SPECIAL EDUCATION AND GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER

ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSION

by

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ABSTRACT

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Research has revealed that there are various reasons for positive and negative

teacher attitudes toward inclusion. This variation often depends on how the specific

school functions and practices inclusion. The purpose of this study was to examine

middle school special education and general education teacher attitudes on inclusion in a

rural school district. The survey used was developed by the researcher specifically for

this study. The survey consisted of 19 Likert scale questions and one comment question.

The surveys were distributed to all special education and general education teachers in

one rural middle school in the Midwest during spring of 2003. Results were tabulated

with frequencies and percentages for each response reported. Cross tabulations were also

completed to compare differences between the special education and general education

teacher's responses.

The results of this study showed attitudes reported by special education teachers

and general education teachers on inclusion. The results indicated some significant

differences in attitudes reported by special education and general education teachers. The study further looked at differences in attitudes reported by educators depending on the student's specific disability (EB/D, CD, LD). The results of the study also identified possible factors behind the positive and negative attitudes.

Recommendations were made for further studies and to the participants after considering the results and conclusions of the study. The following recommendations were made: 1) Complete future studies with larger sample/larger school district; 2) The administration to increase support to teachers and other staff in the way of time and training in order to increase competencies of staff and meet the needs of students with disabilities; 3) The general education teachers and support staff increase their own competencies by seeking out available trainings 4) Special education and general education teachers continue to collaborate to meet the needs of students with disabilities in and outside both of their classrooms. 5) In order to determine factors behind the positive and negative attitudes held by teachers towards inclusion, this researcher recommends adding perception questions to the survey.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Education for students with disabilities has vastly changed since the 1970s.

Before then, students often did not have equal educational opportunities with their peers

without disabilities. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (1997), some

students with disabilities were not even educated in public schools, while others who

participated were often limited in their educational experiences because their disabilities

went undetected. Fortunately, thanks to the evolution of laws leading up to the

Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997 (IDEA, P.L. 105-17), schools are now mandated

to provide students with disabilities equal educational opportunities.

One of the main purposes of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (1997), is to

ensure that all eligible students with disabilities are given special education and related

services to meet their specific needs and to prepare them for employment and

independent living. Another main purpose of the legislation is to guarantee that

educators have available the necessary supports in order to increase the chances of

success of their students with disabilities. One provision of IDEA is Least Restrictive

Environment (LRE), which means that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with

disabilities are educated with children without disabilities (inclusion) (Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act Amendments, 1997). According to the Individuals with

Disabilities Act (1997), only when education in the general education classroom cannot

be achieved (assuming the use of supplementary and supportive services were

exhausted), can the school change placement into a more restricted environment.

According to Arends (2000), inclusion is the practice of including students with

disabilities in general education classrooms, but the incorporation of inclusion in schools

goes much beyond the simple physical placement of students with disabilities into the

classroom and also includes to what extent the students are participating in classroom activities and assignments. According to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), inclusion is students with disabilities learning in the same classroom as their peers without disabilities even though their educational goals may be different. In addition to learning along side their peers without disabilities, inclusion also means that school classes and activities are scheduled for students with disabilities so that opportunities for their participation are maximized (Kochhar, West, and Taymans, 2000). There are a multitude of factors that facilitate successful inclusion. School administrators, teachers, and other staff have a responsibility to meet personal, social, and academic needs of all students while they are in school (Kochhar, West, and Taymans, 2000). According to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), schools need to provide the necessary planning, support, and services for their staff in order to ensure successful inclusion practices for their students with disabilities.

Through a review of research, both positive and negative teacher attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities are typically found. From studies reviewed, many of the concerns from teachers are valid, and there are important factors behind teacher attitudes that can assist schools to improve inclusion experiences. McLeskey and Waldron (2002) found one negative teacher attitude toward inclusion was that the students in the classroom without disabilities noticed the differences between themselves and their peers, and rejected them by labeling and/or calling them names. According to the authors, inclusion can give all students more knowledge about each other's differences as they learn and interact together in the same classroom. Staub and Peck (cited in Jones et al., 2002) reported that inclusion is crucial in creating increased social development while strengthening learning. The authors Staub and Peck (cited in Jones et al., 2002) also came to the conclusion that "the development of all children is enhanced

by the extent to which they feel a sense of belonging, caring, and community in school"
(p. 626).

Schools are very busy places and teachers often may find it difficult to find time
to complete even their basic everyday duties. Inclusion overwhelms many teachers
because they see it as increasing their workload in several ways. Jones et al., (2002),
found that teachers saw their workload increasing during the inclusion of students with
disabilities into their classroom because they viewed the academic needs of these students
as different in quantity and quality than the general education students. For instance,
teachers may already feel they don't have enough prep time to prepare for their daily
lessons, so when the idea of having student's with disabilities in their classroom arises,
they may feel overwhelmed that they simply will not be able to accommodate the
individual needs of students. Besides the additional workload, it appears some teachers
believe that some students with disabilities do not gain a lot themselves academically or
socially from inclusion. In their study, Jones et al., (2002) questioned the value of having
a student with an emotional and/or behavioral disorder in the classroom if the student
gains little academic or social benefit while disrupting the rest of the class. However,
according to Chow and Winzer (cited in Jones, Thorn, Chow, Thompson, and Wilde,
2002) "exposure to special needs students tends to increase teachers' confidence levels"
(p.628). It appears that teachers must be knowledgeable about the benefits of inclusion,
as well as ways it can be successful without overwhelming them or burdening them with
extra work. It also appears that their attitudes may become more positive with increased
positive experiences with students with disabilities in their classroom.

According to Shade and Stewart (2001), teachers report frustration, burden, fear,
and inadequacies because they don't believe they have the abilities to meet the individual
needs of students with special needs in their classroom. Overall, studies such as Voltz,
Brazil, and Ford (2001) and McLeskey and Waldron (2002), indicate that the most

crucial factor behind positive teacher attitudes toward inclusion is that there is a support system in place. This basically means that the whole school needs to be supportive of inclusion and its benefits with support coming from all directions. Some examples of support are special education and general education collaboration and consultation, in class support for general education teachers such as team teaching or a teacher's aide, ample time for planning, and on-going in-services or conference opportunities (McLeskey and Waldron, 2002). All of these opportunities provide, not only support from many directions, but education in the field of special education. With these supports, the general education teachers should gain a strong sense of empowerment and be less fearful that they will not be able to handle their classrooms.

"Successful Inclusion is defined, at least in part, by the ability of teachers to expand the borders of the circle of tolerance and make a broader range of behaviors ordinary in their classrooms" (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002, p. 67). Several studies such as Voltz, Brazil, and Ford (2001), McLeskey and Waldron (2002), Shade and Stewart (2001), and Heflin and Bullock (1999), indicate that support throughout the school is the most significant factor that will increase positive teacher attitudes and acceptance of inclusion. If students are identified as benefiting from inclusion, then it is important that all teachers are accepting of including them in their classroom. Without positive teacher attitudes, inclusion will return to being just a physical placement of students with disabilities and it will not improve the development of all students. With positive teacher attitudes, students with disabilities will be given more educational opportunities with their peers and will more likely benefit to the fullest extent.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine middle school special education and general education teacher attitudes on inclusion in a rural school district. Data will be collected through a survey during a one-week period in the spring of 2003.

Research Objectives

Multiple studies, Jobe, Rust, and Brissie (1996), Leyser and Tappendorf (2001), Jones, Thorn, Chow, Thompson, and Wilde (2002), Shade and Stewart (2001), and Heflin and Bullock (1999), indicate that there are various reasons for positive and negative teacher attitudes toward inclusion. This depends on how the specific school functions and practices inclusion. This study will document whether different attitudes exist between special education and general education teachers, and identify possible factors for the negative and/or positive attitudes. The following objectives will be addressed in this study:

1. Special education teacher attitudes toward inclusion in a rural school district will be identified.

2. General education teacher attitudes toward inclusion in a rural school district will be identified.

3. Differences, if any, between LD, EB/D, and CD teacher and general education teacher attitudes toward inclusion will be determined.

4. Differences, if any, in attitudes of inclusion depending on student's disability (LD, EB/D, CD).

5. Factors behind positive and negative attitudes will be determined.

Definition of Terms

There are several terms that need to be defined for clarity of understanding. These are:

Cognitive Disability (CD): According to Berndt and Burmaster (2002), a cognitive disability is defined as "Significant sub-average intellectual functioning that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and that adversely affects educational performance" (p. 12).

Emotional and/or Behavioral Disability (EB/D): The United States Department of
Education: National Center for Education Statistics (2002) define an emotional and/or
behavioral disability as:

A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long
period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational
performance:

(a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health
factors;

(b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with
peers   and teachers;

(c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances:

(d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or

(e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or
    school problems.

The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are
socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have a serious emotional
disturbance. (p. 176)

Full Inclusion: When students with disabilities are educated in the general
education classroom full time. There is no separate special education classroom or
resource room but support may be given to the general education teacher and the student
with disabilities.

General Education: A classroom environment where students without disabilities
are generally taught.

Inclusion: When students with disabilities are integrated into the general
education population where they actively participate with their peers and their teachers.
This includes participating in class activities and lessons that are adapted for individual

needs if necessary. This also may include the student with disabilities spending a portion of their day in a special education classroom or resource room if it can better meet their academic, social, or other learning goals.

Learning Disability (LD): Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, and Leal (1999) defined a learning disability as " including disorders involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language that result in substantial difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, written expression, or mathematics" (p. 123).

Partial Inclusion: When Students with disabilities spend a portion of their day in a special education classroom or resource room and they spend a portion of their day in the general education classroom with supportive services provided.

Special Education: According to (IDEA, 1997, p. 12) Special Education is "Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings, and instruction in physical education."

Support Staff/Teacher Aide/Paraprofessional: Any person that may be in or out of the classroom with the special education or general education teacher to support the teacher in teaching lessons and helping students with disabilities individually if needed.

Assumptions

It is assumed that all middle school special education and general education teachers of the identified rural school district will receive the survey in their school mailbox, complete it, and then deposit it into a drop box provided by the researcher within one full school week of its distribution. It is assumed that there will be more positive attitudes toward inclusion of students with learning disabilities and emotional and behavioral disabilities than of students with cognitive disabilities. It is also assumed that special education teachers will have more positive attitudes overall toward inclusion.

Limitations

       One limitation of the study is that it only focuses on one rural middle school. The second limitation is that there are more general education teachers than special education teachers. Consequently, there will most likely be an unequal amount of surveys completed. Third, the return of surveys from specific special education teachers (LD, CD, EB/D) may also be of an unequal amount.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

According to the U.S. Department of Education's 23rd annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (2001), the number of students with disabilities being educated in their general education classes has risen to 47.4 percent. This is almost a quarter more than in the early 1980s. This increase may lead some to believe that schools are making more strides to increase educational opportunities for students with disabilities in general education classrooms. The U.S. Department of Education (2001), also reported increasing graduation rates of students with disabilities, where students with mental retardation and emotional disturbance hold the lowest graduation rates at approximately 41.8 percent. The report also indicates that overall school drop out rates have decreased, but the emotional and/or behavioral disorder student population has the highest dropout rate, with about half of the population dropping out of school.

Based on the statistics above, inclusion continues to increase educational benefits for students with disabilities in schools in the United States. Though the results of the report are positive, there is still room for improvement, especially with the EB/D population. Different school districts practice inclusion differently. Some strive for full inclusion, while some are providing equal educational opportunities for their students according to the Individuals with Disabilities Act, but believe that this includes time both in the general education and special education classroom (partial inclusion). The literature reviewed, reports that most school districts do not practice full inclusion because it is not practical or they do not see it as a positive route to follow. Heflin and Bullock (1999), found in their study that teachers stated that the extent of inclusion (full or partial) should be determined for appropriateness on a case by case basis. Heflin and Bullock (1999), also found that none of the participants in the study believed full

inclusion was best, but that individual decisions needed to be made for each student. Jones, Thorn, Chow, Thompson, and Wilde (2002), indicated similar findings in their article, writing that placement decisions, whether it be inclusion or placement in a segregated classroom, need to be made by a team of people including the parent, student, teachers, and counselor, and that the focus of placement would be on the individual needs of the student versus placement based on only what type of disability the student has (LD, EB/D, CD). The general consensus of the literature reviewed is that most educators favor students participating in the general education classroom and least restrictive environment, but with the option of a continuum of services and a multitude of support offered. According to Friedman, Caneelli, and Yoshida and Rich and Ross (cited in U.S. Department of Education's 23rd annual report to Congress on the implementation of IDEA, 2001), for many EB/D students, placement in general education classes without the necessary supportive services may do less to help them academically and socially than if they were in more restrictive settings. This indicates that inclusion could actually be doing a disservice for students if their needs are not being met in the general education classroom. An example of this would be a student with an emotional and/or behavioral disorder who while in the general education classroom cannot be self-managed and managed behaviorally by the teacher and therefore is not gaining academically or socially. This student would benefit from working in a segregated classroom where his behavior is easier to manage by his or her self and the instructor, and where at least academic gains can be made. This can also happen with students with other disabilities. Another example is a student with a learning disability who can succeed academically in the general education classroom as long as the teacher makes adaptations to the student's work. If the teacher fails to do this because, for instance the teacher does not know how, the student may succeed academically more in the learning disability classroom where he/she is receiving the support needed. The report also found that full inclusion is not an

option for all students with disabilities because the supportive services aren't available to them in the general education classroom.

This chapter will begin with an analysis of different opinions and attitudes toward/on inclusion held by educators. This chapter will also include an analysis on factors that make inclusion successful and will conclude with an analysis of the benefits of inclusion.

Opinions and Attitudes

In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was enacted and implemented (United States Department of Education: Office of Special Education Programs, 2001). According to The United States Department of Education: National Center for Education Statistics (2002), this act requires that education in the least restrictive environment be determined on an individual basis for students with disabilities. Since then, there have been a variety of opinions and attitudes about what is the "right" environment for students with disabilities. According to Jones, Thorn, Chow, Thompson, and Wilde (2002), positive attitudes toward inclusion (among educators) are increasing as inclusion is more and more incorporated into school systems. According to Voltz, Brazil, and Ford (2001), an important part of inclusion is that all school staff shares the responsibility in meeting and supporting the needs of all students. The result would be that the special education teachers would not solely work with students with disabilities and the general education teachers would not solely work with students without disabilities, but they would collaborate in order to ensure the chances of success of all students in the general education classroom. If there were no separate special education classroom or resource room, it would be an example of full inclusion. However, studies such as D'Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanleeuwen (1997), and Heflin and Bullock (1999), report that the consensus among educators is for partial inclusion. This would indicate that educators agree with IDEA's least restrictive environment

requirement which states that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children without disabilities and any removal from the general education classroom setting occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in the general education classroom with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (United States Department of Education: Office of Special Education Programs, 2001). However, educators also report that students' needs can best be met if they still have a continuum of services available to them that at times may include more restrictive settings. Keenan (1997) stated that inclusion is best utilized "when instruction emphasizes collaboration of special and general education personnel and resources, and when strategies are used to accommodate the varied learning styles of all children" (p. 120).

According to Giangreco and Cravedi-Cheng (1998), many teachers, both special education and general education, in the past reported that general education teachers could not successfully teach students with disabilities. Giangreco and Cravedi-Cheng stated that because of these attitudes, students with disabilities often spent much of their time in the special education classroom where their expectations were lowered, they had little interaction with their peers without disabilities, spent too much time without instructional activities, and where sometimes the curriculum could be questioned. One of the purposes of IDEA was to improve the education of students with disabilities and one way of doing this was to educate them outside of the special education classroom and in the least restrictive environment.

D'Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanleeuwen (1997) found in their review of literature that positive teacher attitudes toward inclusion are crucial to its success. The factors behind negative attitudes usually make a lot of sense. After all, according to Keenan (1997), for two decades the educational system communicated that separate education for students with disabilities was better, and then suddenly they changed their views. If the

educational system really communicated that separate education for students with disabilities was better for so long, then it isn't really appropriate to expect people to automatically believe this new change is what is best. It is also not appropriate to expect general education teachers to start to educate students with disabilities if they feel unprepared or inadequate.

One benefit of inclusion is increased peer interaction for both students with and without disabilities (D'Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanleeuwen,1997). One concern reported by teachers about inclusion has been the fear that students without disabilities will tease or torment their peers with disabilities. In order for positive peer attitudes to increase, the students without disabilities need to be educated about their peer's disabilities by providing them with information and experiences where they can become familiar (Simpson, Myles, and Simpson, 1997). This could be done in various ways such as implementing a peer-mentoring program.   It is also the teacher's role to model positive acceptance of students with disabilities and to create an accepting environment (Shapiro, 1999). Obviously, in order for this to happen, teachers must in fact have positive attitudes toward inclusion.

Overall, improving educational opportunities for students needs to be a collaborative effort, no matter what student population or subject area one is discussing. Research that has been focused on inclusion seems to differ from what is best for the child. According to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), a mission of all educators is to create a system that blends both special education and general education across disciplines and services. One of the biggest complaints from general education teachers in the literature about inclusion is that they fear they don't have the necessary knowledge or abilities to adequately teach students with special needs (McLeskey and Waldron, 2002, D'Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanleeuwen, 1997, and Shade and Stewart, 2001). If these authors's stated mission's goal were achieved, then general education teachers may

be less fearful and more open to inclusion because they are collaborating and learning with the special education teachers.

Opinions on inclusion vary widely. Most arguments on inclusion circle around full inclusion and how much is appropriate for individual students. According to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), supporters of full inclusion believe that students with disabilities can be accommodated in the general education setting socially, physically, and academically, by accommodations being made and without disruption to the rest of the classroom. On the flip side, according to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), some special educators disagree with the academic component and believe that some of the students' academic needs can best be met outside of the general education classroom. An example of this would be a student with disabilities who is in general education for English in eighth grade, but only has fourth grade reading skills. A student like this may not be able to fully participate in the general education setting, and may benefit from more one-on-one instruction in a special education classroom. Some students may also have other needs that can best be met outside the general education classroom. One example that supports this argument is students with disabilities needing to learn basic living and functioning skills as part of their individual educational plan (IEP). In both of these situations, students may feel more comfortable learning these tasks and skills in a setting away from their peers. Overall, it appears that most educators are not supporters of full inclusion, but agree that each student will have individual needs, and a continuum of services needs to continue to be available for all students. Educators need to realize that they don't have to strive to move toward full inclusion, but according to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), education for students with disabilities needs to continue to improve with greater support and resources.

Another attitude held by teachers regarding inclusion is that it will create more work for them (Heflin and Bullock, 1999). This can be particularly frustrating for

teachers and cause negative attitudes toward inclusion, especially if they are already feeling overwhelmed with their regular workload. Jones, Thorn, Thompson, and Wilde (2002) reported that the teacher workload consequence from inclusion could also have negative consequences for students with and without disabilities. Though additional accommodations may need to be made, Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000) reported that often the general education students could benefit from some of the accommodations too. Since collaboration is such a major goal of educators, one step towards addressing these issues is by teachers sharing the workload. Two examples of this are in class supports by aides, or team teaching. Another worry of some general education teachers according to McLeskey and Waldron (2002) was that the overall academic performance of the class will go down, or future teachers will have negative perceptions of previous teachers who have passed students with disabilities onto the next grade without mastering the materials.

Heflin and Bullock (1999) surveyed special education and general education teachers' attitudes toward inclusion specifically with students with emotional and/or behavioral disorders. Their study found that the top problems of inclusion reported by special education and general education teachers were: inadequate support and training, non-proportional ratios (more students with disabilities in classrooms than normally would be), teachers feeling unprepared to meet academic needs of students with disabilities, behavior management issues, and too much extra time making curriculum adaptations and collaborating. Overall, the results of this study showed that the special education and general education teachers agreed that there were benefits to inclusion, but they also agreed that not all adaptations were being made and that not all students' needs could be met in the general education classroom. D'Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanleeuwen (1997) found in their review of literature, that positive teacher attitudes toward inclusion are crucial to its success. Because general education teachers must make adequate

adaptations to their teaching and curriculum in order for the students with disabilities to benefit, the chances of this occurring would increase if they were motivated to do so. Naturally, feeling positive about something will create this motivation. A study conducted by Bender, Vail, and Scott (1995) came to the conclusion that teachers with negative attitudes toward mainstreaming did not use effective teaching strategies for the students with disabilities as often as teachers with positive attitudes.

Factors of Successful Inclusion

There are a multitude of factors behind successful inclusion. The research reviewed indicates that many of the negative attitudes held by special education and general education teachers toward inclusion could be changed to a more positive outlook if some specific factors were considered.

One complaint stated earlier by general education teachers regarding inclusion is that they are unprepared or they don't have enough knowledge about students with disabilities in order to teach them effectively. The majority of literature reviewed such as McLeskey and Waldron (2002), D'Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanleeuwen (1997), and Shade and Stewart (2001), reported general education teachers stated they needed extra training in the area of teaching students with special needs in order to be adequately prepared. One study by Leyser and Tappendorf (2001) reported that teachers needed various activities included in in-services or pre-services on this subject such as simulations, discussions, panel presentations, and relevant information about disabilities. A major area of training that is seen as needed by general educators is classroom management strategies. According to Simpson, Myles, and Simpson (1997), educators need to be knowledgeable about structuring methods such as the use of antecedents, contingencies, consequences, and manipulation of other things in the general education classroom that can better meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Collaboration is an important factor behind successful inclusion. This is especially valuable between special education and general education teachers. Leyser and Tappendorf (2001) found it was useful if special education and general education teachers trained together in in-services or pre-services so they could share ideas and learn skills on how to effectively collaborate, team, and teach together. According to Voltz, Brazil, and Ford (2001), it is important for the special education and general education teachers to collaborate on issues, concerns, and appropriate instruction and structure in the classroom for students with disabilities. Voltz, et al. also pointed out that the entire school staff should collaborate and work together to meet the needs of all students and should not leave special educators alone or as experts in the move toward more inclusive classes.

According to D'Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanleeuwen (1997) teachers need to have positive attitudes toward inclusion in order for it to be successful. In addition to positive attitudes, the whole school needs to be supportive of inclusion. Supportive administration is the first level because they have to be supportive and give the rest of the staff the support and resources they need in order to feel good about the changes toward inclusion. McLeskey and Waldron (2002) wrote:

Principals work with teachers to:

- Promote the need for changes with the building staff;
- Provide support for program development and implementation including time for planning changes and for staff development;
- Ensure that teachers are in control of changes;
- Ensure that the faculty members own and support changes;
- Ensure that the inclusive school is tailored to the needs of the local setting;

- Encourage risk-taking among teachers and assure them that they will be given support in the event that certain aspects of the inclusive school do not initially succeed; and

- Encourage ongoing evaluation and improvement of the inclusive school. (p. 66)

In order for teachers to have positive attitudes, they need to feel prepared and supported by their peers, school administration, and other staff for the increased workload and changes that will take place. One way for teachers to prevent feeling overwhelmed is to team teach. This allows two teachers to share most of their workload with each other. Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000) stated "this means that teachers plan instruction together, evaluate student progress, communicate with parents, and generally work together with a group of students" (p. 90). As one can probably see, this could take away a lot of the added pressure and overwhelming feelings that some teachers would initially have toward inclusion. Another major complaint of teachers is that they are too busy to have the additional workload. It is essential that teachers have adequate planning time. One way for teachers to feel less overwhelmed is if administration is supportive in allowing teachers to have the necessary extra planning time and time for collaboration with each other. Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000) gave valuable examples of effective planning time writing:

- Teachers hold a special meeting after the initial or annual IEP meeting to discuss new implications for curriculum or instruction in the general education classroom.

- Teachers have daily meeting times in the morning to plan instruction for the day.

- Teachers use part of their regular in-service days for semester planning or review of student progress.

- Teachers have an established afternoon or extended planning period to prepare for the following week: substitute teachers or parent volunteers are enlisted to cover for the period.

- Teachers use after-school time to prepare for the following day. (p. 88)

People often think of inclusion as physical placement of students and modifications for the students in the general education classroom. According to Voltz, Brazil, and Ford (2001), inclusion is really the way educators respond and adapt to individual student differences. Inclusion means that students with disabilities are placed in a general education placement, but this is by far the full definition of inclusion. Voltz et al. reported that in order for inclusion to really be successful, students with disabilities must also be getting a good amount of quality interaction with teachers and students without disabilities and be participating in a truly meaningful way. This includes participating in everyday activities as well as classroom instruction and activities, with their peers and teacher. In order for this to work, educators must prepare both general education and special education students for this change in the general education classroom. While inclusion provides students with disabilities increased social interaction, it is important that students without disabilities accept them. According to Simpson, Myles, and Simpson (1997), this does not naturally occur. Educating students without disabilities about their peers with disabilities can accomplish this goal. According to Fiedler and Simpson (cited in Simpson, Myles, & Simpson, 1997), "curricula and procedures designed to facilitate better understanding and sensitivity toward students with disabilities have proved their worth in integration programs" (p. 177). Various curriculum and methods such as peer mentoring, will allow students to get to know each other while also teaching them valuable methods.

Another common concern among teachers is the need to continue to have a continuum of services provided to students with disabilities such as a resource room and

time in other classroom settings. Schattman and Dennis (1998) took this further and stated that the goal of inclusion is to educate under "one tent." Schattman and Dennis also stated that this doesn't mean that education and inclusion are a one size fits all approach, but that what is offered and supportive to special education students should also be offered to the rest of the student population.

Currently, the movement toward inclusion is progressing and the benefits are increasing. It is apparent that there are still many obstacles that need to be overcome and many changes that still need to take place, but schools are still improving and they may eventually reach a period where inclusion is occurring naturally in the school environment.

Benefits of Inclusion

At first glance inclusion may appear inappropriate, or may appear not to meet all the educational needs in the classroom, but in fact segregated special education classrooms isolate students from peers who are different from them. There are many benefits of inclusion for both students with and without disabilities as well as society.

One study by D'Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanleeuwen (1997) reported on many academic and social benefits of inclusion from multiple studies. Two academic benefits were of particular interest. One benefit was found by Hunt, Farron-Davis, Beckstead, Curtis, and Goetz (cited in D'Alonzo, Giordano, & Vanleeuwen, 1997, Existing Research on Inclusion section, para.1) "students with disabilities spend more time engaged in learning than in special settings." This finding indicates that the students are engaged in learning more in the general education setting because they are receiving a variety of experiences they may not receive in the special education setting. As cited earlier, Giangreco and Cravedi-Cheng (1998) supported this, suggesting that often curriculum is questionable in special education settings. Shapiro (1999) found that students with disabilities learn a lot from the inclusive classroom because they are experiencing more

peer interaction, ideas, and activities. Although one concern of teachers reported by McLeskey and Waldron (2002), is that inclusion would bring academic performance down in the overall class, another study by Sharpe, York, and Knight refutes this statement. Sharpe, York, and Knight (cited in D'Alonzo, Giordano, & Vanleeuwen, 1997, Existing Research on Inclusion section, para.1) reported " The inclusion of students with disabilities is not associated with a decline in the academic or behavioral performance of students with out disabilities on standardized tests or report cards." Obviously there are many different views. There could be many factors behind these differences as was reported in the previous section. It is hard to know for sure how the schools in the different studies specifically function. The schools in the studies could have various degrees of school-wide support and training being offered to their teachers teaching students with disabilities that could impact their views and the study.

There are more specific academic benefits to inclusion for students with disabilities. In addition to the students with disabilities feeling an increased sense of belonging, inclusion also increases their academic abilities. According to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), inclusion gives students a feeling that they are performing more successfully, contributing more, increasing their ability to work well with different instruction, and increasing their ability to work up to a higher or of equal level as their special education classroom. Another extremely important benefit of inclusion is that students with disabilities are spending more time on general education curriculum, and according to Kochhar et al. this leads to the completion of a high school course, which is required for a regular high school diploma. This is more evidence supporting the United States Department of Education: National Center for Education Statistics (2002) findings, that more students with disabilities are receiving high school diplomas today because of inclusion.

Two studies reviewed found social benefits of inclusion. Helmstetter, Peck, and Giangreco (cited in D'Alonzo, Giordano, & Vanleeuwen, 1997, Existing Research on Inclusion section, para.2) reported "High school students report that their relationships with students with disabilities resulted in more positive attitudes, increased response to the needs of others, and increased appreciation for diversity." This statement supports the tremendous social benefit inclusion can have on all students. Inclusion gives students the necessary experiences and skills to work and live with people from diverse backgrounds. The inclusive environment gives all students opportunities to interact with a diverse group of people. It also clears up misconceptions by giving students first hand knowledge and experiences about their peers with disabilities. Hendrickson, Shokoohi-Yekta, HamreNietupski, and Gable (cited in D'Alonzo, Giordano, & Vanleeuwen, 1997, Existing Research on Inclusion section, para.2) found "Students with severe disabilities developed social networks, positive interpersonal relationships, and friendships with students without disabilities." This study indicates that for some students with disabilities, increased interaction with their peers will increase their self-esteem and make them feel that they are truly part of the school. Shapiro (1999) also reported that this environment gives students with disabilities a real sense of belonging in the community they live in because they are receiving instruction and practicing skills in the community where they live.

Shapiro (1999) points out that inclusion can also benefit students with disabilities by giving them more focused career and vocational instruction that they may not otherwise have in their special education classrooms. By participating in career and vocational discussions, students with disabilities will learn about a wide range of educational and vocational opportunities that they have and will not be limited as they might be in a segregated classroom.

Although some parents and guardians may be concerned that inclusion is not appropriate, they too receive direct benefits from this movement. According to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), parents and guardians receive more support from inclusion because there is more interaction with school staff and other parents of students with disabilities. This additional support network also increases the knowledge that parents have about community resources and agencies that can assist them. Inclusion also creates a collaborative atmosphere and according to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), "Better prepares professionals to help parents strengthen personal decision making, goal setting, and self-advocacy in their children" (p. 38).

As stated earlier, drop out rates for students with disabilities have decreased, but students with emotional and/or behavioral disorders continue to have a significantly high drop out rates and students with emotional and/or behavioral disorders and mental retardation continue to have significantly low graduation rates. Inclusion benefits these at-risk students because it provides more supports and resources. According to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), inclusion creates strategies to decrease drop out rates among this population by creating appropriate school-to-work programs, intense support, and partnerships between businesses in the community and the school. These resources are of particular benefit because they tailor to the students' interests. For example, these programs allow the student to focus on particular job interests and skills they have, while helping them get the necessary training, so they automatically have skills for work when they are finished. By building school and business community partnerships, the school is also able to give the students on-the-job training and/or links to potential employment.

As stated previously, general education teachers are often concerned that they do not have the skills or knowledge to educate students with disabilities. It is absolutely necessary for these teachers to receive ongoing training and education in the area of different disabilities, different teaching methods, and consultation. However, experiences

teaching students with a disability also increases the knowledge of teachers. According to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), inclusion supplies teachers with extra resources such as strategy and curriculum manuals, collaboration manuals, and in-service training. These materials and training are very helpful to teachers just beginning to educate students with different needs and they continue to be a useful support system to teachers throughout their career. According to Kochhar, et al. this is a benefit to the whole school and community because more teachers are effectively trained and competent to facilitate team meetings and make curriculum adaptations.

Overall, it is apparent that there have been many varied attitudes held by teachers towards inclusion since its introduction. It appears that the most popular attitude held by teachers currently is that partial inclusion is positive for students, but that there is a need currently, and maybe always will be, to continue to provide a continuum of resources that sometimes may include more restrictive settings for students. It is also apparent that schools may practice inclusion at different levels, but what seems to lead to the most successful inclusion settings are appropriate training, support, and collaboration for all school staff. Lastly, the benefits of inclusion seem endless. Though there is still work to do to ensure all these benefits are received, schools should be proud of how far they have come from in providing appropriate and necessary education for students with disabilities that benefits the whole school, and society as well.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

<u>Introduction</u>

The purpose of this study is to examine middle school special education and general education teacher attitudes on inclusion. This study will attempt to document whether different attitudes exist between special education and general education teachers and identify possible factors for these attitudes. This chapter will describe the subject selection, the survey used, and data collection and data analysis procedures. This chapter will end with a brief discussion on the limitations relevant to the methodology of this study.

<u>Subject Selection and Description</u>

The subjects consist of special education and general education teachers from a middle school from one school district. The school district chosen to participate in the study is located in a rural area in the Midwest. Approval of the study was given to the researcher from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Wisconsin-Stout. An administrative contact to the building principal was made and permission to distribute surveys to special education and general education teachers was granted. An attempt to contact all special education and general education teachers, both male and female, with direct involvement in inclusion was made.

<u>Instrumentation</u>

The survey used consisted of a series of 19 Likert scale items and one comment question for subjects to enter any additional information regarding their attitudes toward inclusion. The items were general in nature, but relate to both positive and negative attitudes toward inclusion. The items were developed from literature reviewed that identified common attitudes of inclusion, and factors behind positive and negative

attitudes. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A. The instrument was designed specifically for this study, so no tests were done for reliability or validity.

Data Collection

The consent form and survey were given to all 65 special education and general education teachers who have direct involvement with inclusion from the identified school district. Both special education and general education teachers were given a consent form connected to the survey that does not require a signature, but is returned because it is on the same page as the survey. The consent form supplied to the subjects included the names and telephone numbers of people to contact in case any questions or concerns arose during the study. The consent form also included an explanation of why the survey was given to the subjects and its purpose. A copy of the consent form is located in Appendix A. The survey was distributed in the subject's school mailboxes during spring 2003. The teachers were asked to return the survey within one week of its distribution to a drop box located near the school mailboxes. Upon retrieval, the completed survey answers to each question were tabulated. All surveys returned were shredded after recording the information.

Data Analysis

All appropriate descriptive statistics were run on the data. The results of each question were tabulated and a final percentage was reported using tables to further describe the results. Any additional information recorded in the comments section was also reported. Cross tabulations were completed to compare differences between special education and general education teachers' responses. Differences in attitudes if any between the special education populations (EB/D, CD, LD), will be identified. Special education and general education teacher attitudes toward inclusion will be identified as well as possible factors behind the positive and negative attitudes expressed.

Limitations

       One limitation of this study is that the sample was small. The subjects were limited to one middle school in one school district. Because of the small sample, the results of this study cannot be generalized to larger populations or more urban areas of the country. There were also no reliability and validity measures completed because the survey was developed specifically for this study only.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine middle school special education and general education teacher attitudes on inclusion. This chapter will include the results of this study; demographic information and item analysis will be discussed. The chapter will conclude with the research questions under investigation.

Demographic Information

In the participating middle school all 65 teachers were provided with a survey in their school mailbox. A total of 59 (91%) out of the 65 teachers are general education teachers and 6 (.09%) out of 65 are special education teachers. Of those, 22 completed and returned the surveys, representing 34% of the total possible participants.

Of the 22, 18 (81.8%) were general education teachers and 4 (18.2%) were special education teachers. Out of the subjects who returned the survey 4 indicated they were special education teachers, 1 subject indicated that they taught all special education areas (CD, LD, EB/D), 2 subjects indicated they taught students with learning disabilities (LD), and 1 subject indicated they taught students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities (EB/D).

Item Analysis

The survey asked the teachers to rate 19 statements that indicated their attitude toward inclusion. The items related to both positive and negative attitudes toward inclusion. Item 20 on the survey asked the subjects to report any additional comments they have about inclusion. One subject did not choose to complete item number 19 therefore, the total number of subjects completing item 19 was 21. The following tables indicate the responses of the teachers for each statement. The number of subjects that responded to each question (n) and the percent is included.

Statement 1: Students with disabilities actively participate in classroom activities with their peers without disabilities in general education classrooms.

As shown in Table 1, 68.2% of the teachers in the participating middle school strongly or somewhat agree that students with disabilities actively participate in classroom activities in the general education classroom with their peers without disabilities.

Table 1

Statement 1: Students With Disabilities Actively Participate

	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	31.8%	7
Somewhat Agree	36.4%	8
Neutral	9.1%	2
Somewhat Disagree	13.6%	3
Strongly Disagree	9.1%	2

Statement 2: Students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities are able to participate
productively in general education classroom learning activities.

 As shown in Table 2, 68.2% of the teachers from the participating middle school,
strongly or somewhat agree that students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities are
able to participate and learn in the general education classroom.

Table 2

Statement 2: Students With EB/D are Productive in Learning Activities

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	27.3%	6
Somewhat Agree	40.9%	9
Neutral	9.1%	2
Somewhat Disagree	13.6%	3
Strongly Disagree	9.1%	2

Statement 3: Students with cognitive disabilities are able to participate productively in general education classroom learning activities.

Indicated in Table 3, 68.2% of the teachers strongly or somewhat agreed that students with cognitive disabilities are able to participate productively in general education classroom learning activities.

Table 3

Statement 3: Students With CD are Productive in Learning Activities

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	18.2%	4
Somewhat Agree	50%	11
Neutral	13.6%	3
Somewhat Disagree	4.5%	1
Strongly Disagree	13.6%	3

Statement 4: Students with learning disabilities are able to participate productively in general education classroom learning activities.

     As shown in Table 4, 72.8% of the middle school teachers strongly or somewhat agreed that students with learning disabilities are able to participate productively in general education classroom learning activities.

Table 4

Statement 4: Students With LD are Productive in Learning Activities

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	36.4%	8
Somewhat Agree	36.4%	8
Neutral	4.5%	1
Somewhat Disagree	13.6%	3
Strongly Disagree	9.1%	2

<u>Statement 5: Inclusion improves social skills of students with disabilities.</u>

As shown in Table 5, the majority of the teachers surveyed (81.8%) reported by either strongly or somewhat agreeing, that inclusion does improve the social skills of students with disabilities.

Table 5

Statement 5: Inclusion Improves Social Skills

	Percent	**n**
Strongly Agree	27.3%	6
Somewhat Agree	54.5%	12
Neutral	4.5%	1
Somewhat Disagree	9.1%	2
Strongly Disagree	4.5%	1

Statement 6: Students with disabilities who spend half of their school day or more in the special education room get their academic needs met adequately.

Indicated in Table 6, 59.1% of the teachers surveyed stated by either strongly or somewhat agreeing, that students with disabilities have their academic needs met even if they spend one-half to a full day in the special education room.

Table 6

Statement 6: Students With Disabilities Get Their Academic Needs Met in the

Special Education Room

	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	18.2%	4
Somewhat Agree	40.9%	9
Neutral	22.7%	5
Somewhat Disagree	9.1%	2
Strongly Disagree	9.1%	2

Statement 7: General education teachers and other staff are provided with ongoing training and in-services in order to prepare them to feel competent in teaching students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

As shown in Table 7, only 27.2% of the teachers' surveyed indicated they strongly or somewhat agree that general education teachers and other staff are provided with the training and in-services needed in order to feel competent to teach students with disabilities in their classrooms.

Table 7

Statement 7: Teachers and Staff are Provided with Training/In-services to Prepare Them

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	4.5%	1
Somewhat Agree	22.7%	5
Neutral	18.2%	4
Somewhat Disagree	31.8%	7
Strongly Disagree	22.7%	5

<u>Statement 8: Special education teachers and general education teachers need to collaborate in order for inclusion to be successful.</u>

The majority of teachers surveyed reported that teachers' collaborating with each other was significant in the success of inclusion. As shown in Table 8, 86.4% of the teachers reported they strongly or somewhat agree that collaboration is necessary between teachers.

Table 8

Statement 8: Special and General Education Teachers Need to Collaborate

	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	77.3%	17
Somewhat Agree	9.1%	2
Neutral	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	4.5%	1
Strongly Disagree	9.1%	2

Statement 9: All teachers and support staff have sufficient administrative support in planning and preparation time, to meet the needs of students with disabilities in and outside of their classrooms.

      As shown in Table 9, 50% of the teachers surveyed strongly or somewhat agree that they receive the support from their administration that is necessary in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities in their classroom. However, the other half of the teachers surveyed indicated they are split between neutral, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree that their administration does not provide adequate support to them in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Table 9

Statement 9: Teachers and Support Staff Receive Sufficient Administrative Support

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	13.6%	3
Somewhat Agree	36.4%	8
Neutral	18.2%	4
Somewhat Disagree	22.7%	5
Strongly Disagree	9.1%	2

Statement 10: Students without disabilities accept their peers with disabilities in the general education classroom.

Of the teachers surveyed, 63.6% reported they either strongly or somewhat agree that students with disabilities are accepted by their peers without disabilities, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Statement 10: Student With Disabilities are Accepted

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	4.5%	1
Somewhat Agree	59.1%	13
Neutral	13.6%	3
Somewhat Disagree	22.7%	5
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Statement 11: Students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities appear to adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion.

Indicated in Table 11, 54.5% of the teachers surveyed strongly or somewhat agree that students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities adapt in the general education classroom. However, 45.4% of the teachers surveyed are neutral or somewhat or strongly disagree that students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities adapt in the general education classroom.

Table 11

Statement 11: Students With EB/D Adapt Behaviorally and Academically to Inclusion

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	4.5%	1
Somewhat Agree	50%	11
Neutral	13.6%	3
Somewhat Disagree	27.3%	6
Strongly Disagree	4.5%	1

Statement 12: Students with cognitive disabilities appear to adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion.

As shown in Table 12, 59.1% of teachers somewhat agree that students with cognitive disabilities are able to adapt behaviorally and academically in the general education classroom.

Table 12

Statement 12: Students With CD Adapt Behaviorally and Academically to Inclusion

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	0	0
Somewhat Agree	59.1%	13
Neutral	31.8%	7
Somewhat Disagree	4.5%	1
Strongly Disagree	4.5%	1

Statement 13: Students with learning disabilities appear to adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion.

As shown in Table 13, 72.7% of teachers strongly or somewhat agree that students with learning disabilities are able to adapt behaviorally and academically in the general education classroom.

Table 13

Statement 13: Students With LD Adapt Behaviorally and Academically to Inclusion

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	13.6%	3
Somewhat Agree	59.1%	13
Neutral	22.7%	5
Somewhat Disagree	4.5%	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Statement 14: General education teachers have the knowledge, skills, and experience to teach students with disabilities in their classrooms.

Of the teachers surveyed, only 50% somewhat agree that the general education teachers have the skills to meet the needs of students with disabilities in their classrooms as shown in Table 14.

Table 14

Statement 14: General Education Teachers have the Necessary Skills to Teach Students With Disabilities

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	0	0
Somewhat Agree	50%	11
Neutral	27.3%	6
Somewhat Disagree	18.2%	4
Strongly Disagree	4.5%	1

Statement 15: A continuum of services (special education classroom, aides, etc.) needs to be provided in order to effectively meet the needs of students with disabilities versus full inclusion where the student is in the general education room for the entire day.

A significantly high number of teachers (81.9%) reported that full inclusion would not effectively meet the needs of students with disabilities. As shown in Table 15, most teachers strongly or somewhat agree that a continuum of services needs to be provided outside of the general education classroom.

Table 15

Statement 15: A Continuum of Services Needs to be Provided

	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	45.5%	10
Somewhat Agree	36.4%	8
Neutral	4.5%	1
Somewhat Disagree	4.5%	1
Strongly Disagree	9.1%	2

Statement 16: General education teachers are concerned that having students with disabilities in their classrooms may disrupt the education of students without disabilities.

According to Table 16, half of the teachers (50%) surveyed reported they strongly or somewhat agree that general education teachers are concerned that having students with disabilities in their classroom may interfere with the education of the students in their classroom without disabilities.

Table 16

Statement 16: Teachers are Concerned that Students with Disabilities may Disrupt the Classroom

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	13.6%	3
Somewhat Agree	36.4%	8
Neutral	13.6%	3
Somewhat Disagree	27.3%	6
Strongly Disagree	9.1%	2

Statement 17: General education teachers are concerned that having students with disabilities in their classrooms will lower their own overall class academic performance.

As shown in Table 17, 50% of the teachers surveyed somewhat or strongly disagreed that general education teachers were concerned that their overall class academic performance would go down by having students with disabilities in their classroom.

Table 17

Statement 17: Teachers are Concerned that Students With Disabilities Will Lower the Class Academic Performance

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	4.5%	1
Somewhat Agree	36.4%	8
Neutral	9.1%	2
Somewhat Disagree	45.5%	10
Strongly Disagree	4.5%	1

Statement 18: I have observed inclusion promoting true friendships among students with and without disabilities.

As shown in Table 18, 77.2% of the teachers surveyed strongly or somewhat agreed that inclusion promotes true friendships among students with only approximately 9.1% feeling that inclusion did not promote true friendships.

Table 18

Statement 18: Inclusion Promotes True Friendships

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	22.7%	5
Somewhat Agree	54.5%	12
Neutral	13.6%	3
Somewhat Disagree	9.1%	2
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Statement 19: The special education room should only be used as a resource when the general education teacher cannot adequately meet the needs of the student with disabilities.

As shown in Table 19, 54.5% of the teachers surveyed reported they either strongly or somewhat agree that the special education room should only be used when the general education teacher cannot meet the needs of the student with disabilities in their classroom.

Table 19

Statement 19: The Special Education Room Should Only be a Resource Room

Attitude Levels	Percent	n
Strongly Agree	22.7%	5
Somewhat Agree	31.8%	7
Neutral	9.1%	2
Somewhat Disagree	31.8%	7
Strongly Disagree	0	0

<u>Statement 20: Please write any additional comments you have about inclusion.</u>

        The subjects were given an opportunity to add any additional comments they had about inclusion. Out of the 22 respondents, 10 added additional comments they had about inclusion. Out of the 10 comments made, 7 were made by general education teachers and 3 were made by special education teachers. The following were additional comments made by general education teachers:

- "Inclusion is important to give the adequate information needed to students as well as better social skills."

- "Some teachers deal very well with inclusion. Others refuse kids with IEP's into their rooms. It all depends on the individual teacher. Some are great with the kids, others set the kids up for failure to get them out of their rooms."

- "We need to continue to provide a continuum of services for students. Students should be placed by need not philosophy. Inclusion is being misused. If kids need skill development, they won't get it in regular education. An example is a student who is placed in 7th grade reading and reads at a 2nd grade level. If a student is placed in regular education, that student should be able to perform at some level independently. What is that student learning if he/she needs assistance 100 % of the time. (Most likely working at a frustration level vs. instructional level).

- "Overly concerned about inclusion. Not all special education students are capable of being included in regular education classes. This needs to be accepted and basic educational skills need to be taught to these students."

- "I have worked very successfully with inclusion and in other years have been extremely frustrated. Results vary greatly depending upon:

personalities/compatibility of teaching staff involved, number and severity of students with disabilities in the classroom, and resources available. There is no one magic formula here."

- "Inclusion can only work if there is education of the regular education teacher and it is not done at <u>all</u> costs. It truly depends upon the child, the course, and the actual day! You can't "dump" all special education students together just as you can't classify non-special education students in any total-group either."

- "Special education rooms should be used when students with special needs are <u>uncooperative</u> in the general education room."

The following were additional comments made by special education teachers on inclusion:

- "Many of the special education students lack the language skills and vocabulary skills which effects the students ability to gain information and have difficulty in the regular education setting."

- "The special education staff and paraeducators should assist and support the general education teacher when they cannot adequately meet the needs of the student with disabilities. All staff needs to be in agreement that it's worth a try for all students to have a chance in regular education. Some teachers (regular education) are pretty resistant to any inclusion."

- "A lot of these depend on the teacher, their training, and attitudes. Also no two students have the same needs or support. Some with high needs do great in regular classes because they like school, the class, the teacher, and the parents follow up at home. Others with few needs couldn't care, hate school, don't like the teacher, have no support, and even though they could do it, deliberately make the worst of it and wreck the whole class

allowing no one to get anything out of it. It is misused energy that can be more effectively redirected, supported, counseled, modeled, in a smaller setting."

<u>Research Objectives</u>

This study documented whether different attitudes existed between special education and general education teachers, and identified possible factors for the negative and/or positive attitudes. The following research objectives are addressed.

1) Research Objective 1: Special education teacher attitudes toward inclusion in rural school district.

Special education teachers agreed the most with items 17, 18, and 19 with a mean of 3.5 or higher out of a 5.0 scale. Special education teachers reported that general education teachers are concerned that having students with disabilities in their classroom may lower the overall class academic performance. Special education teachers also agree that inclusion promotes true friendships among students with and without disabilities. Special education teachers agreed strongly that the special education room should be used only as a resource when the general education teacher cannot meet the needs of the students with disabilities adequately in their classroom.

Special education teachers disagreed the most with items 1, 4, and 10 with a mean of 2.25 or lower out of a 5.0 scale. Special education teachers disagree that students with disabilities participate in classroom activities. Special education teachers also reported that students with learning disabilities are not able to participate productively in general education classroom learning activities. Special education teachers disagree that students without disabilities accept their peers with disabilities in the general education classroom.

2) Research Objective 2: General education teacher attitudes toward inclusion in a rural school district.

General education teachers agreed the most with items 1, 4, 5, 8, 13, 15, and 18 with a mean of 4.0 or higher out of a 5.0 scale. The general education teachers indicated that they agree students with disabilities actively participate in classroom activities with their peers without disabilities while they're in the general education classroom. General education teachers also agree that students with learning disabilities are able to participate productively in learning activities and adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion. The general education teachers also indicated that inclusion improves social skills for students with disabilities as well as promotes true friendships among students with and without disabilities. General education teachers agree that in order for inclusion to be successful general education and special education teachers need to collaborate. Lastly, the general education teachers indicated that in order to effectively meet the needs of students with disabilities a continuum of services needs to be provided versus full inclusion.

General education teachers disagreed the most with items 7 and 17 with a mean of 2.72 or lower out of a 5.0 scale. General education teachers disagreed that they were provided with ongoing training and in-services in order to prepare them to feel competent in teaching students with disabilities in their classroom. The general education teachers also indicated that they were not concerned that having students with disabilities in their classrooms will lower the overall class academic performance.

3) Research Objective 3: Differences, if any, between LD/EBD/CD teacher and general education teacher attitudes toward inclusion will be determined.

Cross tabulations were not done to compare between the special education populations (EBD/CD/LD) as originally planned, because there was a low and unequal amount of special education teachers in the separate disciplines.

The special education teachers scored lower then the general education teachers on all but two items 17 and 19 on the survey. Special education teachers agreed more then general education teachers that general education teachers were concerned that having students with disabilities in their classrooms would lower their overall class academic performance. Special education teachers had a mean of 3.75 and general education teachers had a mean of 2.72 on a 5.0 scale. Special education teachers also agreed more then general education teachers that the special education room should only be used when the general education teacher cannot adequately meet the needs of the student with disabilities in their classroom. On this item special education teachers had a mean of 4.50 and general education teachers had a mean of 3.24 on a 5.0 scale.

A t-test was run on the data. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between the special education and general education teacher responses to several items. A significant difference was found on item 1 ($t = 3.452$; $p=.01$) with the general education teachers agreeing significantly more than special education teachers that students with disabilities participate in classroom activities with their peers without disabilities in the general education classroom. A significant difference was found on item 4 ($t=2.923$; $p=.01$) with the general education teachers agreeing significantly more than special education teachers that students with learning disabilities are able to participate productively in

general education classroom learning activities. A significant difference was found on item 5 (t=3.709; p=.001) with the general education teachers agreeing significantly more than special education teachers that inclusion improves social skills of students with disabilities. Another significant difference found was on item 10 (t=5.394; p=.001) with general education teachers again agreeing significantly more than special education teachers that students without disabilities accept their peers with disabilities in the general education classroom. A significant difference was found on item 12 (t=2.098; p=.05) with general education teachers agreeing significantly more then special education teachers that students with cognitive disabilities appear to adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion. A significant difference was found on item 13 (t=4.426; p=.001) with again general education teachers agreeing significantly more than special education teachers that students with learning disabilities appear to adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion. The last significant difference was found on item 19 (t=-3.085; p=.05) where this time special education teachers agreed significantly more than general education teachers that the special education room should only be used as a resource when the general education teacher cannot adequately meet the needs of the student with disabilities in their classroom.

4) Research Objective 4: Differences if any, in attitudes of inclusion depending on student's disability (LD, EB/D, CD).

Survey items 2, 3, and 4, and 11, 12, and 13 address this objective. The results of survey items 2, 3, and 4 indicated that 68.2% of the participants agreed that students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities and students with cognitive disabilities are able to participate productively in general education classroom learning activities. However, the results indicate that the participants

agree (72.8%) that students with learning disabilities are able to participate and be more productive in general education classroom learning activities. The results of survey items 11, 12, and 13 indicate that over half (54.5% for EB/D and 59.1% for CD) of the participants agree that students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities and students with cognitive disabilities appear to adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion. However, the results indicate that again the participants agree (72.7%) that students with learning disabilities appear to adapt better behaviorally and academically to inclusion then their peers with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities and cognitive disabilities.

     5) Research Objective 5: Factors behind positive and negative attitudes.

     Specific factors were unable to be determined because of the nature of the items. However, several items yielded higher percentages of agreement or disagreement, which indicate what items the participants agree or disagree with the most and in some cases are the most important to them. The results of survey items 4, 5, 8, 13, 15, and 18 yielded the highest percentage of agreement by the participants. Of the participants, 73% agreed that students with learning disabilities are able to participate productively in the general education classroom and appear to adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion. Of the participants, 82% agreed that inclusion improves social skills of students with disabilities and 77% of the participants have observed inclusion promoting true friendships among students with and without disabilities. Lastly, 86% of the participants agreed that special education and general education teachers need to collaborate in order for inclusion to be successful and 82% believe that a continuum of services needs to be provided in order to effectively meet the needs of students with disabilities.

The two survey items that yielded the highest percentage of disagreement by participants were 7 and 17. Over half (54.5%) of participants disagreed that general education teachers and other staff are provided with ongoing training and in-services in order to prepare them to feel competent in teaching students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Half of the participants also disagreed that general education teachers are concerned that having students with disabilities in their classrooms will lower their own overall class academic performance.

Summary

The results of this study have identified middle school special education and general education teacher attitudes on inclusion in one rural school district. The results indicated that there were some significant differences between special education and general education teacher attitudes. The general education teachers agreed significantly more than special education teachers that; students with disabilities participate in classroom activities with their peers without disabilities, that students with learning disabilities are able to participate productively in general education classroom learning activities, that inclusion improves social skills of students with disabilities, that students without disabilities accept their peers with disabilities in the general education classroom, and that students with cognitive and learning disabilities appear to adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion. Lastly, the special education teachers agreed significantly more than the general education teachers that the special education room should only be used as a resource when the general education teacher cannot adequately meet the needs of the student with disabilities in their classroom. Though factors behind positive and negative attitudes were not able to be determined, the results indicate that the majority of participants agree that special education and general education teachers need to collaborate in order for inclusion to be successful. The majority of participants also

stated, that in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities, a continuum of services needs to be provided.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This study examined middle school special education teacher and general education teacher attitudes on inclusion. This chapter will start with a discussion of the findings of this study compared with other studies presented in Chapter Two. This chapter will follow with conclusions of the results of this study. This chapter will end with recommendations for further studies and the participants of this study.

Discussion

The results of this study concur with the general consensus of the literature reviewed that a continuum of services and a multitude of support needs to be an option to best meet the needs of students with disabilities. Studies such as Leyser and Tappendorf (2001) and Voltz, Brazil, and Ford (2001) emphasized the importance of collaboration between special education teachers and general education teachers. Participants of this study concurred, reporting that collaboration is necessary in order for inclusion to be successful. Participants of this study tended to agree with studies such as McLeskey and Waldron (2002), D'Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanleeuwen (1997), and Shade and Stewart (2001) which indicate that general education teachers need additional training and in-services in order to prepare and feel competent in teaching students with disabilities in their classrooms.

Voltz, Brazil, and Ford (2001), report that students with disabilities must be truly participating in the general education classroom in order for inclusion to be successful. Participants from this study report that students with disabilities do participate with their peers and are productive in their learning activities. A study by Hendrickson, Shokoohi-Yekta, HamreNietupski, and Gable (cited in D'Alonzo, Giordano, & Vanleeuwen, 1997) report that friendships between students with severe disabilities and students without

disabilities developed because of inclusion. The participants of this study agree that inclusion promotes true friendships among students with and without disabilities. McLeskey and Waldron (2002) report that one concern of teachers is that inclusion would bring their overall academic performance down in their class. Although the majority of the participants disagreed that this was of concern, the results showed almost a significant difference between special education and general education teachers, with special education teachers agreeing more that this was a concern of general education teachers.

Conclusions

Overall, the special education and general education teachers in this study generally have positive attitudes towards inclusion. However, general education teachers agreed more on all but two statements, therefore having more positive attitudes towards inclusion then special education teachers. Special education teachers stated more then general education teachers, that general education teachers are concerned about lowered overall class performance by including students with disabilities in their classrooms. Special education teachers also agree more that the special education room should only be used as a resource when the general education teacher cannot adequately meet the needs of the student with disabilities in their classroom.

Overall, the teachers agreed that students with disabilities participate in classroom activities with their peers without disabilities. The teachers also agree that students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities, cognitive disabilities, and learning disabilities all participated in learning activities productively in the general education classroom but the teachers agree that students with learning disabilities were the most productive in the general education classroom. The majority of teachers also agreed that students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities, cognitive disabilities, and learning disabilities all appear to adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion with again teachers agreeing

that students with learning disabilities adapt the best. The teachers also indicated that they felt inclusion improves social skills of student with disabilities as well as promotes true friendships among students with and without disabilities. Though half of the teachers indicated that there is sufficient administrative support to meet the needs of students with disabilities, a little over half felt like general education teachers and other staff are not provided with ongoing training and in-services meant to prepare them and increase their competency in teaching students with disabilities in their classroom. The majority of teachers agreed that collaboration between special education teachers and general education teachers is necessary in order for inclusion to be successful. Lastly, the teacher's responses indicate they are proponents of partial inclusion indicating that a continuum of services needs to be provided in order to effectively meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Recommendations

The results and conclusions of this study lead to the following recommendations:

1) This study could benefit from being conducted with a larger school district and therefore a larger sample. This would allow the researcher to determine whether there were any differences in attitude levels within the special education disciplines and general educators.This study could also be conducted with an entire school district. This would allow the researcher to look at elementary, middle, and high school levels, and again determine if there are any differences in attitude levels within the separate schools. In addition to surveying teachers, it may be of interest to interview students and compare and contrast the survey results of each.

2) The administration to increase support to teachers and other staff in the way of time and training in order to increase competencies of staff and meet the needs of students with disabilities.

3) The general education teachers and support staff increase their own competencies by seeking out available trainings.

4) This researcher also recommends that special education and general education teachers continue to collaborate to ensure that needs of students with disabilities are being met in and outside of both of their classrooms.

5) In order to determine factors behind the positive and negative attitudes held by teachers towards inclusion, this researcher recommends adding perception questions to the survey.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form

I understand that by returning this survey, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small. I am aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that only minimal identifiers are necessary and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. I understand that the results will be given in a manner that subjects will not be identified. I also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. The results will be given to the school administration and participants of this study and the information can be used in order to tailor needs of all students, as well as meet needs of teachers, and other school staff. I realize that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice.

NOTE: Questions or concerns about the research study should be addressed to Jennifer Olson, the researcher, at (715) 233-1861, or Dr. Amy Schlieve, the research advisor, at (715) 232-1332. Questions about the rights of research subjects can be addressed to Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 Harvey Hall, Menomonie, WI, 54751, phone (715) 232-1126.

Inclusion Survey

This is a survey of special education and general education teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms. The completed surveys will be collected and examined in anonymity. The demographic questions are only asked in order to meet the research study objectives. Your time and participation in this study are greatly appreciated.

Demographics
Please circle or fill in the answer that applies to you.

1. Your position with in the school district
    A) General education teacher   B) Special education teacher

2.   Subject you teach (i.e. health, science, etc. or CD, LD, EBD)

_____

PLEASE TURN OVER FOR THE SURVEY

Please rate the following statements that indicate your attitude on a scale from 1 to 5. There is a comment section at the end of the survey to write additional comments you have about inclusion.

1= Strongly Agree
2= Somewhat Agree
3= Neutral
4= Somewhat Disagree
5= Strongly Disagree

1. Students with disabilities actively participate in classroom activities with their peers without disabilities in general education classrooms.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

2. Students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities are able to participate productively in general education classroom learning activities.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

3. Students with cognitive disabilities are able to participate productively in general education classroom learning activities.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

4. Students with learning disabilities are able to participate productively in general education classroom learning activities.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

5. Inclusion improves social skills of students with disabilities.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

6. Students with disabilities who spend half of their school day or more in the special education room get their academic needs met adequately.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

7. General education teachers and other staff are provided with ongoing, training and in-services in order to prepare them to feel competent in teaching students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE

</div>

1= Strongly Agree, 2= Somewhat Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Somewhat Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree

8. Special education teachers and general education teachers need to collaborate in order for inclusion to be successful.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

9. All teachers and support staff have sufficient administrative support in planning and preparation time, to meet the needs of students with disabilities in and outside of their classrooms.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

10. Students without disabilities accept their peers with disabilities in the general education classroom.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

11. Students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities appear to adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

12. Students with cognitive disabilities appear to adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

13. Students with learning disabilities appear to adapt behaviorally and academically to inclusion.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

14. General education teachers have the knowledge, skills, and experience to teach students with disabilities in their classrooms.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

15. A continuum of services (special education classroom, aides, etc.) needs to be provided in order to effectively meet the needs of students with disabilities versus full inclusion where the student is in the general education room for the entire day.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

PLEASE TURN OVER FOR THE REMAINING 5 QUESTIONS

</div>

16. General education teachers are concerned that having students with disabilities in their classrooms may disrupt the education of students without disabilities.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

17. General education teachers are concerned that having students with disabilities in their classrooms will lower their own overall class academic performance.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

18. I have observed inclusion promoting true friendships among students with and without disabilities.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

19. The special education room should only be used as a resource when the general education teacher cannot adequately meet the needs of the student with disabilities.

<div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

20. Please write any additional comments you have about inclusion.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY!