to learn, pedagogical choices, and ways to support student outcomes (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017). It is also crucial for educators to understand the extent to which the production and reproduction of social class occurs within educational settings, as it has important implications to society (Mixon, 2007), in the classroom, and especially for diverse learners.

Theory into Practice

Two relevant theorists on inclusive and equitable practices are Srikala Naraian and Albert Bandura. Both share similar views on the importance of taking a closer look at the teacher in order to better meet the needs of the diverse learner. Below is a discussion of each theorist.

Srikala Naraian

Srikala Naraian's work (2017), which is a compilation of multiple studies sought to understand the process by which teachers make decisions about inclusive and equitable

education, and their instructional practices. What emerged were eight principles that would serve educators in a variety of school contexts. The principles derived from an understanding of inclusion, grounded in teachers' perspectives and equitable teacher practices. They are what Naraian believes to be a more effective way to hone in on critical inclusive pedagogical design to support diverse learner needs. Naraian's theory was used as the Theoretical Framework in this study to help frame and align the data collected, in order to categorize what practices are currently occurring at NOVA, determining whether it is working, and what the next steps are towards more inclusive and equitable practices.

Albert Bandura

The inclusion of students in the general education setting has changed the classroom more than ever. Behaviorist Albert Bandura, who believes in a humanist approach just as Naraian, would agree that today's teachers are expected to rise to the opportunities of adjusting their teaching practices to create more inclusive, supportive, and academically engaging environments for all learners, regardless of specific learner needs. Bandura, who emphasizes the importance of observing behaviors and attitudes in terms of a continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences (Forlin, Loreman, & Sharma, 2014), would ask that teachers be looked at much more closely in the classroom today. This would be done to increase teacher-efficacy in order to support them in better meeting the needs of the diverse students in their classroom. According to Bandura, it is important to examine teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and actions in the classroom, because teacher attitudes and beliefs drives their behaviors in this environment.

Both Naraian and Bandura would also agree teachers' attitudes and perceptions about their preparation must be considered, as it is likely that these may influence their behavior

toward students with disabilities (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003), and other students with diverse learning needs. In order for inclusive and equitable education to be successful, one element teachers must possess is a supportive attitude (Smith & Leonard, 2005), and be willing to use innovative and engaging practices in the classroom, in order to better meet the needs of the students sitting before them each day. According to Fuchs (2010), teachers' attitudes and beliefs about inclusion influences their beliefs about their own ability to educate all learners in the general education setting. Therefore, teacher attitudes and beliefs will drive their behavior or self-efficacy in the classroom, which is why these areas are important to inclusive and equitable education.

Attitudes and Beliefs

An attitude can be viewed as a belief, feeling, or behavioral tendency towards a socially significant object or symbol, such as inclusive and equitable education (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014). A belief can be viewed as an opinion or conviction that a person can have, which then can create a particular attitude. Attitudes are significant to the implementation of inclusive and equitable education because, according to the theory of planned behavior, attitudes can predict behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). The theory of planned behavior specifically predicts that teachers will implement new practices if three elements are in place: a favorable attitude toward the practice; perceived social pressure to engage in the practice; and confidence in their ability to successfully implement the practice (Ajzen, 1985, 1991).

As mentioned, Bandura's research speaks to a continuous reciprocal interaction or determinism that will help to structure teacher self-efficacy. Teachers' attitudes and beliefs in their environment such as the classroom, drives their behaviors or self-efficacy, and in reverse, their environment and self-efficacy can also drive their attitude and beliefs. These additional

examples further show that the positive attitudes of teachers towards inclusion may lead to a greater willingness to welcome students with disabilities and diverse learning needs into the general education classroom (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Cook, 2002; Silverman, 2007; Soodak & Podell, 1993; Soodak, et al., 1998). Teachers with a positive attitude towards inclusive and equitable education, also have a higher level of self-efficacy in their classroom environment (Bandura 1977, 1983, 1993; Guskey, 1998). Which makes self-efficacy crucial in the classroom, and important to this study.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy drives actions, interactions, relationships, teacher reflection, and support for all students in the general education classroom. Self-efficacy is defined as a teacher's expectation that he or she will be able to bring about student learning (Soodak & Podell, 1996). This may include personal and professional development to support this process. There is also evidence that teachers with higher self-efficacy also hold more positive attitudes towards, have a greater effort for, and cope better with the challenges of educational reforms, such as the inclusive and equitable education movement (Bandura, 1997; DeMesquita & Drake, 1994; Guskey, 1988; Pajares, 1996).

Overall, teachers with higher self-efficacy include children with disabilities and diverse needs more effectively in general education classrooms (Friend & Bursuck, 2009; Sharma et al., 2012). They also have an openness to differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students, including those with learning difficulties (Chester & Beaudin, 1996). Self-efficacy is also referred to as teacher-efficacy. Teacher-efficacy is closely related to a teacher's willingness to implement innovative teaching practices (Hasazi, Johnson, Ligget, & Schattman, 1994), and find them less difficult to execute than their colleagues with a lower sense of self-efficacy (Ghaith &

Yagji, 1997). Teacher- efficacy or self-efficacy is significant in this study because it will determine what teachers are willing and able to do in the classroom in front of, and for all students with whom they have been charged to serve. The answers to these questions can be found in the teachers' actions. This includes their attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy, and how they all tie together in the classroom by the most important person dictating what occurs for each and every student, the teacher.

In this study, an examination of self-efficacy was important as it drives teachers' behaviors in the classroom. Bandura helps further understand the relationship between teacher attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy, as it relates to inclusive and equitable education. In 1977 Bandura stated, self-efficacy in all forms influences our thoughts, emotions, actions, and motivation. It operates mainly through the cognitive and affective channels and plays a crucial role in shaping our perception of life experiences. Bandura believed that we build a self-system based on our social skills, cognitive skills, observational learnings, and social backgrounds. He says that this system is the backbone of our personality, and self-efficacy is one of the essential components of it.

There are two types of self-efficacy as explained by Bandura. The first is motivation and second is perceived self-efficacy. Motivation involves the motivation to action, in which the intensity depends on teachers' attitudes and beliefs. Here teachers reflect on their courses of action, and in the intensity and persistence of their effort to support all students. Perceived self-efficacy are teacher beliefs about their capabilities to produce effects. Either way, self-efficacy can improve if a person is willing to do so, which depends on their attitudes and beliefs, and when the proper supports are in place. In this study, self-efficacy is examined through the voices of the teachers, and weighed against the supports in place facilitated by the school principal.

Together, the teachers and the principal help create the story of NOVA's journey towards inclusive and equitable education, in the best interest of all of the students, and the teachers who instruct them each day.

The Study

This type of study can be applied to any elementary school with diverse student needs because the strongest reluctance to embrace inclusive reform efforts can be found among educators (Connor & Ferri, 2007). Very little is known about how skills for effective inclusive and equitable practices are developed, or about how to influence teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy in order that they might be reflected in practice (Jordan, Schwartz, McGhie-Richmond, 2009). What can be done is to listen to the teachers on the frontline of inclusive and equitable education, so that principals can implement necessary changes to improve practices school wide. This will encourage more successful teacher experiences in the general classrooms with the diverse students they serve. Focused training is also crucial to support teachers in this work, which is another reason why teacher voices had to be included in this study.

Teacher Training and Supports

According to Gorski (2013), a teacher's dangerous assumptions can lead to feeling helpless in regards to assisting students with the greatest needs, especially when they are unprepared to do so. Glazzard (2011) states, teachers express the need for more training and support in narrowing the gaps of learners with disabilities and diverse needs. He posits that teacher opinions in schools around the country are suggesting that there are many concerns related to inclusive and equitable education that are similar. Teachers welcome the training, ongoing support, modeling and resources initiated by the school principal.

Supports at NOVA. During this study and then beyond, trainings were provided for the teachers on the benefits and implementation of small group instruction throughout the school year. Small group instruction often follows whole group instruction and provides students with reduced student-teacher ratio, and typically in groups of 3-6. Small group instruction gives students more of the teacher's focused attention, opportunities to ask specific questions about what they have learned, and a chance for teachers to assess what students truly know. Following the training, there were different levels of support put into place such as classroom observations, immediate feedback, modeling when needed, and revisits to the classroom by the principal as follow ups. These efforts were intended to help determine what additional supports are needed by the teachers, in order to effectively meet the needs of all students in the general classrooms, especially with those with diverse learning needs.

Guskey (2002), also reminds principals that teachers need to acquire evidence of improvement in student learning before any significant change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs will occur. These nuggets of success will support students, as well as increase the self-efficacy of teachers over time. The premise and the literature supports that the higher teacher self-efficacy, the more positive teacher attitudes and beliefs in the classroom towards diverse learner needs, and the increase in use of inclusive and equitable practices will occur.

Research Questions

In order to study the research topic of interest at NOVA, a phenomenological approach was selected. This qualitative research study examined elementary teachers' attitudes, beliefs, self-efficacy, and self-disclosed needs in order to successfully create and maintain more inclusive and equitable classrooms in a highly diverse suburban school in the Mid-Atlantic

region. Data were collected through the use of a comprehensive online survey to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes and beliefs of teachers towards inclusive and equitable education in a diverse suburban elementary school?
2. How does teacher efficacy affect their outcomes related to inclusive and equitable education in this school?
3. What do elementary teachers report is needed in order to foster a more inclusive and equitable education for all of their students?

Summary

Educational research indicates that there are no right or wrong answers, nor a specific right way to facilitate inclusive and equitable education across all schools. There are only practices that can be implemented, and then one assesses which students respond well to those practices. Just the initial planning and striving for inclusive and equitable education has a range of positive influences on all learners, and it further levels the playing field in schools. Paradoxically, at best, is that most of the research regarding inclusion is outdated and does not support the diverse needs of students in today's classrooms. This leaves schools to study their own environment, in order to assist with building focused solutions. Historically, inclusion refers to students in the special education program being included in the general education setting. Students today require a more inclusive and equitable approach to ensure learning for all, especially those who have been historically marginalized over the years.

In order to better meet the needs of all students with inclusivity and equity, it was important to study the attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy of the teachers at NOVA, in the best interest of the diverse student population they serve. According to Rosas & Winterman (2010),

teachers' positive attitude and high sense of self-efficacy are among the key facilitators of inclusive and equitable education. They determine how teachers feel, think, and behave in the classroom. The theoretical framework of Narayan's Eight Principles was used to offer a collective approach of what supports are currently in place, as well as the findings to determine the overall attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy of the teachers of NOVA as it relates to inclusive and equitable education.

The purpose of the study was to examine the attitudes, beliefs, self-efficacy, and self-disclosed needs of the teachers at NOVA. A list of research questions previously discussed, was created in order to obtain the desired information to support the goals of the study. The discussion now turns to a review of the literature and research.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Inclusion has become more prevalent, and today more than 60 percent of all students with disabilities spend 80 percent or more of their school day in general education classrooms, alongside their non-disabled peers (*Education Next*, 2018). The term inclusion is used to mean a service-delivery model whereby students with and without disabilities are taught subject matter in the same way, and in the same setting, with provided modifications, accommodations, and services. Some service delivery model examples are (a) students with disabilities attending their home school of residence, as opposed to a special school; (b) students with disabilities spending part of their day in general education classes with typical peers; (c) students with mild-to-moderate disabilities spending their full day with typical peers; or (d) all students, regardless of the severity of their disability, spending time in their full day with typical peers. (Boyle, Topping, Jindal-Snape, & Norwich; Copeland & Cosbey, 2008-2009; Forian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Inclusion is typically utilized due to least-restrictive (LRE) mandates.

The most common inclusion models in the general education classroom have been delivered in three ways; first by using the general education teacher to support all students with and without disabilities; secondly using a co-teaching model with both the general and special education teachers to teach all students; and thirdly having classroom assistants or paraprofessionals present to assist the teacher(s). These inclusion models would be for students classified as receiving itinerant or supplemental support services; as opposed to, students being pulled out into a resource room or self-contained classroom to receive special education services. At times, a resource room is where students with disabilities spend part of each school day to get academic or other assistance from special education teachers, but the rest of their time they are in

the same setting as their peers without disabilities (Dev & Haynes, 2015). The self-contained classroom can be where students with disabilities spend all or most of their time during school and may join their peers without disabilities for some school activities. Students spending time in the resource room would be classified as receiving supplemental support services; a self-contained classroom is a full-time service; and students in a general education classroom all day are receiving itinerant services.

Moving Towards an Inclusive and Equitable Education

According to WrightLaw (2018), the current definition of inclusion leaves out the key component which is that inclusive and equitable education seeks to educate students with disabilities and from diverse backgrounds in the general education classrooms. This inclusion would include peers with and without disabilities, along with the appropriate services and supports as needed. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) does not use the term “inclusion”, however, IDEA requires school districts to place students in the least restrictive environment (LRE). LRE means that, to the maximum extent appropriate, school districts must educate students with disabilities in the general education classroom with appropriate aids and supports, referred to as “supplementary aids and services”, along with their nondisabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled, unless a student’s individualized education program (IEP) requires some other placement arrangements. This requires an individualized inquiry by the IEP team, into the unique educational needs of each disabled student in determining the possible range of aids and supports that are needed (WrightLaw, 2018).

Over the years, the practice of inclusion itself has been shaped by influences such as educational philosophy, personal experiences, and perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). “Inclusive and equitable education prepares all preservice teachers to instruct diverse

learners, including students with learning differences who, because of language, cultural background, differing ability level, disabilities, learning approaches, gender, and/or socioeconomic status, whom may have academic or behavioral needs that require varied instructional strategies to ensure their learning” (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2015, p.3). Overall, inclusive and equitable education supports diverse learners, while also strives to determine and maintain supports and reflective practices for the teachers as well.

Equitable Education for All Learners

Equitable education connects to a sociocultural understanding of learning which refers to the use of inclusive practices that keep all student differences, educational needs, race, sexual orientation, and all other socially constructed labels in mind when designing and delivering a lesson (Naraian, 2017). Equitable education also encourages collaboration among teacher colleagues to promote the teacher’s own levels of development, in this case towards making equity actionable, by being an inclusionist, using equitable practices as an educator, and taking on the role of an equity designer. Such a person asks daily, which action and situations need to be improved so all young people get the opportunities and supports they need and deserve (Pollock, 2017), regardless of their individual diverse needs. Although there is more student diversity in today’s classroom, and a need for inclusive and equitable practices, the current literature shows that teachers continue to struggle with their attitudes and beliefs about including all students, encountering uncertainty during implementation, and report school and district leadership barriers as well (Glazzard, 2011).

The notion to expand the vision of traditional inclusion is to better meet the needs of all students in the classroom, especially those with diverse learning needs. Since inclusion was first presented as a service delivery model more than two decades ago, a number of researchers have

documented teacher attitudes and beliefs towards inclusion as factors that influence their behaviors (Avramidis & Norwich, 2010; Dev & Scruggs, 1997; Forlin, Loreman, Sharma, & Earle, 2009; McLeskey et al., 2001). Much of the literature revealed that it is teacher attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy that has the strongest effect on teacher behaviors in the classroom, which also impacts inclusive and equitable education the most.

The Relationship Between Attitudes, Beliefs, and Self-Efficacy

According to Cullen, Gregory, & Noto (2010) attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy become particularly important for the success of inclusive and equitable education when used within frameworks towards complex change. The relationship between attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy is vital within the education reform movement. Research shows teacher attitudes and beliefs about teaching students in general education classrooms, and the overall impact of the teacher is important for all students (Cullen, Gregory, & Noto, 2010). Likewise, a teacher's sense of self-efficacy should include their ability to provide instruction using inclusive and equitable practices, collaborate with others in the inclusive setting, manage the diverse needs of students with and without disabilities (Sharma et al., 2012), and feel confident in doing it.

Several studies to date have explored the relationship between teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy toward the inclusion of students with diverse needs in the general education classroom; such as, one with elementary teachers in Israel (Weisel & Dror, 2006) and another in New York (Soodak, et al., 1998). Both studies found self-efficacy as the single best predictor of teacher attitudes. A third study of elementary and middle school teachers in China found that teachers' self-efficacy, more so in the area of collaboration, significantly predicted their attitudes toward including all students (Malinen, Savolainen, & Xu, 2012). Equally important, a few more studies have also identified sense of efficacy as positively influencing teachers' attitudes towards

the inclusion of students with diverse needs (Meijer & Foster, 1988; Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2011; Soodak et al., 1998; Weisel & Dror, 2006). In knowing what the literature reveals, inclusive and equitable practices can be applied not only to students with disabilities, but also to those with diverse needs.

Theoretical Framework

The multiple needs among students in our public schools are a clear depiction of diversity in our society. According to Lawrence-Brown & Sapon-Shevin (2014), diversity should be celebrated, embraced, and articulated to promote professional discourse among educators towards inclusive and equitable classroom solutions. To support elementary teachers and ensure all students in the inclusive setting are successful, it is imperative that there is an understanding of whether teachers are supported in the work they do, and have the agency to do it. School-based leaders and school district leaders must begin to think about sustainability and the basic tenets of effectiveness (Campbell & Jeter-Iles, 2017), in order to keep up with the diverse student population in public school classrooms. The higher teacher efficacy in the area of inclusion, the more positive their attitude and likelihood to try more innovative instructional and equitable practices (Hasazi, Johnson, Ligget & Schattman, 1994) for all learners.

Naraian's Principles

Naraian (2017) always presumes the competence of teachers, offers a humanizing approach to those who are engaged in inclusive and equitable education in public schools. Naraian posits eight guiding principles for effective and equitable practices for teaching in inclusive environments. The principles emerged from an understanding of inclusion grounded in teachers' perspectives of advancing an inclusive pedagogy, based on the current needs of today's diverse classrooms. In her research, Naraian listened to teachers' stories and whenever possible,

spent prolonged periods of time observing their instructional practices, to understand the process by which they made decisions about curricular and instructional practice.

The principles offer the novice inclusive teacher and the school principal constructive ways to take up efforts towards inclusion. Naraian's message encourages ongoing research with the understanding that inclusion is always unfinished. Below are Naraian's eight guiding principles. Under each principle is an explanation to provide a better understanding of each one's meaning:

Principle #1: Teaching for inclusion is unpredictable, multidimensional, and always unfinished. Inclusion, is an ongoing, unfinished process, which is continually marked by old and new struggles and requires constant maneuvering. Inclusive and equitable practices are not cookie cutter, nor do one set work for all students. Ongoing creativity and innovation is needed in order to teach all students using inclusive and equitable practices.

Principle #2: Teaching for inclusion is premised on a holistic understanding of all learners and a commitment to principles of social justice. Inclusive education begins with the commitment to equitable schooling practices that can restore the legitimacy of experiences of those who have been historically marginalized within schools. Inclusive educators are expected to push back against such oppressive practices to ensure all students are comfortable, treated fairly, have access to curriculum, and accepted for who they are in all classrooms. It is crucial for principals to determine whether teachers are prepared to do this by asking the following questions. Do teachers have the training to do so? Do teachers have the belief that this work is relevant and important?

Principle #3: Although teaching for inclusion requires a supportive school leadership and school culture, teachers make strategic decisions to foster inclusive practices within the classroom. Principals have important roles to play in supporting teachers with inclusive practices. Some administrators make careful choices when assigning students with particular kinds of disabilities to teachers. Others allowed teachers freedom in experimenting with scheduling and curricular decision-making, particularly at the elementary level. How principals support their teachers and carry out a common vision of inclusive and equitable education through their individual modeling and decision-making are vital. In addition, ongoing reflection and feedback to and from the teachers to determine what else is needed, and how to accomplish it should be ever-present in the principal's mindset.

Principle #4: Teaching for inclusion entails balancing the limitations of time and placement with an emphasis on high-quality practice. Time and place are tied within teachers' understandings of how inclusion could be made to work. Teachers worry about the unavailability of time to provide needed supports for students within particular kinds of instructional spaces. Teachers also seemed to have little control over the ways in which boundaries of places are settled and how people were assigned to those spaces. Teachers are observed creating new spaces of learning within pre-given places that would make it more likely for students to succeed. Leaving room for new imaginings of spaces to implement a socially just pedagogy is valuable.

Since it is difficult to add more time to the school day, it is important to maximize time throughout the day. This can be done by using professional learning communities (PLCs) to help facilitate collaborative conversations among teacher teams and departments about supporting diverse learners and their needs. Space should be used with equity in mind as well, by

facilitating effective instructional practices such as small groups, organizing the classroom space with stations or centers that are diverse, useful, and geared toward all student needs. Inclusion or push-in models are used rather than pull-out sessions, so that all students benefit from services provided by special education, English language programs, and related services.

Principle #5: Teaching for inclusion necessitates the straddling of competing philosophies and frameworks of learning rather than a purist stance. The most visible form of such straddling is moving from the traditional special education language and practices, and working towards all teachers engaging in an inclusive pedagogy. Inclusive education scholars have argued for the decoupling of special education from inclusive education in order to abandon practices that continue to use a deficit approach. Teachers continue to draw on the language and practices of special education, as they develop caring and inclusive communities. Inclusive and equitable practices should be merged rather than traditional inclusion. Combining the philosophies of inclusive and equitable education, allows for the use of resources and services that previously were only available outside of the general education classroom, and for special education students included in the general education environment.

Principle #6: Teaching for inclusion requires an active interpretive stance on the part of teachers to create cohesive classroom communities. The charge to implement inclusion should be recognized by most teachers, particularly at the elementary level, as inseparable from the obligation to create a certain kind of classroom community that is premised on principles of care, respect, and responsibility to each other. The room should be set up with stations and small-group learning areas where students can go to learn independently at their level, with the teacher, or collaboratively with classroom peers. The responsibility of the school culture begins with the principal. The creation and modeling of a common vision towards

inclusive and equitable practices is vital. Teachers are then expected to create this same culture in their general classrooms in order to meet all student needs.

Principle #7: Teaching for inclusion necessitates enfolded families within the process of educators' own professional growth; this is predicated on teachers' openness to be transformed by families' experiential knowledge. Even though teachers make conscious attempts to be respectful of families, they are often less likely to draw on families to support their everyday curricular and instructional work. Teachers seem to struggle to find a balance between navigating their management of the classroom and seeing families as a component of that work. Schools need to work on parent participation affairs more in order for an increase in family involvement to occur. However, questions must be asked about how this can occur, and can most parents deliver this request? Why or why not?

Principle #8: Teaching for and growing inclusion requires skills in adult education. Teachers rarely, if ever, carry out their work in isolation. Teachers remain perceptive of the needs and concerns of their colleagues so that their own efforts to seek professional development training in inclusive practices are always designed to reflect those needs. The experiences of adult educators are important for novice teachers, along with the significance of reflective practice when taking on the role of teacher educator within their schools. Teacher leaders are important, along with teacher-mentors, Professional Learning Community (PLC) schedules, and topics of discussion to reflect teacher and student needs.

Naraian's Plan

Naraian (2017) would agree that the planning of inclusive and equitable education is as complex as the work itself. The principles explained above emerged from the understanding of such complexity. The ideas behind the principles are to be a guide for schools to help move into

or further into inclusive and equitable practices. Inclusion and equity must be the vision of a school to move further away from traditional inclusion, so that all students can be supported without limitations or guidelines about services and resources.

Bandura's Research

Self-efficacy is significant as teacher capacity will drive teacher performance in the classroom. Bandura's (1974) development of the notion of Reciprocal Determinism, describes a reciprocal interaction that occurs in the classroom. This research challenged prior behaviorist views with linking the teacher to the environment by introducing an affective element (Forlin, Loreman, & Sharma, 2014). Bandura's model is consistent with how the environment impacts the teacher, and how the teacher impacts the environment. Teachers will always think and feel (cognitive factors) a connection in the educational process. This cognitive dimension will impact both the environment and the behavior of the teacher (Loreman, 2013). The three areas of Reciprocal Determinism form a triangle that runs both clockwise and counterclockwise. The relationship between the three areas are environment to behavior, behaviors to cognitive factors, then cognitive factors to environment, then inversely traverses in the opposite direction.

Figure 1 below demonstrates the reciprocal relationship of the three areas of Reciprocal Determinism. The figure shows the environment (schools and classroom) impacts practice, as does cognitive factors (including attitudes, beliefs, concerns, and self-efficacy), which all impacts teacher behaviors (teaching approaches used in the classroom). This further links attitudes and beliefs towards inclusive and equitable education (Forlin, Loreman, & Sharma, 2014), and how self-efficacy plays a part. This phenomenon has also been found in both Beijing and Turkish studies, linking the teacher attitudes and beliefs of their teaching efficacy to the impact on inclusive and equitable education. The Beijing study demonstrated a link between the

attitude and beliefs of teacher efficacy in collaboration with stakeholders, including teachers and specialists (Malinen et al., 2012). While Sari, Celikoz, and Secer (2009) discerned a similar relationship in Turkey, between teacher efficacy, and attitudes and beliefs towards inclusive and equitable education amongst Turkish preschoolers, and their teachers.

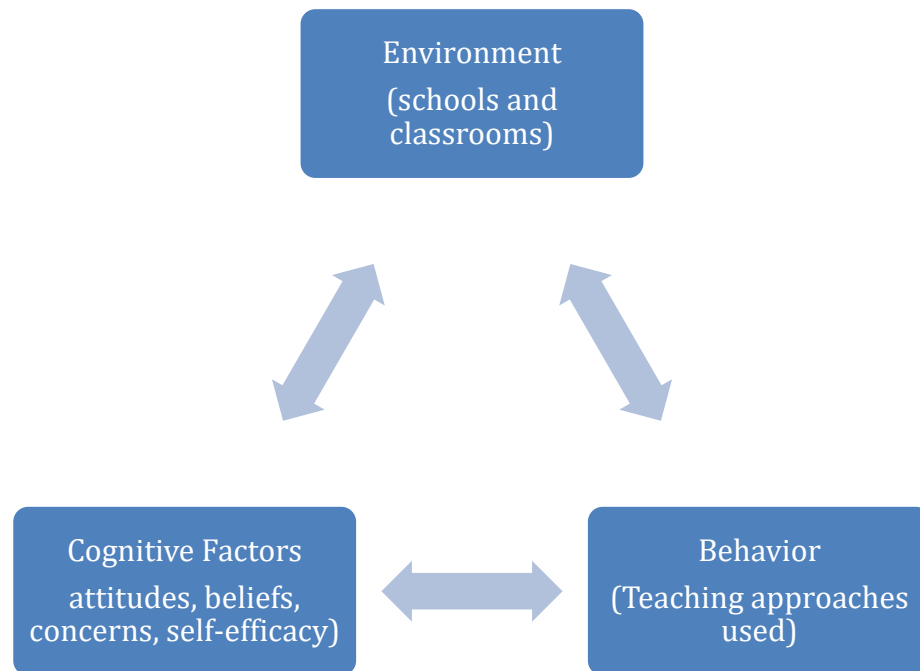


Figure 1: Reciprocal Determinism and the relationship between attitudes, beliefs, concerns, and self-efficacy for inclusive and equitable education (Adapted from Bandura, 1974)

Naraian and Bandura in Practice

Inclusive and equitable education challenges the status quo of schooling, making it unsurprising that teacher attitudes, beliefs, and efficacy would also be challenged. As teachers and principals are increasingly under attack within popular discourse, and are under greater state scrutiny and censure (Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Power, 2013; Ravitch, 2013) this is the best time to prioritize inclusive and equitable education. Using Naraian and the behaviorist views of Bandura will help permit a recognition of teacher capacity as situated rather than as fully internal. Their combined work explains how teachers simply transport from one context to

another depending on their attitudes, beliefs, and the school environment in which they are in, and create in their classrooms. This is their way of trying to figure out how to support their students, and how to make inclusive and equitable education work for them, as well as those they serve. Either way, a teacher's attitude, beliefs, and self-efficacy in the classroom are incredibly significant.

Influencing Attitudes, Beliefs, and Self-Efficacy

Despite current and past research findings, the impact of collaboration and direct experience on attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy are complex. According to Forlin, Loreman, & Sharma (2014), it has been noted that mere experience and collaboration are not enough to influence attitudes, beliefs, and teaching efficacy when including all students, but rather it is the nature and quality of those experiences that is important. Teacher knowledge also plays a role by consistently demonstrating a link between knowledge and improved attitudes and sentiments, which also relates to the improvement in self-efficacy (see e.g., Forlin, Loreman, Sharma, & Earle, 2009; Loreman et al., 2007). One aspect of teaching to self-efficacy for inclusive and equitable practices that is both noteworthy and encouraging is that teacher education and training has shown a positive impact (Loreman, Sharman, & Forlin, 2013). However, what type of training needed lies in the hands of the teachers, according to the research surveyed.

Changes in School and Classroom Practices

According to Sapon-Shevin (2007), graduates of teacher education programs often define themselves not in terms of what they teach, but whom they teach (Sapon-Shevin, 2007). General education teachers feel more comfortable teaching nondisabled students, and leaving what they consider a specialist of special education to those teachers qualified. Special education teachers report feeling the same way about teaching the general education student, unqualified. This

philosophy of separate teacher education has had serious effects on all teachers and the educational system for many years. Special education teachers have been told that it takes a special person to work with special students, and general education teachers were taught to recognize these special students, and refer them to the special teachers and special programs. Teachers who are not fully prepared for diverse learners in the inclusive classroom, potentially lead to more students falling farther behind or evaluated for special education programming.

Since the inception of special education, there has been a history of misdiagnosis and over-identification of disability with select historically marginalized demographic populations of students (Oswald & Coutinbo, 2006). The disparities were identified in the over-identification and overrepresentation of students of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, who were then being referred to receive special education services. Some students were receiving services when they could have been effectively supported in the general education classroom, if the effective inclusive and equitable practices were universally in place for them.

Overrepresentation of Students

Overrepresentation of students in special education is a growing problem in schools today. Research indicates that factors such as test bias, general education instruction, and insufficient professional development for working with diverse students can cause overrepresentation (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2016). The number of children who have a qualifying special education disability in a school district should be about the same across all race, nationalities, or ethnic groups (Oswald & Coutinho, 2006).

However, research reveals there is a disproportionate representation of students in special education programs, and it is not limited by race or nationality, but may also occur based on socioeconomic status, primary language, and other cultural characteristics (Education

Commission of the States, 2009; Griner & Stewart, 2012). The disproportionate representation of students are often students of color, and typically males. This is problematic because these same students represent those with diverse needs. There could be other reasons why they have fallen behind in school, not necessarily having a disability of sorts. If instructional gaps were closed earlier in their school career by using effective inclusive and equitable practices, by trained and well-informed teachers, the outcomes of these students may have been different.

Over-Identification of Students

Over-identification is the inappropriate identification of a student who does not actually have a disability, and who does not need services as a disability. The over-identification of underserved or diverse students for special education programs promotes the ongoing segregation of populations, limiting their access to the general curriculum, typical peers, quality instruction, and high expectations (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2016).

Students who are over-identified for special education programs are also often of color, male, and had gaps in their learning for various reasons. A typical classification for such students would often be a learning disability, or deemed needing emotional support, which represents a form of anger or displaying aggressive behaviors in the classroom (Oswald & Coutinho, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2016). National averages of the over-identification and overrepresentation of students with disabilities as provided by the US Department of Education, 2015 is staggering. The concerning numbers further support why current classroom practices need to change in schools, and why there is a need for more inclusive practices in schools.

To illustrate the point, according to the US Department of Education (2015) figures, the national rate of identification for students with disabilities is 13%, while 17% of American

Indian students and 15% of Black students have been identified as having special needs. There is an imbalance by gender with 16% of male students being identified, while 9% of female students have been identified. Within the specific category of Emotional Disturbance, 5% is the national average, yet 8% of Black students have been identified.

The Opportunity Gap

When there is an over-representation of a particular diverse group identified in special education programs, or an over-identified number of students, it does not support the opportunity gap. The opportunity gap has grown significantly in the United States within the last three decades (Reardon, 2013). Although nationally our public schools are expected to provide an equal education to all students, those living with diverse needs, often graduate with a reading level between third and fifth grade (Richardson, Vafa, & Litton, 2017). These children born into diverse situations are not more likely to have a learning disability than their wealthier counterparts, yet they continue to be disproportionately represented in special education programs on an epidemic scale (Richardson et al., 2017). This further supports the need for teachers to have a more supportive attitude, belief, and be better prepared to provide inclusive and equitable education for all students.

Research has shown a relationship between teacher training, type of professional development, and teacher effectiveness. In several studies, rather than sending students out of the classroom to receive some type of special service, when teachers build relationships with their students based on empathy and knowledge of the student, grades increased and the opportunity gap narrows by as much as 60 percent (Gelback & Robinson, 2016; Martin & Dowson, 2009). Burney and Beilke (2008) proclaim, students who are living in poverty and have diverse needs are potentially the nation's best hope. Not only do all students have the right to be educated, but

also morally should be provided with a high-quality education, just like their peer counter-parts. An education that they can relate to would include, one to gain knowledge from, and can also help them become productive members of society.

Institutional Response

It is important that the educational community come to the consensus that poverty and diversity have an impact on student learning (Ullucci & Howard, 2014), and safety nets should be put into place to support students with diverse needs as a result. Gorski (2013) explains the right to an equal education is more than simply being given an education, or the opportunity to have one. In today's classroom, it includes the right to inclusive and equitable education opportunities such as rich, relatable, and challenging curricula, engaging pedagogies for all learners, high expectations as capable learners, and the opportunity to apply what is learned on a regular basis to check for understanding. When all students do not have access to resources like these the achievement gap widens, and the opportunities that may have been afforded to these students are reduced (Krashen, Lee, & McQuillan, 2010).

Educational Benefits

There are educational benefits to using the inclusion model in schools for students with diverse needs. All students encounter opportunities to learn in the inclusive setting, and are presented with many advantages to learning in an inclusive and equity-based classroom. Parents can argue for a preference to educate their child with a disability label in the inclusive classrooms (Prager, 2014), and from an inclusive perspective, the preferred placement for all students is the general education classroom. Services can be brought to the student rather than removing the student to a segregated environment to receive services (Villa & Thousand, 2003). This outcome ensures the success of all students in inclusive and equitable education, not just

those receiving services. After all, those same services and supports helping students in special education can now benefit all children in the same inclusive classroom.

The literature shows that we know enough about inclusive and equitable education to date, and that the teachers are a key element in the successful inclusion of students with diverse needs (A.F. Gilmour, 2018). Teacher support being consistently monitored, tested, and the implementation of effective practices enable inclusive and equitable education to be more than merely an illusion, but an educational reality in this country (Cardona-Molto, 2012). However, it does take vision and effort by school stakeholders, such as teachers and principals, to better meet the needs of all learners in a classroom and school. The general education classroom can now provide all students access to additional resources such as special education staff, assistive technology, differentiated instruction, curriculum access, and effective materials. These work to the benefit of all students who may have a disability or any other diverse learning needs.

In a meta-analysis of studies examining inclusive education, several themes emerged regarding the effects on general education students (Staub & Peck, 1994-1995). The research indicates that students in inclusive and equitable classrooms show greater acceptance of students with disabilities, experience less fear of differences, and have an increased self-concept from their experiences. Further, inclusive and equitable practices help all students develop moral and ethical principles, including advocacy skills, and create diverse friendships (Kvalsund & Velsvik Bele, 2010; Staub & Peck, 1994-1995).

It is clear from the research reviewed that traditional inclusion continues to miss diverse populations who require more inclusive and equitable classroom practices. Today, inclusive and equitable education is valuable in that it supports all learners, not just those in the special

education program. Diverse learner needs benefit most of all because there is value in the supports and services under special education that benefits all learners in the classroom.

Social Benefits

Inclusive and equitable education creates a sense of belonging for students with special and diverse needs. Inclusive and equitable practices also communicate that all students are a part of both the classroom and the school community as a whole. The sense of belonging directly promotes a number of positive social effects for all students regardless of their learning needs. In fact, all students benefit socially and academically in the general education classroom (Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994-1995). Many researchers have identified a relationship between academic gaps and segregated services when students have very limited or no access to the general education curriculum or typical peers (Ferguson, 2008; Gisher, 2007; Griner & Stewart, 2012; Helmstetter, Curry, & Brennan, 1998; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walter-Thomas, 2002; Tremblay, 2013).

The social benefits for all students in general education can be endless, with inclusive and equitable practices having a successful impact on all involved, regardless of perceived barriers along the way. According to Baker, Wang, & Walberg (1994-1995), students universally benefit socially while being instructed in the general education classroom. Students from more diverse backgrounds need more than inclusive practices and the social exposure in the general education setting. They need a change towards inclusive and equitable education.

Classroom Practices without Judgment

Traditional inclusive education only supported students with disabilities, by going into the general education classroom with supports and services focusing only on those students by ‘pushing in’ to that environment for only those students. The use of inclusive and equitable

practices promotes learning for all students, regardless of their individual needs, because everyone is important. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) posits, if we change our perceptions of diverse learners, we behave a little differently by recognizing the politics and injustice in education. We convince ourselves that the myths and stereotypes that create images of specific groups of people have no relevance.

Furthermore, it is clear in the literature educators need to stop determining who should leave a classroom to get services and support. Rather begin observing more and actually seek to work with all students who need the help. Dorsey-Gaines (1988) would agree, that only until then have we nudged the world a little closer to inclusive and equitable education. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines go on to mention that even gender, race, economic status, and settings should not be used as significant correlates of literacy or success. Which means that educators need to begin treating all students, regardless of need with respect, dignity, and without judgment. The notion that every child should have a fair chance at a high-quality education and a high-quality life through the use of inclusive and equitable practices is prevalent throughout the literature review.

Where it Begins

An inclusive and equitable education is one that has high expectations for all learners in the face of individual challenges, where learning is a priority, and success is a reliable pathway for all students (Scherer, 2016). Typically, students with strengths in linguistic, logical-mathematical, and/or interpersonal intelligences often experience high rates of success in school (Tafti, Heidarzadeh, & Khademi, 2014; Winne et al., 1982). Students with disabilities or those with diverse needs, do not display the same strong academic skill areas as their higher performing peers. In fact, students with disabilities and those with diverse needs have been found to have relative weaknesses in the same skill areas where their higher performing peers shine.

These same areas are also traditionally utilized in schools the most as a measure to identify those students who are successfully performing among their typical peers.

As a school vision, inclusive and equitable practices will give all students access to the content they are expected to learn, so that the general educational curriculum is not only more accessible, but also ensuring teachers are better prepared to teach it to all students which speaks to differentiated instruction, as espoused by leading advocates such as Tomlinson (2014).

Teacher equity efforts must require that necessary opportunities and resources reach all students, which ensures that teachers and schools reshape what they do as a whole (Pollock, 2017) to meet maximum effectiveness of all learners. The effectiveness of inclusive and equitable education begins with the attitude and beliefs of the teachers, and the building leaders who have the vision to support them.

Teacher Attitudes and Beliefs

Many educational researchers agree, despite the logistical and pedagogical challenges to implement inclusion, the attitudes, beliefs, and expectations of the teachers are the most significant measures to the successful inclusion of all students (Sokai & Sharma, 2013) in a classroom. A positive and supportive attitude not only supports students with disabilities, but cannot be emphasized enough when instructing students from diverse backgrounds in an inclusive and equity focused classroom setting. Connor and Ferri (2007) states the greatest reluctance to embrace inclusive and equitable education reform efforts can be found among teacher attitude. When given opportunities to be open and reflective, teachers can cite reasons for their reluctance to include students with diverse needs in their classrooms. Such an open forum allows concerns to be addressed, and supports to be added for teachers.

When comparing three studies, the first study (Subban & Sharma, 2006) found that teachers' exposure to individuals with disabilities and diverse needs, promoted openness to inclusion. A second study (Alghazo et al., 2003) found no influence of prior exposure to diverse needs on teachers' attitudes, stating the teacher participants were still open to having all students in their classrooms. The third study (Forlin et al., 2009) suggested different effects of training in inclusion had a significant impact on teacher attitudes by teacher age. Despite the mixed approaches within the three studies, the research consistently identifies formal education, training, or having a positive attitude are main factors in promoting inclusive and equitable education (Bender et al., 1995; Sharma, Forlin, Loreman, & Earle, 2006).

The studies also reveal no significant effect of teachers' age on inclusive attitudes (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002), nor effect of teachers' gender on attitudes towards inclusion (Alghazo, Dodeen, & Algaryouti, 2003; Van Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2000). Only teachers' attitude and sense of self-efficacy showed particular importance in the inclusive classroom, with education or training having an additional impact. Knowing teachers' attitudes, as well as their self-disclosed needs, also was important to address those needs and concerns that they had.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

The literature continued to show, teacher attitudes toward inclusive and equitable education is based on their self-efficacy. The higher teacher self-efficacy, the more supportive their attitudes and beliefs are towards all students in the classroom. Self-efficacy is a critical factor in teaching and learning, and a way to gauge student success. For example, self-efficacy relates to instructional decisions made in the best interest of students, such as the use of a timer or student choice, as instructional strategies (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Michayluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990). Strategies for teachers would be the ability

to work as a team, advocate for all learners, and being open to training to improve your own craft (Glazzard, 2011).

There is ample research into the self-efficacy among general education teachers for inclusive practices, but a limited amount for special educators. Self-efficacy in special education teachers primarily focuses on the lack of experience with the general education curriculum, students, and the roles/responsibilities of the general education classroom teacher (Liasidou & Antoniou, 2013; Scruggs et al., 2007). It is difficult to separate the use of inclusive and equitable practices from personal values, because practitioner values influence the ways in which inclusive and equitable education is implemented (Gazzard, 2011).

Some research findings have raised the concern that general educators in an inclusive setting may lack the appropriate supports and assistance to adequately meet the needs of all their students (Bunch et al., 1997; Daniel & King, 1997), which is why training is necessary. While general educators often report having limited knowledge of special education policy and practices, and supporting students with disabilities (Liasidou & Antoniou, 2013; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007), Chester & Beaudin (1996) remind us that teachers with higher self-efficacy are open to teaching, as well as learning how to teach all students through differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all their learners.

Teacher Self-Disclosed Needs

Since the literature reveals a more supportive attitude and belief towards inclusive and equitable education, it is important to determine the self-disclosed needs of teachers in one of today's diverse suburban public schools. Much research has been conducted over the years about the supports that teachers perceive as necessary in an inclusive and equity-focused classroom (Daniel & King, 1997; Lipsky & Gartner, 1998; Lupart, 1998). In the literature, various teacher

needs were posing as barriers to deliver effective inclusive and equitable education, including topics such as smaller class sizes, supportive building principal, increase teaching staff, obtaining additional resources, classroom support, and targeted training (Glazzard, 2011; Rosas & Winterman, 2010; Gilmour, 2018). Determining teacher needs in order to foster effective inclusive and equitable practices in our diverse classrooms will help transform diversity into a pedagogical advantage for all schools (Moll & Gonzalez, 2011).

Teacher perceptions about their preparation must be considered as it is likely that these perceptions may influence their behavior toward and their acceptance of students with disabilities (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003), and those who have diverse needs. Teacher agency is what helps all students achieve, and actually asking teachers about their needs give them a voice, thereby preventing building leaders from guessing as to what is needed, or utilizing a top-down approach. Bunch, Lupart, & Brown (1997) conducted a national study on educators' attitudes toward inclusion, and within this survey a number of supports were raised as important, such as pupil-teacher ratio and having educational assistants. Personnel supports are often out of the control of the principal in many districts, but a viable concern of the teachers still remain.

In terms of other supports, some researchers have found that certain factors can influence the effectiveness of an inclusive and equitable classroom, such as the lack of teacher training or relevant in-service, inadequate teacher supports, and embracing cultural differences (Hammond, 2003). Norrell (1997) suggested that an inclusive classroom requires prior and ongoing training for teachers, additional planning time, a limited number of special education students, provision for teacher aides or paraprofessionals, additional monetary resources, and support from the principal.

Truly knowing what teachers need in order to foster better or more effective inclusive and equitable practices in the classroom will promote student achievement for all learners in today's diverse suburban schools. It will be impossible if practitioners fail to embrace their responsibilities for the education of all students (Glazzard, 2011). Previous research has also led to the present study's examination of teacher supports that are needed in order to facilitate a more inclusive and equitable education for students at the study site, especially for students with diverse needs. To do this, it starts with a vision.

The Vision Starts with the Principal

"Many have suggested that inclusion isn't so much a delivery model as it is a frame of mind for a learning community" (Kilanowski-Press, Foote, & Rinaldo, 2010, p. 45). This frame of mind starts with the leadership of the school, the principal. Villa and Thousand (1995) call it an attitude, or a value and belief system. Carpenter (2007) views it as a philosophy that begins at a global level of the educational community, celebrating diversity and determined to meet the individual needs of each student. Others have indicated that inclusive and equitable education communities offer all students the opportunity to be successful learners by providing access to flexible curricula that is also engaging, challenging, and enriching (Fisher & Frey, 2001; Roach, Salisbury, & McGregor, 2002). While inclusion can be viewed as both a school community-oriented philosophy, and a service delivery model, it all starts with how the principal thinks and behaves.

Lipsky and Gartner (1998) note that inclusive and equitable education is often limited to building-wide adoption rather than a component of systemic reform. Which makes principals viewed as important visionaries in the adoption and successful implementation of inclusive and equitable practices. Carpenter and Dyal (2001) suggest that inclusive and equitable education is

most effective when proactive principals establish models of effectiveness. For example, Carpenter (2007) “offers principals a set of essential questions to help facilitate quality inclusive and equitable educational programming” (p. 45).

- The qualifications and strengths of the teachers,
- The role of the general and special educator related to the content instructed,
- The professional development experiences teachers have had in understanding and applying inclusive and equitable education models for all students,
- The time available for planning and consultation.

Summary

Inclusive and equitable practices in today’s diverse classroom is what Naraian proposes, what Bandura encompasses, and what the research pertaining to inclusive and equitable education is lacking. Traditional inclusion must be replaced with inclusive and equitable practices to effectively meet the needs of today’s diverse learners. The literature demonstrates a clear link in the role that teacher attitudes, beliefs, and efficacy plays in addressing student diverse needs (Brown & Royle, 2014) in the classroom.

Supporting teachers using their attitudes, beliefs, and self-disclosed needs towards inclusive and equitable education provided valuable information for this study. As expected, the results showed the relationship of these three key areas on teacher behaviors in the classroom, the instructional practices currently used (or not being used) with diverse learners, and the current teacher efficacy towards inclusive and equitable education at NOVA Elementary School.

The disclosure of teacher needs helped to identify areas of development in order to build teacher efficacy, towards school wide improvement. Strengthening teacher efficacy will continue to impact their attitudes and beliefs about meeting the needs of all diverse learners over time.

This connection between disposition and effectiveness was also documented in a study by Moberg, Zumberg and Reinmaa (1997) in which the authors noted the level of inclusion in a classroom had a life changing impact on the pre-service educator's attitude toward inclusive practices (Roger-Adkinson, 2016). Therefore, the more open a teacher is to inclusive and equitable practices, the higher their self-efficacy becomes. The theory is that attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy are critical pieces for inclusive and equitable education to support diverse learners in today's elementary classrooms. However, supporting teachers along the way is important as well. Quality trainings, levels of support, and proper resources are not only in the best interest of the teachers, but also bet for the students they serve.

The comment below is from Lawrence-Brown & Sapon-Shevin (2014) and was stated by Ronald Edmonds, a pioneer in effective school's research. The words are a good representation of the supportive attitudes and beliefs that teachers need to have in order to support all diverse learners in their classrooms. Edmonds stated the following:

We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far. (2014, p. 1)

The following chapter discusses the study's research methodology. It will present the approaches utilized, how the study was conducted, including the data collected, how they were analyzed, and the data-collected techniques used. In this section the research questions will be revisited as well.

Chapter Three

Methodology

In order to study the research topic, a phenomenological approach was selected. The approach helped the researcher better perceive the experiences of the participants in the study in order to surmise common phenomena experienced by all. This qualitative research study examined elementary teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy, along with their self-disclosed needs, in order to successfully create and maintain more inclusive and equitable practices at NOVA. Data were collected through the use of a comprehensive online survey to examine the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes and beliefs of teachers towards inclusive and equitable education in a diverse suburban elementary school?
2. How does teacher efficacy affect their outcomes related to inclusive and equitable education in this school?
3. What do elementary teachers report is needed in order to foster a more inclusive and equitable education for all of their students?

Context of the Study

At the time of the study, certified elementary teachers at NOVA were invited to participate in the study. The study took place throughout the 2019-2020 school year. The suburban district itself is located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, a few miles away from a major city, and serves multiple municipalities. At the time of the study, the district was comprised of six elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school. The enrollment numbers at the smallest elementary school was approximately 350, the largest elementary school had approximately 630 students the second to the largest, which was NOVA,

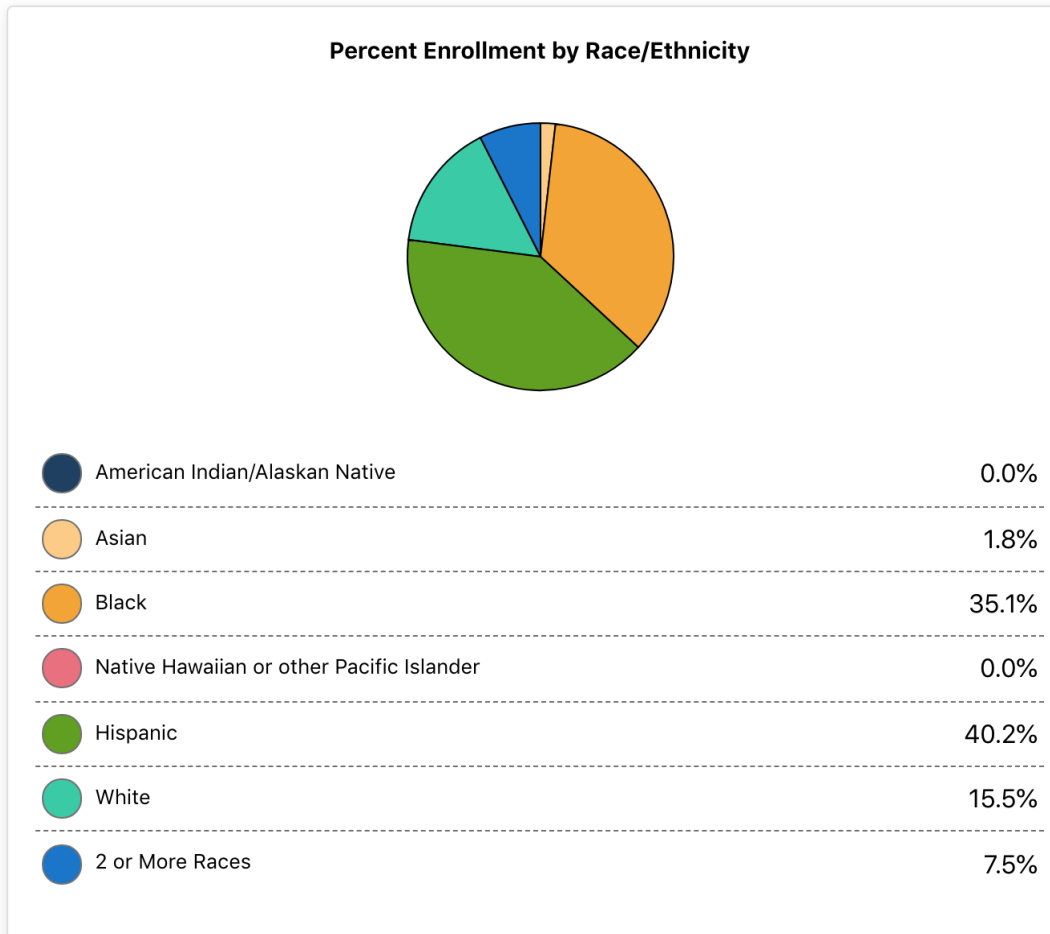
had 550 students. The middle three schools each served a capacity of 750- 900 students. The high school supported upwards of 1900 students when the study took place.

The researcher was also the principal of NOVA during the study.

Title I Funding

NOVA was Title I funded, with close to 80% of the total district population economically disadvantaged. Title I is a Federally funded supplemental education program that provides financial assistance to local education agencies to improve education opportunities for educational deprived students. Title I programs are designed to help students meet the state content and performance standards in reading, language arts, and mathematics. Title I programs provide financial assistance through state educational agencies (SEAs) to local educational agencies (LEAs) and public schools, with high numbers or percentages of poor children to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards (Department of Education, 2015). At this time, the school district is considering the potential of applying for a 100% Title I designation. This uncommon designation as a suburban district, outside of an urban area, speaks to the poverty experienced by the families living in the community. The student enrollment percentages found in Table 1 below portrays the race, ethnicity, and diversity in the district as a whole, with similarities to NOVA's demographics.

Table 1: Percent Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Source: NOVA School District Website (October, 2019)

NOVA Elementary School

NOVA served 550 students in grades Kindergarten to 4th grade at the time of the study and the school and district as a whole had experienced a change in student demographics over the last decade or more. The composition of the neighborhoods within this now low performing diverse suburban school district, ranges were from families living in poverty, to those who are in the low- middle socioeconomic status depending on which municipality they live in.

Specifically, although the statewide student rate of special education participation is 16%, NOVA has had over 21% of their students identified with one or more disabilities. There has also been an increased number of English Language Learners who have been dual diagnosed over the last few years as well. In the latter case, special education services have been designated priority, which has placed additional challenges across the district. This shift in student population has placed a greater emphasis for more inclusive and equitable practices.

Cresswell (2012) noted that qualitative research should seek to select participants or sites that will best help them understand the problem and research questions. Both a purposive and convenience sample was used based on the researcher's access to the study participants, reasons for choosing the participants, and the geographic location. Purposeful sampling was used (McMillan & Shumacher, 2010) in order to learn more about a specific experience from a representative population at NOVA. Therefore, all certified teachers at NOVA were asked to complete a survey to best address the purpose of the study. Instead of trying to generalize across all elementary schools in the district, the reason for purposeful sampling was to create connections between the certified teachers at NOVA, in order to determine better ways to support the diverse needs of their student population.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

The study addresses two gaps in the existing literature. The first speaks to the need for more effective inclusive and equitable practices in order to address the needs of diverse student populations. The other addresses a gap in the literature pertaining to examining teacher needs through their own voice. This is accomplished by first investigating the attitudes and beliefs of the teachers towards inclusive and equitable education; determining their self-efficacy when it comes to supporting diverse learners; and reporting on their self-disclosed needs in order to

deliver inclusive and equitable practices to all their students. All data were collected and Naraiian's Eight Principles for Effective and Equitable Practices helped organize and frame the results, and report out areas of concern and need. Not only are teacher attitudes and beliefs significant to this study, but more importantly, is the self-efficacy of the teachers towards meeting the needs of all students, especially diverse learners.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is the building principal in the same school where the study was conducted. While acknowledging a position of authority, the researcher endeavored to minimize a conflict of interest by focusing on the confidentiality of the participants. There was potential risk that the participants would feel uncomfortable being frank and candid during the survey due to the building principal asking them questions about their views on inclusive and equitable education. Nevertheless, the focus remained on how principals can support teachers using an online anonymous survey, which was designed to inform the goals of the researcher's study, as well as the building principal's practices. There were many positive benefits to studying at NOVA. The researcher could delve deeper within one school building, especially when it is their own. The opportunity gap can be seen more intentionally, and the data and needs which are uncovered, can be used to change practices, and eventually replicated or expanded in other elementary schools within the same school district.

In addition, personal bias must be removed from the collection and analysis of the data on the researcher's part. The participants were certified teachers within the researcher's place of employment, which created the possibility for a certain level of bias or positionality to be present especially as their supervisor. To address this possibility, the researcher took specific precautions to ensure validity of the results and reliability of the process by having a protocol to follow. The

researcher used an online survey (Appendix D), distributed by the building secretary, fully disclosed the levels of confidentiality and the mitigation of risks. As well as their participation (or not) would not affect their job, position, salary, or evaluation in any way. The researcher also kept the Carpenter (2007) statements in mind throughout the entire study to ensure the absence of bias, and that no school is perfect. Carpenter “offers principals a set of essential questions to help facilitate quality inclusive and equitable educational programming” (p. 45). The researcher kept in mind:

- The qualifications and strengths of the teachers,
- The role of the general and special educator related to the content instructed,
- The professional development experiences teachers have had in understanding and applying inclusive and equitable education models for all students,
- The time available for planning and consultation.

Finally, the researcher discussed the study with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Schools and obtained written permission from the Superintendent to conduct the study at NOVA.

Participant Selection

The researcher presented the opportunity for all certified elementary teachers at NOVA to participate in the study, using the school secretary to recruit potential participants. Purposeful sampling was used (McMillan & Shumacher, 2010) in order to learn more about a specific experience from a representative population. Only certified teachers were invited to participate, as their experiences were most relevant to the study. Instead of trying to generalize, the purposeful sampling was used to find connections between the participants’ survey responses.

Similar teacher certifications and assignments allowed for the ability to find and build a list of trends and themes to analyze as a representation of each participant group.

The potential study participants at Nova included 50 certified elementary teachers across various content areas and disciplines who were given the opportunity to participate in the study. This study was also valuable because potentially it had all the research elements to inform the principal about the needs of the teachers, it gave a voice to the teachers to express useful supports needed in the classrooms; and finally, it ultimately provided what was needed to better meet the needs of diverse learners. More broadly, it had the potential also to inform the six other elementary schools in the same school district.

The teaching experience of the teacher participants ranged from novice through more experienced. General and special education teacher data were used as primary sources. English language teachers were categorized as secondary sources to corroborate the data gathered. Teaching experience was pertinent to this study, yet was not confused with being more effective in the classroom, nor in possession of more training or formal education. In fact, research has shown that teachers with more experience are only generally more effective in the classroom.

Data Collection

Attitude, beliefs, and self-efficacy are constructs that are influenced by behavior, personal related factors, and the environment of the participants. For those reasons, the researcher collected and reported data using a qualitative methodology and a phenomenological approach. According to Schwandt (2001), qualitative inquiry focuses on the real-life experiences that one encounters. The study also addressed the outdated information in the literature regarding inclusion, as traditional inclusive practices do not go beyond students in the special education program. In order to determine participant attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy related to

implementing inclusive and equitable practices, data collection was required from elementary teachers to determine their needs, barriers, and successes.

The building secretary at NOVA provided all certified teachers with an introduction email and consent form (Appendix A and B) via email, two days prior to the distribution of the online survey going out. This gave teachers an opportunity to read about the study and review the consent form. Next, the building secretary sent all potential participants the survey email (Appendix C) containing the study invitation and the online survey link for the survey itself. Potential participants had the opportunity to read the invitation, and access the survey. The online survey took participants approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Participants had one week to complete the online survey; afterwards it was no longer accessible.

Research Instruments

The online survey (Appendix D) included two demographic questions, two combined instruments on inclusive and equitable practices adapted from a previous study, and two open-ended questions. The first demographic question asked participants their number of teaching years, and the second question related to their current assignment or primary certification as it related to the study (general education, special education, English language). The two demographic questions supported the coding and analyzing process when applicable.

The first instrument used was an adapted version of the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices scale (TEIP), and the second an adapted version of the Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students scale (ATTAS) (Sharma et al. 2012; Gregory & Noto, 2012). The TEIP measures teachers' efficacy to teach in an inclusive classroom. The TEIP approach identifies three scale factors: efficacy in using inclusive instruction, efficacy in collaboration, and efficacy in managing behavior.

The ATTAS scale was the second instrument, and was designed to use three components of attitude: cognitive, affective, and behavioral to measure teachers' disposition towards the inclusion of students with disabilities and diverse needs. This scale addresses the cognitive component of attitude, and teachers' thoughts and beliefs about inclusive and equitable education. Both scales have been determined to be valid and reliable instruments for measuring teacher attitudes and beliefs towards teaching all students in general education settings (Sharma et al.; Gregory & Noto), combined to create the survey for this study. When adapted, each question assisted in addressing the overall research questions for this study.

Survey Questions. Ten survey questions were selected in creating a Likert scale. The same ten questions were used for the three subgroups of students in this study: students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students of color. Each of the ten questions asked the participants about the subgroups mentioned. There were ten questions representing students with disabilities, ten questions representing English Language Learners, and ten questions representing students of color for a total of 30 survey questions.

Open-Ended Questions. The final section of the survey contained two researcher-created open-ended questions which were used to gather the self-disclosed needs that impact teachers' ability to provide an inclusive and equitable education for diverse students in the classroom. Using an open-ended format allowed teachers to answer freely without the restrictions of the Likert-scale. The first question asked teachers about their strengths and weaknesses when supporting diverse learners, and what support is needed in order to better meet those needs. The second question was more specific to the aforementioned school initiative, which was the use of small group instruction to better meet the needs of diverse students. Both questions supported the reactions and responses to research questions #2 and #3, stated previously above. The responses

to the first open-ended question supported the knowledge of teacher efficacy related to teaching diverse learners. The second and last question helped determine the effectiveness of the professional development training, and whether small group learning is currently working, if additional training is needed, and what it would look like.

Artifacts

The additional data collected was contained in a document analysis. It was used to help go beyond teacher self-reported data, in order to achieve more qualitative depth. This was done in the form of acquiring documents from professional development sessions during the study. Appendix E outlines how the trainings were introduced to teachers, the topics, and the work teachers participated in during the trainings. Small group learning was an important initiative to start at a diverse school such as NOVA, because most, if not all instruction in the general education setting was taking place in full-group. There were minimal opportunities to differentiate learning, and meet with students in smaller to really see what they could and could not do. Nor time to work at instructional levels, rather than on grade level skills.

Professional Development

As the result of the professional development during the 2019-2020 school year, which focused on small group learning, teachers at NOVA had (and continues to have) students working together in pairs, in small groups, during and after full-group instruction, as well as in guided reading and math groups. Students work at centers independently, collaboratively, and also in intervention groups with the classroom teachers to target identified needs. The intervention time may also include co-teachers in the general classroom instructing separate small groups of students, or students going into another general education classroom to work on focused skills, depending on which skills the students were working on during that cycle of

intervention time. By design, the small-group approach allowed for students to work at their instructional level and to receive targeted intervention practice that meet their needs, rather than feeling lost, or “hiding” behind the larger group.

The intention was also for teachers to build closer relationships with students in smaller groups, know where they truly are instructionally, and support them in taking more risks in this smaller setting by increasing their participation rate when demonstrating their knowledge base. These practices will hopefully encourage teachers to better plan for diverse learner needs during the larger group lessons, and focus more individually in the smaller groups when the time comes.

Supervised Classroom Observations

As the researcher and principal, goals during classroom observations were to support teachers with small group instruction by ensuring that it is occurring, determining what practices and materials are being used, and identifying where assistance can be provided. A classroom observation could range from 15-60 minutes in length. At a minimum, the activities taking place in the classroom should reflect what was learned and discussed during the trainings. This includes the use of small group learning activities and targeted intervention groups. It is also important to check whether all students are actively engaged in the learning, what instructional strategies and practices are being used, and if they were different for each small group being instructed, or were they the same. These areas were all discussion points during the professional development trainings.

Feedback was given to teachers to affirm their pedagogy regarding diverse students that showed positive outcomes, and to provide thought provoking questions based on the evidence collected during an observation. If it applied, recommendations were also given in order to change practices immediately to maximize instructional time for all learners. An important

component of the observations to note that was highlighted during some of the feedback to teachers was how students responded to the strategies and practices being used, and what materials worked best for individual students, or small groups of students. For example, how did students of color, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities respond to what occurred in the full group portion of the lesson, compared to when transitioning to small group instruction? What additional support was needed? Was it provided in small-group? Was it effective? How do you know? These were questions used as a researcher and principal to guide conversations with a teacher to help them reflect on their practices.

Additional opportunities provided for teachers to receive feedback on their teaching were through ways such as having an open-door policy to ask questions, written feedback not just verbal, being assigned a mentor or instructional coach, and permission to seek additional professional development outside of the school; as well as, opportunities for instructional modeling performed by either the principal, instructional support teachers, or the lead teacher of the school.

Small Group Learning

During the course of the school year, formal and informal observations took place during small group work, which produced results that will be discussed in subsequent chapters. Although the work is still unfinished, the initiative of small group learning continues. The survey was intended to capture teacher strengths, weaknesses, and concerns during this observed time. All of the data collected supported the goals of the study, and helped investigate the research questions during the data analysis.

Data Analysis

In this study, the analysis was a synthesis and evaluation of the data that were collected from the three sections of the survey, the professional development artifacts, feedback given to the teachers, and the observational data collected by the principal before, during and after the trainings. Data analysis was ongoing from the commencement of the study. The identification of patterns, concepts, and relationships within the survey data, allowed for the research questions to be addressed (Terrell, 2016) from the subgroup data early on. Once completed, this is where the coding process began, and the overarching themes took shape (Charmaz, 2006) for the remaining sections of the survey.

Coded data were reviewed several times to further refine emerging themes. The coding process used a numerical system to label the overarching categories related to Naraian's Guiding Principles when possible, and a lettering system to label the sub-themes within larger categories if needed. This axial system required several phases. This axial coding system is defined as the breaking down of emerging themes as data is reviewed and analyzed over and over again. It is a process in which the researcher takes larger emerging themes and further breaks them into sub-themes that relate to one another or have commonalities (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010). The researcher used a colored-coded highlighter system to identify the similar themes which began to tell the story about the participants' perspectives at NOVA, and allowed for relationships to be drawn. The emerging themes were organized by major and minor areas of data collected. These perspectives were then aligned to Naraian's principles.

Limitations

Weaknesses within the study included using only one school, which produced a relatively small sample size; however, it did allow the opportunity to go deeper into the voices of the

teachers. The relative convenience of the sample, which was where the researcher was employed, as well as the positionality of the researcher, who was also the principal of NOVA greatly contributed to the efficacy of the study's aims. Nevertheless, this study had further value for the remaining schools in the same district, as well as similar schools with the same demographic student population. There was also potential bias on the part of the researcher due to their role as supervisor in the same school where the study took place. However, the benefits far outweighs the risks.

The strengths of this research design were the researcher's access to a diverse school and district, the use of a survey instrument with questions proven to be reliable, and using an online survey for participant anonymity so they can go deeper into what they believe, by providing honest and candid responses. The other opportune strength was the researcher's triangulation of data. Triangulation included, the three sections of the survey, the professional development training on small group learning, the observation data, and the feedback provided based on the observations. These areas were then applied to Naraiian's Principles, which are based on current literature in the field offering effective inclusive and equitable practices for diverse learner needs in the general education classroom. Naraiian's Principles were used as the study's framework of reference.

All collected data were grounded and aligned to Naraiian's Framework, which also helped connect teacher and principal perspectives, in order to gain a better understanding of teacher needs in the general education classrooms, as it pertained to inclusive and equitable practices. By the end of the study, there was an analysis of the collective teacher experience, the coding of their perspectives based on emerging themes, considerations of the outlier responses,

connections made back to Naraiian's Principles, and recommendations made for NOVA based on the findings as well as for any other schools who would like to duplicate this study.

Trustworthiness

The purpose of the study was to examine elementary teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy using their self-disclosed reported needs in order to successfully create and maintain more inclusive and equitable practices at NOVA. As the researcher and principal, one had to be aware of biases, limitations, and personal views when conducting a qualitative research study, as these can impact data collection and analysis (Brown, 1996). The nature of the study itself produces bias in that the results of a qualitative study can be considered open to interpretation based on the background and experiences of the researcher. The researcher counterbalanced this subjectivity by placing strategies in place, and worked diligently to control for this limitation to enhance a sense of trustworthiness in the study.

To ensure the trustworthiness, there are several ethical measures that the researcher applied recognizing that principals are closely tied to their school communities, therefore could inadvertently impact the results of the study and the validity of the results. Such proactive measures included: (1) The school secretary sent the introductory email and consent form to potential participants at NOVA. (2) Two days later, the school secretary sent the invitation email, the consent form again, and the online Qualtrics survey link for completion. If a teacher did not give consent and opts out, their survey link closed. Teachers had one full week to complete the survey. After one week, the link closed. (3) No personal or identifiable information was collected or retrieved from the online portal by the researcher or the secretary. (4) Participants' decision not to participate would not affect their relationship with the school, district, their employment status, their assignment/role, salary, ability for promotion, support, or annual evaluation. (5) A

coding process was used to develop related themes using participant responses. (6) Naraiian's Principles were used as the Theoretical Framework in order to make connections to current and effective practices in the field. (7) Triangulation of all data collected was used to add validity and reliability to the study. Thirty-nine out of 50 teachers agreed to participate in the study, and only an average of 36 teachers actually completed the survey. In order for the results to be potentially generalizable across NOVA as a whole, the data collection and analysis must be valid and reliable. The strategies listed above support this effort.

Summary

In order to study the research topic, a qualitative phenomenological approach was used. As a result, the research methodology included an online survey, a collection of artifacts, professional development, classroom observations, and small group learning. As the researcher and principal, a system was in place for the trustworthiness of the study. This leads to a discussion of the results in Chapter Four next.

Chapter Four

Results

This qualitative study examined the attitudes, beliefs, self-efficacy, and self-disclosed needs of elementary teachers in order to successfully create and maintain more inclusive and equitable classrooms in a highly diverse suburban school. Within this overarching research focus, there were three research questions posed: (1) What are the attitudes and beliefs of teachers towards inclusive and equitable education in a diverse suburban elementary school? (2) How does teacher efficacy affect their outcomes related to inclusive and equitable education in this school? (3) What do elementary teachers report is needed in order to foster a more inclusive and equitable education for all of their students?

This chapter addresses the aforementioned research questions through the collection of data primarily from 39 out of 50 possible teacher participants. Three subgroups were examined: Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, and Students of Color. Participant responses were then assessed against Naraian's (2017) Eight Principles of Effective Inclusive and Equitable Practices as the Theoretical Framework.

Recruitment

The 50 certified teachers were sent an introductory email (Appendix B) about the researcher and the study, along with the consent form (Appendix A) by the building secretary. They were informed that two days later the invitation (Appendix C) would be sent, along with the actual survey link. They were advised to read over the consent form ahead of time, in order to devote their time and attention to the survey itself. Then an invitation to participate, another copy of the consent form for agreement, and the online survey link were forwarded.

The electronic survey link was used to help protect the privacy and identities of the teacher participants by keeping all of their personal information confidential, and not attributing any of the responses back to their individual names or email addresses.

Participants

Teacher participants who gave consent and clicked on the survey link to access the survey were considered participants in the study. A total number of 39 out of 50 teacher participants gave consent and started the survey, which was 78% of the teaching staff; compared to an average of 36.5 participants out of the 50 teachers at NOVA who actually completed each question, which was 73% of the teaching staff. An averaged number of participants was because the number of participants who completed each question changed throughout the survey. The number of participant responses ranged from 35-39 (70-78%), depending on the questions throughout the survey, and the total averaged participant number was calculated for each subgroup. This process also helped to account for unanswered questions.

Credentials. All the participants held at least a bachelor's degree and certification credentials in general education, special education, or English language. Credentials in general education made up the largest surveyed group of 30 participants, six in special education, and just two in English language. There was one teacher who chose not to answer this question.

Table 2 illustrates teacher participant credentials.

Teacher Participant Credentials	Number of Participants
General Education	30
Special Education	6
English Language	2

Participant Experience. The teachers also ranged across a spectrum of experience from novice/new to veteran teachers making up the three participant credential groups of general education, special education, and English language teachers. All participants’ experience in education ranged from zero to more than 25 years, with the largest number of teachers in education between 15-20 years. More specifically, one out of 39 participants had five or less years of experience, four out of 39 had five-ten years of experience, seven out of 39 had ten-15 years of experience, 11 out of 39 had 15-20 years, nine out of 39 had 20-25 years, and seven out of 39 participants had more than 25 years of experience.

The majority of the teachers who participated in the survey had ten or more years of experience in education, which was 34 out of 39 teachers (87.17%). Table 3 lists the years of experience for the surveyed participants.

Number of Years in Education	Number of Participants
0-5 years	1
5-10 years	4
10-15 years	7
15-20 years	11
20-25 years	9
More than 25 years	7

Survey Instrument

In this qualitative measured study, the survey instrument used a six value Likert-like scale (Appendix D) ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree, unless otherwise specified. The survey also used positively-worded statements to examine the attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy of the teacher participants in the study, when supporting three different subgroups of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students of color. The

study also grouped teacher responses in “agree” and “disagree” to surmise common themes. The same ten questions were used for each subgroup, for a total of 30 questions used in the survey. Additionally, each of the survey questions were utilized in collecting data in addressing the aforementioned three research questions. Below are the ten survey questions. Discussion of the data collected follows later in this report.

1. I feel confident that students can be successful in my classroom. (RQ#1)
2. I feel confident in my ability to provide appropriate intervention support for students. (RQ#1)
3. I am confident in my ability to get students to work in pairs or small groups. (RQ#1)
4. I feel confident in my ability to get and keep students engaged in learning activities. (RQ#1)
5. I am confident in my ability to assist families of students in helping their child do well in school. (RQ#1)
6. I feel confident in making students feel comfortable in my classroom. (RQ#2)
7. I am confident in designing small group learning activities for students. (RQ#2)
8. I provide examples and alternative explanations for students when they are confused with the curriculum. (RQ#2)
9. I know how to design appropriate instructional practice for students. (RQ#2)
10. I feel confident in my ability to provide individual support to all students. (RQ#2)

Data Analysis

Analysis of the survey data revealed varied results pertaining to the three different subgroups used in the study. Teacher participants viewed each subgroup differently, which included different learning needs and teacher supports needed, as it is related to inclusive and equitable practices. The results are presented and organized by subgroup from the scaled questions of the survey, along with the themes that emerged within the open-ended questions, the

outliers are also analyzed, followed by the connections to Naraian's eight principles. Data results are shown aggregated, then disaggregated (Appendix F) as well. Both forms of data analysis were important to show not only the general attitudes and beliefs of the surveyed teachers, but also the more specific nuances found when the data were then analyzed at a deeper level, when disaggregated.

Students with Disabilities

An overwhelming 96.37%, or 34.9 teachers, indicated they felt comfortable in their ability to support this group, while only 3.63% (1.3 teachers) did not. Several reported lacking confidence in areas such as instructional practices, providing alternate explanations, and motivating students with disabilities to work in pairs. There was only one teacher who strongly lacked confidence in making students with disabilities comfortable in the classroom.

Teacher Confidence. In general, participants' positive sense of confidence can be detected among most of the responses for students with disabilities. In fact, 100% of the participants reported feeling confident in their ability to provide individual support to all students with disabilities. However, there were several questions with somewhat disagree responses, such as the two participants who disagreed somewhat with not feeling confident in their ability to motivate and keep students with disabilities engaged in learning activities. Also, there were two who responded not feeling confident in designing appropriate instructional practices, nor designing small group learning activities for students with disabilities. Finally, there were the three who did not feel confident in assisting families of students with disabilities in helping their child do well in school.

Teacher Attitudes and Beliefs. The averaged responses when determining teacher attitudes and beliefs towards supporting students with disabilities, indicated 34.4 teacher

participants (96.06%) in agreement with feeling confident in their ability to meet the needs of these students. The other 1.8 (3.94%) teachers did not report such a high attitude or belief. A higher number of 35.4 (96.68%) teacher participants indicated that teacher self-efficacy with students with disabilities may be positively affecting the outcomes in the classroom related to inclusive and equitable practices. The remaining teacher participant number of 0.8 (3.32%) reported needing support in this area.

Variance in the Data. The lowest confidence area reported among all teacher-participants was the ability to assist families of students with disabilities in helping their child do well in school. There was one question in this subgroup where 100% of the participants agreed, and that was in their confidence that students with disabilities can be successful in their classroom. Additionally, there was a total average of 36.2 out of 50 participants who completed questions pertaining to students with disabilities, which was a total of 92.82% of the teacher participants. Table 4 portrays aggregated data results for the students with disabilities subgroup and indicates a high degree of confidence in the aggregate.

Table 4: Aggregated Data for Students with Disabilities

Survey Responses	Mean Confidence		Research Questions		Participants
	Avg. % Agreed	Avg. % Disagreed	Avg. % of #1 RQ's	Avg. % of #2 RQ's	Avg. % of Participants
Students with Disabilities	34.9 (96.37)	1.3 (3.63)	34.4 (96.06)	35.4 (96.68)	36.2 (92.82)

Note. This table is a summary of the data. It shows the averaged number of participants who responded to the questions pertaining to Students with Disabilities. The displayed frequencies are not whole numbers because teacher participation changed for each survey question. There was a total of 39 out of 50 teachers (78%) who gave consent to participate in the study.

Participants' agreed and disagreed responses are reported in percentages shown in parentheses.

English Language Learners

When supporting English Language Learners, overall findings using the scaled questions revealed that 34.7 teacher participants (93.24%) felt confident in supporting this group; however, 2.1 (6.76%) did not. In fact, in the latter group just about every question had a response on the “disagree” side of the response scale. Some participants expressed their lack of confidence with instruction, small groupwork, providing appropriate intervention, supporting the subgroup students one-on-one, and supporting families with helping their child. One participant response was “strongly disagreed” when asked if he/she can design appropriate instructional practices for English Language Learners.

Teacher Confidence. There were two overall areas where teachers expressed a relative lack of confidence in supporting English Language Learners. The first area was with feeling confident in providing appropriate intervention support for English Language Learners, with 32

out of 36 (88.8%) teacher participants agreed. The second area was in the ability to motivate and keep English Language Learners engaged in learning activities. Here, 33 out of 39 (84.6%) teacher participants felt confident in their abilities. One could claim these remain relatively high confidence levels.

Teacher Attitudes and Beliefs. When averaging the responses associated with RQ#1, the results disclosed that 93.14 percent (35.4 teachers) had strong levels of confidence in supporting English Language Learners, while 1.3 teacher participants (6.86%) did not. There was a small increase resulting in 93.34% of 34 teacher participants, who felt their current self-efficacy positively affecting the outcomes for ELLs in the classroom, while 2.8 of them (6.66%) felt the need for additional support. These collected data addressed RQ#2.

Variance in the Data. There were two questions where 100% of the participants responded as feeling confident. Therefore, there was no variance in the data. One was in teachers' abilities to encourage ELLs to work in pairs and small groups. Similarly, 100% of the participants felt confident that ELLs can be successful in their classrooms. An average of 36.8 participants responded to questions pertaining to ELLs, which was a total of 94.35% of the teacher participants. Table 5 indicates aggregated data results for the English Language Learner subgroup.

Table 5: Aggregated Data for English Language Learners

Survey Responses	Averaged Confidence		Research Questions		Participants
	Avg. % Agreed	Avg. % Disagreed	Avg. % of #1 RQ's	Avg. % of #2 RQ's	Avg. % of Participants
ELL	34.7 (93.24)	2.1 (6.76)	35.4 (93.14)	34 (93.34)	36.8 (94.35)

Note. This table is a summary of the data. It shows the averaged number of participants who responded to the questions pertaining to English Language Learners. The displayed frequencies are not whole numbers because teacher participation changed for each survey question. There was a total of 39 out of 50 teachers (78%) who gave consent to participate in the study. Participants' agreed and disagreed responses are reported in percentages shown in parentheses.

Students of Color

The final subgroup studied was students of color. This group displayed the highest levels of confidence in the survey scale. Only two participants indicated they somewhat disagreed with having confidence in providing appropriate intervention support for students of color. In addition, there was one participant who indicated a lack of confidence in providing examples and explanations during learning; providing instructional support and practice: being able to have students work in pairs; and supporting families to help their child of color.

Teacher Confidence. An overall number of 35.9 out of 50 teacher participants (98.32%) felt comfortable in supporting students of color in the general education setting, while 0.6 teacher-participants (1.68%) did not. There were five survey questions in which all of the teacher participants agreed on and felt confident in accomplishing. One hundred percent of the participants believed they can make all students of color feel comfortable in their classrooms. All

100% of the participants were confident in designing small group learning activities for students of color. Also, 100% of the participants felt confident in their ability to motivate and keep students of color engaged in learning activities. All 100% of the participant also were confident in their ability to provide individual support to all students of color. Finally, all 100% of the participants felt confident that students of color can be successful in their classrooms.

Teacher Attitudes and Beliefs. When supporting students of color, the aggregated data revealed that 35.9 teacher participants (98.32%) felt confident in their ability to support this subgroup, while a miniscule 0.6 teachers (1.68%) did not. When disagreeing, it was only “somewhat disagree”. Overall, 36 teacher-participants showed a supportive attitude and belief towards inclusive and equitable education, which was a 97.76% percent rate, 0.5 teachers did not (2.24%). In relationship to students of color, these data correlate to RQ#1.

Variance in the Data. There were 35.8 (98.8%) participants who showed a high average score of confident responses when considering whether their self-efficacy may be positively affecting student outcomes related to inclusive and equitable education for students of color. In contrast, only 0.7 teachers did not (1.12%). These data support RQ#2. An average of 36.5 out of 39 participants responded to questions pertaining to students of color, which was a total of 93.58% of the teacher-participants. Table 6 categorizes aggregated data for the students of color subgroup.

Table 6: Aggregated Data for Students of Color

Survey Responses	Averaged Confidence		Research Questions		Participants
	Avg. % Agreed	Avg. % Disagreed	Avg. % of #1 RQ's	Avg. % of #2 RQ's	Avg. % of Participants
Students of Color	35.9 (98.32)	0.6 (1.68)	36 (97.76)	35.8 (98.88)	36.5 (93.5)

Note. This table is a summary of the data. It shows the averaged number of participants who responded to the questions pertaining to Students of Color. The displayed frequencies are not whole numbers because teacher participation changed for each survey question. There was a total of 39 out of 50 teachers (78%) who gave consent to participate in the study. Participants' agreed and disagreed responses are reported in percentages shown in parentheses.

Open-Ended Questions

There were two open-ended questions in the survey for teacher-participants to freely provide responses outside of the forced choices found in the 'disagree' and 'agree range'.

Twenty-eight out of the 39 participants, which was 71.79% actually responded to the open-ended questions. The inquiries are below, along with corresponding research questions:

1. Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses when supporting diverse students. What kind of support do you need in order to better meet their needs? (RQ#2, RQ#3)
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of small group learning? What additional support is needed in order to better meet the needs of diverse students in small groups? (RQ#3)

Prominent Themes

Teacher participants reported out their strengths and weaknesses using the open-ended questions when supporting diverse learners in the general education classroom. There were several prominent themes that emerged from their responses which are presented, as discussed below:

Themes. Teacher-participants consistently reported that small group learning is extremely important for students with diverse needs. However, the lack of sufficient time due to pacing demands, large class sizes, materials and resources needed, as well as the need for additional professional development were reported as preventing teachers from doing their best to support all learners. Participants also agreed that differentiation techniques are important to meet the needs of all student abilities, however, the aforementioned diversity among students in the classroom, makes supporting diverse learners challenging.

Teacher-participants also reported feeling inadequate when supporting English Language Learners and their parents. Although having high expectations, consistent routines and procedures were in place, claimed the respondents, not being able to effectively communicate with students in the classroom poses as a deficit for many teachers at NOVA. One teacher stated, “I feel more comfortable meeting the needs of students who speak English. It is difficult to address the needs of English Language Learners because I cannot communicate with them.” Another teacher shared, “I would like to improve my Spanish fluency and literacy to be able to communicate better with Spanish-speaking families.”

Due to the needs mentioned above, professional development was a request in order to better communicate with the ELL population at NOVA. Not having enough time was another concern, with one teacher stating, “Time is always a struggle when it comes to small group

instruction. There is never enough time, so it is important to be organized and have firm routines in place to make the most of each small group's time."

Other emergent themes to a slightly lesser degree, included the importance of positive relationships with student so they can feel safe, comfortable, and understood in the classroom. Teacher participants proffered such comments as, "It is important to know as much as possible about all students in order to support them in the classroom." The importance of additional engagement strategies was also a finding during the study. Most suggestions requested was for either keeping students engaged longer during small group activities, or supporting the teachers with techniques while they are working with one group of students; while simultaneously supervising other independently engaged students elsewhere in the classroom. This was especially apparent for teachers in the lower grades.

Having accurate data on all students was also a need expressed by teachers, as well as the importance of strategic scheduling. Teachers expressed a desire for more time with students in the classroom and were open to additional support from other personnel. Some teachers requested "aligning services such as pull-out, push-in, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech services be aligned across all schedules to support the core curriculum in the general education classroom."

Additional comments from teachers were, "At times I think that some of our students are not given enough small group instruction due to outside factors including lack of staffing, push for inclusion, the law, number of children needing support, and the schedule." Another teacher reported, "Monitoring students while working with a small group is always a challenge." Other than language concerns that teachers had, there were some teachers who reported their struggle with supporting students of color in general. One stated, "I have not had the opportunity to work

with many other students of color before, and I am not confident in my skill set.” Another stated, “I struggle somewhat with any form of intervention or modification for children of color.”

Open-Ended Responses. Overall, most of the responses from the teacher participants were based on their strengths in the classroom for all three subgroups of students with disabilities, ELLs, and students of color. Much of their concerns were based on areas such as needing more materials, personnel, professional development, time, resources, language barriers, scheduling needs, and needing more data in order to better meet the needs of the students at NOVA. Table 7 displays the major and minor themes from the open-ended questions, related to the strengths and weaknesses of small group learning, in order to better meet the needs of diverse learners.

Table 7: Prominent Themes from Open-Ended Questions	
Prominent Themes	Also Mentioned
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Small Group learning is important 2. Not enough time & pacing restraints 3. Additional professional development is needed in various areas 4. Small class sizes are important 5. Additional materials/resources/personnel are needed 6. Differentiating/teaching to abilities is difficult 7. It is difficult to communicate with ELL students & parents 8. Expectations/routines/procedures are important during small group learning 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is important for all students to feel comfortable and supported 2. Accurate data are needed 3. Effective scheduling to align with services 4. Too much testing is occurring

Additional Findings

There were also outlier responses among the open-ended responses that should be considered. These are important to note because they still represent teacher concerns when supporting diverse learners in the classroom, as well as additional supports needed among the teacher participants, and could serve as a voice for other teachers at NOVA.

The outliers were kept in mind during further data analysis because these perspectives could affect outcomes in the classroom for students with diverse needs. Below are several outliers sorted by topic and are examined to uncover additional teacher concerns. The first set of outliers mentions time being a barrier, as well as indicating other reasons why more time is needed. Taking a closer examination will help identify other areas of improvement to support diverse learners.

Time

There were several perspectives on time:

1. “The existing reading program does not give the teacher time to differentiate instruction.”
2. “Not enough time in the day to do more ‘fun’ activities about diversity or culture.”
3. “It also takes a lot of time to plan and gather materials for small groups.”
4. “Despite many of our student needs such as mental health as well as academic, there is no time to help everyone.”

Restraint. The existing reading program may be preventing a teacher from differentiating for diverse learners. This disclosure prompts a need to incorporate training on strategies to differentiate learning within the reading program. This could be accomplished during classroom observations and modeling, as well as providing teachers time to share

successful ideas among themselves. A teacher also wanted to include instructional activities about diversity and culture in their classroom. This is a great way to help build a classroom community. However, the pressure of pacing charts to coincide with assessments prevent teachers like this one from wanting to do so, according to the review of the open-ended questions.

Implications for the Principal. I have heard teachers say that they wish more “fun” activities could occur in their classroom. Instead, unfortunately, there is always a sense of urgency to meet needs, deadlines, and goals. I agree, however, based on classroom observations, there is much work to be done with our students in other priority areas. Another teacher mentioned that it takes a lot of time to gather materials for small groups. This outlier is important because if teachers are not organized and prepared for small groups, it will be obvious to students, as well when the principal is in the classroom for an observation.

As principal, I observed that the most successful teachers have materials ready to go at stations or in a location for students to grab on their way over to centers. They also already took the time to have various materials across different skills pre-sorted, bagged, labeled, and stored for future use. When questioned, they responded with it was worth putting the leg-work in ahead of time so that the activities were readily available for students.

Student Needs

Another outlier is related to supporting students with mental health and academic needs. It was not this statement that caught my attention, but the last part which was, “...there is no time to help everyone.” It is important for classroom programs to include all students, and small group instruction is designed to do just that. Supporting the diverse needs of all students can be challenging for some teachers, but it is possible with the right teacher supports, and their

commitment. Below are more particular scenarios disclosed by teachers that emerged in the outliers.

Teacher Challenges

The findings revealed particular challenges teachers face in the classroom:

5. “There are particular student needs that are challenging cases and I appreciate the extra support.”
6. “The trouble I experience with small groups is a group not getting along. Misbehavior makes the whole thing [small group] undesirable to utilize as a teacher.”

When teachers are challenged, it is important for them to have a support system in place to rely upon for assistance. Students need more time with the teacher, instructional skill focused at their level developmental readiness levels, extra attention, and patience.

Challenges with Families

7. “Some of my Spanish speaking parents don’t even know how to read Spanish.”

The statement above speaks to the reality of some of our Spanish speaking families, and thus additional means to communicate with families and including them in their child’s education is essential. Parents are their child’s first teacher and advocate.

Designing Lessons

The study provided insight into the teachers’ views in their design of lessons, such as:

8. “My weakness is that I am not efficient in my time management when designing lessons.”

Designing effective lessons and incorporating small group learning activities that support all diverse learning needs is crucial, so claimed the participants. In the professional development training a word used was “intentional” and for good reason. What was evident during

professional development sessions was everything a teacher does in the classroom should be planned, calculated, timed, and intentional. During observations, the teacher who designed such lessons and followed through with them, had more successful outcomes the study revealed.

Retention of Students

This topic was indicative of a somewhat prevalent thought among the participants:

10. "Some students are being moved on and not being retained and then the start line is too far behind and we must play 'catch up' in the next grade."

This outlier was interesting because the teacher was referring to holding students back a grade because they did not make enough progress to move on to the next grade. If this were to happen, it would include so many diverse learners who are struggling in the general education classroom.

Identifying Weaknesses

On weaknesses, one participant stated:

11. "I do not have any weaknesses at this time."

As mentioned, the outliers were illustrative as they provided context in understanding additional teacher perspectives not found in the more prominent themes revealed in the data. The outliers were significant in that they help understand the other teacher perspectives outside of the emergent themes. The outliers are used to convey teacher voice during the continued analysis of the data, viz-a-viz the research questions.

Research Questions

Research Question #1: What are the attitudes and beliefs of teachers towards inclusive and equitable education in a diverse suburban elementary school?

As a whole, and based on the survey results, teacher participants at NOVA Elementary felt confident in their ability to support most students with diverse learning needs, and believe that these students can be successful in their inclusive general education classrooms with the availability of appropriate supports. Teacher participants also reported being in favor of small group learning, finding value in the strategy for diverse learners, and also offering suggestions to support diverse students moving forward even more. Although teachers disclosed needs of their own to deliver more effective practices, the majority seemed to have fully embraced small group learning, as well as the pedagogical issues surrounding the three sub-groups of learners examined in the study.

Research Question #2: How does teacher efficacy affect their outcomes related to inclusive and equitable education in this school?

Teacher participants felt confident in their ability to provide individual support to all students with disabilities and students of color. Furthermore, all teachers also felt confident in designing small group learning activities for students of color. This was not the case for English Language Learners, as more than a few teachers reported difficulty with communicating with this growing subgroup at NOVA. In addition, teachers in the lower grades reported difficulty during small group learning when managing students' engagement while at a different center. These types of outcomes result in fewer small group sessions, less interactions with English Language Learners, and, as reported, not what students of diversity can afford vis-a-viz their academic progress.

Teachers also reported needing additional professional development in various areas of need. Many included learning specific strategies related to further supporting each of the subgroup's needs, engagement strategies, time management strategies, small group lesson

planning, and skills such as differentiation techniques. The researcher sensed a certain amount of frustration on the teachers' part as, it was presumed, skill sets like these can enhance a teacher's efficacy and improve student outcomes in the classroom.

Research Question #3: What do elementary teachers report is needed in order to foster a more inclusive and equitable education for all of their students?

Many of the teachers expressed a weakness not being able to communicate with their ELL students in the classroom, nor with family members. Another need was having more time in the day for small group planning, gathering materials, and spending more quality instructional time with each small group during reading instruction. Teachers stated that there are too many tests, pacing restrictions, and large class sizes in some classrooms. They recommended additional paraprofessional or co-teacher support, more focused instructional materials, intervention materials, time to plan, professional development on requested strategies, and aligning all school-based services with the core curriculum schedule. There were many responses that asked for additional supports, resources, and more professional development on research-based practices, but no specifics were provided.

Aggregated Data

The results of the aggregated data depicted that most of the teachers at NOVA strongly believe that small group learning is extremely valuable to target needs and is beneficial for diverse students. Nevertheless, drilling down into the data, specific challenges and concerns still emerged. Narayan reminds us that inclusive and equitable practices are unpredictable, multidimensional, and always unfinished. It is her first principle for a reason; there is nothing easy about this work. It is not a box to check, nor is it a "one and done" strategy. Supporting

diverse students takes ongoing work, commitment, persistence, and patience. The more you do, the more you can learn, and the more you can discover.

Measuring the Responses using Naraian's Principles

By employing Naraian's Eight Principles of Effective Inclusive and Equitable Practices (2017), it will help to further organize the teacher responses and glean insights into to the research questions, in order to weigh them against what the principal reported as practices in place at NOVA. By taking this approach, it will demonstrate where NOVA currently stands in its quest towards inclusive and equitable education, especially with its most recent initiative of small group learning. Below are Naraian's principles listed in priority order, the supports at Nova as reported by the principal, and the responses reported by the teachers. ¹The principal is drawing on various sources of data including classroom observations and reflection, own experience, agendas, and open-ended teacher responses.

Principle #1: Teaching for inclusion is unpredictable, multidimensional, and always unfinished.

Principal Reported. Due to the diverse student population at NOVA, as principal I made the shift in school year 2019-2020 to initiate professional development (Appendix D) in the area of small group instruction, in order to further support students with diverse needs. There were three training sessions so far at the time of this report, along with ongoing formal and informal classroom observations, with immediate feedback given to the teachers. In this process, feedback to teachers was immediate via electronically.

For the purpose of this study, classroom observation visits occurred during small group instruction. I provided positive affirmations and gave suggestions to help improve teacher

¹ The principal who is also the researcher is drawing on the following sources of data: own experience, reflection, professional development agendas, classroom observations, discussions with teachers, open-ended survey responses, and personal notes. Most sources can be found in the Appendixes.

practices. Teachers had the opportunity to ask questions in return, or provide clarification as needed. Small group instruction is an ongoing learning process, and it will need time, persistence, and continued refinement in order to support the teachers, as well as the students.

Teachers Reported. According to the data, teachers at NOVA agreed with the importance of small group learning to support diverse student needs. However, finding enough time for small group learning in the reading block of instruction and how to maximize that time was a concern for many of the teachers. Their struggles appeared several different ways in the responses: “It takes a lot of planning time for many different lessons.” Another teacher mentioned, “Struggling students need multiple exposure to reading that matches their levels and often there isn’t enough time during the reading block to achieve this goal.” This teacher evidently is proactive when faced with lack of time, “Time is always a struggle when it comes to small group instruction. There is never enough time, so it is important to be organized and have firm routines in place to make the most of each small group time.”

Merging the Perspectives. Both the principal and teachers reported the need to continue to learn and provide additional ways to support diverse learners in the general education classroom. This can be accomplished by exploring new strategies; using research-based interventions; enhancing techniques; providing high-quality small group activities; and participating in relevant ongoing professional development. These perspectives align with Naraian’s 1st Principle, stating that inclusion is unpredictable, multidimensional, and always unfinished.

Principle #2: Teaching for inclusion is premised on a holistic understanding of all learners and a commitment to principles of social justice.

Principal Reported. As principal of NOVA, my passion is in inclusive and equitable education, and I lead NOVA this way by endeavoring to ensure that all students have the opportunity to be included in the general education setting with appropriate supports. In order to ensure all teachers are able to support diverse learners, training was provided during designated professional development time. Furthermore, additional training was held when time permitted, observations were conducted frequently, and immediate feedback was also provided so that timely instructional changes were made. Moreover, modeling was available for teachers from multiple instructional support leaders, with the goal to ensure equal and high-quality instruction for all students. As principal, it was also important for me to know whether the teachers of NOVA found value in the small group initiative. Most teachers did, but there were others who for their reasons, did not think it was worth it. For example, one teacher stated, “Small group takes away from whole group instruction for the remaining students.”

Teachers Reported. According to the survey, not only did teachers find value in small group learning for the students, indeed they also affirmed that all diverse subgroups can be successful in their classrooms. One teacher stated, “Small group learning is extremely valuable in the classroom. Children learn best in a small group setting. They feel more comfortable, supported, not judged by their peers, and have a higher learning success rate.” Teachers also reported a concern that they are having difficulty communicating with ELL students, stating, “I feel more comfortable meeting the needs of students who speak English. It is difficult to address the needs of ELLs because I cannot communicate with them” (in their native language). However, overall teachers reported feeling confident in supporting students with disabilities and students of color in the inclusive setting. There was one or two participants in both areas who indicated a lack of confidence.

Merging the Two Perspectives. Teachers at NOVA recognize that there are three subgroups of learners: students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students of color. Overall, every participating teacher felt confident that each of these subgroups could be successful in their classrooms. However, when responding to the remaining scaled questions pertaining to specific subgroup needs and in the open-ended questioning, teachers were very specific with their weaknesses citing that the Spanish language in particular was a barrier for them.

Next, there were teachers who reported their concerns when supporting students of color and those with disabilities. “I have not had the opportunity to work with many other students of color, and I am not confident in the skill set.” And, “I struggle somewhat with any form of intervention or modification for children of color.” Also, one reported, “The existing reading program does not give the teacher the opportunity or time to differentiate instruction.” These perspectives align with Naraian’s 2nd Principle relating to understanding all learners and the commitment of the school to principles of equitable school practices and social justice. With this principle, teachers understand student needs, as well as their own personal weaknesses, and thereby expressed a need for additional assistance and guidance.

Principle #3: Although teaching for inclusion requires a supportive school leadership and school culture, teachers make strategic decisions to foster inclusive practices within the classroom.

Principal Reported. As principal, I encourage democratic and distributive leadership practices at NOVA. I provide many opportunities for the teachers to make decisions in what I perceived are in the best interest of students. There are team leaders assigned to each grade and department to help with decision making and to gather input across the building. Students who

have specific diverse needs may be placed with particular teachers who have a specialized skill set to better support them, such as an English language certification, special education certification, or just possesses additional patience with students who require more attention.

At times, with students who may require more strategic instructional practices, I would assign to a teacher whom I believe has the skill set to meet those students' needs. While I performed my classroom observations, I would check in on these students and the teacher to offer any further support, especially during small group learning. Building a positive classroom community is vital. This groundwork at the beginning of the school year using the school wide positive incentive program, as one such strategy, will carry over into the instructional day, specifically during small group learning activities.

Teachers Reported. In the survey, teachers reported their classroom priorities as implementing procedures and routines; infusing academic and behavioral expectations; and taking steps to inculcate a culture of learning and student achievement. Some teachers mentioned setting goals, identifying student interests, and building a classroom community. There were other teachers who continued to struggle with their diverse learners and required additional support. These teachers reported, "Many of our students need mental health as well as academic support." Also, "Misbehavior makes the whole thing undesirable to utilize as a teacher. I feel the students are ill equipped to work in small groups."

Merging the Perspectives. As the principal, it is my responsibility to support all the teachers and to set and maintain the culture of the building. Overall, the teachers want to support all students and contribute to the decision making and even transfer those leadership skills over to their students. However, as one teacher stated, "Every class is full of diverse students and needs. We are all trying to balance schedules, time, needs, decisions, practice, all while

maintaining the culture.” Another teacher mentioned, “We need the time in the beginning of the year to get our routines modeled and practiced before we go heavy into the academics.” As Principal I perceive a possible need to revisit building wide routes several times throughout the year as well, in order to share the decision making as recommended in Naraian’s 3rd Principle: requiring a supportive school leadership and school culture with teachers making strategic decisions to foster inclusive practices with the classroom.

Principle #4: Teaching for inclusion entails balancing the limitations of time and placement with an emphasis on high-quality practice.

Principal Reported. As principal, I have embedded Professional Learning Community (PLC) time, team planning time, data meetings, Comprehensive Student Assistance Process (CSAP) meetings, and committee meetings into the weekly calendar in order to provide time for teachers to meet and plan. This is also a time when support and related service members can check in with grade teams to discuss diverse student needs as well. It is very difficult to add more time to the day, so it is important for teachers to maximize their time throughout the day, especially during small group instruction. One can only see a certain number of small groups in a reading or math instructional block, while completing a specific number of activities with them, and have different instructional materials available for each of those groups as they rotate in and out their small groups.

As Principal, I would advocate that the general education teacher have a co-teacher come into the classroom and offer instructional support. This person could be a special education teacher, English language teacher, paraprofessional, or someone from related services. The

available classroom materials may be used by them as well, in order to support all students in the general education classroom.

Teachers Reported. The survey results indicated the issue of time was a recurring theme in the data. Teachers reported needing more time to prepare for small group learning, through lesson planning, gathering materials, delving deeper with instructional practices, and meeting with more small groups during the day. Teachers also reported being in support of the current co-teaching model with ELL and learning support teachers, as well as related services. Another positive response was RTI (Response to Intervention) supports and the use of paraprofessional personnel in the classrooms. From a negative perspective, although there are various services pushing into the general education classrooms, there are some that do not always align with the schedule of the core curriculum. Therefore, students may be pulled out of another subject, or the service provider pushes in to the classroom, but outside of the desired core subject.

Merging the Perspectives. Although teachers have 40 minutes allotted for meeting and planning every morning, and a 40-minute period for daily preparation, it still does not seem to be enough time to plan for high-quality small group learning activities for all learners, considering all of their myriad of other professional responsibilities. Teachers are also finding it beneficial for their students to have services pushing into their classroom to co-teach their students. The extra set of hands are not only helpful, but serves a purpose during small groups. For example, a teacher stated, “A support teacher to co-teach is helpful to help with addressing the needs of the children or reinforce skills that are being taught.”

Performing observations, I also would see this need in some classrooms, especially those with higher student numbers, and physically smaller classrooms. Many students in general, let alone those in subgroups, often struggle with their personal space issues especially in tight-fitting

classrooms. This balancing of limitations of time and placement in the inclusive classroom with an emphasis on high-quality practice is Naraian's 4th Principle.

Principle #5: Teaching for inclusion necessitates the straddling of competing philosophies and frameworks of learning rather than a purist stance.

Principal Reported. As principal of NOVA, I am a fiercely strong advocate of the push-in model, as this is the core instructional program for the school's special education and English language programs, as well as for related services. Many staff are able to go into the general education classroom and not only support the students on their caseload in their natural environment, but may also find opportunities to support other students with diverse learning. These specialists will also be able to transfer valuable skills over to the general education teacher who can continue to use these same skills for those same students, in addition with others in the classroom. During classroom observations, successful push-in models with ELL supports, learning supports, autistic supports, and with speech services have been highly successful.

Teachers Reported. Teachers embraced the co-teaching model, and would desire the practice being enlarged. In the survey, teachers asked for more co-teaching opportunities, whether it was with a certified teacher or a paraprofessional as an extra support person in the classroom. One teacher stated, "Extra professional support is always more effective when teaching in small groups."

Merging the Perspectives. Teachers continued to ask for additional support in the classroom from various sources. Most the of the responses seemed to be for a co-teacher with a specialized skill set. Paradoxically, no one specifically asked for co-teaching in the area of language support, despite what the data revealed. One teacher did mention that her strength is

building relationships with English language teachers. In addition, the transference of skills beyond special education services for all diverse learners is crucial for diverse learners' needs. This philosophy of moving from the traditional special education language and practices approach, to all teachers working towards engaging in an inclusive pedagogy of sharing resources, services, and practices, is Naraian's 5th Principle.

Principle #6: Teaching for inclusion requires an active interpretive stance on the part of teachers to create cohesive classroom communities.

Principal Reported. As the principal, teachers are expected to create, implement, and facilitate small group learning in the form of centers or stations in an environment that is kind, caring, respectful, and where they are responsible for each student's learning. Students should be able to go to classroom centers, work independently if preferred, then collaboratively with peers at a center, with the teacher at a different center, and/or with a second adult at still another center. During my classroom observations, some teachers had pre-existing stations that were set up with materials and pre-labeled areas around the classroom that were ready for students at their leisure.

In other classrooms, teachers would use a table for themselves during independent work time, where they would meet with a small group, while the rest of the students were encouraged to find a place on the floor, in a chair, another small table, or somewhere around the classroom to work on a corresponding extended activity. This practice often did not engage students for long, which eventually led to off-task behaviors. One teacher reported, "It is challenging to provide meaningful work for students that are not in the small group with the teacher."

Teachers Reported. Teachers reported creating classroom communities that have expectations, routines, and procedures. They also opined about their small group learning centers and the associated strengths and weaknesses that go along with it. Teachers expressed the difficulty in the lower grades to keep students engaged at the other centers away from the teacher, as well as all of the planning that goes into each of the centers. Thus, those centers were not always accessible for students. One of the teachers stated, “It is important you have engaging and meaningful activities in centers for the rest of the students to complete and continue learning from, while you’re with a small group.”

Merging the Perspectives. Creating kind, respectful, caring, safe, and cohesive classroom communities are important for diverse student learners. In such an atmosphere, students strive to meet their maximum potential. The principal can create a school culture that fosters such an environment, however, the teacher must transfer this culture into their classroom, then into their instructional practices. As one teacher mentioned above, it starts with the classroom expectations, routines, and procedures. This drives how students respect each other, the teacher, and the learning environment. Creating such an environment takes time, focused action, persistence, and care. This active interpretive stance on the part of the teacher to create a cohesive classroom community is Naraian’s 6th Principle.

Principle #7: Teaching for inclusion necessitates enfolding families within the process of educators’ own professional growth; this is predicated on teachers’ openness to be transformed by families’ experiential knowledge.

Principal Reported. As principal, teachers are expected to use class online applications such as Classroom DoJo™ or Talking Points™ to stay in communication with families about their child. This is a great way for parents to communicate their needs to teachers before, during,

and after the school day, and it helps to mitigate some of the language barriers. At NOVA, we still need more parent participation during school events, especially when there is an instructional focus. When talking with the teachers, they ask for more parent participation, but it usually is for concerns such as not completing homework, frequent absences, addressing unwanted behaviors, not completing classwork, or to report a student's positive accomplishments. In sum, parents are contacted to share their child's academic and social progress.

Teachers Reported. There were limited teacher responses pertaining to teachers involving parents. One response pertained to a reason for a lack of parent participation, which included a language barrier with ELL students and their families. A teacher reported, "I would like to improve my Spanish fluency/literacy to be able to communicate better with Spanish-speaking families." Accordingly, another teacher reported speaking Spanish as a strength, "I have consistent home communication to involve parents/guardians in their child's education."

Merging Perspectives. This is an area of development for NOVA. Enfolding families within the process of teachers' own professional growth, by involving parents earlier on into their child's educational experiences to support with the shaping of curricular and instructional work, will be a new endeavor for NOVA. Families are typically invited in for various reasons and events, but individual programming is not one of them. The increase in family involvement, the component of teachers being open to enfolding families into education, contributes to their child's academic programming, is Naraiian's 7th Principle.

Principle #8: Teaching for and growing inclusion requires skills in adult education.

Principal Reported. Although NOVA has grade-level teams, department leaders, and PLC schedules, as principal, I believe we still have not tapped into the professional development

potential of the staff. In addition, more teachers can be encouraged to attend out-of-district professional development, which would include returning with turn-around training. Overall, professional development should be ongoing and focused on the needs of the students and teachers.

During classroom observations, at times it is apparent that additional training is needed with selected teachers. Just my feedback and/or modeling may not be enough for some teachers. Ongoing refresher courses, time to talk about challenges and successes with colleagues, and to share ideas is important. Currently, due to many district initiatives, time for professional development has been reduced significantly at the building level. I try to make time for mini-trainings in the mornings, however, it is with a limited number of teachers in attendance.

Teachers Reported. The teachers requested numerous training topics in order to address their self-disclosed needs, and to support the diverse needs of their students. The topics included, but were not limited to: Differentiation, engagement strategies, strategies to support ELLs, Spanish fluency, time management strategies when designing lessons, social/emotional learning, inclusion strategies, as well as interventions and modifications for diverse learners.

Merging the Perspectives. The teachers are asking for and require additional professional development to support and enhance their small group instructional practices. However, due to recent demands and shifts in district initiatives, more creative ideas are needed to find the time for this initiative to occur. Teacher leaders will be important for focused professional development, in order to capitalize on their skill set, as well as to highlight the wonderful successes they are finding with the practices they are using to support diverse student needs in their classroom. Utilizing teacher leaders and the significance of reflective practices, represents Naraian's 8th Principle.

Naraian's Theoretical Framework

Naraian's eight principles, derived from an understanding of inclusion, grounded in teachers' perspectives and equitable teacher practices, and are what she says is a more effective way to hone in on critical inclusive pedagogical design to support diverse learner needs. When merging the principal and teacher perspectives above, NOVA is moving in the right direction when it comes to teacher self-efficacy and the school's overall agency related to inclusive and equitable education. Teachers find value in small group learning and understand the benefits for diverse learners. On the survey, teachers were able to share their personal strengths and weaknesses, identify areas of professional development needs, additional resources and supports that would benefit diverse learners, and many voiced an appreciation for being asked to do so.

As revealed in the aggregated data, there is much potential to grow as a school for NOVA, especially when it relates to inclusive and equitable education. By using Naraian's principles, incorporating teacher responses, and using classroom observations, it encouraged success stories.

Disaggregated Data

The survey results were then disaggregated into frequencies and percentages for each of the teacher responses, in order to determine what patterns and other findings emerged. Presenting the data in this format teased out the data in a way that revealed more nuanced findings than the aggregated data. Three survey questions out of the ten were selected to be used for deeper analysis. The three questions were chosen based on what was surprising or interesting, and requiring further examination. The results of the first question chosen showed participant responses reflected 63.88% (23 out of 36 teachers) strongly agreed to feeling confident in their ability to provide appropriate intervention support for students of color; while only 27.02% (10

out of 37 teachers) strongly agreed feeling this way towards students with disabilities; whereas, only three teachers (8.33%) strongly agreed to feeling confident in their ability to provide appropriate intervention support for English Language Learners. Table 8 displays the disaggregated data. The full set of disaggregated data containing all ten questions are located in Appendix F.

Table 8: I feel confident in my ability to provide appropriate intervention support for student.							
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	10 27.02%	18 48.64%	8 21.62%	1 2.70%	0	0	37/39
English Language Learners	3 8.33%	25 69.44%	4 11.11%	4 11.11%	0	0	36/39
Students of Color	23 63.88%	10 27.77%	1 2.77%	2 5.55%	0	0	36/39

The next survey question and data that were disaggregated shows 61.11% (22 out of 36 teachers) strongly agreed in their confidence to provide examples of alternate explanations for students with disabilities when the students were confused with the curriculum; while 52.77% (19 out of 36 teachers) strongly agreed to using this practice for students of color; whereas only 41.66% reported (15 out of 36 teachers) reported providing this strategy for English Language Learners. Table 9 displays the disaggregated data. The full set of disaggregated data containing all ten questions is located in Appendix F.

Table 9: I provide examples and alternate explanations for student when they are confused with the curriculum.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	22 61.11%	12 33.33%	1 2.77%	1 2.77%	0	0	36/39
English Language Learners	15 41.66%	18 50%	2 5.55%	1 2.77%	0	0	36/39
Students of Color	19 52.77%	15 41.66%	1 2.77%	1 2.77%	0	0	36/39

The last survey question that I highlighted as ‘surprising’ or ‘interesting’ is how confident teachers felt about subgroups of students being successful in their classroom. Seventy-five percent of the teacher participants strongly agreed (27 out of 36 teachers) to feeling confident that students of color can be successful in their classroom. While only 45.94% (17 out of 37 teachers) strongly agreed that English Language Learners can be successful in their classroom. Teachers also reported feeling confident that students with disabilities can be successful in their classrooms as well with 45.71% (16 out of 35 teachers) strongly agreeing. The disaggregated data appears in Table 10. The full set of disaggregated data containing all ten questions is located in Appendix F.

Table 10: I feel confident that students with disabilities can be successful in my classroom.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	16 45.71%	14 40%	5 14.28%	0	0	0	35/39
English Language Learners	17 45.94%	18 48.64%	2 5.40%	0	0	0	37/39
Students of Color	27 75%	8 22.22%	1 2.77%	0	0	0	36/39

Performing a deeper analysis by disaggregating the data allowed the researcher to see teacher attitudes and beliefs through an additional lens. Disaggregating the data allowed for race to surface in a way that plays a part in the general education classroom. Here, we can now see how teachers truly feel about what support is needed in order to better help students of color, which is an area in the aggregated data that appeared not to be a concern. This phenomenon is discussed further in Chapter five.

Summary

This chapter examined the data that addresses the aforementioned research questions, based on the three subgroups of Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, and Students of Color. First explored were the themes found during the data analysis, followed by the teacher-participant responses assessed against Naraian’s (2017) Eight Principles of Effective Inclusion and Equitable Practices as the Theoretical Framework.

Once data were collected and analyzed, teacher confidence levels were assessed in relationship to each of the subgroups. Naraian’s Principles also permitted a closer look at teacher

attitudes and beliefs, and then weighed against the principal's observations. Prominent themes throughout the data were listed, which in turn, also further revealed outliers of individual teachers whose voices were also represented. Ultimately, all data were used to inform the research questions, explore teacher disclosed needs, and to investigate possible teacher support, in the best interest of diverse students' needs.

Teacher-participants felt confident in their ability to support diverse learner needs and believe that students can be successful with the right supports in place. Although teachers disclosed needs of their own to deliver more effective practices, the majority seem to have fully embraced small group learning, and the diverse learning needs of the three subgroups. Professional development, additional personnel, and better communication with the ELL subgroup were the most prominent supports needed.

This chapter also further revealed that supporting diverse student needs takes ongoing work, commitment, persistence and patience. Measuring teacher survey responses against Naraian's Principles (2017) provided a framework that can be used moving forward for NOVA, as a way to ensure that student needs are being met, and teacher support is always being considered.

Chapter five offers further discussion based on the aforementioned data analysis. Connections are made to literature and theory, along with implications for practice, as well as further recommendations for future research. Chapter five also moves this report forward with concluding thoughts that will surmise additional implications, based on all data presented.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine elementary teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy, along with their self-disclosed needs, in order to successfully create and maintain more inclusive and equitable practices at NOVA Elementary School. This chapter includes a discussion of major themes as related to the purpose of the study and the literature towards supporting diverse learners in the general education classroom. Also included is a discussion on implications and inferences derived from this study, as well as current theory related to inclusive and equitable practices. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the suggestions for classroom practices, limitations inherent in the study, recommendations for NOVA Elementary School, and areas for future research.

Specifically, the following research questions were examined:

RQ#1: What are the attitudes and beliefs of teachers towards inclusive and equitable education in a diverse suburban elementary school?

RQ#2: How does teacher efficacy affect their outcomes related to inclusive and equitable education in this school?

RQ#3: What do elementary teachers report is needed in order to foster a more inclusive and equitable education for all of their students?

Prominent Findings

The study's focus for teacher attitudes and beliefs towards inclusive and equitable education in a diverse suburban elementary school was predicated within teacher efficacy and fell within eight major themes: (a) small group learning is important, (b) not having enough time & pacing restraints, (c) additional professional development needed on various topics, (d) small

class sizes are important, (e) additional materials, resources, and personnel are needed, (f) differentiating and teaching to diverse abilities is challenging at best (g) it is difficult to communicate with ELL students and parents, and (i) expectations, routines, and procedures are important during small group learning. There were some factors related to areas out of the school principal's control; some were confirming current practices occurring in the classrooms that are working for diverse learner needs; others showed additional professional development, supports, and resource were needed. All of the themes listed above have the potential to further contribute to the increase in teacher efficacy if implemented at NOVA, thereby also further improving teacher attitudes and beliefs towards supporting diverse learner needs.

Recurring Themes

The use of time was an area that recurred among teacher responses. There were teachers who referred to needing support with time management; more time in the classroom with students, more time in small groups to better meet the needs of diverse learners, additional time with pacing charts; less testing, and learning how to write lesson plans so that time is factored into each activity, in order to maximize instructional time.

The professional development ideas and supports noted are all great examples of how teachers are thinking of ways to further support diverse student needs at NOVA. When reading all teacher comments on the subject, as principal and researcher, I felt privileged to have access to the needs of the students, as expressed by the teachers. The information is invaluable and can really propel NOVA into the right direction—which is moving closer to the goals of supporting all students, regardless of their needs, with more inclusion and equitable practices.

Literature Review

This study's major themes are consistent with the literature in that various teacher needs can be barriers for them to deliver effective inclusive and equitable practices, and some are out of the principal's control (Glazzard, 2011; Rosas & Winterman, 2010; Gilmour, 2018). Examples were time restraints in the classroom due to pacing charts and scheduled mandated high-stakes testing, concerns such as class size, additional personnel needed, and the need for more or specific resources and materials to help with student interventions.

There were also supports teachers requested that principals can incorporate into the school day, for example finding more ways in the day to teach to ability needs, establishing universal expectations, routines, and procedures, along with obtaining additional resources, realigning classroom supports, and finding time for targeted professional development needs in various areas and topics. Naraian (2017) pointed out in her work how important it is to give teachers voice when determining what is needed in the classroom, and how principals are a significant bridge of such a school culture. Glazzard (2011) emphasizes the importance of ongoing training for teachers, especially in areas of need. Professional development is important for teacher efficacy, as principals can then support teachers through classroom observations and feedback. If teachers do not get the training, they may not have the knowledge to draw from in order to support their students.

What principals do have control over must be maximized, such as finding time for professional development, sending articles or videos to teachers on areas of need, establishing building wide expectations, routines, and procedures, and ensuring building initiatives are being followed. Despite any barriers standing in the way of a school's vision towards inclusive and equitable education, the literature clearly reveals that equity efforts must require that

opportunities and resources reach all students, which challenges teachers and principals to reshape what they do as a whole to reach all of their learners in the classroom (Pollock, 2017).

Open-Ended Questions

Since teacher efficacy was a vital aspect of this study, teacher feedback about their current strengths with the small group learning initiative, and what additional supports are needed that emerged in the findings. For this reason, the open-ended section of the survey turned out to be the most significant data for the researcher, as the teachers provided insights that a building principal can only perceived when observing in the classrooms. The professional development topics and additional resources listed below are teacher requests reported in the best interests of the students, but also supports the teachers while leading the instruction in the classroom:

Teacher Requests

(1) [A desire for] “the most effective strategies to help ELL students in the general education classroom.” (2) “Additional hands in the classroom to better execute lessons and small groups.” (3) “Training on speaking Spanish.” (4) “More flexibility with instructional time would be helpful and having more instructional aids.” (5) “Research based materials and programs to assist students with diverse needs. As well as extra intervention support from other support teachers in the building.” (6) “Time to plan and share ideas would be beneficial.” (7) “Ongoing valid data and resources that are able to address the student needs.” (8) “That I could have help in the form of another educator and/or professional to aid in moderating the small group interactions.” (9) “Materials that are appropriate, adjustment to schedule and smaller class sizes.” (10) “More materials provided by the district.” (11) “It is advantageous when a reading specialist helps the most struggling students. More support is needed to help these students.” (12)

“Materials about various cultures to meet the needs of diverse students.” (13) “A support teacher to co-teach is helpful to help with addressing the needs of the children or reinforce skills that are being taught.” (14) It would be beneficial to me to have more ideas of meaningful things for my lowest level learners to do when I am working with other groups. (15) “The most effective strategies to help ELL students in the general education classroom.” (16) “PD/Training to support the challenging needs of students.” (17) “The education field is always evolving and new practices are always being introduced to better meet the needs of a diverse student population.” (18) “Engagement techniques.” (19) “I would need training to instruct the student of color population effectively.” (20) “More information is needed about student needs.” (21) “Lesson Planning and Time Management PD/Training.” (22) “More flexibility with instructional time would be helpful.” (23) “To not have so much testing or strict pacing guidelines, so more time can be used to research or celebrate the diversity in my classroom or building.” (24) “If would be beneficial to me to have more ideas of meaningful things for my lowest level learners to do when I am working with other groups.” (25) “Diversified manipulatives, programs and materials can be used to better meet the needs of diverse students in small groups.” (26) “Intervention materials to better meet the needs of these diverse learners.” (27) “PD/Training on ESL and inclusion strategies.” (28) “Time to help with student needs.”

Although this list is extensive, it is what the teacher participants listed as recommendations in the general education classroom to better meet the needs of all learners. Each recommendation is different which is why they were all listed. It is important to honor each teacher’s voice, especially when they were asked to provide additional supports needed to help promote a more successful class environment for diverse learners.

Teacher Voice

The teachers' list of requests for NOVA's student population is lengthy, however, each perspective has been represented. There are some areas at first glance that may appear the same, but, upon closer examination and scrutiny, there are significant variances. For example, the request for additional materials from one teacher relates to intervention support, from another for supporting cultural diversity in the classroom, and another teacher asking for materials to be purchased by the district office rather than the school itself. The above list of supports requested by teachers can also be used as additional professional development topics once the initial intentions of the responses have been met. These areas of supports and needs can also provide insight into what many teachers are thinking, where their pedagogical needs exist. Some may be addressed by the principal through observations and feedback. When a principal has an awareness of these needs during the daily school operation, they can slowly begin to be addressed.

Interpretations of the Findings

As mentioned previously, teacher efficacy played an important role in this study, teacher responses about their current strengths and weaknesses in the classroom, especially with small group instruction is crucial. Participating teachers reported that further support is needed to help refine what is currently in place at NOVA, and to be able to do their job in the most effective way possible to support diverse learner needs. Among other researchers, including Bandura, Brown & Royle (2014), showed a link between teacher attitudes, beliefs, and their efficacy in addressing student diverse needs in the classroom. In this study, a link was also found and the findings are interpreted below.

Teacher Attitudes and Beliefs at NOVA

Most of the participating teachers at NOVA strongly believe that small group learning is extremely valuable to target individual needs, and is highly beneficial for diverse students. However, they do cite some challenges when student needs are so specific. Glazzard (2011) states and this study also found that teachers are open to more training in narrowing the gaps of learners with diverse needs, and welcome additional supports and resources. Additionally, the need for additional professional development on various strategies to support with student engagement, learning the Spanish language, and to improve or differentiate instruction emerged multiple times across teachers' responses. The strategic support will increase teacher efficacy, which according to the literature will continue to improve teacher attitude and beliefs about supporting diverse learner needs (Forlin, Lorema, Sharma, & Earle, 2009; Loreman et al., 2007), thereby producing more successful student outcomes in the classroom. Overall, the participating teachers agreed that all students, regardless of their diverse needs can be successful in their classrooms with the proper resources and supports in place.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

In this study, participating teachers shared the need for additional professional development to gain more strategies and techniques, to improve their craft, and to better support the diverse learner needs of their students. In addition, there were requests for more resources and materials that would help provide meaningful changes to occur in the general classroom. All open-ended responses that participating teachers provided underscored the major themes that emerged in the study. The aforementioned list of responses was an important aspect of overall teacher-efficacy at NOVA because it was developed using the voices of the teachers. The next

steps will be to try and provide the supports and resources that participant teachers have requested.

Teacher education and training has a positive impact on not only the students, but also on the teachers themselves (Loreman, Sharman, & Forlin, 2013). When teachers are successful in the classroom, their students' success is enhanced as well. The literature continues to show teacher attitudes toward inclusive and equitable education is based on their self-efficacy. The higher teacher self-efficacy, the more supportive their attitudes and beliefs are towards all students in the classroom. This study further concludes, self-efficacy is a critical factor in teaching and learning, and a way to gauge student success using current teacher practices. Therefore, teachers indeed are a key element in the classroom and for the success of students with diverse needs (A.F. Gilmour, 2018).

Unexpected Findings

There were several unexpected findings that came out of the data. First, most of the participating teachers completed the first section of the survey rating themselves with what seemed to be overall high confidence levels in their ability to support all three student subgroups in their classrooms. Participating teachers scored a 96.37% confidence level when supporting students with disabilities, a 93.24% level with English Language Learners, and 98.32% level with students of color. Another unexpected finding, participating teachers were very specific about the strengths and weaknesses of small group learning during the open-end section of the survey, and even more candid about their self-disclosed needs. This was pleasantly surprising and very valuable information. The third unexpected finding was the consensus among the teachers of being at a disadvantage when interacting with the ELL students due to communication barriers.

The fourth unanticipated finding, and the most surprising, was the highest percentage of confidence reported on the survey regarding students of color. Historically, students of color are often recommended for special education services (US Department of Education, 2015), due to the lack of success in the general education classroom. Moreover, in the area where the teacher participants scored the lowest level of confidence for this same subgroup was in the teachers' ability to provide appropriate intervention support in the classroom. Finally, the last unexpected finding was with the subgroup of students with disabilities. The data showed that the lowest teacher confidence level was with assisting the families of these students in helping their child succeed.

The unexpected findings opened up a different set of questions for further research. Some potential questions are, but are not limited to, why are the teacher participants more confident about students of color? Does the lower amount of confidence reported with regards to interventions use with students of color include small group learning? Also, with students of color, it may be advantageous to follow student achievement data more closely to see if it correlates with teachers' data regarding self-efficacy. Or does it resemble more of the confidence levels represented in the responses for students with disabilities, as historically reported?

Rather than speculating or trying to create an explanation for the unexpected findings, it is best, in the principal's view, to leave these findings as they are, unexpected. They do not change the results of the study, nor shift the researcher's thinking away from the importance of using the data to support the vision of having an inclusive and equitable education for all students at NOVA, by way of enhancing teacher practices. The study's data remains invaluable for NOVA, as it seeks to improve all teachers' self-efficacy, based on the voices and courage of the participating teachers.

Connections to the Theoretical Framework

The study's findings are compatible with the literature regarding teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy being the most significant barriers to the success of inclusive and equitable practices in the general education classroom (Sokai & Sharma, 2013). Attitudes are critical because, according to the theory of reciprocal determinism, there is a relationship between teacher attitudes, beliefs, concerns, and their self-efficacy for inclusive and equitable education (Bandura, 1974). This connection was also made apparent in this study. Teachers felt confident in their ability to support all diverse learner needs in the classrooms, however they had a concern or a belief that various levels of professional development was still needed to improve their self-efficacy.

Although professional develop is needed to address specific teacher needs in order to support identified subgroups, there are building wide expectations, routines, and procedures that also need to be identified and put into place. Naraian's Principles (2017) will help with such universal practices. Naraian would agree, the results of this study are unfinished, just like inclusion. Revising each of the principles and using them as a framework towards continuous improvement at NOVA, keeps Naraian's principles at the forefront and in constant motion.

Naraian offers eight principles to use as a framework to assist in examining NOVA's teachers' self-efficacy, current supports in place, and the school's overall agency related to inclusive and equitable practices. These principles were measured against what was reported by the teachers and principal. Collectively, this study's findings using Naraian's principles shows that both the principal and teachers reported the need to learn and provide additional ways to support diverse learners in the general education classroom. Areas such as a language barrier with Spanish speaking students and families, finding time in the schedule for more

differentiation to support students with disabilities, as well as supporting teachers with interventions or modifications for students of color were reported. Along with the fact that diverse student learners also struggle with managing areas of time, space, and materials in the general classroom as well.

The principal and teachers' commitment to equitable school practices and social justice, helps with identifying personal, professional, and building level weaknesses, to work on as a school community. Through the use of Naraian's principles and elements from the review of the literature, it is the responsibility of the principal to set and maintain the culture of the school. Within the study's survey, teachers used their voices to express the needs of the students, thereby presenting their professional needs as well.

Additional findings included the need for a kind, respectful, caring, safe, and cohesive school culture that also carries into the classroom communities supporting diverse learner needs. Such a community also includes all teachers working towards engaging in an inclusive pedagogy of sharing resources, services, and practices. This is in lieu of having students removed from the classroom for special or individual services. This study's conclusions emphasized the need for additional professional development in multiple areas, including follow up training needed with the school's small group learning initiative. The last area where the study shows NOVA needing to grow as a whole is by involving parents earlier on into their child's educational experiences. Overall, NOVA did well against Naraian's principles, however additional growth is needed with principles #7 and #8.

Principle #7 is an area of development for NOVA because embracing families within the process of teachers' own professional growth, by involving parents, especially earlier on into their child's educational experiences to support with the shaping of curricular and instructional

work, is a new endeavor. This practice can be seen more in the special education program, and even among the teachers in the English Language Program due to laws, rules, regulations and policy in place. However, these practices need to be more of a focus with the general education teachers, as well as trainings offered to support teachers when approaching the Spanish language.

Principle #8 is also an area of development because in order for NOVA to truly improve in the area of inclusive and equitable practices, adult education is important, and thereby a higher feeling of self-efficacy for the teachers would potentially result. Ongoing professional development will be needed at the school in multiple areas of need to support teachers in their efforts. Also, strategically monitoring teacher practices thereafter will be necessary to measure the outcomes of the trainings. Teacher leaders should also be utilized for trainings to maximize the skill sets of those who are highly proficient or distinguished in desired areas. In addition, encouraging teachers to also seek training and educational experiences outside of the work day will be beneficial, as professional development time during the school year is often limited. Professional growth is important, as well as teacher personal growth towards inclusive and equitable education.

Implications for Practice

Naraian's principles are a great place to start each schoolyear at NOVA to ensure effective inclusive and equitable practices are being incorporated in the classrooms and school wide. According to the data, the emerging themes are the next area to focus on in order to embed teacher-led practices into the current school vision. As principal, it will be important to focus on what I can control at the building level, and make a commitment to keep these important themes as school goals to carry out and maintain each year. For example, teachers find important small group learning, small class sizes, as well as the need for appropriate and consistent expectations,

routines, and procedures for the benefits of small group learning to occur. These all should be made non-negotiables school wide with the principal setting the standard.

Teachers also reported needing professional development in areas such as differentiating instruction, communicating with ELL students and parents, as well as with classroom strategies to support diverse learner needs. These are doable professional development topics to work on and schedule throughout the school year. The last two areas that teachers reported are more out of a principal's control, but can be incorporated in different ways using some creativity. In particular, teachers reported not having enough time due to restraints related to district curriculum pacing mandates, along with needing additional materials, resources, and personnel to support diverse student needs. The creativity needed for these areas could include scheduling changes, realignment of support staff when it is possible, recruitment of volunteers, mentors, student teachers, and interns. The more hands there are in the school building, will bring more supports into the classrooms.

Disaggregated Data

When analyzing the disaggregated data, several questions came to mind due to the interesting, and in some cases surprising numbers centered around race that emerged. Although further examination and explanation is needed, it was important that the researcher approach this discussion with interest, curiosity, and the need for further research. When reviewing the question pertaining to feeling confident in their ability to provide appropriate intervention support for students, teachers strongly agreed in being more confident to better meet student needs of color.

As a researcher, this begs the question of whether these data indicate there is an assumption that it is easier to provide appropriate intervention support for students of color? Are

teachers more comfortable supporting students of color? More effective at supporting students of color? Or is it the belief that students of color need less intervention support, in comparison to students with disabilities and ELL students? With a historically disproportionate number of students in special education in Pennsylvania schools, how can teachers feel so confident in providing intervention support to students of color? Not only do students of color bring many diverse needs to the classroom, so many of them are often not successful in the general education environment, and are sitting in or recommended for special education services.

There seems to be many reasons to approach the results of these data with concern and curiosity. Although the teachers responded to the Likert-scaled questions with much confidence in meeting the needs of students of color, there was a different voice when reading over the open-ended responses. There, teachers requested support in multiple areas to help with better meeting the needs of all diverse subgroups, especially those of color and with disability needs. When not listing specific support needed, it was apparent when teachers listed weaknesses that were present. These areas of weakness also spoke to the support really needed, to best support the diverse student needs at NOVA. Some teachers were forthright in saying, “I would need training to instruct the students of color population effectively” and “I struggle somewhat with any form of intervention or modification for children of color.” The higher level of confidence the teachers reported towards students of color and why, also leads to wanting to know more about how they see their confidence towards the other subgroups, and why. Teachers reported feeling less confident in supporting English Language Learners, due to not speaking Spanish, and even lesser confidence when supporting students with disabilities.

However, there were some areas where confidence was shown when teaching all subgroups, such as one teacher stating, “I do not have any weaknesses.”, and another stating, “I

treat all of my students the same.” Although the same interventions, repetition, and goal setting for one group of students can often support all other diverse learners, there still should be some modifications, and seeing the difference between each subgroup of student needs in the classroom. This small shift in mindset towards the prevention of the disproportionate number of a specific race of students in the special education program, the specific needs of all student subgroups, as well as not making assumptions of any subgroup, especially those of color, will make a huge difference in any elementary school.

Data disaggregated also demonstrated more teachers strongly agreed to providing examples and alternate explanations for students with disabilities than any other subgroup. This is concerning because all diverse learners can benefit from this instructional strategy, therefore it should not be used as an accommodation for a student’s IEP. Assumptions like these, evoke questions such as whether teachers are teaching the same way to every student, despite their learning needs. There should never be an assumption that all students learn the same, have the same background knowledge, and can understand the content and concepts being taught in school the same way. There should always be opportunities for multiple examples and explanations, and even to invite students to share their personal examples with the class.

There were a couple of teachers who were very candid in responding in the Agree Somewhat and Disagree Somewhat columns of the Likert Scale. Overall, more research is needed to determine whether teachers teach the same way to all students, except possibly when they have an IEP. Also, more investigation is needed into how a student’s native language affects their learning in the classroom, as well as how it affects the delivery of the teacher’s instruction. This need was evident upon examining data from the open-ended questions.

The last question in the disaggregated data analysis is the teachers' confidence that students can be successful in their classroom. Teachers agreed overwhelmingly higher than any other subgroup that they feel confident that students of color can be successful in their classroom. As the researcher, I wondered why teachers were so confident in this area with students of color? What are they doing to support student learning for this subgroup in the classroom? Can teachers differentiate what they are successfully doing in the classroom for students of color that they may not do for the other subgroups? There is also a question about whether the teachers have good understanding of whether students of color are doing well in the general education classroom, or is there something else going on? Do many teachers really believe that students of color do not have any learning or diverse learning needs that require attention in comparison to the other subgroups? Or do they believe they are meeting all of their needs? The researcher approaches all of these questions with major curiosity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teacher attitudes, beliefs, and their self-efficacy drives their behaviors in the classroom. The higher teacher self-efficacy, the more supportive they are towards all students in the classroom. When teachers feel confident and are successful in the classroom, so are their students. School principals shape the school culture, as well as the inclusive and equitable practices that occur.

Race played a significant part in this study requiring further research, as teachers reported feeling more confident in their ability to support and meet the diverse needs of students of color, than students with disabilities, and finally English Language Learners. Teachers had the least confidence when supporting English Language Learners due to their perceived language barrier. Teacher confidence for students with disabilities was often similar to the ELL data, unless it was

based on questions related to compliance. In these cases, the disability subgroup confidence by the teachers was higher. If the data are a representation of the study site, there should be a smaller number of students of color, if any, in and recommended for special education services. However, just as in the literature, there continues to be a disproportionate number of students by race often recommended for the special education program.

Could it be that teachers initially perceive students of color as safe with no obvious disability needs? This would imply a limited sense of student background knowledge, which leaves a false impression of support needed, leaving gaps in student learning due to a disconnect between the content, what is actually being taught, and the support that is needed for comprehension. In the end, the disconnect is then attributed to other factors such as attendance, home environment, disengagement, an absent parent, single parent, et al. In these cases, teachers could believe that they provided all the support they could to help a student of color, however the referral for special education is ultimately recommended. Since students of color are often referred for special education services, teachers can do what they perceive as their best over time, not realizing that there were so many gaps in their learning (and instruction) from the start. Without early mandated Tier II intervention, specific instructional strategies, and some additions to the instructional program, students with such diverse learning needs fall farther behind, and will most likely need special programming at some point to help them catch them up.

This is in no way to pass judgment on teachers, especially not the teachers at NOVA, but rather the reality of what surfaced in the data. This reality is indicative of multiple concerns that need to be addressed in order for all students to be successful at NOVA, as well as a national and broader conversation for all diverse elementary schools. The larger question is how can we better help teachers to support students of color with diverse learning needs? In fact, understanding the

diverse needs of every subgroup population in elementary schools, and teaching to their needs, is vital in order for all students to be successful.

Another possibility that may have had a bearing on the survey results is the principal's race and positionality. Could the teachers have responded to all questions pertaining to students and race with higher confidence as not to disappoint the school principal, or do they truly feel confident in their ability, and can truly support students of color? The position of power that a principal has, especially being of color in a study like this could very well have an impact on the results, despite the precautions put into place to minimize it. However, the perception of the teachers is what drives the results of this study, therefore, their beliefs and attitudes regarding the principal must be considered. It would be difficult to think otherwise, unless the survey was completed by a principal who is not of color. Additional research is needed in this area, and all questions pertaining to race, positionality, and power. This additional research will inform teachers and school principals alike, as well as support all students, especially those of color.

Limitations

The primary limitations of this study were the relatively small sample size drawn from a single school within a diverse school district. Also, what could be perceived as a limitation, was the researcher was the principal of the school that was studied. However, in the best interests of the diverse learner needs at the study site, the researcher being the principal should be considered a great benefit towards the improvement of the school's inclusive and equitable practices. One surprising limitation found during the analysis was that the principal's race and positionality could have played a significant part in the study results. This was found in the aggregated data presented, and even more so in the disaggregated data analysis. There was also a risk of self-selection bias because participants volunteered to complete the survey.

Validity of the results was largely dependent upon the teachers' awareness of their own self-efficacy and attitudes, as well as their comfort with providing forthright and candid responses. It is also important to recognize that the survey represents a single snapshot, rather than an extended examination of the teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy over time. To account for these possible limitations, a Likert-like survey and open-ended questions were used, professional development documentations reviewed, principal observations, and analyzing all data collected using Naraian's Theoretical Framework.

Recommendations for NOVA

The findings in this study evoked additional questions, protocols, and areas for further research at NOVA. Therefore, the first recommendation for NOVA is to extend the research of the study. An extension of this study would be to continue it over an indefinite amount of time, following up with additional training on the current professional development topic of small group learning, slowly incorporating other supports and training requested by the teachers, and then reporting on these data, and their outcomes. Naraian's principles should continue to be used as fluid measures of success and a gauge for inclusive and equitable practices building wide. Continuing with frequent classroom observations, providing effective teacher feedback, tracking progress based on areas of training, and keeping the lines of communication open with teachers will be important for ongoing improvement, as directed by the principal. This will determine if teacher efficacy improves over time at NOVA, in which areas, and the outcomes for each specific student subgroup can be followed.

Future Research

The first recommendation is to use a universal protocol form when observing classrooms. This study used a self-reported survey, principal observations, professional development

training, and review of documents to describe current teacher efficacy. However, a protocol form for the observations was not used. The practice of using a universal protocol form will provide consistency when collecting data across each classroom related to teacher practices used, based on training provided, and can show what types of teacher feedback was given over time.

A second recommendation would be to use Naraian's principles on an ongoing basis as benchmarks for school improvement towards inclusive and equitable education. These principles can be a guide for any school, especially at the elementary level, whose school vision is often to support diverse learners' needs at an early age. In this study, the teachers of NOVA voiced their desire and the urgency to help diverse learners early on, before they move up in grade or age. The teachers clearly recognized the importance of early intervention and offered suggestions to help with this effort. In order to uphold this vision, the support must be provided to the teachers who are standing before their diverse group of students in the classrooms. Teachers must be equipped with the proper training and resources with a school leader who leads by example, and cultivates a school environment that supports Naraian's effective principles towards inclusive and equitable practices for the long-term benefits.

The third recommendation is for every school principal to conduct such a study at their school. As a principal, determining your teachers' attitudes, beliefs, current self-efficacy, and self-disclosed needs are empowering not only for the teachers, but also for the principal. A principal will gain not only a better understanding of their teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and efficacy, but also teacher behaviors, concerns, challenges within general education, supports needed, and the next steps for professional development. Most importantly, if principals allow themselves, they will also develop a closer connection to their teachers in this process.

The fourth recommendation is for principals of various diverse schools, and most importantly of various races to conduct a similar study. This will help determine whether the race of the principal impacts the results of the study. Showing the relationship between the race of a principal, their positionality, and the power it can have to sway survey results is something to pay attention to in this field of study. Such results and how they play out in a school and classroom, has significance on the outcome of students with diverse needs, especially when it comes to race. This finding in this study, can prove to be similar in future studies. Overall, it is worth the attention of all educational scholars.

The last recommendation would be for a principal conducting this study to keep a journal. It is important for a principal to reflect on their practices throughout the study to ensure that their biases are not getting in the way of the study results, nor their daily decisions in general. This is especially true at the elementary level where many principals do not have assistant principals to converse with about teacher and student needs. Journaling can be used as a way to release feelings at the end of an observation, end of a day, week, or after a meeting with a teacher struggling to get their footing in a new role. A journal can also be used to reflect upon entries to see the progression of success over time. If a principal continues to write over time, improvement can be reviewed over the years, so that the successes of inclusive and equitable education does not go unnoticed.

Summary

Data collected over the time period of the study, September 2019 to June 2020 reveals that the overall teacher confidence and self-efficacy at NOVA appears to be high. Nevertheless, when completing a deeper analysis, additional teacher support is needed to support all students with diverse learning needs. This was noticeable in the Likert-scaled survey results, the open-ended sections, and when using Narayan's principles. Teacher attitudes and beliefs are high and supportive, with an overall view that additional help is needed to increase teacher-efficacy in order for diverse learners to be more successful. This is the mindset needed for continuous change to occur in the general education classrooms at NOVA towards inclusive and equitable education.

Data also revealed the need to take a closer look at the race, positionality, and power of the principal with the teachers in a diverse school building. This adds a completely different element to an elementary school when it comes to supporting students and their diverse learning needs, as well as supporting today's teachers in meeting those needs. Only time will reveal the true outcomes of teacher-efficacy at NOVA. In the meantime, NOVA is headed in the right direction to better meet the needs of their students, it is the opinion of this researcher.

Glazzard (2011) states teachers need to celebrate student differences and diversity, and have the courage to experiment with new inclusive and equitable practices. He agrees that further research is needed to identify alternative pedagogies so that teachers can reshape their own style of inclusive and equitable practices, that support the students they serve, and fit their comfort level towards ongoing success. As the researcher of this study and the principal of NOVA, I concur. Teachers need to feel confident about their self-efficacy when teaching all students, especially those with diverse learning needs. Their confidence and classroom practices must also

match their students' outcomes as measures of their success. When this occurs, a spike in creativity and innovation is inevitable, and NOVA will truly be well on its way to supporting all of its students towards their vision of inclusive and equitable education.

The future of all students, especially those with diverse learner needs are dependent upon educators to finally "get it right". There is an obligation when serving in the position of an educator; one must commit to finding ways to help all students, even those whose needs appear more complex. In today's schools such as NOVA, we have many students who come with diverse needs requiring extra supports. School principals must learn to rally their teachers and create a culture that is not only a supportive system for the students, but also for the teacher. This type of leadership is important in today's diverse schools, and can only be facilitated by the principal. This study's conclusions provide evidence that significant progress can be made towards inclusive and equitable practices when principals examine their teachers' attitudes, beliefs, self-efficacy, and their self-disclosed needs towards inclusive and equitable education. Teacher attitudes and beliefs about teaching students in the general education classroom, and the overall impact of the teacher for all learner needs remains important (Cullen, Gregory, & Noto, 2010).

References

- Andrew, P., & Jonathan, T. (2006). Focus group method and methodology: Current practice and recent debate. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education, 29*, 23-37.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Process, 50*, 179-211.
- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (2005). The influence of attitudes on behavior. In D. Albarracín, B. T. Johnson, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *The handbook of attitudes* (pp. 173-221). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Alghazo, E. M., Dodeen, H., & Algaryouti, I. A. (2003). Attitudes of pre-service teachers towards persons with disabilities: Predictions for the success of inclusion. *College Student Journal, 37*, 515-522.
- Anyon, J. (1980). Social class and the hidden curriculum of work. *Journal of Education, 162*(1), 67-92.
- Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B. (2002). Teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 17*, 129-147.
- Baker, E. T., Wang, M. C., & Walbeg, H. J. (1994-1995). The effects of inclusion on learning. *Educational Leadership, 52*, 33-35.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*, 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist, 28*, 117-148.

- Beam, A. P. (2009). Standards-based differentiation: Identifying the concept of multiple intelligences for use with students with disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children Plus*, 5(4) Articles 1. Retrieved from <http://escholarship.bc.edu/education/tecplus/vol5/iss4/art1>
- Bender, W. N., Vail, C. O., & Scott, K. (1995). Teachers' attitudes toward increased mainstreaming: Implementing effective instruction for students with learning disabilities.
- Bonner, A., Francis, K & Mills, J. (2006). The development of constructivist grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), Retrieved from http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/bacjkissues5_1/html/mills.htm
- Boyle, C., Topping, K., Jindal-Snape, D., & Norwich, B. (2012). The importance of peer-support for teaching staff when including children with special educational needs. *School Psychology International*, 33(2), 167-184. 10.1177/0143034311415783
- Brady, K., & Woolfson, L. (2008). What teacher factors influence their attributions for children's difficulties in learning? *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 78(4), 527-544.
doi: 10.1348/000709907X268570
- Braunsteiner, M. L., & Mariano-Lapidus, S. (2014). A perspective of inclusion: Challenges for the future. *Global Education Review*, 1(1), 32-43.
- Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).
- Brown, C. G., & Royle, J. (2014). School administrators' perceptions of the achievement gap between African American students and white students. *Education Leadership Review of Doctoral Research*, 1(2), 85-95.
- Brown, J. R. (1996). *The I in science: Training to utilize subjectivity in research*. Oslo, Norway: Scandinavian University Press (Universitetsforlaget AS).

- Brownell, M. T., & Pajares, F. (1999). Teacher efficacy and perceived success in mainstreaming students with learning and behavior problems. *Teacher Education and Special Education Journal*, 22, 154–164. doi:10.1177/088840649902200303
- Bunch, G., Lupart, J., & Brown, M. (1997). Resistance and acceptance: Educator attitudes to inclusion of students with disabilities. *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED410713).
- Burney, V. H., & Beilke, J. R. (2008). The constraints of poverty on high achievement. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 31(3), 295-321. doi:10.4219/jeg-2008- 771.
- Carpenter, L.B., & Dyal, A (2001). Retaining quality special educators: A prescription from school principals in the 21st century, *Catalyst for Change*, 30(3), 5-8.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). Autism Spectrum Disorder [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html?scrllybrkr=a5df0a5e>
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through Qualitative analysis*. London, UK: Sage Publications Inc.
- Chester, M. & Beaudin, B. Q. (1996). Efficacy beliefs of newly hired teachers in urban schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 33, 233-257.
- Chiu, M. M, & Walker, A. (2007). Leadership for social justice in Hong Kong schools addressing mechanisms of inequality. *Journal of Educational Administration*. 45(6), 724-739.
- Coleman, J. M. (1983). Handicapped labels and instructional segregation: Influences on children's self-concepts versus the perceptions of others. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 6, 3-11.

- Conner, D., & Ferri, B. (2007). The conflict within: Resistance to inclusion and other paradoxes in special education. *Disability & Society, 22*, 63-77.
- Cook, B. G. (2002). Inclusive attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses of pre-service general educators enrolled in a curriculum infusion teacher preparation program. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 25*, 262-277.
- Cook, B. G., Tankersley, M., Cook, L., & Landrum, T. J. (2000). Teacher's attitudes toward their included students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 67*(1), 115-135.
- Cooley, E. J., & Ayres, R. R. (1988). Self-concept and success-failure attributions of nonhandicapped students and students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 21*(3), 174-178.
- Copeland, S. R., & Cosbey, J. (2008-2009). Making progress in the general curriculum: Rethinking effective instructional practices. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 33-4*(4-1), 214-227.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among the Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Education research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cullen, J. P., Gregory, J. L., & Noto, L.A. (2010). The teacher attitudes toward inclusion scale (TATIS) technical report. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association.
- Cummings, K. (2012). Motivating urban youth: Honoring the experiences of adolescents. *Art Education, 65*(6), 18-24.

- Daniel, L., & King, D. (1997). Impact of inclusion education on academic achievement, student behavior and self-esteem and parental attitudes. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 9(2), 67-80.
- Daniel, L. G., & King, D. A. (2001). Impact of inclusion education on academic achievement, student behavior and self-esteem, and parental attitudes. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 91(2), 67-80.
- De Mesquita, P. B., & Drake J. C. (1994). Educational reform and the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers implementing nongraded primary school programs. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 10(3), 291–302.
- Discrimination Prohibited, 34 C.F.R. § 104.4 (1998).
- Education Commission of the States. (2009). Special education: Overidentification. Retrieved from <http://www.ecs.org/html/issue.asp?issueid=112&subIssueID=119>
- Falvey, M. A., & Givner, C. C. (2005). *What is an inclusive school?* In R. Villa & J. Thousand (Eds.), *Creating an Inclusive School* (pp. 1-11). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Ferguson, D. L. (2008). International trends in inclusive education: The continuing challenge to teach each one and everyone. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 23(2), 109-120. doi: 10.10880/08856250801946236
- Fisher, A. (2007). Creating a different discourse. *Education, Citizenship, and Social Justice*, 2(2), 159-192.
- Florian, L., & Black-Hawkins, K. (2011). Exploring inclusive pedagogy. *British Educational Research Journal*, 813-828. doi:10.1080/01411926.2010.501096
- Ford, D. (2017). Diverse students need diverse resources. *Principal*, 96(3), 12-13.

- Forlin, C., Earle, C., Loreman, T., & Sharma, U. (2011). The sentiments, attitudes, and concerns about inclusive education revised (SACIE-R) scale for measuring pre-service teachers' perceptions about inclusion. *Exceptionality Education International*, *21*, 50-65.
- Forlin, C., Hattie, J., & Douglas, G. (1996). Inclusion: Is it stressful for teachers? *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, *21*(3), 199-217.
- Forlin, C., Keen, M., & Barrett, E. (2008). The concerns of mainstream teachers: Coping with inclusivity in an Australian context. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, *55*(3), 251-264.
- Forlin, C., Loreman, T., Sharma, U., & Earle, C. (2009). Demographic differences in changing pre-service teachers' attitudes, sentiments and concerns about inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *13*(2), 195–209.
doi:10.1080/13603110701365356
- Freeman, S. F. N., & Alkin, M. C. (2000). Academic and social attainments of children with mental retardation in general education and special education settings. *Remedial and Special Education*, *21*(1), 3-18.
- Friend, M. P., & Bursuck, W. D. (2009). *Including students with special needs: a practical guide for classroom teachers*. Custom ed. New York: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: Theories of multiple intelligences*. New York: BasicBooks.
- Gelbach, H. & Robinson, C. (2016). *Creating birds of a feather: The potential of similarity to connect teachers and students*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.
- Gibb, K., Tunbridge, D., Chua, A., & Frederickson, N. (2007). Pathways to inclusion: Moving from special school to mainstream. *Educational Psychology*, *23*(2), 109-127.

- Gibson, S., & Dembo, M. H. (1984). Teacher efficacy: A construct validation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 76*(4), 569-582.
- Glazzard, J. (2011). Perceptions of the barriers to effective inclusion in one primary school: Voices of teachers and teaching assistants. *National Association of Special Educational Needs, 26*(2), 56-63.
- Gorski, P. C. (2013). *Reaching and teaching students in poverty: Strategies for erasing the opportunity gap*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Gorski, P. C. (2016). Re-examining beliefs about students in poverty. *School Administrator, 73*(5), 17-20.
- Gregory, J. L., & Noto, L. A. (2012). Technical manual for attitudes toward teaching all students (ATTAS) manual. Paper presented at the *Council for Exceptional Children/Teacher Education Division Annual Conference*. Grand Rapids, MI.
- Griner, A. C., & Stewart, M. L. (2012). Addressing the achievement gap and disproportionality through the use of culturally responsive teaching practices. *Urban Education, 48*(4), 585-621.
- Hammond, H. (2003). Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion: Survey results from elementary school teachers in three southwestern rural school districts. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 22*(2), 24-30. Retrieved from https://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4052/is_200304/ai_n9201600
- Hammond, H., & Ingalls, L. (2003). Teachers' Attitudes toward inclusion: Survey results from elementary school teachers in three southwestern rural school districts. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 22*(2), 24-30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/875687050302200204>

- Hasazi, S. B., Johnston, A. P., Liggett, A. M. Schattman, R. A. (1994). A qualitative study of the least restrictive environment provision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. *Exceptional Children*, 60, 491-507.
- Hastings R. P., & Oakford, S. (2003). Student teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special needs. *Educational Psychology*, 23(1), 87-94.
- Hearne, D., & Stone, S. (1995). Multiple intelligences and underachievement: Lessons from individuals with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 28(7), 439-448. 585-621.
- Helmstetter, E., Curry, C. A., & Brennan, M. (1998). Comparison of general and special education classroom of students with severe disabilities. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 33(3), 216-227.
- Hogg, M. A., & Vaughan, G. M. (2014). *Social Psychology* (7th ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson
- Huber, K. D., Rosenfeld, J. G., & Fiorello, C. A. (2001). The differential impact of inclusion and inclusive practices on high, average, and low achieving general education students. *Psychology in the Schools*, 38(6), 497-504.
- Hunt, P. (1994). Evaluating the effects of placement of students with severe disabilities in general education versus special classes. *Journal of the Association for the Severely Handicapped*, 19(3), 200-214.
- Hunt, P. & Farron-Davis, F. (1992). A preliminary investigation of IEP quality and content associated with placement in general education versus special education classes. *Journal of the Association for the Severely Handicapped*, 17(4), 247-253.
- Idialu, J.U., & Odaman, O.M. (2010). Organisational development and change towards increased productivity in Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences* 6(2), 16-29.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 612.5.A (2004).

Jordan, A., Lindsay, L., & Stanovick, P. J. (1997). Classroom teachers' instructional interactions with students who are exceptional, at risk, and typically achieving. *Remedial and Special Education, 18*, 82-93.

Jordan, A., Schwartz, E., & McGhie-Richmond, D. (2009). Preparing teachers for inclusive classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(4), 535-542.
doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2009.02.010

Krashen, S., Lee, S., & McQuillan, J. (2010). An analysis of the PIRLS (2006) data: Can the school library reduce the effect of poverty on reaching achievement? *CSLAS Journal, 34*(1), 26-28.

Kvalsund, R., & Velsvik Bele, I. (2010). Students with special educational needs – Social Inclusion or marginalization? Factors of risk and resilience in the transition between school and early adult life. *Scandinavian Journal of Education Research, 54*(1), 15-35. doi: 10.1080/00313830903488445

Liasidou, A., & Antoniou, A. (2013). A special teacher for a special child? (Re)considering the role of the special education teacher within the context of an inclusive education reform agenda. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 28*(4), 494-506.

Lipsky, D. K. (2005). Are we there yet? *Learning Disability Quarterly, 28*(2), 156-158.

Lipsky, D., & Gartner, A. (1998). Taking inclusion into the future. *Educational Leadership, 56*(2), 78-81.

Litvack, M. S., Ritchie, K. C., & Shore, B. M. (2011). High- and average-achieving students' perceptions of disabilities and students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. *Council for Exceptional Children, 77*(4), 474-487.

- Lombardi, T. P., & Hunka, N. J. (2001). Preparing general education teachers for inclusive classrooms: Assessing the process. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 24*(3), 183-197.
- Loreman, T., Forlin, C., & Sharma, U. (2007). An international comparison of pre-service teacher attitudes towards inclusive education. *Disability Studies Quarterly, 27*(4). Retrieved from <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/53/53>.
- Lupart, J. (1998). Setting right the delusion of inclusion: Implications for Canadian schools. *Canadian Journal of Education, 23*(3), 251-264.
- Malinen, O., Savolainen, H., & Xu, J. (2012). Beijing in-service teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies, 28*(4), 526-534.
- Mandlawitz, M. (2007). *What every teacher should know about IDEA 2004 laws and regulations*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Martin, A. J., Dowson, M. (2009). Interpersonal relationships, motivation, engagement, and achievement: Yields for theory, current issues, and educational practice. *Review of Educational Research, 79*(1), 327-365.
- Maslow, A.H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*(4), 370.
- Maslow, A.H., Frager, R., & Cox, R. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed., pp. 1887-1904). New York: Harper & Row.
- McLeod, S. (2007). Maslow's hierarchy of needs: *Simply Psychology*(1). 1-4.
- Meijer, C., & Foster, S. (1988). The Effect of Teacher Self-Efficacy on Referral Chance. *Journal of Special Education, 22*, 378-385.

- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mills, A., Durepos, G. & Wiebe, E. (2010). Coding: axial coding. *Encyclopedia of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397.n54>
- Mostert, M. P., & Crockett, J. B. (2010). Reclaiming the history of special education for more effective practice. *Exceptionality*, 8(2), 133-143. doi: 10.1207/S15327035EX0802_4
- Muzvidziwa, I. (2015). Quality and equitable education in primary and secondary schools in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Social Development in Africa*. 30(2). 111-128.
- Narayan, S. (2017). Teaching for inclusion: Eight principles for effective and equitable practice. New York, NY, Teachers College Press.
- Neuman, S. B. (2016). Code red: The danger of data-driven instruction. *Educational Leadership*, 74(3), 25-29.
- Nolen, J. (2003). Multiple intelligences in the classroom. *Education*, 124, 115-120.
- Norrell, L. (1997). A case for responsible inclusion. *Teaching PreK-8*, 28, 17.
- Norwich, B., & Nash, T. (2011). Preparing teachers to teach children with special educational needs and disabilities: The significance of a national PGCE development and evaluation project for inclusive teacher education. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 11(1), 2-11. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-3802.2010.01175.x
- Oswald, D.P., & Coutinho, M.J. (2006). Why it matters: What is disproportionate representation? *The Special Edge*, 20(1), 1-4.
- Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of Educational Research*, 66(4), 543-578.

- Pietangelo, R., & Giuliani, G. A. (2006). *Learning disabilities: A practical approach to foundations, assessment, diagnosis, and teaching*. Boston, MA, Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
- Pollock, M. (2017). *SchoolTalk: Rethinking what we say about and to students every day*. New York, NY, The New Press.
- Prince, E. J., & Hadwin, J. (2013). The role of a sense of belonging in understanding the effectiveness of inclusion of children with special educational needs. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(3), 238-262. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2012.676081
- Pujol, P. (2018). Equity across America. *Principal* 97(4), 10-13.
- Rea, P. L., McLaughlin, V. L., & Walter-Thomas, C. (2002). Outcomes for students with learning disabilities in inclusive and pullout programs. *Exceptional Children*, 68(2), 203-222.
- Reeve, J. (2009). Why teachers adopt a controlling motivating style toward students and how they can become more autonomy supportive. *Educational Psychologist*, 44(3), 159-175.
- Related Services, 34 C.F.R. § 300.34 (2012).
- Richardson, R. C., Vafa, S., & Litton, F. (2017). Educating children in poverty. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 53(3), 116-119. doi:10.1080/00228958.2017.1334475
- Roach, V., Salisbury, C., & McGregor, G. (2002). Applications of a policy framework to evaluate and promote large scale change, *Exceptional Children*, 68, 451-464.
- Rosas, C. E., & Winterman, K. G. (2010). Teachers' perceptions on special education preparation: A descriptive study. *Journal of the American Academy of Special Education Professionals*, 119-128.

- Saklofske, D. H., Michayluk, J. O., & Randhawa, B. S. (1988). Teachers' efficacy and teaching behaviors. *Psychological Reports, 63*(2), 407-414.
- Samuels, A. J. (2018). Exploring culturally responsive pedagogy: Teachers' Perspectives on Fostering Equitable and Inclusive Classrooms. *SRATE Journal, 27*(1), 22-30.
- Sapon-Shevin, M. (2007). *Widening the circle: The power of inclusive classrooms*. Boston, Massachusetts. Beacon Press Books.
- Savolainen, H., Engelbrecht, P, Nel, M., & Malinen, O. (2012). Understanding teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy in inclusive education: Implications for pre-service and in-service teacher education. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 27*(1), 51-68.
doi: 10.1080/08856257.2011.613603
- Scherer, M. (2016). The question of inequity. *Educational Leadership, 74*(3), 7.
- Schulte, A. C., & Stevens, J. J. (2015). Once, sometimes, or always in special education: Mathematics growth and achievement gaps. *Exceptional Children, 81*(3), 370-387.
doi: 10.1177/00144029145636
- Schwandt, T. A. (2001). *Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Scruggs, T. E., Mastropieri, M. A., & McDuffie. (2007). Co-teaching in inclusive classrooms: Results of qualitative research from the United States, Canada, and Australia. *International Perspectives, 20*, 311-338
- Scruggs, T. E., Mastropieri, M. A., & McDuffie, K. A. (2007). Co-teaching in inclusive classrooms: A meta-synthesis of qualitative research. *Exceptional Children, 73*(4), 392-416.

- Sermier Dessemontet, R., Bless, G., & Morin, D. (2012). Effects of inclusion on the academic achievement and adaptive behavior of children with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 56(6), 579-587. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2788.2011.01497.x
- Sharma, U., Forlin, C., Loreman, T., & Earle, C. (2006). Impact of training on pre-service teachers' attitudes about inclusive education, concerns about inclusive education, and sentiments about persons with disabilities. *International Journal of Special Education*, 21(2), 80-93.
- Sharma, U., Loreman, T., & Forlin, C. (2011). Measuring teacher efficacy to implement inclusive practices. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 12(1), 12-21.
- Sharma, U., Loreman, T., & Forlin, C. (2012). Measuring teacher efficacy to implement inclusive practices. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 12(1), 12-21. doi: 10.1111/j1471-3802.2011.01200.x
- Shin, T., Davison, M. L., Long, J. D., Chan, C., & Heistad, D. (2013). Exploring gains in reading and mathematics achievement among regular and exceptional students using growth curve modeling. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 23, 92-100.
- Silverman, J. C. (2007). Epistemological beliefs and attitudes toward inclusion in preservice teachers. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 30(1), 42-51.
- Sirin, S. (2005). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A meta-analytic Review of research. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 417-453.
- Smith, R., & Leonard, P. (2005). Collaboration for inclusion: Practitioner Perspectives. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 38, 269-279.
- Sokal, L. & Sharma, U. (2013). Canadian in-service teachers' concerns, efficacy, and attitudes about inclusive teaching. *Exceptionality Education International*, 23(1), 59-71.

- Soodak, L. C., & Podell, D. M. (1993). Teacher efficacy and student problem as factors in special education referral. *Journal of Special Education, 27*, 66-81.
- Soodak, L. C., & Podell, D. M. (1996). Teacher efficacy and student problem as factors in special education referral. *Journal of Special Education, 27*, 66-81.
- Soodak, L. C., Podell, D. M., & Lehman, L. R. (1998). Teacher, student, and school attributes as predictors of teachers' responses to inclusion. *The Journal of Special Education, 31*(4), 480-497.
- Special Education, 34 C.F.R. § 300.39 (2012).
- Staub, D., & Peck, C. A. (1994-1995). What are the outcomes for nondisabled students? *Educational Leadership, 52*(4), 36-40.
- Subban, P., & Sharma, U. (2006). Primary school teachers' perceptions of inclusive education in Victoria, Australia. *International Journal of Special Education, 21*(1), 45-52.
- Tafti, M. A., Heidarzadeh, M., & Khademi, M. (2014). A comparison of multiple intelligences profile of students with and without learning disabilities. *International Journal of Applied Psychology, 4*(3), 121-125.
- Taylor, D., & Dorsey-Gaines (1988). *Growing Up Literate*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Teherani, A., Martimianakis, T., Stenfores-Hayes, T., Wadhwa, A., & Varpio, L. (2015). Choosing a qualitative approach. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education, 7*(4), 669-670.
- Terrell, S. (2016). *Writing a proposal for your dissertation*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Tremblay, P. (2013). Comparative outcomes of two instructional models for students with learning disabilities: Inclusion with co-teaching and solo-taught special education. *Journal of Research in Special Education Needs, 13*(4), 251-258.

- Ullucci, K. & Howard, T. (2014). Pathologizing the poor: Implications for preparing teachers to work in high-poverty schools. *Urban Education Journal*, 50(2), 170- 193.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2007). Building the legacy: IDEA 2004. Retrieved from <http://www.ideapartnership.org/oseppage.cfm?pageid=41>
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2015). Digest of Education Statistics, 2013. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=64>
- U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2016). Dear Colleague Letter: Preventing racial discrimination in special education, *Federal Register*, 81(243). Retrieved <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201612-racedisc-special-education.pdf>
- Van Reusen, A. K., Shoho, A. R. , & Barker, K. S. (2000). High school teacher attitudes toward inclusion. *High School Journal*, 84(2), 7-20.
- Vaughn, S., Elbaum, B. E., & Schumm, J. S. (1996). The effects of inclusion on the social functioning of students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 29(6), 598-608.
- Villa, R. & Thousand, J. (1995). Creating an inclusive school. *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*.
- Villa, R. A., & Thousand, J. S. (2003). Making inclusive education work. *Teaching All Students*, 6(2), 19-23.
- Villa, R. A., & Thousand, J. S. (2005) *Creating an inclusive school*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum and Development.

- Weisel, A., & Dror, O. (2006). School climate, sense of efficacy and Israeli teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice, 1*(2), 157-174.
- West, J. E., & Schaefer Whilby, P. J. (2008). Federal policy and the education of students with disabilities: Progress and the path forward. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 41*(3), 1-16.
- Winne, P. H., Woodlands, M. J., & Wong, B. Y. L. (1982). Comparability of self-concept among learning disabled, normal, and gifted students. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 15*(8), 470-475.
- Winzer, M. A. (1993). *The history of special education: From isolation to integration*. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.
- Woodcock, S., & Hardy, I. (2017). Probing and problematizing teacher professional development for inclusion. *International Journal of Educational Research, 83*, 43-54
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2017.02.008>.
- Woolfolk, A. E., & Hoy, W. K. (1990). Prospective teachers' sense of efficacy and beliefs about control. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 82*(1), 81-91.
- Worrell, J.L. (2008). How secondary schools can avoid the seven deadly “sins” of inclusion. *American Secondary Education, 36*(2), 43-56.
- Yell, M. L., Rogers, D., & Lodge Rogers, E. (1998). The legal history of special education. *Remedial & Special Education, 19*(4), 219-236.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent Form for Participation in an Electronic Survey

Rachel McClellan-Kirksey, Researcher

Purpose of the study

This study is being conducted as a student research project at Arcadia University. The study is designed to examine the attitudes, beliefs and self- efficacy of elementary teachers, along with their self-disclosed needs towards inclusive and equitable education. I am interested in finding ways to support elementary teachers in the classroom with diverse student needs.

Why are you being asked to participate?

Your participation is important because of your experiences in a diverse and inclusive school, and because you can provide insight from your position, which will bring an honest perspective to the project. You meet the inclusion criteria for participating because you hold one or more of the following certifications, General Education, Special Education, or English as a Second Language.

What will participation involve?

During this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey. Once you are finished, your participation in the study is complete. Filling out the survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes.

Are there any risks to participating?

This study involves minimal risk to participants' physical and psychological well-being that is no greater than one would encounter in everyday life. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer and you will not be penalized for leaving blank answers.

I think this study is important because it will make a contribution by identifying factors likely to improve inclusive and equitable education at the school level to promote positive school experiences for all students especially those with different or diverse needs. The decision to not participate in the survey will not affect your relationship with the school, district, or its administration. It will have no bearing on your employment status, assignment, salary, ability for promotion, support, or annual evaluation. Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the Superintendent of Schools.

What are the benefits?

While there are no direct benefits to you at this time, your participation in this study will help others learn more about inclusive and equitable education in diverse suburban schools.

How will your personal information be protected?

Names will not be collected in this study. The final published work will include only grouped results, and therefore it will not be possible to identify individual participants.

Will you be compensated?

There will be no compensation.

What if you don't want to participate?

Your participation is completely voluntary, you do not have to participate in the study. You may also withdraw at any time.

Consent

This study has been approved by the Arcadia University Institutional Review Board (IRB). To ensure that this research continues to protect your rights and minimizes your risk, the IRB reserves the right to examine and evaluate the data and research protocols involved in this project. If you wish to know more about your rights, please contact the Office for the Committee for the Protection of Research Subjects at (267) 620-4111.

If you would like to contact the student researcher or faculty supervisor to discuss this study, you may reach them by email:

Student: Rachel McClellan-Kirksey

E-mail: rmcclellan_01@arcadia.edu

Faculty Advisor: Graciela Slesaransky-Poe

E-mail: slesaranskypoe@arcadia.edu

“I have read the consent form. By clicking “Next” at the bottom of the screen, I agree that I meet all the inclusion criteria, and I agree to have information collected from the following survey to be used anonymously in this study. I understand that I can choose to leave a question blank if I would rather not answer it, and that I can exit the survey at any time.

Appendix B: Introduction Email

My name is Rachel McClellan-Kirksey. I am a currently an Educational Leadership Doctoral Student from Arcadia University. As part of my Dissertation, I am conducting an anonymous, online survey about the attitudes, beliefs and self-efficacy of elementary teachers towards inclusive and equitable education in a diverse suburban school. My goal is to find ways to support elementary teachers with diverse learner needs, during these changing times in education. You are receiving this email because you hold one or more of the following certifications identified for this study: General Education, Special Education, and English as a Second Language.

I have included the consent form for you to review prior to sending out the online survey. This way you can take your time reading it to learn more about the study and why you fit the criteria to participate. In two days, you will receive another email with the actual survey link to participate in the study.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Appendix C: Invitation and Online Survey Email

Hello again, my name is Rachel McClellan-Kirksey. As you know, I am a currently an Educational Leadership Doctoral Student from Arcadia University. As part of my Dissertation, I am conducting an anonymous, online survey about the attitudes, beliefs and self-efficacy of elementary teachers towards inclusive and equitable education in a diverse suburban school. My goal is to find ways to support elementary teachers with diverse learner needs, during these changing times in education. You are receiving this email because you hold one or more of the following certifications identified for this study: General Education, Special Education, and English as a Second Language.

Thank you in advance for taking part in this survey. Although you received a copy of the consent form two days ago, I have attached the same copy below in case you did not have a chance to read over it. Please provide consent by clicking yes below, the link will open, and you can begin the survey. If the survey does not open, please click next.

Thank you!

Appendix D: Online Survey**ONLINE SURVEY****Part I: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Thank you for participating in this study on inclusive and equitable education. Your responses will support this research project and potentially inform the field of education.

Directions: Please click on the answer that applies below.

1. Your teaching assignment or primary certification that you hold:
 - General Education
 - Special Education
 - English Language

2. How many years you have been teaching in education?
 - 0-5 years
 - 5-10 years
 - 10-15 years
 - 15-20 years
 - 20-25 years
 - More 25 years

Part II: Teacher Attitudes and Self-Efficacy for Inclusive and Equitable Education

In today's schools, teachers are expected to teach students from a wide range of diverse backgrounds and needs. The purpose of this survey is to determine factors that influence teacher attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy, when fostering an inclusive and equitable education for students with disability needs and diverse learners. Diverse learner is defined, but not limited to, cultural/linguistic/racial backgrounds, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, family composition, religion, varying reading levels, English language proficiency, homelessness, trauma, depression, needing related services, or have mental and behavioral health challenges. The survey questions should be answered based on the current systems and structures in place in your school.

Directions: Please select the number that best represents your opinion for each of the statements below. Since there are no right or wrong answers, please respond honestly and candidly.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Disagree Somewhat	4 Agree Somewhat	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
I feel confident in making students with disabilities feel comfortable in my classroom. (RQ#2)						
I am confident in my ability to assist families of English Language Learners in helping their child do well in school. (RQ#1)						
I am confident in my ability to get and keep students of color engaged in learning activities. (RQ#1)						
I am confident in my ability to get English Language Learners to work together in pairs or small groups. (RQ#1)						
I am confident in designing small group learning activities for students of color. (RQ#2)						
I feel confident in my ability to provide appropriate intervention support for students with disabilities. (RQ#1)						
I feel confident in my ability to provide individual support to all English Language Learners. (RQ#2)						
I feel confident that English Language Learners can be successful in my classroom. (RQ#1)						
I am confident in designing small group learning activities for students with disabilities. (RQ#2)						
I am confident in my ability to get students of color to work together in pairs or small groups. (RQ#1)						

I know how to design appropriate instructional practices for English Language Learners. (RQ#2)						
I am confident in my ability to assist the families of students of color in helping their child do well in school. (RQ#1)						
I am confident in my ability to get students with disabilities to work in pairs or small groups. (RQ#1)						
I feel confident in making students of color feel comfortable in my classroom. (RQ#2)						
I am confident in my ability to get and keep students with disabilities engaged in learning activities. (RQ#1)						
I provide examples and alternate explanations for students of color when they are confused with the curriculum. (RQ#2)						

I feel confident in my ability to provide appropriate intervention support for English Language Learners. (RQ#1)						
I am confident in designing small group learning activities for English Language Learners. (RQ#2)						
I feel confident that students of color can be successful in my classroom. (RQ#1)						
I provide examples and alternate explanations for students with disabilities when they are confused with the curriculum. (RQ#2)						
I feel confident in my ability to provide individual support to all students of color. (RQ#2)						
I know how to design appropriate instructional practices for students with disabilities. (RQ#2)						

I feel confident in my ability to provide appropriate intervention support for students of color. (RQ#1)						
I provide examples and alternate explanations for English Language Learners when they are confused with the curriculum. (RQ#2)						
I am confident in my ability to assist families of students with disabilities in helping their child do well in school. (RQ#1)						
I feel confident in my ability to provide individual support to all students with disabilities. (RQ#2)						
I know how to design appropriate instructional practices for students of color. (RQ#2)						
I feel confident in making English Language Learners feel comfortable in my classroom. (RQ#2)						
I am confident in my ability to get and keep English Language Learners engaged in learning activities. (RQ#1)						
I feel confident that students with disabilities can be successful in my classroom. (RQ#1)						

Source: Adapted from the ATTAS Survey (Sharma et al. 2012; Gregory & Noto, 2012)

Part III: Open-Ended Response

1. Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses when supporting diverse students. What kind of support do you need in order to better meet their needs? (RQ#2, RQ#3)

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of small group learning? What additional support is needed in order to better meet the needs of diverse students in small groups? (RQ#3)

****Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input is valuable and much appreciated. Thank you for all that you do!!*

Appendix E: Professional Development Agendas

Professional Development
Improving Instruction
August 29, 2019

1. Instructional Model
 - a. Whole Group
 - b. Small Group

2. Across Reading and Math
 - a. Lecture is the least effective instructional strategy, with only 5 to 10 percent retention after 24 hours.
 - b. Engaging in a discussion, practicing after exposure to content, and teaching others are much more effective ways to ensure learning retention.

3. Improving Instructional Delivery
 - a. To ensure more teaching and learning occurs.
 - b. To ensure students have more opportunities to respond and receive constructive feedback
 - c. Select appropriate assessments-multiple data points (screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring)
 - d. Use data to determine what students know, can do and need.
 - e. Set expectations for performance
 - f. Provide skills- focused, systematic, explicit instruction
 - g. Use data to group students
 - h. Provide intensive intervention for struggling students by increasing instructional and decreasing group size, provide more opportunities for reteaching and guided practice.

4. Data collection
 - a. Formative Assessments
 - i. Anecdotal – data collected during Guided Reading, Exit Slips, during independent practice
 - b. On-going Assessments
 - i. Lesson or Weekly Quizzes
 - c. Summative Assessments
 - i. Unit Tests
 - ii. Chapter Tests
 - iii. Beginning, Middle, and End of Year – Can be considered diagnostic or summative

5. Flexible Grouping
 - i. The key to successful grouping is FLEXIBILITY and using what works to achieve the instructional purpose
 - ii. As data is collected/observed students move in and out of groups

Note: Mixing skill levels within small groups using high/medium and medium/low skill groupings is most effective for teacher-led instruction and guided practice

6. Small Group Instruction Advantages

a. Teachers

- i. Teachers form a more personal relationship with students.
- ii. Teachers gain a deeper understanding of student needs for modification.
- iii. Teachers are more informed and equipped for decision making, planning and teaching.

b. Students

- i. Students receive better instruction.
- ii. Students have more opportunities to express what they know and receive feedback from other students.
- iii. Students are more engaged and have more opportunities for responding and applying information.

7. Pros

- a. Differentiated instruction is effective for all students; high-ability students as well as students with mild to severe disabilities.
- b. Students take on more responsibility for their own learning.
- c. Students appear to be more engaged in learning
- d. There are reportedly fewer discipline problems in classrooms where teachers provide differentiated lessons.

8. Equality

- a. “Equality means giving everyone equal opportunities to learn, not teaching everyone exactly the same way.”

9. English Language Learners

a. WIDA Levels

- i. Entering 1.0-1.9
- ii. Beginning 2.0-2.9
- iii. Expanding 3.0-3.9
- iv. Bridging 4.0-4.9
- v. Reaching 5.0-6.0

b. ELA Placement

- i. WIDA 1.0-2.9 National Geographic
- ii. WIDA 3.0-3.4 Wonders with support
- iii. WIDA 3.5 – 5.0 Wonders

10. ELL Assessment

a. National Geographic

- i. Benchmarks
- ii. Unit tests

- b. Ongoing
 - i. Key Words Tests
 - ii. Oral Language Rubrics
 - iii. Reading Strategy Tests
 - iv. Unit Self-Assessment
 - c. Wonders
 - i. Participate in all assessments given in the Wonders classroom
11. Things to look for in an ELD classroom
- a. Oral English language production (student-student, student-teacher)
 - b. Explicit instruction of vocabulary, concepts, language structures, study skills and educational materials
 - c. Use of student background knowledge to increase comprehension and build student confidence
 - d. Flexible grouping
 - e. Collaborative activities
 - f. Ongoing formative assessment to guide instruction

Professional Development: Guided Math
October 8, 2019

PowerPoint Slides

1. What is Guided Math
2. Why is Guided Math Important?
3. How is Guided Math different from Guided Reading?
4. How does Guided Math work?
5. Does every math lesson lend itself to centers or choices?
6. What do math centers look like?
7. How do I fit it all in?
8. What types of centers/choices can you use?
9. What does a typical weekly schedule look like?
10. Which centers can be frequent/daily?
11. Getting started with Guided Math
12. What can I do now that students are a centers?

*****PowerPoint and videos will be sent to teachers*****

Professional Development Preparation
November 5, 2019

Needs:

Decks of cards

Questions for ice breaker

Power Point

Snacks/Drinks

Data video or Why early literacy is so important?

Small-group instruction video

8:30 - 9:00 ----- Ice Breaker

9:00 - 9:50 ----- Count off by 5's by grade level. Get into groups, hand out district data. Assign a note taker to complete data analysis sheet based on DISTRICT DATA

9:50 - 10:00 ---- Debrief/Takeaways/Further implications

10:00 - 10:15 --- Break

10:15 - Count off by 5's again - we want different groups

10:30 - 11:45 - Look at your INDIVIDUAL DATA within your small group.

- What are the strengths
- What are the needs
- Any overlap among each other as far as the data
- Based on data, each person shares a WIN lesson around one of your strengths and one of your needs
- Use template given ?? or google doc (idea below)
- GOAL: to come away from this with 5 different ideas to address weaknesses and 5 different ideas to address strengths. If you have additional time additional activities can be planned OR you can plan for your WIN groups for the next week or two.

11:45- 12:15 - Come back as a big group (maybe K and 1??) share a WIN lesson from google doc. Group can ask questions/make any additional suggestions

Google doc CREATED BY SMALL GROUP (then shared with whole group):

SKILL: ACTIVITY: MATERIALS NEEDED: ADDITIONAL
COMMENTS

12:15 - 1:15 – LUNCH

1:30 - 2:45 - Look at your INDIVIDUAL DATA within your small group.

- What are the strengths
- What are the needs
- Any overlap among each other as far as the data
- Based on data, each person shares a WIN lesson around one of your strengths and one of your needs

- Use template given ?? or google doc
- GOAL: to come away from this with 5 different ideas to address weaknesses and 5 different ideas to address strengths. If you have additional time additional activities can be planned OR you can plan for your WIN groups for the next week or two.

2:45 - 3:00 Break

3:00 - 3:30 Come back as a big group share a WIN lesson from google doc. Group can ask questions/make any additional suggestions.

WIN Period: Small Intervention Groups & Instructional Needs
November 5, 2019

-----The Morning Schedule Session -----

9:00- 9:50- Kindergarten to Room 2 & First grade to room 11

1. Within grade teams get into small groups (4-5 in group w/ multiple buildings).
2. Using chromebook individual groups will analyze BOY district Dibels data.
3. Using a chromebook each small group will complete a Data Analysis doc. Specifically looking at strengths and weaknesses district wide.
4. Based on the strengths and weaknesses, how can we use our Wonders and Foundations programs to fill the gaps and enrich students? (next steps)

9:50- 10:00- (All Purpose Room) Debrief/ Takeaways/ Further Implications.

-----The Morning Schedule Session 2-----

10:15- Return to Kindergarten & 1st grade classrooms.

Break into small groups

(4-5 in group w/ multiple buildings, different from Session 1)

10:30- 11:45- Look at individual data within small groups

1. Using chromebook individual teachers will analyze BOY classroom Dibels and/ or Foundations data
2. Using a chromebook individual teachers will complete a Data Analysis doc. Specifically looking at strengths, weaknesses and next steps within your classroom.
3. Based on the strengths and weaknesses, how can we use our programs to provide our students what they need through our WIN period?

4. Doc. will be provided and each teacher will come up with one WIN intervention for a weakness and a strength.

11:45- 12:15- Grade level group will discuss WIN activities that small groups came up with. (Q&A) suggestions.

-----The Afternoon Schedule-----

1:30- Begin with 2nd Grade in Library

. Break into small groups (4-5 in group w/ multiple buildings, different from Session 1)

1:45- 3:00- Look at individual data within small groups

1. Using chromebook individual teachers will analyze BOY classroom Dibels and/ or Foundations data
2. Using a chromebook individual teachers will complete a Data Analysis doc. Specifically looking at strengths, weaknesses and next steps within your classroom.
3. Based on the strengths and weaknesses, how can we use our programs to provide our students what they need through our WIN period?
4. Doc. will be provided and each teacher will come up with one WIN intervention for a weakness and a strength.

3:00- 3:30- Grade level group will discuss WIN activities that small groups came up with. (Q&A) suggestions

Appendix F: Aggregated and Disaggregated Data Results

Aggregated Survey Data for all Subgroups

Survey Responses Pertaining to Students with Disabilities Subgroup

Students with Disabilities	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Total Agreed	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Disagreed	# of Participants
I feel confident in making students with disabilities feel comfortable in my classroom. (RQ#2)	17	18	3	37/38 97.3%	0	0	1	1/38 2.7%	38/39
I feel confident in my ability to provide appropriate intervention support for students with disabilities. (RQ#1)	10	18	8	36/37 97.2%	1	0	0	1/37 2.8%	37/39
I am confident in designing small group learning activities for students with disabilities. (RQ#2)	11	20	4	35/37 94.5%	2	0	0	2/37 5.5%	37/39
I am confident in my ability to get students with disabilities to work in pairs or small groups. (RQ#1)	11	17	6	34/35 97.1%	1	0	0	1/35 2.9%	35/39

I feel confident in my ability to get and keep students with disabilities engaged in learning activities. (RQ#1)	11	21	2	34/36 94.4%	2	0	0	2/36 5.6%	36/39
I provide examples and alternate explanations for student with disabilities when they are confused with the curriculum. (RQ#2)	22	12	1	35/36 97.2%	1	0	0	1/36 2.8%	36/39
I know how to design appropriate instructional practices for students with disabilities. (RQ#2)	10	22	2	34/36 94.4%	2	0	0	2/36 5.6%	36/39
I am confident in my ability to assist families of students with disabilities in helping their child do well in school. (RQ#2)	12	19	2	33/36 91.6%	3	0	0	3/36 8.4%	36/39
I feel confident in my ability to provide individual support to all students with disabilities. (RQ#2)	12	16	8	36/36 100%	0	0	0	0/36 0%	36/39

I feel confident that students with disabilities can be successful in my classroom. (RQ#1)	16	14	5	35/35 100%			0	0	0	0/35 0%			35/39
Averaged Agreed/ Disagreed Responses:	96.37%						3.63%						Avg. # of Participants 36.2 (92.82%)
RQ#1 Averaged Responses:	97.2 %	97.1 %	94.4 %	91.6 %	100 %	96.0 6%	2.8 %	2.9 %	5.6 %	8.4 %	0 %	3.94%	5/5 Questions Each
RQ#2 Averaged Responses:	97.3 %	94.5 %	97.2 %	94.4 %	100 %	96.6 8%	2.7 %	5.5 %	2.8 %	5.6 %	0 %	3.32%	5/5 Questions Each

Survey Responses Pertaining to English Language Learners Subgroup

English Language Learners	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Total Agreed	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Disagreed	# of Participants
I feel confident in making English Language Learners feel comfortable in my classroom. (RQ#2)	17	16	3	33/36 91.6%	0	0	0	0/36 8.4%	36/39
I feel confident in my ability to provide appropriate intervention support for English Language Learners. (RQ#1)	3	25	4	32/36 88.8%	4	0	0	4/36 11.2%	36/39
I am confident in designing small group learning activities for English Language Learners. (RQ#2)	7	23	3	33/36 91.6%	3	0	0	3/36 8.4%	36/39

I am confident in my ability to get English Language Learners to work in pairs or small groups. (RQ#1)	18	19	2	39/39 100%	0	0	0	0/39 0%	39/39
I feel confident in my ability to get and keep English Language Learners engaged in learning activities. (RQ#1)	11	21	1	33/39 84.6%	2	0	0	2/35 15.4%	35/39
I provide examples and alternate explanations for English Language Learners when they are confused with the curriculum. (RQ#2)	15	18	2	35/36 97.2%	1	0	0	1/36 2.8%	36/39
I know how to design appropriate instructional practices for English Language Learners. (RQ#2)	6	19	10	35/37 94.5%	1	0	1	2/37 5.5%	37/39
I am confident in my ability to assist families of English Language Learners in helping their child do well in school. (RQ#1)	2	23	11	36/39 92.3%	2	1	0	3/39 7.7%	39/39
I feel confident in my ability to provide individual support to all English Language Learners. (RQ#2)	8	17	9	34/37 91.8%	3	0	0	3/37 8.2%	37/39
I feel confident that English Language Learners can be successful in my classroom. (RQ#1)	17	18	2	37/37 100%	0	0	0	0/37 0%	37/39
Averaged Agreed/Disagreed Responses	93.24%				6.76%				Avg. # of Participants 36.8 (94.35%)

RQ#1: Averaged Responses:	88.8%	100%	84.6%	92.3%	100%	93.14%	11.2%	0%	15.4%	7.7%	0%	6.86%	5/5 Questions Each
RQ#2: Averaged Responses:	91.6%	91.6%	97.2%	94.5%	91.8%	93.34%	8.4%	8.4%	2.8%	5.5%	8.2%	6.66%	5/5 Questions Each

Survey Responses Pertaining to Students of Color Subgroup

Students of Color	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Total Agreed	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Disagreed	# of Participants
I feel confident in making students of color feel comfortable in my classroom. (RQ#2)	21	13	1	35/35 100%	0	0	0	0/35 0%	35/39
I feel confident in my ability to provide appropriate intervention support for students of color. (RQ#1)	23	10	1	34/36 94.4%	2	0	0	2/36 5.6%	36/39
I am confident in designing small group learning activities for students of color. (RQ#2)	18	17	3	38/38 100%	0	0	0	0/38 0%	38/39
I am confident in my ability to get students of color to work in pairs or small groups. (RQ#1)	19	16	1	36/37 97.2%	1	0	0	1/37 2.8%	37/39

I feel confident in my ability to get and keep students of color engaged in learning activities. (RQ#1)	17	19	3	39/39 100%	0	0	0	0/39 0%	39/39
I provide examples and alternate explanations for students of color when they are confused with the curriculum. (RQ#2)	19	15	1	35/36 97.2%	1	0	0	1/36 2.8%	36/39
I know how to design appropriate instructional practices for students of color. (RQ#2)	17	14	4	35/36 97.2%	1	0	0	1/36 2.8%	36/39
I am confident in my ability to assist families of students of color in helping their child do well in school. (RQ#1)	10	20	5	35/36 97.2%	1	0	0	1/36 2.8%	36/39
I feel confident in my ability to provide individual support to all students of color. (RQ#2)	24	11	1	36/36 100%	0	0	0	0/36 0%	36/39

I feel confident that students of color can be successful in my classroom. (RQ#1)	27	8	1	36/36 100%	0	0	0	0/36 0%	36/39				
Averaged Agreed/ Disagreed Responses	98.32%						1.68%				Avg. # of Participants 36.5 (93.58%)		
RQ#1 Averaged Responses:	94.4 %	97.2 %	100 %	97.2 %	100 %	97.76%	5.6 %	2.8 %	0 %	2.8 %	0 %	2.24%	5/5 Questions Each
RQ#2 Averaged Responses:	100 %	100 %	97.2 %	97.2 %	100 %	98.88%	0 %	0 %	2.8 %	2.8 %	0 %	1.12%	5/5 Questions Each

RQ3: Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses when supporting diverse students. What kind of support do you need in order to better meet their needs?

Strengths	Weaknesses	Support Needed
-Classroom expectations -Modeling	-So much academic pressure -Pacing -Do not have time to get to know the students -Pressure from admin to maximize instructional time -No enough time to listen and talk with each other	-Additional PD -Materials needed
-Affording diverse students opportunities to match their interests, learning styles, and cultures when designing a lesson.	-Existing reading program does not give the teacher the opportunity or time to differentiate instruction. -Pacing is a concern -Not having available materials for all learnings	-Time -Materials -Less pressure around pacing
-Having a positive relationship with students and their parents	-Every class is full of diverse students and needs	

<p>-Creating an environment where students feel accepted and support. -Strives to help students feel safe in order to feel comfortable to take risks and make mistakes.</p>		
<p>-Strong with engagement strategies. -Clear goals -Having high expectations -Positive classroom environment that is inclusive of individual student backgrounds.</p>		<p>-Resources -Effective technology -Additional strategies to add to my existing knowledge</p>
<p>-Good at supporting all different types of students of color, diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and other students who have experienced depression, anxiety, OCD, ADD/ADHD and other disabilities. -If I had this population, I would make them feel comfortable and successful in my room.</p>	<p>-ELL students -Students with severe disabilities -Never had these learners in my class because of what I teach (they do not qualify for my program) -This is a weakness for me because I never experienced this population.</p>	
<p>-Working with students with disabilities. -I provide individualized support based on needs and deficits determined from a baseline. -I utilized research based assessments to drive instruction and make the learning meaningful.</p>	<p>-ELL population because I am not able to speak Spanish.</p>	
<p>-I feel confident in making all learners feel comfortable in my classroom, so they can learn and grow. -Building a strong sense of community.</p>	<p>-There are particular student needs that are challenging cases and appreciate extra support.</p>	<p>-PD/Training needed with challenging needs of students. -The most effective strategies to help EL students in the general education classroom.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I feel more comfortable meeting the needs of students who speak English. -Difficult to address the needs of ELL because I cannot communicate with them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Need for specific strategies to help the ELL.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Talking Points has helps, but some parents can't read Spanish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The hardest part for me is communicating with non-English speaking families. -Some parents don't even one how to read Spanish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -English Parent Workshops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I have a graduate certificate in TESOL and graduate degree in Special Education, so I feel comfortable supporting diverse learners in the classroom. -I keep language proficiencies, accommodations and modifications in mind when differentiating general education curriculum. -The education field is always evolving and new practices are always being introduced to better meet the needs of a diverse student population. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Staying informed and receiving training on these practices would help teachers better meet student needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Worked with ELLs for 18 years, and some have had disabilities. -Extremely confident, secure, and knowledgeable with my teaching skills for this demographic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I have not had the opportunity to work with many other students of color, and I am not confident in the skill set. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I would need training to instruct the student of color population effectively.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I keep in mind my students' needs as I create my lessons. -I try to make the lessons as engaging and interesting as possible. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Additional hands in the classroom to better execute the lessons.

	<p>-I need to know more about what can be expected academically of each individual student with autism or a learning disability, or trauma from their homeroom teacher.</p> <p>-The SDIs if ab IEP don't give you that information.</p>	<p>-More information is needed about student needs.</p>
<p>-I treat all my students the same.</p> <p>-I teach to their abilities.</p>		
	<p>-I would like to improve my Spanish fluency/literacy to be able to communicate better with Spanish-speaking families.</p>	
<p>-The school has many supports in place.</p>		
<p>-My strength is individualized programming for students with disabilities.</p> <p>-I can successfully keep them engaged individually and in small groups so they can progress and master skills.</p> <p>-I feel confident in my ability to teach diverse students of color and needs.</p>		<p>-Areas of improvement are working with English Language Learners.</p>
<p>-I look for ways to have every child succeed.</p> <p>-I alter my teaching methods to best accommodate the needs of the students.</p>	<p>-My weakness is that I am not efficient in my time management when designing lessons.</p>	<p>-Lesson Planning and Time Management PD/Training</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Meeting each child where he or she is academically. -Being able to plan individualized work centers for each child while maintaining a rigorous classroom atmosphere where no child feels that what they are working on is inferior or different from anyone else. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More flexibility with instructional time would be helpful. -Having more instructional aides.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Having students make connections to their background and culture during instruction. -Using various modalities of learning during instruction. -Consistent home communication to involve parents/guardians in their child’s education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Only speaking English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -PD/Training on learning Spanish and social/emotional learning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Speaking with other teachers and adults in the building. -Attending Cultural Proficiency meetings. -Speaking with the students and their families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No enough time in the day to do more “fun” activities about diversity or culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To not have so much testing or strict pacing guidelines, so more time can be used to research or celebrate the diversity in my classroom or building.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Working the district for 5 years. -Understanding the population. -Building relationships with ELL teachers. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Having consistent support with agency teaching assistants to understand our population of children of color and disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Confident in my ability to identify my students strengths and weaknesses academically using data and understanding them as learners. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Research based materials/program to assist students with diverse needs. -Extra intervention support from other support teachers. (RTI).

<p>-I have many tools and strategies to implement support to diverse students with many years of teaching. -I have been in different grade levels. -Effectively filling in gaps for students that are very far from grade level expectations.</p>		
<p>-Support diverse students is not difficult. -Skills can be reviewed and reinforced in small group and independent center activities.</p>	<p>-Finding the time within the pacing guidelines is the most difficult. Monitoring students while working with a small group is always a challenge.</p>	
<p>-Co-Teaching is a strength and is beneficial to many students.</p>	<p>-Many of our student needs (mental health as well as academic) -Not enough time to help everyone.</p>	<p>-Class size -Time to help with student needs.</p>
<p>-I have become stronger in terms of helping ELL and students with disabilities in my classroom.</p>	<p>-I struggle somewhat with any form of intervention or modification for children of color.</p>	<p>-PD/Training to support students of color.</p>
<p>-I tried to take classes on ESL and other inclusion strategies.</p>		<p>-PD/Training on ESL and inclusion strategies.</p>

RQ3: What are the strengths and weaknesses of small group learning? What additional support is needed in order to better meet the needs of diverse students in small groups?

Strengths	Weaknesses	Support Needed
<p>-Small group learning allows for direct instruction to address individual student needs.</p>	<p>-Smaller classes sizes are needed.</p>	<p>-Additional staff needed -Intervention materials to better meet the needs of these diverse learners.</p>
<p>-Small group learning allows me to customize the lesson and provide instant feedback to the student.</p>	<p>-Small group takes away from whole group instruction for the remaining students.</p>	

<p>- Small group plans a huge part. Crating cohesive group are very important as well as instructional levels.</p>		
<p>-Small group instruction is highly effective.</p>	<p>-Time is always my biggest struggle. -Some groups need more time and teacher support to grasp concepts independently.</p>	<p>-Extra professional support is always more effective when teaching in small groups.</p>
<p>-Small group learning is extremely beneficial to all students. -It allows teachers to provide direct instruction and bridge knowledge gaps. -Students should be familiarized with small group rotations, routines and procedures.</p>	<p>-Small groups can cause off task behaviors.</p>	<p>-Diversified manipulatives, programs and materials can be used to better meet the needs of diverse students in small groups.</p>
<p>-Small groups are a great way to meet the needs of every student.</p>	<p>-Time is always a struggle when it comes to small group instruction. There is never enough time, so it is important to be organized and have firm routines in place to make the most of each small group time.</p>	<p>-Having additional paraprofessionals to support is always welcome in efforts to make small groups the most valuable at all times.</p>
<p>-Small group learning is extremely effective in meeting students' diverse needs.</p>	<p>-ensuring that effective activities are being independently completed by the students not in the group.</p>	<p>-In the younger classrooms, additional support in the classroom is needed.</p>
<p>-It takes time for students to be confident and effective in working with others and relying on each other for support. -This needs to be explicitly modeled, taught and practices.</p>		

<p>-Small group learning is extremely valuable in the classroom. -Children learn best in a small group setting. -They feel more comfortable, supported, not judged by their peers, and have a higher learning success rate.</p>	<p>-Having engaging and meaningful activities/lesson in centers for the rest of the students to complete and continue learning from them.</p>	<p>-Have paraprofessionals in every classroom.</p>
<p>-Small group learning is ideal.</p>	<p>-It is challenging to provide meaningful work for students that are not in the small group with the teacher. -It also takes a lot of time to plan and gather materials for small groups.</p>	<p>-Time to plan and share ideas would be beneficial. -Continued Cultural Proficiency professional development is very helpful. -More support in the classroom and more pull-out or push-in grouping would also be beneficial to meet the needs of diverse students.</p>
<p>-I love small group learning.</p>	<p>-I do not have any weaknesses at this time.</p>	
<p>-The strengths of small group learning is the ability to target needs, set specific goals and advance growth and achievement.</p>	<p>-Small group learning is if it is activity driven, rather than being intentional and need focused.</p>	<p>-Ongoing valid data and resources that are able to address their student needs.</p>
<p>-Small group learning creates natural ways to teach social skills and leadership. -Helpful student supports include a hierarchy of prompting, visuals, and checklists. -Assigned group roles with clear definitions to help facilitate appropriate behavior.</p>		
<p>-I like the collaborative aspect of small group learning. -I also like how it gives students a chance to interact with someone they may not normally talk to thus developing new relationships.</p>	<p>-In order to truly meet the needs of these small groups, I wish that the overall class size was smaller.</p>	<p>-That I could have help in the form of another educator and/or professional to aid in moderating these small group interactions.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The trouble I experience with small groups is a group not getting along. -Questions from other groups who are not in the group with the teacher. -Misbehavior makes the whole thing undesirable to utilize as a teacher. -I feel the students are ill equipped to work in small groups. 	
		-More instructional aids are needed and flexibility with time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Small group learning is beneficial when working on specific skills and with regards to reteaching and pre-teaching. -I believe it supports students with learning and emotional needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -At times I think that some of our students are not given enough small group instruction due to outside factors including staffing, push for inclusion, the law, number of children needing support, and scheduling. 	
-Students are group according to their abilities so I can meet their instructional needs.		
-Scheduling conflicts for services (ELL, speech, Resource Room, etc.)	-The students can easily drift off topic in small groups.	- building more rapport with the students will improve this.
-Being able to tailor instruction, see very clearly students' learning gaps, more comfortable for students to ask questions to clarify learning.	-The amount of time available to give quality instruction with each group also requires more planning time as well as meaningful work for other students who are not working with the teacher.	-Materials that are appropriate, adjustment to schedule and small class sizes.
-Small group learning gives me a chance to see what my students really need and what areas they are successful in without much extra support.		

<p>-Providing students with more direct, individualized instruction.</p>	<p>-Students often have behavior issues in the lower groups, which disrupts instruction, and time restraints.</p>	<p>-More materials provided by the district.</p>
<p>Is best when students can work both with others and independently within a group.</p>	<p>I feel you need a range of ability that is enough for peer support but not too wide to impact the success of the students negatively.</p>	
<p>-When small groups are flexible then they can be successful. -Can also be successful when you have the time and flexibility to meet with all learners including those who don't struggle. -Providing each group with unique lessons that match their needs is instrumental. -Guided reading should not be used for students who are reading above grade level and enrichment groups should reflect and match the needs for these students.</p>	<p>-Struggling students need multiple exposure to reading that matches their levels and often times there isn't enough time during the reading block to achieve this goal.</p>	<p>-It is advantageous when a reading specialist helps the most struggling students. -More support is needed to help these students.</p>
<p>-Small group learning assists in better meeting the needs of students. -Small groups are flexible for various math and reading concepts. The students can work together and have engaging conversations.</p>		<p>-Materials about various cultures to meet the needs of diverse students.</p>

<p>-You get to know the students' abilities and personalities. -More attention is given to the children in small group settings. -Your instruction is geared to that group and you can address their needs. -You are able to listen to each "voice" and their opinions without them feeling embarrassed. -I really like the WIN time so that needs can be addressed.</p>	<p>-A lot of planning time for many different lessons. -No support staff to help with small groups (para, co-teaching). -Some students are being moved on due to not being retained and then the start line is too far behind and we must ply "catch up." -The expectations, routine and feel the confidence in themselves before you can move on. -Students need to trust and respect you as a teacher and visa-versa.</p>	<p>-A support teacher to co-teacher is helpful to help with addressing the needs of the children or reinforce skills that are being taught. -Limited supplies for lessons. -We need to have support staff. -Keep the WIN time. -Have support staff during that time. -We need the time in the being of the year to get our routine modeled and practiced before we go heavy into the academics.</p>
<p>-This year I really worked hard to develop lessons for small group (especially in the area of reading). -I make centers specific to each group I had in my classroom.</p>		<p>-If would be beneficial to me to have more ideas of meaningful things for my lowest level learners to do when I am working with other groups.</p>
<p>-You can better address individual needs and design instruction to match those needs.</p>	<p>-To make sure that you have other activities that are equally as engaging for the students that are not included in the small group</p>	

Disaggregated Survey Data for all Subgroups

(Data below is presented in frequencies and percentages for each response across all questions, and comparing each subgroup)

1. I feel confident in making students with disabilities feel comfortable in my classroom.
2. I feel confident in making English Language Learners feel comfortable in my classroom.
3. I feel confident in making students of color feel comfortable in my classroom.

(RQ#2)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	17 44.73%	18 47.36%	3 7.89%	0	0	1 2.63%	38/39
English Language Learners	17 47.22%	16 44.44%	3 8.33%	0	0	0	36/39
Students of Color	21 60%	13 37.14%	1 2.84%	0	0	0	35/39

1. I feel confident in my ability to provide appropriate intervention support for students with disabilities.
2. I feel confident in my ability to provide appropriate intervention support for English Language Learners.
3. I feel confident in my ability to provide appropriate intervention support for students of color.

(RQ#1)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	10 27.02%	18 48.64%	8 21.62%	1 2.70%	0	0	37/39
English Language Learners	3 8.33%	25 69.44%	4 11.11%	4 11.11%	0	0	36/39
Students of Color	23 63.88%	10 27.77%	1 2.77%	2 5.55%	0	0	36/39

1. I am confident in designing small group learning activities for students with disabilities.
2. I am confident in designing small group learning activities for English Language Learners.
3. I am confident in designing small group learning activities for students of color.

(RQ#2)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	11 29.72%	20 54.05%	4 10.81%	2 5.40%	0	0	37/39
English Language Learners	7 19.44%	23 63.88%	3 8.33%	3 8.33%	0	0	36/39
Students of Color	18 47.36%	17 44.73%	3 7.89%	0	0	0	38/39

1. I am confident in my ability to get students with disabilities to work in pairs or small groups.
2. I am confident in my ability to get English Language Learners to work in pairs or small groups.
3. I am confident in my ability to get students of color to work in pairs or small groups.

(RQ#1)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	11 31.42%	17 48.57%	6 17.14%	1 2.85%	0	0	35/39
English Language Learners	19 46.15%	19 48.71%	2 5.12%	0	0	0	39/39
Students of Color	19 51.35%	16 43.24%	1 2.70%	1 2.70%	0	0	37/39

1. I feel confident in my ability to get and keep students with disabilities engaged in learning activities.
2. I feel confident in my ability to get and keep English Language Learners engaged in learning activities.
3. I feel confident in my ability to get and keep students of color engaged in learning activities.

(RQ#1)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	11 30.55%	21 58.33%	2 5.55%	2 5.55%	0	0	36/39
English Language Learners	11 31.42%	21 60%	1 2.85%	2 5.71%	0	0	35/39
Students of Color	17 43.58%	19 48.71%	3 7.69%	0	0	0	39/39

1. I provide examples and alternate explanations for student with disabilities when they are confused with the curriculum.
2. I provide examples and alternate explanations for English Language Learners when they are confused with the curriculum.
3. I provide examples and alternate explanations for students of color when they are confused with the curriculum.

(RQ#2)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	22 61.11%	12 33.33%	1 2.77%	1 2.77%	0	0	36/39
English Language Learners	15 41.66%	18 50%	2 5.55%	1 2.77%	0	0	36/39
Students of Color	19 52.77%	15 41.66%	1 2.77%	1 2.77%	0	0	36/39

1. I know how to design appropriate instructional practices for students with disabilities.
2. I know how to design appropriate instructional practices for English Language Learners.
3. I know how to design appropriate instructional practices for students of color.

(RQ#2)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	10 27.77%	22 61.11%	2 5.55%	2 5.55%	0	0	36/39
English Language Learners	6 16.21%	19 51.35%	10 17.57%	1 2.70%	0	1 2.70%	37/39
Students of Color	17 47.22%	14 38.88%	4 11.11%	1 2.77%	0	0	36/39

1. I am confident in my ability to assist families of students with disabilities in helping their child do well in school.
2. I am confident in my ability to assist families of English Language Learners in helping their child do well in school.
3. I am confident in my ability to assist families of students of color in helping their child do well in school.

(RQ#1)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	12 33.33%	19 52.77%	2 5.55%	3 8.33%	0	0	36/39
English Language Learners	2 5.12%	23 58.97%	11 28.20%	2 5.12%	1 2.56%	0	39/39
Students of Color	10 27.77%	20 55.55%	5 13.88%	1 2.77%	0	0	36/39

1. I feel confident in my ability to provide individual support to all students with disabilities.
2. I feel confident in my ability to provide individual support to all English Language Learners.
3. I feel confident in my ability to provide individual support to all students of color.

(RQ#2)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	12 33.33%	16 44.44%	8 22.22%	0	0	0	36/39
English Language Learners	8 21.62%	17 45.94%	9 24.32%	3 8.10%	0	0	37/39
Students of Color	24 66.66%	11 30.55%	1 2.77%	0	0	0	36/39

1. I feel confident that students with disabilities can be successful in my classroom.
2. I feel confident that English Language Learners can be successful in my classroom.
3. I feel confident that students of color can be successful in my classroom.

(RQ#1)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	# of Participants
Students with Disabilities	16 45.71%	14 40%	5 14.28%	0	0	0	35/39
English Language Learners	17 45.94%	18 48.64%	2 5.40%	0	0	0	37/39
Students of Color	27 75%	8 22.22%	1 2.77%	0	0	0	36/39