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ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' AND PRINCIPALS' CONCERNS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION IN A SOUTH TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Dissertation

by

LAUREN Y. ARCE

Submitted to the Graduate College of
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2017

Major Subject: Educational Leadership

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' AND PRINCIPALS' CONCERNS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION IN A SOUTH TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

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LAUREN Y. ARCE

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May 2017

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ABSTRACT

Arce, Lauren Y., Elementary Teachers' and Principals' Concerns in the Implementation of Inclusion in a South Texas School District. Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), May, 2017, 192 pp., 9 tables, references, 143 titles.

This study addressed the in depth concerns that elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and campus administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with special needs. These concerns that teachers and campus administrators have can influence the practice of inclusion. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to: (a) identify the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers in one South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion; (b) identify the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion; (c) explore in depth the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms, and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom concerning the implementation of inclusion; (d) explore in depth the levels of concern of campus administrators who do and do not utilize inclusionary practices in their respective campuses. While identifying levels of concern of teachers and campus leadership, this study attempted to address those concerns to determine what perceptual suggestions could improve the education of special education students that are and are not participating in inclusion as a method of education. The

results of this study revealed that administrative support is needed in the areas of collaboration and continuous staff development. It is recommended that further research is needed to investigate these levels of concern.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family who has supported me in many ways throughout this endeavor. I am truly blessed to have such a great family. I also dedicate this work to my newborns: Jolie, Joaquin, Jovana, and Isabel Lauren. I have seen you grow so much since I began this work, and now I am pleased that you can see the final product.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to all students with and without disabilities who work diligently every day to reach their God-given potential. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to all teachers and administrators who devote their lives to improving the academic success of all students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Shirley J. Mills, my committee chair, for the wisdom and knowledge that she graciously shared throughout this process. Dr. Mills, your kind words and encouragement were always what I needed to accomplish this endeavor, and thank you Ms. Maggie for opening your home to me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, students with all disabilities have been part of the regular education classrooms for decades. Several mandated educational provisions, such as content mastery, resource classrooms, and other important mandates have been part of our students' educational setting. The history of special education court litigation and legislation demonstrates a trend towards fulfilling the needs of students with special needs (Yell, 2012). This study details the concerns that affect elementary regular and special education teachers, as well as campus administrators in elementary schools in one South Texas school district who engage in inclusive practices.

A concern is a matter that relates to or affects one based on their level of engagement (Hall & Hord, 2006). George, Hall, and Stieglbauer (2006) stated, "Our entire psychosocial being—our personal history, personality dynamics, motivations, needs, feelings, education, roles, and status—shapes how we perceive, feel about, and cope with our environments" (p. 7). Whenever something alerts our feelings and thoughts, we feel concerned about it. George et al., (2006), stated that an instrument, Seven Stages of Concern About an Innovation, has identified as stages because there is a developmental movement through them and are described as: awareness (0), informational (1), personal (2), management (3), consequence (4), collaboration

(5), and refocusing (6). Additionally, George et al. (2006) stated, "*The Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (SoCQ) is the primary tool for determining where an individual is in the stages of concern" (p. 8).

Yell (2012) stated the importance of the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education*, "although it took time, the precedents set in *Brown* resulted in sweeping changes in the schools' policies and approaches to students with disabilities" (p. 49). Reform in education policies followed as the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 noted a purpose: "was to provide federal money to states to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged children, including students with disabilities who attended state schools for the deaf, blind, and retarded" (p. 52). Sacks (2001) outlined the next federal law related to special education as:

The subsequent decades introduced stronger legislation towards the inclusion of students with special needs in regular education classrooms. Sacks (2001) stated that in The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 94-142 which mandates for all children with disabilities (1) a free and appropriate public education; (2) the right of due process; (3) education in the least restrictive environment; and (4) individualized educational programs. These four areas will serve as the nucleus of special education philosophy, documentation, and program development. (Sacks, 2001, p. 46).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), P.L. 101-476, originally realized as an amendment to the Education of the Handicapped Act, reauthorizes and expands discretionary programs and mandates transition services and assistive technology services to be

included in the IEP, adding autism and traumatic brain injury to those categories for special education programs and services" (p. 51).

This was modified by the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. Yell (2012) concluded that, "An important congressional goal in passing the IDEIA was to align the IDEA with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA; formerly referred to as No Child Left Behind [NCLB]), thereby increasing accountability for improving student performance" (p. 83). Heiman (2004) noted "the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in mainstream educational, occupational, and societal frameworks has become an accepted concept in western countries in the last two decades" (p. 91). Thus, it became obvious to many that some degree of federal involvement was necessary to move towards inclusionary practices.

The population of students that benefitted from the practice of inclusion was in the disability category of learning disability. Sacks (2001) described learning disabilities as "a handicapping condition whereby the individual possesses average intelligence but is substantially delayed in academic achievement" (p. 202). Cortiella (2009) stated "the term 'specific learning disability' means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations" (p.1). Additionally, Winzer (2009) stated, "Today, learning disabilities is the largest single focus of special education in many school districts. However, it is under pressure to articulate a more exact definition of learning disabilities and to specify clear criteria for the various subgroups within it" (p. 183). Thus, students with disabilities generally require inclusive practices and

interactions with teachers through various school settings to be served appropriately. The students that have disabilities are those that may be serviced through inclusionary practices. "Inclusive education means that all students in a school—regardless of their strengths, weaknesses, or disabilities in any area—become part of the school community" (King, 2003, p. 152). McGregor and Forlin (2005) stated "previous research examining the impact on including children with disabilities in mainstream education on the attitudes of students towards their peers with disabilities is quite substantial although the results vary" (p. 19). Schools have always focused on student success to create accountability.

As the framework for accountability and progress of various subgroups came to light, the implementation of inclusionary practices became common methods used in the classroom. The various implementations of inclusion varied, however its definition remained similar. Sacks (2001) described the method of full inclusion is "inclusion involves educating all children in regular classrooms all of the time, regardless of the degree or severity of individual student disabilities" (p. 200). This definition was not well received by teachers in regular education classrooms.

Winzer (2009) stated that while The No Child Left Behind Act forced attention to the needs of low performing students, "Advocates see the inclusion of special education students in state testing as an important step in ensuring that every child receives a high-quality education" (p. 212). Additionally, Yell (2012) defined inclusion as "…simply the idea that all students with disabilities will spend the majority of their time in the general educational environment" (p. 270). This appeared to be a more acceptable definition of students with disabilities.

Most of the research into effective techniques for students with disabilities in inclusive settings has been focused on specific instructional techniques that could be implemented in regular education classrooms (Paterson, 2007). Glazzard (2011) suggested, "Current educational policy on inclusive education assumes that educators can narrow the gap between the attainment of learners with and without special educational needs" (p. 61). Essentially, inclusive practices means the student with special education needs is attending the regular school program and is enrolled in age-appropriate classes 100% of the school day (Idol, 2006).

"Students have greater self-esteem and achieve at a higher level when they are successful in school" (Zinkil & Gilbert, 2000, p. 225). King (2003) described a framework for teaching with inclusionary practices "unlike previous waves of reform that focused primarily on curriculum changes, the clearly articulated goal today, whether regular education or inclusion classroom, is to produce effects at the level of the learner" (p. 152). However, this does not mean that having a disability label will necessarily prevent a child from learning academic skills (Kemp & Carter, 2006). Boyle, Scriven, Durning, and Downes (2011) stressed that "providing resources and support is vital as children learn differently, and therefore teachers need to utilize fully a differentiated approach, which includes a variety of strategies to adapt lessons and effectively plan to cater for all students' learning abilities" (p. 75). Highly qualified teachers were a necessity for carrying out the appropriate inclusive practices that ensured student success.

According to Idol (2006), the implementation of inclusion, however, is not a solution for all students and is perhaps, best suited for those with learning disabilities. While NCLB did focus attention on students that were not meeting academic goals, Winzer (2009) explained, "Critics contend that the law is not flexible enough to take into account the individual needs of

students with disabilities" (p. 212). Although inclusionary practices may have advantages and disadvantages for students with disabilities, many educational leaders determine the successful implementation of inclusionary practices through support and guidance measures is still the best choice for students with disabilities.

Leadership's impact on school organizations has experienced change during the time of the law and legislation previously described. The increased responsibility placed on school leaders is expressed by Frost and Kersten (2001) "…although principals are not necessarily prepared to be the instructional leaders to special education teachers, in the wake of legislation and school reform, it is critical that they assume this responsibility to ensure program effectiveness and student achievement" (p. 6). Sanzo, Clayton, and Sherman (2011) underscored the importance of planning for instructional change, "Principals are expected to be knowledgeable and competent instructional leaders. It is critical that school leaders understand how to enact meaningful change within the building to support the instructional needs of a diverse student body" (p. 6). Additionally, Sanzo et al., (2011) determined the role that laws and legislation have played in the implementation of programs within schools by stating, "External policy changes such as No Child Left Behind of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act often serve as the impetus for planning within a district" (p. 6). Leaders must be cognizant of current educational legislation that is enacted for students with disabilities.

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, it became inevitable that schools, and the manner in which we educate students with disabilities, would have to change. "No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) impacted the increase in the number of students with special education classifications in general

education curriculum" (Casale-Giannola, 2012, p. 28). The implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 brought forward the need to change the method and manner in which special needs students were educated and the importance to school districts to ensure that proper methods were used to instruct students with special needs. Formerly omitted from school accountability measures, students with disabilities have been pushed to the front of state and federal accountability systems. At the national level the amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) set the ground for accountability requirements so that local school districts included students with special needs in their performance and participation of academic accountability measures. This requirement was accelerated into the discussion of accountability through the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which established the students with special needs as a subgroup for the purpose of ensuring schools meet Adequate Yearly Progress (Jaiani & Whitford, 2011).

Hall and Hord (2001) described the need for change facilitators in the change process, and identified actions facilitators need to take in order for change to be successful. Hall and Hord (2001) defined an intervention as "any action or event that influences the individuals involved or expected to be involved in the process" (p. 105). An action is planned, while an event is unplanned. Thus, interventions can either be positive or negative, but not all actions are positive and not all events are negative. While the principal is usually viewed as the change facilitator, Hall and Hord (2001) noted that anyone can be the change facilitator so long as they "assume the role and responsibilities" (p. 107). The researchers identified "six functions of interventions" which operate in terms of creating a context supportive of change: (1) developing, articulating, and communicating a shared vision of the intended change; (2) planning and providing

resources; (3) investing in professional learning; (4) checking on progress; (5) providing continuous assistance; (6) creating a context supportive of change. Hall and Hord (2001) also listed five strategies for creating a supportive change context: (1) shaping the physical features of the context; (2) modeling the expected behaviors and norms; (3) teaching and coaching; (4) addressing conflict; and (5) selecting, rewarding, and censuring staff. Additional interventions include developing a shared vision of the change and creating a context for change. Heiman (2004) affirmed the value of the school principal through the statement: "when the school principal shares the decision making process with the school staff, this contributes to more educational accountability and responsibility" (p. 93). Bailey and du Plessis (1997) explained that inclusionary practices can provide challenges for school principals, "it is noted that there is a great diversity of opinion about the benefits and values of inclusion" (p. 429). It is clear that inclusionary practices must be guided by the school principal in order for inclusion to be effective.

Statement of the Problem

This study will address the in depth concerns that elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and campus administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with special needs. These concerns that teachers and campus administrators have can influence the practice of inclusion.

Berry (2006) stated, "The recent No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and the current and previous versions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997, 2004) require access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities" (p. 490). Jaiani and Whitford (2011)

delineated the changes of No Child Left Behind stating, "test results and other indicators (such as graduation and attendance rates) then helped evaluate whether schools are moving toward attainment of the Act's main goal of one hundred percent student proficiency by the year 2014" (p. 14). Zinkil and Gilbert (2000) determined that "supporters of inclusion maintain the belief that students have a right to be educated in the general education setting with support services and aids provided to them in that setting" (p. 225). Additionally, Zinkil and Gilbert (2000) asserted that advocates of inclusionary practices support the initiative due to the fact that they "believe it will benefit special education students academically, emotionally, and/or socially" (p. 225). Leaders must evaluate the positive and negative research on inclusion that has been generated.

Glazzard (2011) stressed the implementation issues related to inclusionary practices: "it is clear that inclusion will remain a significant challenge if practitioners are not committed to its principles and it will be impossible if practitioners fail to embrace their responsibilities for the education of all children" (p. 56). Duhaney (1999), described the relationship between the underlying theory and its implementation issues as, "inclusion policies support collaboration between educators; however, school districts find it difficult to provide teachers with the time to collaborate" (p. 368). Clearly, the implementation issues that teachers and administrators face in public schools is constant.

Glazzard (2011) highlighted the importance of implementation issues stating, "Inclusion is difficult to do without the support from the school's senior management team" (p. 57). Additionally Glazzard (2011) stated, "The current emphasis on raising attainment of children with special education needs is also hugely problematic for learners themselves" (p. 59). Daniel

(1997) explained that "in 1975 the Congress of the United States promulgated Public Law 94-142 or the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act in reaction to the fact that so many disabled children were being denied access to the nation's public schools" (p. 397). Yet, nearly 30 years after the passage of this law, now referred to as the Individuals with Disabilities Act, many students with disabilities remain in education settings separate from their non-disabled peers (Ferri & Connor, 2005). "The interpretation of the phrase to the maximum extent appropriate has been moving toward inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom setting" (Zinkil & Gilbert, 2000, p. 224). Boyle et al., (2011) stated, "Including children with special needs in the classroom allows them the opportunity to learn in a culture that is supportive and conducive to their needs" (p. 73). Successful inclusionary practices may be dependent first upon teachers' attitudes towards its implementation and, second upon their perceived competence to deliver this important education initiative (Hodkinson, 2006). Paliokosta and Blandford (2010) stated that in regards to inclusionary practices, "the experience of a teacher is characterized by ongoing tensions and a feeling of inadequacy towards what is and continues to be prescribed by policy" (p. 73). According to Hodkinson (2006) the literature base determined that the effective implementation of inclusive education is seemingly dependent, among other factors, upon how individual teachers define it. The researcher further noted that teachers who have received the necessary trainings to instill a belief that they can deliver a positive education and accept that all children are educable within mainstream education. Stainback and Stainback (1990) explained, "It is no longer sufficient to simply advocate for access to the mainstream of school life. It is also essential to facilitate appropriate educational

programs and supports for every student in the mainstream" (p. 5). Responsibility for the successful use of inclusionary practices falls upon the leadership of the school.

"To achieve inclusive schools, special and regular educators must come together to work to achieve the goal of effective and appropriate education for every student in the mainstream" (Stainback & Stainback, 1990, p. 4) Due to the fact that inclusionary practices are important initiatives, there are other factors to consider: learning from schools where inclusion is practiced and their success rates, implementation of sound disciplinary practices regardless of whether the student is a student with disabilities or a student who is at risk for school failure, and allowance of more students with disabilities to prepare for and be given the statewide test (Idol, 2006). Cromwell (2004) highlighted the difficulties in ensuring inclusion success, "Even the staunchest backers of inclusion recognize that it requires support services and changes in the traditional classroom" (p. 2). Hwang and Evans (2011) stressed that "educational professionals accept the educational rights of children with disabilities and the principle of inclusion; there remain significant barriers to achieving those ideals" (p. 140). Leatherman and Niemeyer (2007) suggested that "teachers form attitudes toward children with disabilities, and ultimately toward inclusion, based on a child's characteristics, the factors in the classroom, and their previous experiences" (p. 24). The sum of concerns previously described by teachers provides guidance for campus administration to address, as they encounter inclusionary practices on their campus.

Sage (1996) emphasized the importance of the role of campus administration in the practice of inclusion by stating, "we should recognize that school administrators carry an ambiguous role expectation because, although they are expected to lead, they are also expected to maintain stability in the system" (p. 105). The process is supported through providing

successful implementation plans of inclusionary practices and allowing the staff to contribute during the planning phase of inclusionary practice implementation (Rodriguez & Tompkins, 1994). Schaffner and Buswell (1998) stated, "All advocates must join together in recognizing that schools that implement sound educational practices are good schools for all students. The presence of students with disabilities in general education classrooms and their successes or failures can serve as a barometer for how well all children are being educated in those classrooms" (p. 63). As explained, the role of campus leadership in the implementation of inclusion is crucial to determine the various concerns that should be addressed towards inclusionary practices.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to: (a) identify the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers in one South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion; (b) identify the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district regarding the implementation of inclusion; (c) explore in depth the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms, and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom concerning the implementation of inclusion; (d) explore in depth the levels of concern of campus administrators who do and do not utilize inclusionary practices in their respective campuses. The *Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ)* was utilized to identify levels of concern of teachers and campus leadership. This study attempted to address those concerns to determine what suggestions could improve the education of special education students that are and are not participating in

inclusionary practices. While identifying stages of concern of elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and elementary campus administrators, this study attempt to address those concerns to determine what course of action would benefit students who utilize inclusionary practices as a method of education.

Research Questions

Quantitative Research Questions

The following research questions guided the quantitative study:

1) Are there differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers who are practicing inclusion in their classrooms using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?
2) Are there differences in the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?
3) Are there differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?
4) Are there differences in the levels of concern between (a) elementary regular education teachers (b) elementary special education teachers and (c) campus administrators using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?

Qualitative Research Question

The following overarching research question guided the qualitative study:

What are the levels of concern and suggestions for improvement of elementary regular teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with disabilities?

Significance of the Study

This study detailed the concerns that affected elementary regular and special education teachers, as well as campus principals in elementary schools in one South Texas school district who implemented inclusionary practices. Stanovich and Jordan (1998) found the "principal's role as norm setter in a school to be so important that the strongest single predictor of teaching effectiveness in inclusive classrooms was subjective school norms embodied in the building principal's attitude about inclusion" (p. 175). Campus administrators, especially school level principals "must not only keep abreast of the trends and changes in the field, but must take an effective leadership role" (Patterson, Marshall & Bowling, 2000, p.10). Essentially, the building principal or administrator sets the tone and climate for the school as an inclusionary setting for students with special needs because he or she often controls the budget and schedules of individuals that will work within the school program and determines the effective implementation of inclusion.

Stainback and Stainback (1996) stressed the importance of goals with inclusive schools; "the key to successful inclusion is our willingness to visualize, work for, and achieve a mainstream that is adaptive to and supportive of everyone" (p. 385). The regular education

teacher and the special education teacher must shift their roles within the classroom. Stainback and Stainback (1996) explained, "the major reason for inclusion is not that previously excluded students are necessarily going home to become proficient in socialization, history, or math, although it is obvious that there are more opportunities for everyone to grow and learn in inclusive classrooms" (p. 218). Iverson (1996) explained that some teachers have apprehensions; "most teachers need quality training in order to be effective managers" (p. 298).

The culmination of all of these factors must be taken into consideration through the implementation of inclusion in regards to its success in elementary schools. Additionally, identifying the concerns of campus administrators in regards to inclusionary practices assisted others as they moved towards inclusion and supported their teachers to include students with disabilities in their classrooms.

Methodology

This study implemented a mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2009) that utilized a quantitative survey (*Stages of Concern Questionnaire*, George et al., 2006) and focus group interviews. Creswell (2009) explained, "It [the study] involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study" (p.4). The study implemented the triangulation design as Creswell & Plano-Clark (2007) stated, "This design is used when a researcher wants to directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings or to validate or expand quantitative results with qualitative data" (p. 62). Additionally, Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) indicated that the validating quantitative data model is implemented when researchers are interested in validating and expanding upon information collected from a survey. The study implemented a quantitative

instrument known as the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire(SoCQ)* intended to refocus the questions in a manner that the *innovation* addressed was dedicated to the practice of inclusion. Hall and Hord (2006), explained, "Because the questionnaire has been designed so that there is a raw score for each stage, a graphic representation of the data can be made using a percentile table for conversions" (p. 147). The study included an online questionnaire sent to 439 (N=439) elementary regular and special education teachers and ten campus administrators in one South Texas school district and an additional six campus administrators were added to the study. George et al., (2006) stated the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (SoCQ) was developed to provide a quick-scoring measure of the seven Stages of Concern and consisted of a 35 item questionnaire on a 0 to 7 Likert scale, thus producing raw scores for each stage of concern were in turn are converted to percentile scores and arrayed on a stages of concern profile. Creswell (2009) explained that survey research "provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (p. 12). The researcher surveyed the population of all elementary regular and special education teachers, six additional campus administrators and all elementary campus administrators in one South Texas school district for the quantitative portion of the study.

After the online survey was conducted and the data were analyzed, the researcher implemented purposive sampling to select individuals that participated in the qualitative focus group interviews of this study (Creswell, 2009). The researcher conducted interviews with the three focus groups using an open ended interview process (See Appendices B and C) that included elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and campus administrators. The researcher included individuals who practiced inclusion and

individuals who did not practice inclusion in their respective classrooms/campuses as indicated from the survey. Gay et al., (2012) identified purposive sampling as the selection of a sample that is believed to be representative of a particular given population. The framework of the study conducted was a mixed method research that implemented a survey component along with a series of focus group interviews in a manner that the data and information collected validated the quantitative concerns of individuals implementing inclusion.

Limitations of the Study

This study addressed the levels of concern that elementary teachers and elementary campus administrators encountered as inclusionary practices were implemented; however, the study does have limitations. Creswell (2009) stressed that "deficiencies in past literature may exist because topics have not been explored with a particular group, sample, or population" (p. 106).

1) The study was limited to one school district located in South Texas with a population that is 99% Hispanic and 80% at-risk of not completing high school. The school district served a population of students of approximately 17,500 of which 8% were identified as eligible for "special education services" based on demographic reports complied by the school district. Therefore, the interpretation of findings from this study by other states or larger school districts should be done with extreme caution.
2) Teachers throughout the district have experienced various types and forms of inclusionary practices and so their level of acceptance varied.
3) Longer or shorter research time spans can influence results regarding the effects of inclusionary practices at the various elementary campuses.

4) The researcher was a participant-observer with supervisory responsibilities. This dual role may have generated bias and caused key participants to be hesitant to openly discuss their concerns.
5) District initiatives in practice may or may not limit the ability to generalize results to other districts and areas.

Delimitations of the Study

"Delimitations are the boundaries purposely put on the study, usually to narrow it for researchability" (Mertler & Charles, 2011, p. 58). The defined area of the study was primarily relegated to the area of south Texas where the population was mostly of Hispanic ethnicity. The study surveyed the population of all elementary teachers and elementary campus administrators in a South Texas school district plus an additional six campus administrators from a South Texas school district for the quantitative portion of the study. The return rate for these surveys was 34%.

Additionally, the qualitative portion of the study implemented purposive sampling so as to limit the number of teachers based on their levels of concern from the survey and whether or not inclusionary practices was implemented in their classroom. The campus administrators of the defined South Texas school district were fearful of participating in the qualitative study, and an additional six administrators from another South Texas school district were utilized. The researcher used the district based on its availability and easy access and delimited the study to that one district. The researcher's study itself was delimited when the ten campus administrators resisted participation in the qualitative portion of the study. After much discussion amongst committee members an additional six campus administrators from another South Texas school

district were used in the qualitative focus group interview. The researcher worked closely with the special education director of one South Texas school district to identify participants and delimited her study to elementary teachers and administrators rather than including middle and high school. This district was chosen based on the demographics of the elementary teaching staff and elementary campus administrators as well as accessibility to the researcher.

Definition of Terms and Acronyms

The following terms are essential to the study and will be defined to ensure comprehension of the various settings related to special education.

ARD. "Admission, Review & Dismissal. Another name for the local education agency committee that determines whether a student is in need of special education services, and if so, what services, etc." (Packer, 2002, p. 2). Commonly referred—at a national level as a multidisciplinary team—also this is what is used in IDEA.

AYP. "Adequate Yearly Progress is the yardstick that measures how schools progress towards the one hundred percent proficiency goal" (Jaiani & Whitford, 2011, p. 14)

Concerns-Based Adoption Model. "A conceptual framework that describes, explains, and predicts probable behaviors throughout the change process, and it can help educational leaders, coaches, and staff developers facilitate the process" (George et al., 2006).

Disability. A child with a disability means a child evaluated in accordance with Sec. 300.304 through 300.311 as having (1) an auditory impairment , (2), autism, (3) deaf-blindness (including deafness), (4) intellectual disability, (5) multiple disabilities, (6) an orthopedic impairment, (7) other health impairment, (8) a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as "emotional disturbance"), (9) a specific learning disability, (10) a speech or language

impairment, (11) traumatic brain injury, (12) a visual impairment (including blindness), and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services ("IDEA-Building The Legacy of IDEA 2004", n.d.).

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Special education and related services that have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction and without charge; meet the standards of the Texas Education Agency (TEA); include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the State involved; and are provided in conforming the individualized education program (IEP).

Full inclusion. "Students, regardless of handicapping condition or severity will be in a regular classroom/program full time. All services must be taken to the child in that setting" (WEAC, 2007, p.1).

IDEA. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, formerly the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, stipulates that children with disabilities must be provided a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. "IDEA was amended in 1997 as Public Law 105-17 as is usually just referred to as 'IDEA" or "IDEA '97." This piece of federal legislation is the heart of entitlements to special education. IDEA also empowers parents as partners in their special needs child's educational planning" (Packer, 2002, p. 10). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvements Act of 2004 removed the discrepancy criterion and allowed responses to intervention as part of the learning disabilities assessment process (Winzer, 2009).

Individual Education Program (IEP). "An IEP is a written educational plan for a school-aged child with disabilities developed by a team of professionals (teachers, therapists,

etc.) and the child's parents. The program is written for a student who has been found to be eligible under IDEA for special education" (Packer, 2002, p. 10).

Inclusionary practices. "…bringing support services to the child rather than moving the child to a segregated setting to receive special services" (McCarthy, 1994, p. 1). Inclusive practices is the idea that all students, regardless of ability, can and should receive a solid education in a general classroom alongside their peers.

Innovation. Any program, process, or practice, new or not, that is new to a person (Hord et al., 1987, p. 3).

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). A mandate the state education agency that it must guarantee that "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with non-disabled children" (McCarthy, 1994, p. 1).

Regular education classroom. For the purpose of this study, a regular education classroom is one that consists of students from grades Kinder through 5th.

Regular education teacher. According to the Texas Education Code a "classroom teacher" means an educator who is employed by a school district and who, not less than an average of four hours each day, teaches in an academic instructional setting or a career and technology instruction setting. For the purpose of this study, an elementary regular education teacher is one that serves students from Kinder through 5th grade.

Special education. Special education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including—

(1) Instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and

(2) Instruction in physical education.

Special education includes each of the following, if the services, otherwise meet the requirements of the previous section—

(i) Speech-language pathology services, or any other related service, if the service is considered special education rather that a related service under State standards;

(ii) Travel training, and;

(iii) Vocational education.

Special education classroom. For the purpose of this study, a special education classroom is one that consists of students that do have specific, identified disabilities from grades Kinder through 5th and meet the criteria for eligibility for special education.

Special education eligibility. A child who meets state and federal definition, criteria of having a disability and where-by reason thereof, needs special education would be a child considered eligible for special education.

Special education teacher. For the purpose of this study, a special education teacher is one that serves students from Kinder through 5th grade that do have specific, identified disabilities and who meet eligibility criteria for special education and are served through special education.

***Stages of Concern Questionnaire*.** A survey of questions related to an innovation in teaching that is used to "determine what people who are using or thinking about using various

programs are concerned about at various times during the adoption process" (George et al., 2006).

Summary

The implementation of inclusionary practices throughout schools has been an endeavor with a variety of challenges. Many teachers felt apprehensive when dealing with students with disabilities due to a variety of underlying factors. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to: (a) identify the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers in one South Texas school concerning the implementation of inclusion; (b) identify the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion; (c) explore in depth the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms, and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom concerning the implementation of inclusion; (d) explore in depth the levels of concern of campus administrators who do and do not utilize inclusionary practices in their respective campuses. The researcher intended to identify the stages of concern related to inclusion and its implementation in elementary schools within a school district of approximately 17,500 students where 8% of the population was identified as special education. Furthermore, the researcher intended to identify the stages of concern of elementary teachers and campus administrators as a focus on the implementation of inclusionary practices and to further interview the campus administrators in relation to inclusion and the support structure needed in the classroom. The various significant terms were defined to ensure the comprehension of inclusion and related acronyms were clearly delineated. The intent throughout the first chapter was to determine the underlying issues related

to inclusionary practices in elementary schools and the manner in which the implementation of these practices best suited the needs of the students.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presented a review of the literature as it pertained to special education and inclusionary practices and the role of teachers and school administrators in this process. Educating children who have disabilities in classes with non-disabled peers is considered inclusive schooling (National Study on Inclusive Education, 1994). The National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion (NCERI) developed a definition, which was comprehensive and illustrative of many definitions published of the term inclusion. Inclusion made provisions for all students, including those with significant disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, with the needed supplementary aids and support services, in age-appropriate classrooms in their neighborhood schools in order to prepare students for productive lives as full members of society (National Study on Inclusive Education, 1994). Topics addressed in this chapter include the following: historical overview of special education, inclusionary practices, benefits and challenges of inclusionary practices, teachers' perspectives on inclusionary practices, and leadership and change.

History of Special Education

Prior to the civil rights movement and the 1954 landmark legislation *Brown v. Board of Education*, children with disabilities were denied their right to a free public education. Families frustrated with the exclusionary status quo mentality began forming advocacy groups to force the nation's public school systems to serve children with special needs. The history of special education was clouded with case law and public law to ensure every child received a free and appropriate public education (Yell, 2012).

Case Law

At the beginning of the 20th century the majority of the states had enacted compulsory education laws. However, very little effort was made to educate children with disabilities (Huefner, 2000). Through efforts on behalf of parents and advocacy groups, the educational rights of children with disabilities began to expand (Hehir & Latus, 1992). The landmark United States Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) served as the catalyst to include disabled children in schools and the passage of legislation to ensure all students were provided an education (Benjamin & Crouse, 2002). *Brown v. Board of Education* helped pave the way for different sub-groups to advocate for equal opportunities, especially those representing disabled children (Winzer, 2009). Separate but equal was deemed a violation in the 1950s. In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the high court reasoned that because of the importance of education in our society, the stigmatizing effects of racial segregation, and the negative consequences of racial segregation on the education of those against whom segregation was practiced, denied students equal educational opportunities (Yell, 2012). This basic truth was considered by many to be equally applicable to those denied equal opportunity to an education

because of a disability. Thus, *Brown v. Board of Education* became a catalyst for the efforts to ensure educational rights for children and youth with disabilities because if segregation by race was a denial of educational opportunity for black children, then certainly the total exclusion of children and youth with disabilities was also a denial of equal educational opportunity (Huefner, 2000). On the basis of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, a series of court cases was brought on behalf of children and youth with disabilities by advocates and persons with disabilities in which they both challenged and sought redress for similar inequities (Winzer, 2009).

Prior to the 1970s, states could choose to provide or deny school enrollment to children with disabilities (Heward & Cavanaugh, 1993; Keefe & Davis, 1998), whereas other states provided educational services to children with disabilities. These states provided services through the education of "handicapped" children in the permissive legislation (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1997). Only since a federal court in 1972 and the passage of federal legislation in 1975, had all the states been mandated to provide a free and appropriate public education to all students with disabilities. Thus, these two pivotal cases in 1970s, *Mills v. Board of Education* (1972) and *The Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. Pennsylvania* (1972) secured greater rights for disabled children in schools and shaped the implementation of special education in schools today.

Case law has been important in changing philosophy of school reform. Yell (2012), summarized the *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (1972) case:

The plaintiffs argued that students with mental retardation were not receiving publicly supported education because the state was delaying or ignoring its constitutional obligations to provide a publicly supported education for these students, thus violating state statute and the students' rights under the equal protection of the laws clause of the 14th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution (p. 50).

Soon after the *PARC* decision was handed down by the courts, a class-action lawsuit was filed in Federal Court for the District of Columbia. "This suit, *Mills v. Board of Education* (1972; hereafter *Mills*), was filed against the District of Columbia's Board of Education on behalf of all out-of school students with disabilities" (Yell, 2012, p. 51). Sacks (2001) explained the results of the *Mills* decision as, "Just as *Brown vs. the Board of Education* applied to race, the federal district court interpreted the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to apply discrimination of students on the basis of disability" (p. 46). The impact of *PARC* and *Mills* in 1972 was to strengthen laws passed by states authorizing the funding of special education (2001).

Mills v. Board of Education had a pivotal effect by guaranteeing children equal access to public education in all aspects of schooling. When their school considered changes in their status such as: suspension, expulsion, reassignment, and transfers out of regular education classrooms, the students were entitled to full procedural protection with the right to be heard by legal counsel (U.S. Congress, 1973).

Public Law

From these initial court cases federal legislation was passed that changed the manner in which students with special needs were educated. "The Education for All Handicapped Children

Act, P.L. 94-142, (1975), mandated for all children with disabilities (1) a free and appropriate public education; (2) the right to due process; (3) education in the least restrictive environment; and (4) individualized educational programs (Sacks, 2001, p. 46). The four areas served as the foundation of special education programs and the manner in which they were documented in schools. In 1990 the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act passed ushering in a series of changes. According to Sacks (2001),

> The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), P.L. 101-476, originally realized as an amendment to the Education of the Handicapped Act, reauthorizes and expands discretionary programs and mandates transition services and assistive technology services to be included in the IEP, adding autism and traumatic brain injury to those categories for special education programs and services (p. 51).

In 1997 P.L. 105-17 was passed as a reauthorization of IDEA with a greater emphasis placed on the general education classroom as a setting for special education students. Winzer (2009) stated, "The 1997 reauthorization required that the general education curriculum be a starting place for all students and that outcome measures on Individual Education Plans (goals and objectives) be tied directly to the general education curriculum goals and objectives" (p. 284-5). In 2001 The No Child Left Behind Act was passed and was "designed to promote high standards in public education and to ensure that all youths receive high-quality services" (Winzer, 2009, p. 285). In 2004 *P.L. 108-446* was passed in an effort to align provisions with the requisites of the No Child Left Behind Act. Winzer (2009) stated "The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act passed into law on June 19, 2004" (p. 285). Additionally, IDEIA underscored

that disabled students should only be placed in separate classes or schools when the nature or severity of their disabilities was such that they could not receive an appropriate level of education in a general education classroom with supplementary aids and services (Howard, 2005). This guaranteed the right of all students with disabilities to receive their education in the least restrictive environment.

Current literature reviews the similarities and differences between mainstreaming and inclusionary practices. According to Yell (2012) inclusionary practices and mainstreaming were grounded in the struggle for the extension of civil rights, furthermore, both were directed at placement of students with disabilities in general education settings with their normally developing peers. Both mainstreaming and inclusionary practices had common methods of implementation, although they were different. Halvorsen and Neary (2001) pointed out that inclusionary practices differ from mainstreaming in that students did not belong to any specialized environment based on ability but were members of the regular education class.

To date, there have been numerous acts of legislation that have ordered special education students out of isolated educational settings and into classrooms with their regular education counterparts. More recently, the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) established provisions for all students including subgroups of students identified in terms of their disability, socioeconomic status, language, race, and ethnicity (Winzer, 2009). Specifically, all learners were required to take high-stakes assessments aligned with statewide learning standards and be proficient in core school subjects by 2014 (Allbritten, Mainzer, & Ziegler, 2004). In such a manner, districts showed that they were making adequate yearly progress for all students. No longer were districts allowed to exempt special education students from taking standardized assessments. In order to

comply with the Act, to educate all learners, schools were required to merge general and special education into a single delivery system (Matlock, Fielder, & Walsh, 2001).

Inclusion

Profound challenges of inclusionary practices defined what unexamined notions of what "ordinary" and "normal" really mean (Forrester & Pearpoing, 1997). It required that one understand the origins, implications, past and present definitions of inclusionary practices in research. Research to date has different definitions of inclusion. When the IDEA was passed in 1974, the definition for the term inclusion was introduced, thus becoming the turning point for the placement of students with disabilities. All schools were required to receive federal funding, by law, to make provisions for a free and appropriate education for all students regardless of their handicap. Yet, the term inclusion did not appear in the IDEA text. Inclusion was a practice held by a growing number of educational professionals in the United States (Freagon, 1993). Ferguson (1995) described inclusion as a meshing of general and special education reform initiatives and strategies to achieve public education that included all children with high quality education by providing a meaningful effective curriculum and student supports. Freagon (1993) defined inclusion as a rather unique unstated term under the IDEA *(IDEA, PL 101-476*). It described increasing practices of educators. Stainback and Stainback (1990) used the term inclusion to describe a place where everyone belonged and was accepted.

Educational programs for children with and without disabilities included assistance for teachers to help students succeed in the mainstream setting. Odom (2002) preferred a broad definition as classroom programs in which children with and without disabilities participated in activities that normally occurred for children in their community and culture. Allen and

Schwartz (2001) stated that inclusion was not a placement issue or a set of strategies but was about belonging to a community. Bradley, King-Sears, and Tessier-Switlick (1997) defined inclusion as participation by all in a supportive educational environment that included appropriate social and educational supports and services. Integrated or inclusive schools did not require students to fit into programs but developed classroom communities to meet the educational and social needs for all children. Hines and Johnston (1996) called attention to the ethical implication of inclusion of special education students being morally right. They expressed the view that some educators questioned whether inclusion was appropriate for regular education students. Hines and Johnston (1996) provided some insight into the difference in inclusion versus mainstreaming. Inclusion established the students' "right" to a regular classroom while mainstreaming was viewed as a benchmark where students could "earn" their way back into the classroom. Presently, the paradigm shift challenged educators to look beyond mainstreaming to find inclusive strategies to meet the needs of individual students. The success of inclusion depended upon the instruction, the context being taught, and learner (Tisdell, 1995). Teachers and administrators rethought the concept of one teacher in his or her classroom. The current movement was toward teachers working together collaboratively.

Currently, the philosophy was to include all students in the same class, which brought about the collaboration between the general education and the special education teachers cooperatively joining their professional expertise, perspective, and skills. Collaboration was the backbone of successful inclusion (Edmiaston & Fitzgerald, 1998). Giangreco and Doyle (2007) offered ten recommendations to general education teachers working in an inclusive setting: (1) work with other team members, (2) welcome the students in their class, (3) be the teacher of all

students, (4) make sure everyone belongs to the classroom community and everyone participates in the same activities, (5) clarify and share expectations with team members, (6) adapt activities to the students' needs, (7) provide active and participatory learning experiences, (8) adapt classroom/arrangements, materials, strategies, (9) make sure support services help, (10) evaluate the teaching. Whether inclusion was in an elementary, middle, or high school, changes occurred for both general and special education teachers. An adjustment for the general education teacher occurred in the classroom. This adjustment took place when collaboration with the special education teacher and the general education teacher were planning and discussing lessons together. Collaborative planning was an ongoing process. The literature on collaboration, related to inclusion, described teacher behavior, such as sharing goals, being able to listen, trust, and openness. Teamwork, cooperation, and a shared vision were repeatedly identified as important factors in inclusion (Thousand & Villa, 1990). Successful inclusion requires the collaboration of the administrators, teachers, and other support staff (Aydin et al., 2013). However, inclusion, collaboration, teamwork or cooperation did not function in this manner, and resistance was evident (Katzenback & Smith, 1993). Maroldo (1994) found that special education and general education teachers needed to learn common language, due to the isolation they had experienced. Each member of the collaborative team accepted the responsibilities for student outcomes by decisions made by the team members. Titone (2005) remarked, "Inclusion is not something different, it's just adding to the philosophy that we already have and expanding it so that the range of students we deal with is bigger" (p. 32).

Benefits of Inclusion. The various benefits of inclusion have been documented by various authors. Inclusion appeared to be an educational trend that showed no indication of slowing.

With the implementation of IDEA, many schools were instituting the practice of educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. In the fall of 2007, 95% of 6-to-21year old students with disabilities were served in the regular schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010). Cortelia (2009) found that three out of the five students with learning disabilities spend the majority of their time in the general education classroom. Research has shown that inclusion had a positive academic impact on all students. Positive academic impact was viewed in two ways: 1) positive impact on the disabled student, while (2) showing little or no signs of decreased academic performance on the part of the non-disabled student. Students with disabilities educated in inclusive settings received higher grades and achieved higher scores on standardized tests than students with disabilities placed in separate classrooms (Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002). Research also revealed that the academic accomplishments of students with severe disabilities increased through interaction with typically developing peers in an integrated environment, and they met the goals of the individualized education programs (Westling & Fox, 2009). Staub and Peck (1995) found that academic progress was not affected for students without disabilities and these students seldom learned undesirable behaviors from children with disabilities. There was no effect on levels of teacher time lost to interruptions of instruction when compared to non-inclusive settings. Inclusive programs did not affect academic progress of children without disabilities or instructional time for teachers. Inclusion not only increased comfort and awareness for all children, it improved social interaction and was actually less expensive than traditional non-inclusive programs (Staub & Peck, 1995). According to research by Balyer (2012) supported

inclusionary practices as benefitting all students, especially students with special needs is necessary for it to work properly.

Studies also reported that inclusion provided an opportunity for students with severe disabilities to build social skills in terms of establishing relationships with their peers. Some studies indicated that students with disabilities in inclusive education classrooms experienced a higher level of interaction with peers than students with disabilities placed in separate classrooms (Hunt, Soto, Maier & Doering, 2003; Katz & Mirenda, 2002; Westling & Fox, 2009). Savich (2008) pointed out those students with disabilities in general education classrooms who received inclusion resulted in greater communication skills, greater social competence, and greater developmental skills. Significant research had shown that students with disabilities who were able to access the general curriculum benefited because it promoted communication, motor, and social skills, and helped students build friendships (Copeland et al., 2004; Ryndak & Billingsley, 2004).

Studies noted the importance of inclusion from the social aspect of the special education student. In addition to social benefits, elementary students with mild disabilities demonstrated higher standardized test scores, better grades, more attentive types of behavior, and a higher level of mastery in the IEP goals, and an overall more positive view towards school in inclusive environments (Hunt, Soto, Maier & Doering, 2003; Peetsma, 2001).

Children without disabilities have been reported to benefit from the exposure to disabled students in many ways. In an inclusive setting, children of different abilities had the opportunity to appreciate the fact that not all children were created equal. In elementary age children, Hunt et al., (2003) noted inclusive educational programming helped students become more accepting

of each other and helped them be more familiar with individual differences. Copeland et al., (2004) suggested that academic performance of non-exceptional students was enhanced through the students' opportunities to provide peer support to their classmates who were identified as having moderate to severe disabilities. Having both disabled and non-disabled students integrated into an age appropriate classroom resulted in positive outcomes. Since schools were a social arena, inclusion allowed exceptional learners to be a part of their school community and identify with peers from whom they would otherwise have been segregated (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004).

Current studies conducted with pre-service teachers tended to highlight the need for skills and experiences related to the implementation of inclusion. Researchers expressed that teachers had positive attitudes and decreased concerns towards inclusion as professional development workshops and seminars on inclusive education to improve the knowledge of in-service elementary teachers and enhance the qualification of the inclusive practices (Golmic & Hansen, 2012). Additionally, teacher efficacy increased as teachers continued to experience inclusive classrooms and there was a focus on the needs of pre-service teachers along with an emphasis on the importance of being skilled in inclusive practices (McHatton & McCray, 2007). Furthermore, Kern (2006) stated, "In addition to benefitting all students, inclusion provides benefits to teachers as well. Teachers are able to expand their skills to make them more effective and well prepared educators for all students" (p. 9). Teachers also had the opportunity to excel in conferencing skills and socialization skills, as they collaborated with special educators, IEP teams, and co-teachers (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004).

Challenges of Inclusion. Despite the potential benefits to inclusion, there were challenges that impeded individuals from gaining access to the regular curriculum setting (Spooner & Dymond, 2006). As inclusion evolved through time and legislation, the regulations of the legislation were not always implemented in the schools. Current literature provided a great deal of discussion regarding instructional strategies that encouraged students with disabilities to acquire functional skills; however, there was little research that considered instructional strategies that could better assist students in accessing the general education curriculum (Downing, 2008).

The delivery of inclusion required great support from all individuals within a school setting, especially school administrators. Administrators were key players in creating a positive inclusion environment for students with disabilities through collaboration with other staff members (Carter & Hughes, 2005). The literature suggested that administrators provided support through collaboration of staff members through "joint problem solving, maintaining data, facilitating staff development programs, providing emotional support in tough times, modeling collaborative traits and communication, providing resources, providing advocacy, providing time for staff to engage in collaboration, and assessing program efforts" (Bartlett, Weisenstein, & Etscheidt, 2002, p. 242). Arguments against inclusion include the possibility that students with special needs may be tormented or ridiculed by classmates; that teachers may not be prepared for inclusive education; that teachers may not be capable of appropriately servicing special needs students; and that every classroom may not be equipped with the proper services (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004; Zionts & Callicott, 2002). Odom (2002) stated that inclusive settings supported engagement of children with and without disabilities; however, teacher

education and administrative support were needed and helped children with disabilities engage in activities. Teachers planned developmentally because the plans affected children's participation and developmental outcomes. Not only was training, experience, and administrative support necessary for quality inclusion, but teacher attitude was as well (Odom, 2002). There were fewer interactions between children with and without disabilities when teachers did not directly promote integration in the classroom and it was important for teachers to have a positive attitude toward inclusion and a willingness to promote interactions (Bricker, 2000). However, the most positive attitudes might not promote successful inclusion if teachers did not have the skills, knowledge, and support systems to effectively care for diverse groups of children (Bricker, 2000). As previously stated, administrative support was important for positive attitudes of teachers. Principals and directors could greatly enhance strength-based attitudes in teachers. Lieber et al., (2000) found that a shared vision, training, advocating for new ideas as well as national and state policies were critical in initiating and implementing programs.

According to Kern (2006), "Studies indicate that general education teachers receive minimal special education training as a component of their pre-service training" (p. 14). A discrepancy exists as to what is perceived as being taught in teacher training programs and what is actually being taught. According to Cook (2001), a study conducted with teachers indicated that teachers felt they were not effectively prepared to handle special education students in their regular education classes. These results then led to poor attitudes by teachers based on their lack of confidence and a perceived lack of proper training in the area of special education and inclusion (Cook, 2001). Thus, campus administrator's roles or activities along with proper

training were an essential component in leading to successful inclusion of students in all classrooms.

Teachers' Perspectives of Inclusion

Research has shown that the practice of inclusion had a positive impact both academically and socially to the special education student. In addition, studies noted that regular education students felt they did not suffer academically by having special education students in their classrooms (Cawley, Hayden, Cade, &Baker-Kroczynski, 2002). Although literature tended to support the practice of inclusion from a student's point of view, there was consideration to the other factors that influenced the practice of inclusion.

Since the practice of inclusion implied that students will be educated in the least restrictive environment, understanding how the regular education teacher perceived this practice was critical. The regular education teacher was now also responsible and accountable for the education of special education students. In addition to providing a sound education to the special education student(s), the regular education teacher must simultaneously meet the educational needs of the regular students in the classroom as well. The initial perception of success or failure of the inclusion practice was critical to the continued success of the program (Smith & Smith, 2000).

In order for a regular education teacher to have a positive attitude toward inclusionary practices, the entire school must be receptive and show support for the various needs of all types of learners (Bowe, 2003; Shade & Stewart, 2001). Critics of inclusion noted that the practice of inclusion placed too much emphasis and responsibility on the part of the general educator. Teachers enter the classroom with their own personal beliefs, values, attitudes and concerns

toward inclusion and their new primary responsibility to teach all students, especially students with exceptional needs (Golmic & Hansen, 2012). In a study conducted by Smith and Smith (2000), 75 K-3 teachers were surveyed reporting they had been teaching in inclusive classrooms perceiving that 72.3% felt they were effective, while 27.7% felt that they were ineffective in inclusive classrooms. Teachers also reported specific concerns in this study were: class load, classroom support, collaborative planning time, implementation of the practice, continuous training, and whether or not there would be continual reassessment of the practice and design (Smith & Smith, 2000). A study conducted by Bunch and Finnegan (2000) reported that teachers responded that inclusion increased the demands on the regular education teacher and discussed concerns that the workload was worrisome and overwhelming. Bunch and Finnegan (2000) reported concerns were the issues of professional adequacy, teacher overload, and the fear of insufficient support.

The appropriateness of inclusionary practices within a school needed to be evaluated on a case by case basis. Children with disabilities should be considered for mainstreaming if appropriate (O'Dell & Karr-Kidwell, 1994). In determining the effect a disabled student's presence in the regular classroom had on the environment, regular education teachers needed to make two observations. First, whether or not the student's behavior was disruptive so that it interfered with the regular classroom atmosphere; secondly, whether or not the needs of the disabled student and the rest of the students suffered academically (O'Dell & Karr-Kidwell, 1994). Hamre-Nietupski, McDonald, and Nietupski (1992) reviewed several challenges when integrating students with disabilities into a regular education classroom. These challenges included (1) providing functional curriculum in a regular classroom, (2) providing community

based instruction and (3) promoting social integration. Since students with disabilities may have difficulty with several of these aspects, they could be integrated into the general curriculum for the benefit of all children. Current literature supported concerns that influenced regular education teachers as they implemented inclusionary practices. Brownell, Adams, Sindelar, Waldron, and Vanhover (2006) described several characteristics that included teacher knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy, teacher reported beliefs and knowledge about behavior management, teacher views on teaching styles and student-centered learning, teacher ability to reflect on learning, and teacher knowledge of instructional adaptations. Van Hover (2003) reported findings similar to those found by Brownell et al., (2006) from analysis of interviews of 12 teachers. Van Hover deduced themes which included teacher concerns about instructional approaches and how to make necessary adaptations for students with disabilities.

As inclusionary practices became more commonplace in public education, general education teachers began to assess their readiness to implement the program successfully. Concerns ranging from impact on the classroom, as well as classroom management and ability to successfully collaborate with the special education teacher and other professionals were legitimate concerns facing today's educator. Other researchers noted the perceptions of teachers related to their attitudes of students with disabilities. Elhoweis and Alsheikh (2006) noted teacher attitudes towards students with disabilities was critical for the successful implementation of inclusionary practices in the general education classroom. McHatton and McCray (2007) proposed that elementary education majors were found to have more favorable perceptions towards inclusionary practices when compared to secondary education majors who tended to disagree with the benefit of inclusionary practices and the ability to educate students with special

needs in the secondary education classroom. Hastings and Oakford (2003) found that teachers were more negative about the impact of children with emotional and behavioral disorders on other children in the general education classroom than they were about children with intellectual disabilities. Cook (2002) determined that teachers were more positive towards the inclusion of students with learning disabilities than students with behavior disorders, mental retardation, or multiple disabilities. Finally, Forlin, Loreman, Sharma, and Earle (2009) concluded that the personal engagement and involvement in teaching students with disabilities will most likely continue to further acceptance and understanding of inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms and improve attitudes towards inclusionary practices.

Leadership, Change, and Inclusion

Change is a construct that is frequently described with a set of assumptions that are rooted in cultural, social, ideological, and personal histories (Sayles, 2002). Change has been defined as an event that occurs when something passes from one state or phase to another, or when something is altered or made different. Change has been described as a process through which people move as they gradually come to understand and become skilled and competent in the use of new ways (Hall & Hord, 2006). When change occurred something ended and something new or different began. This usually involved moving from the familiar to the unknown, letting go of the old and embracing the new. Even when change was positive it was not uncommon for a person to feel an ending or loss associated with it (Sayles, 2002). Marzano et al., (2005) suggested one of the constants in education is that someone is always attempting to improve or change it through a new practice or program. Marzano et al., (2005) argued principal leadership was a critical factor to implementing change in schools. Principals must understand

the change process; they must understand which leadership responsibilities to emphasize and how to emphasize them when working with staff for which the change may have different implications. Specifically, leaders must engage in behaviors that are consistent with the magnitude of the change represented by the innovation, in this case, inclusion. If the leadership behaviors do not match the order of change required by the innovation, the innovation will probably fail regardless of its value. Some innovations required change that was gradual and subtle, while others required changes that are drastic and far reaching (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

In order for the practices of inclusion to be successful in a classroom, the entire campus must be supportive of the movement. As inclusionary practices began to take shape in a school, teachers noted that positive support from the school leader was essential (Daane, Beirne-Smith & Latham, 2000). Principals play a key role in setting the tone and vision for inclusive schools (Polat, 2011). Principals must understand and adequately estimate the magnitude of the improvement for all stakeholders. Principals must also understand which leadership responsibilities to emphasize when supporting staff with different needs (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). They have the ability to make informed placement decisions and to cultivate inclusive school environments that service all students equally in a non-discriminatory setting (Pazey & Cole, 2013). Teachers and administrators alike understood that a special education student's membership in the least restrictive environment was guaranteed under the law (Yell, 2012). The current trend in education was for schools to find "new and innovative ways to create learning environments that are responsive to the needs of the students with mild/moderate disabilities" (Stump, 2000, p. 1). Stump continued by listing suggestions to enhance the outcomes of students integrated in the regular education classrooms. They included the following:

1) **Setting the tone**. This can be achieved by working with staff to articulate a vision, setting goals, and developing a plan of action for the inclusionary program. By including staff in the planning stages of an inclusionary program, teachers can create a sense of ownership in the effort and work together to determine the desired outcomes of the program. Stump (2000) also stated that it was difficult work to develop and sustain a collaborative inclusionary program and it required the staff's full cooperation and commitment.
2) **Prepare the environment for the school inclusion of practice**. The campus staff must be aware of potential major changes that could occur in the campus operations. Equality between schedules will be important with both regular and special education teachers. Principals played an important role by rewarding and encouraging teachers' efforts. They also played a part in the assigning of the students with disabilities amongst the regular classrooms (Stump, 2000).
3) **Prepare teachers and staff for inclusionary practices.** It will be crucial for principals to provide training programs for teachers in order to guarantee their commitment to inclusionary practices. Teachers and staff must understand the complexity of students with disabilities in order to help them meet their academic, as well as behavioral and emotional goals (Stump, 2000).

One of the main benefits and goals of inclusive education was to promote social integration. Proponents of the practice of inclusion argued in favor of the many advantages afforded students with disabilities who were instructed in the general education setting. Research indicated including students with disabilities in general education classrooms had been

found to be related to beneficial educational and social outcomes for these students (Rea, McLaughlin, & Thomas, 2002). This goal could be reached from all levels, from the administration down to the classroom teacher and students. According to McDonnell et al., (2003) school leaders made it clear that disabled students were a wanted and integral part of the school. They sent positive messages and attitudes to the school staff, as well as to the community.

In the classrooms, the teachers used the opportunity to model and encourage appropriate social interactions among their students. In this instance, the strategies came full circle where modeling appropriate social behavior would not only benefit the disabled population, but the entire class as well. Integrating students into general education had many positive effects. In addition to effects on achievement, positive inter-group relations, greater acceptance of mainstreamed students and self-esteem, affects of cooperative learning were found on a variety of important educational outcomes. These included liking school, development of peer norms in favor of doing well academically, feelings of individual control over the student's own fate in school, and cooperation (McDonnell et al., 2003).

One critical quality that administrators possessed was the ability to empower their teachers. The capability of an administrator to relinquish authority on aspects of education, such as curriculum and instructional practices, gave teachers a sense of control in their ability to make decisions that directly impacted their classroom and the students they instructed (Rieck & Wadsworth-Dugger, 2000). Additionally, when administrators relinquished some control of the decision making to the teachers directly involved in the implementation of inclusion, the probability for the program's success increased (Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes, 1995).

Furthermore, the principal worked diligently to build a level of administrative support and trust within the building that allowed the teachers to feel as if they could take risks when making decisions that impacted the educational program in the school. Concerns often arose when the school's administrative team announced changes in school programs without involving teachers directly. In this situation, it was often difficult for the teachers to "buy into" the process of change in the school. In order for the change to be well received and have a lasting impact, the principal should be viewed as a "coach" or "guide" to the change process rather than insisting that change be implemented (Kavale & Forness, 2000).

Resources were considered to be tools necessary to make inclusionary practices work. Resources included continued training for the staff, materials such as computers and necessary software, monitoring the class load (Smith & Smith, 2000), and also ensuring appropriate time for teacher collaboration. In addition, Scruggs and Mastropieri (1994) noted that the administrator's ability to provide specialized equipment to children with special needs and the securing of other professionals, such as therapists and interpreters, assisted the teacher with the change process.

Just as important as it was to have teachers who were properly trained, the same went for the schools' administration. It was reported that teachers viewed the school leader as essential to the success of inclusionary practices (Patterson, Marshall & Bowling, 2000; Mayrowetz, & Weinstein, 1999; Daane et al., 2000; Rieck & Wadsworth-Dugger, 2000; Villa et al., 1996; Dyal et al., 1996). In order to promote effective leadership regarding the inclusion process, Patterson, Marshall and Bowling (2000) outlined several factors to encourage the continued development of the educational administrator as a change agent for inclusionary practices. First, administrators

needed to have a basic understanding of special education services. Teachers frequently noted support as a factor that influenced their perception of inclusionary practices and they looked to school leaders for answers to their questions, as well as for encouragement (Smith & Smith, 2000).

Secondly, school leaders must continue to develop their knowledge of inclusionary practices through ongoing professional development (Smith & Smith, 2000). When school leaders attended in-service functions regarding the implementation of inclusion it serves a dual purpose. First, it enhanced their own knowledge of the subject and second, showed support to the teachers. The school administrator showed solidarity with the teachers by keeping abreast of the fast changing world of special education.

Sage and Burrello (1994) reported that the school leader's beliefs and perceptions toward the practice of inclusion and toward special education in general were critical factors that influenced teacher perceptions toward their students with disabilities. Teachers looked toward the school administrator for guidance and support with regard to the practice of inclusion. Among other factors, such as the amount of pre-service and in-service training, the amount of administrative support was perceived by teachers as crucial to their own perceptions or attitudes of inclusionary practices.

Summary

The history of special education began to take shape in the United States of America beginning in the early part of the 20th century. Significant landmark cases beginning with *Brown v. Board of Education (*1954) along with *Mills v. Board of Education* (1972) pushed the struggle of special education students into the regular education classrooms. Further legislation known as

AHCA, IDEA, IDEIA, and NCLB continued to battle for the rights of students in special education settings.

Changes for people with disabilities were taking place all over the country. Increasing numbers of parents, educators, and advocates were committed to full participation and citizenship for people with disabilities. This Pandora's Box was opened in 1975 and educators will never go back. Stainback and Stainback (1990) stated that many levels of change must occur in the nation's education system if schools and classrooms were to successfully accommodate the educational and social needs of a diverse student population. They also stated that since the mid-1980s, the movement to include all students had gained momentum. Additionally, the National Association of State Boards of Education (1992) advocated moving to a more inclusive system that effectively served all students. It would seem reasonable to assert that special needs children must be provided instructional alternatives to many current or existing practices that do not provide adequately for the needs of diverse student populations. The implementation of inclusion was being offered as a viable option.

Finally, it should be emphasized that restructuring was easier said than done. Segregation had been practiced for centuries, and there were entrenched attitudes, laws, policies, and educational structures that worked against achieving inclusionary practices of all students on a widespread basis. Thus, achieving the implementation of inclusion of all students was a very challenging undertaking. However, the goal of having inclusive schools where everyone belonged, had friends, and was provided appropriate educational programs and supports were far too important not to accept the challenge.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) described mixed methods research as a methodology that "involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process" (p. 5). The execution of mixed methods research was implemented in this study as a manner to collect quantitative data through a survey and to enrich and support that data through qualitative information collected with focus group interviews. Creswell (2009) stated, "Concurrent mixed methods procedures are those in which the researcher converges or merges quantitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem" (p. 14). Thus, the researcher intended to gain insight to the implementation of inclusion within a school district in South Texas through the use of survey research and focus group interviews. Creswell (2009) explained that "research methodology continues to evolve and develop, and mixed methods is another step forward, utilizing the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research" (p. 203). This chapter will include the following sections: purpose of the study, research questions, methodology, and conclusion.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to : (a) identify the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers in one South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion: (b) identify the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion; (c) explore in depth the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms, and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom concerning the implementation of inclusion; (d) explore in depth the levels of concern of campus administrators who do and do not utilize inclusionary practices in their respective campuses. While identifying levels of concern of teachers and campus leadership, this study attempted to address those concerns to determine what perceptual suggestions could improve the education of special education students that are and are not participating in inclusion as a method of education.

Quantitative Research Questions

1) Are there differences in the levels of concern between elementary regular and special education teachers who are practicing inclusion in their classrooms using the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006)?
2) Are there differences in the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district using the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006)?
3) Are there differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms and

elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom using the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006)?

4) Are there differences in the levels of concern between (a) elementary regular education teachers (b) elementary special education teachers and (c) campus administrators using the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006)?

Null Hypotheses

1) There are no differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers who are practicing inclusion in their classrooms on any of the seven factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006).
2) There are no differences in the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district on any of the seven factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006).
3) There are no differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom on any of the seven factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006).
4) There are no differences in the levels of concern between concern between (a) elementary regular education teachers (b) elementary special education teachers and (c) campus administrators, on any of the seven factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006).

Qualitative Research Question

The following overarching research question will guide the qualitative study:

What are the levels of concern and suggestions for improvement of elementary regular teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with disabilities

Methodology

Research Design

This study implemented a mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2009) that utilized a quantitative survey (*Stages of Concern Questionnaire*, George et al., 2006) and focus group interviews. Creswell (2009) explained, "It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study" (p.4).

The study implemented the triangulation design as Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) stated "This design is used when a researcher wants to directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings or to validate or expand quantitative results with qualitative data" (p. 62). Additionally, Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) indicated that the validating quantitative data model is implemented when researchers are interested in validating and expanding upon information collected from a survey.

Quantitative. This study implemented an instrument known as the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire (*George et al., 2006, Appendix A). A concern is a matter that relates to or affects one based on their level of engagement (Hall & Hord, 2006). George et al., (2006) stated, "Our entire psychosocial being—our personal history, personality dynamics, motivations, needs, feelings, education, roles, and status—shapes how we perceive, feel about, and cope with our

environments" (p. 7). Whenever something alerts our feelings and thoughts, we feel concerned about it. George et al., (2006) stated that Seven Stages of Concern About an Innovation have been identified and are called stages because there is a developmental movement through them and are described as awareness (0), informational (1), personal (2), management (3), consequence (4), collaboration (5), and refocusing (6). Additionally, George et al., (2006) stated, "*The Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (SoCQ) is the primary tool for determining where an individual is in the stages of concern" (p. 8). The researcher rewrote the questions in the instrument with permission of the authors to replace the word, "innovation" with the word, "inclusion" to refocus the instrument to reflect the practice of inclusion. All changes were made to the instrument before being sent to the participants. Hall and Hord (2006), explained, "Because the questionnaire has been designed so that there is a raw score for each stage, a graphic representation of the data can be made using a percentile table for conversions" (p. 147). However, in this study, the researcher scored the average scores for each participant on each of the seven stages of concern for use in statistical analysis (George et al., p. 26).

The study included an online questionnaire sent to 439 (N=439) elementary regular and special education teachers and six additional campus administrators and all elementary campus administrators in one South Texas school district for the quantitative portion of the study.

Creswell (2009) explained that survey research "provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (p. 12).

Qualitative. After the online survey was conducted and the data were analyzed, the researcher implemented purposive sampling to select individuals who participated in the

qualitative focus group interviews of this study. Gay et al., (2012) identified purposive sampling as the selection of a sample that is believed to be representative of a particular given population.

The researcher administered three focus groups using an open ended interview process (See Appendix B) that included elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and campus administrators. The researcher included those that practice inclusion and individuals who did not practice inclusion in their respective classrooms/campuses.

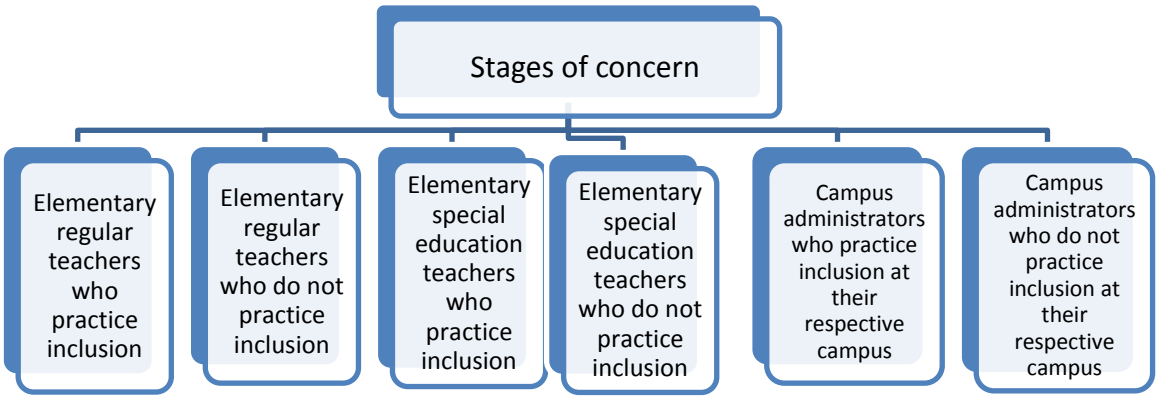

Figure 1. Schematic of Stages of Concern organizing focus group interviewees

Hall and Hord (2006) described the process of the open-ended question and response by stating that the initial step is to determine if the concern is unrelated, self, task, or an impact concern. "The statement is then reread, and a stage of concern is assigned to each sentence in order to make a holistic assessment (Hall & Hord, 2006, p. 147).

The framework of the study was a mixed method research study that implemented a survey component along with three detailed focus group interviews in a manner that the data

and information collected validated the quantitative levels of concern of individuals implementing and not implementing inclusionary practices.

Population and Sample

The following sections will describe the rationale and criteria for selecting the district and campus participants for this study.

Quantitative. Gay et al., (2012) stated, "In most studies, the chosen population is generally a realistic choice (i.e., the accessible population), not an ideal one (i.e., the target population)" (p. 130). The method of selection employed in this study was to survey the entire elementary population (*N*=439) of one South Texas school district. This district was chosen based on the demographics of the teaching staff and campus administrators as well as accessibility to the researcher.

The researcher of this study utilized the *Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) 2012-11 District Profile* (2011) to indicate a population that consisted of a high percentage, "90.1%" (p. 3) of minority staff and students. The *AEIS 2012-11 District Profile* (2011) indicated that 84.3% of the teachers were Hispanic, 83.0% held a bachelor's degree, 15.9% had a master's degree, and 20.5% had 1-5 years teaching experience (p. 3). The *AEIS 2012-11 District Profile* (2011) indicated that 67.8% of the teachers were females and 32.2% were males (p. 3). Finally, as per *AEIS 2012-11 District Profile* (2011), the average number of years of experience of teachers within the district was 13.7 years (p. 4). Creswell (2012) suggested that "as a rough estimate, an educational researcher needs …approximately 350 individuals for a survey study, but this size will vary depending on several factors" (p. 146). The total number of

respondents that could participate were 439 (*N*=439) that consisted of elementary regular and special education teachers with sixteen elementary campus principals.

Qualitative. The participants for the qualitative portion of the study were drawn from the same population that was previously described. According to Creswell (2013), "In the entire qualitative research process, the researchers keep a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or writers from the literature" (p. 47). The participants for this study were identified purposively. Creswell (2013) stressed, "The participant meanings further suggest multiple perspectives on a topic and diverse views" (p. 47). The most knowledgeable and information rich candidates were chosen by the researcher to support the qualitative focus group interviews; therefore, only veteran teachers with five years or more experience were chosen for the focus groups. The researcher reserved the right to choose these participants for the focus groups based on the following criteria:

1) Their level of concern based on the results of the quantitative survey.
2) Experience of five years or more using inclusionary practices.
3) An outlier or extraordinary results from the results of the quantitative survey if needed.

The researcher used six regular education teachers and one special education teacher in focus groups one and two. The final focus group interview consisted of six campus administrators.

Researcher's Role

Quantitative. Access to teacher demographic information was a requirement of

the study and was obtained through a formal request to the Superintendent of Schools through written permission that included information related to the study and its benefit to the educational community. The researcher provided a copy of needed documents, including the proposed research, *Stages of Concern Questionnaire*, letter of consent, and a copy of the IRB (See Appendices) to be submitted, to the Superintendent of Schools identifying where the research was to take place.

Qualitative. Granting of permission to proceed with the study by the Superintendent of Schools and the IRB, the researcher purposively selected from the population of elementary teachers and principals within the district to participate in the focus group interview portion of the study based on the survey results, years of experience, and extraordinary results. The researcher administered three focus groups using an open ended interview process (See Appendices B & C) that included elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and campus administrators. The individuals were contacted and an approved IRB letter of consent (See Appendix G) was provided before participation in the study. In accordance with the guidelines recommended by Gay et al., (2006), wherein the authors state, "In qualitative research, where the 'researcher is the instrument,' it is critical to the success of the study that the researcher establish his 'OKness' with the study's participants" (p. 87), and the ethical protocols at the research university. A question and answer session followed with the researcher responding to questions with the intent of demonstrating and establishing a level of integrity and credibility on the part of the participants and the researcher. The researcher provided a copy of needed documents, including interview protocol, letter of

consent, and copy of the IRB (See Appendices B, C, E, and G) to be submitted, to the Superintendent of Schools where the research took place.

Data Collection Procedures

The implementation of a convergent model that utilizes quantitative and qualitative research to collect and analyze data is essential to the study of inclusionary practices. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) stated, "Researchers use this model when they want to compare results or to validate, confirm, or corroborate quantitative results with qualitative findings" (p. 65).

Instrumentation for Quantitative. The method of data collection in this study was to survey the entire population with the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (see Appendix A). Gay et al., (2012) suggests that after defining the population the researcher will establish the desired sample size. Creswell (2013) states, "Data are collected from the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon" (p. 81). In this case the data collected was from a population of all elementary teachers and the elementary campus administrators in one South Texas school district through an online survey. The information for the online survey was disseminated through a meeting with the elementary campus principals alongside the Superintendent of Schools. Participants were given directions to the link for the online survey. Additionally, the researcher briefed the campus principals and Superintendent of Schools on the purpose of the study and discussed the timeline for the survey. A question and answer session with the researcher demonstrating and establishing a level of credibility of both the researcher and the study along with the benefits from it was presented to the school district. Finally, the researcher provided the group with contact information should they require more support or help in responding to questions.

"The Concerns-Based Adoption Model is a conceptual framework that describes, explains, and predicts probable behaviors throughout the change process, and it can help educational leaders, coaches, and staff developers facilitate this process" (George et al., 2006, p. 5). The stages of concern related to the implementation of inclusion was studied through a questionnaire. George et al., (2006) stated, "The *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (SoCQ) is the primary tool for determining where an individual is in the stages" (p. 8) of concern over an event. According to George et al., (2006) the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* related to the implementation of an innovation, in this case, inclusion, range from (0) awareness, (1) informational, (2) personal, (3) management, (4) consequence, (5) collaboration and (6) refocusing. Therefore, this questionnaire (Appendix A) was administered to gain insight on teachers' and principals' concerns related to inclusionary practices.

Instrumentation for Qualitative. In this portion of the research study, a multiple case study of inclusionary practices was used to collect qualitative information through focus group interviews. The researcher administered three focus groups using an open ended interview process (See Appendices B and C) that included elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and campus administrators. The researcher included those that did practice inclusion and those that did not practice inclusion in their respective classrooms/campuses as indicated from the survey. The qualitative case study of inclusionary practices utilized an interview protocol developed by the researcher to explore in depth the overarching question and sub-questions related to the concerns of elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and elementary campus principals in regards to

the implementation of inclusion. Participants were predominantly Hispanic and had between 5 to 30 years of experience in the classroom.

An interview protocol consisting of ten open-ended questions was utilized. Each focus group was recorded at each focus group interview and the raw data was transcribed by the researcher. Researcher's notes supported the responses elicited through the interview process. A protocol was developed for teachers (Appendix B) and principals (Appendix C).

Quantitative Validation

The quantitative portion of the study implemented the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (SoCQ). George et al., (2006) explained, "The questionnaire developers investigated the validity of the SoCQ by examining how scores on the seven Stages of Concern scales relate to one another and to other variables as concerns theory would suggest" (p. 12). George et al., (2006) reported that the coefficients of internal reliability (alpha coefficients) ranged from .64 to .83 on the seven constructs measured and the Pearson-r values indicated that responses were consistent when the same persons were administered the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire*. Additionally, George et al., (2006) explained that Hall, George, and Rutherford (1986) were able to show that there was high inter-correlation between the constructs measured indicating that the instrument measures what it is intended to measure.

Qualitative Validation

In order to ensure validity, the researcher employed validation procedures such as rich, thick description; member checking; and external auditor or debriefing. Rich, thick description, according to Creswell (2007), "…describes in detail the participants or setting under study. With such detailed description, the researcher enabled readers to transfer information to other settings

and to determine whether the findings can be transferred" (p. 209). Additionally, member checking is a frequently used approach, in which the researcher takes summaries of the findings back to key participants in the study and asks them whether the findings are an accurate reflection of their experiences (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). A third approach implemented in this study was to ask an external auditor to examine and review the data. All three methods were implemented to ensure validation of data.

Ethical Considerations

Adhering to ethical guidelines, the researcher informed all participants of any aspect that might affect their willingness to participate in the study. The researcher presented the information in a professional manner and stressed the anonymity through the use of pseudonyms. Additionally, consent forms were obtained prior to any data collected. The researcher did not collect any data until approval was given from the university Institutional Review Board (IRB). The identity from the school district from which teacher and principal participants were chosen was referred to as "one South Texas public school district." All participants and campuses will be assigned pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. During the process of an individual interview or at any time during the course of the study a participant has the opportunity to refuse to respond to any question or to drop out of the study at any time without impairment.

Data Analyses Procedures

Quantitative. Data collection procedures were those that were outlined by the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire*. Additionally, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and repeated measures analysis of variance (RM-ANOVA) models were performed to compare various independent groupings of personnel (teachers and/or administrators) on the variable

constructs derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire*. George et al. (2006) explained, "*The Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (SoCQ) has four parts: the cover letter; the introductory page; two pages of statements, or items, for the respondent to evaluate; and the demographic page" (p. 23). The survey was administered with all four parts. George et al., (2006) explained that the instrument or questionnaire is a "two-page list of the 35 statements, or items, to which the participant responds" (p. 25). According to George et al., (2006) individuals that answer the questionnaire will "mark each item on a Likert scale (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) according to how true the item seems to them at the present time" (p. 25). Additionally, George et al., (2006) recommended "If *innovation* is not a familiar term to respondents, we recommend replacing the words, *the innovation,* with a phrase they will recognize, such as the name of the innovation or initiative" (p. 25). The questionnaire included the term, *inclusion,* as a replacement for the term, *the innovation;* so that teachers comprehended that the questionnaire was intended to measure their perceptions of the stages of concern related to the implementation of inclusion.

Hall and Hord (2006) described the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* by stating, "The most rigorous technique for measuring concerns is the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ*), which is a 35-item questionnaire that has strong reliability estimates (test/retest reliabilities range from .65 to .86) and internal consistency (alpha-coefficients range from .64 to .83)" (p. 147). George, et al. (2006) explained that "This is the instrument itself (see appendix A), a two-page list of the 35 statements, or items to which the participant responds by marking each item on a 0-7 Likert scale according to how true the item seems to them at the present time" (p. 25). George et al., (2006) elaborated that the research on concerns has identified seven stages of concern reflecting self, task, and impact concerns that individuals experience through the implementation

of an innovation. *Self-concerns* consists of awareness, informational, and personal while *task concerns* consist of management, and finally *impact concerns* are consequence, collaboration, and refocusing (George et al., 2006). Each stage of these seven concerns is represented by five statements on a 35-item *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* which emerged from Hall's Concerns Based Adoption Model, which hypothesizes that teachers' and principals' concerns develop through seven stages as they accept an innovation (Rogers, 1992).

Hall and Hord (2006) stated, "The most rigorous technique for measuring concerns is the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ*), which is a 35-item questionnaire that has strong reliability estimates (test/retest reliabilities range from .65 to .86) and internal consistency (alpha-coefficients range from .64 to .83)" (p. 147). According to Creswell (2012), "Internal consistency results when all the items or tasks on a test are related, or in other words, are measuring similar things" (p. 167). The values discussed above provide reliability and validity to the instrument *Stages of Concern* Questionnaire as implemented in this study.

The researcher implemented comparative analyses via MANOVA (hypotheses 1, 3, and 4) and RM-ANOVA (hypothesis 2) to consider the differences in the mean averaged scores of the seven dependent variable constructs derived from the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration, and refocusing) between the various independent groups (elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and elementary campus administrators).

In addition, all procedures were best aligned to answer the quantitative research questions.

Qualitative. Creswell (2012) explained that qualitative research does "not use someone else's instrument as in quantitative research and gather closed-ended information; we will instead collect data with a few open-ended questions that we design" (p. 205). The collection of information was guided by questions that ensured integrity and credibility was maintained with the purpose of determining certain concerns related to the implementation of inclusion. Measures of trustworthiness were also implemented which included tests for construct validity, internal and external validity, and reliability. The following section describes the triangulation strategies and measures of trustworthiness which were implemented.

Focus group interviews (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007) were used to gather sources and analyze data. Informal interviews with key participants were part of the multisource data collection, or triangulation records. Questions were asked of all of these individuals to gain information about teachers' and principal's concerns related to inclusionary practices.

Focus group interviews were held with elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and elementary campus principals using an interview protocol (See Appendices B and C). These interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim and returned to participants for member check to ensure reliability and validity. The interviews that were conducted were recorded through audio tape and the information was analyzed to determine responses as they were categorized. The researcher transcribed all focus group interviews and all participants were given a pseudonym to protect anonymity.

Trustworthiness is a term used by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to differentiate validity and reliability measures in qualitative studies compared to those measures in quantitative studies. Validity and reliability are key components of any research study. According to Gay et.al.,

(2006), validity "is the degree to which qualitative data accurately gauge what the researcher is trying to measure" (p. 603). Additionally, Gay et al., (2012) define reliability as the "degree to which a test (or qualitative research data) consistently measures whatever it measures" (p. 630).

Three validation strategies were utilized in this research study: rich, thick description; member checking; and external auditor or debriefing. Rich, thick description, according to Creswell (2007), ". . . describes in detail the participants or setting under study. With such detailed description, the researcher enabled readers to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred" (p. 209). Additionally, member checking is:

> a frequently used approach, in which the researcher takes summaries of the findings (e.g., case studies, major themes, theoretical model) back to key participants in the study and asks them whether the findings are an accurate reflection of their experiences (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007, pp. 134-135).

The researcher defined and described the codes, categories, themes, patterns, and pertinent findings to determine reasonableness of the respondents' concerns related to the implementation of inclusion in regular education classrooms. For this study, the researcher allowed elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and elementary principals to read the completed transcriptions for accuracy of information. Then the researcher analyzed the raw data into codes to discover emergent themes related to inclusionary practices. If necessary, the researcher scheduled additional interviews with focus group participants in order to "judge the accuracy and credibility of the account" (Creswell, 2007, p. 208).

A third approach implemented in this study was to ask others to examine and review the data. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) suggested that external auditors are those that are familiar with qualitative research and the content area specific to the research conducted. An external auditor was selected by the researcher for the purpose of reviewing findings and determination of the results of the interviews conducted in a manner that ensured reasonableness so as to draw conclusions based on information collected during the interviews. The peer utilized in this study was CITI certified and a graduate from the university's doctoral program. Additionally, the researcher's perspectives may be shaped by previous experiences; however, numerous attempts to omit any biases were implemented throughout the study.

Reliability within this study is ensured by giving careful thought and consideration to the utilization of tape recording devices that provide for the best quality recordings and accurate transcription of those recordings. The researcher maintained reliability through the interview process by asking the same open-ended questions to all participants. Further, the researcher maintained a strict protocol used to develop code names and match them to certain colors. The researcher included themes categorized with passages and quotes identified under each of those headings (Creswell, 2007).

Through the collection and interpretation of the data related to the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire*, trends emerged related to the implementation of inclusion in elementary schools in one South Texas school district. Data collected during the interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. Following the transcription of audio recordings, the researcher analyzed the raw data by hand into codes. There are three methods that researchers use to approach coding. 1) Descriptive, 2) In Vivo, and 3) Process coding (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

The researcher used descriptive coding to assign labels to summarize in a word or phrase the basic topic of the data. In Vivo coding was used as often as possible where the researcher used the participants' own language as codes. "This coding method uses gerunds (-ing" words) exclusively to connote observable and conceptual action in the data" (Miles et al., 2014, pg. 75). After the initial coding the researcher reviewed the codes and condensed large amounts of data into smaller numbers of analytical units/themes. The researcher employed analytical memoing. "Analytic memos are primarily conceptual in intent. They don't just report data; they tie together different pieces of data into a recognizable cluster, often to show that those data are instances of general concept" (Miles et al., 2014, pg. 96). The researcher conducted cross case analyses to enhance transferability to other similar settings that use inclusionary practices.

As a method to enhance reliability, the researcher utilized an external auditor that reviewed the documents and audited the paper trail. The audit trail began with the superintendent research study approval, IRB paperwork, consent forms, *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* results, interview protocols, original interview notes, original tape recordings, transcriptions, color-coded transcriptions, and notes from member checks and debriefings. An organizational system was maintained in order to preserve the raw data which authenticated the research study. The researcher organized the data with the help of rich, thick description, member checks, peer debriefings, quality tape recordings, transcriptions, and audit trails.

In the qualitative portion of the study, validity and reliability checks were implemented to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the study. The researcher asked the participants to review conclusions and confirm researcher findings related to the interviews. Additionally, the

researcher's perspectives may be shaped by previous experiences; however, numerous attempts to omit any biases were implemented throughout the study.

Limitations of the Study

This study addressed the stages of concern that elementary teachers and elementary campus administrators encountered as inclusionary practices were implemented; however, the study did have limitations. Creswell (2009) stressed that "deficiencies in past literature may exist because topics have not been explored with a particular group, sample, or population" (p. 106).

1) The study was limited to one school district located in South Texas with a population that is 99% Hispanic and 80% at-risk of not completing high school. The school district served a population of students of approximately 17,500 of which 8% are identified as "special education" based on demographic reports complied by the school district. Therefore, the interpretation of findings from this study to other states or larger school districts should be done with extreme caution.
2) Teachers throughout the district had experienced various types and forms of inclusionary practices and so their level of acceptance varied.
3) The researcher was a participant-observer with supervisory responsibilities. This dual role may have generated bias caused key participants to be hesitant to openly discuss their concerns.

Delimitations of the Study

"Delimitations are the boundaries purposely put on the study, usually to narrow it for researchability" (Mertler & Charles, 2011, p. 58). The defined area of the study was primarily

relegated to the area of South Texas where the population is mostly of Hispanic ethnicity. This district was chosen based on the demographics of the elementary teaching staff and elementary campus administrators as well as accessibility to the researcher. The study surveyed the population of all elementary teachers and elementary campus administrators in the district for the quantitative portion of the study. Additionally, the qualitative portion of the study implemented purposive sampling so as to limit the teachers based on their levels of concern from the survey and whether or not inclusionary practices are implemented in their classroom, while the same limitations do not apply to campus administrators. The district initiatives in practice may have limited the ability to generalize results to other districts and areas whose demographics differ.

The researcher chose the district based on its availability and easy access and limited the study to that one district. The researcher worked closely with the special education director of the district to identify participants and limited her study to elementary teachers and administrators rather than including middle and high school.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that all participants were honest and straightforward when answering the focus group questions. The researcher maintained a professional manner and was mindful of her own bias. All efforts were made by the researcher to create a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere without fear of reprisal.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to: (a) identify the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers in one South Texas school concerning the implementation of inclusion; (b) identify the levels of concern of campus administrators in one

inclusive South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion; (c) explore in depth the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms, and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom concerning the implementation of inclusion; (d) explore in depth the levels of concern of campus administrators who do and do not utilize inclusionary practices in their respective campuses.

While identifying levels of concern of teachers and campus administrators, this study attempted to address those concerns to determine what perceptual suggestions could improve the education of special education students that are and are not participating in the implementation of inclusion as a method of education. The following research questions guided the quantitative study:

1) Are there differences in the levels of concern between elementary regular and special education teachers who are practicing inclusion in their classrooms using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?
2) Are there differences in the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?
3) Are there differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?

4) Are there differences in the levels of concern between (a) elementary regular education teachers (b) elementary special education teachers and (c) campus administrators using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?

The following overarching research question guided the qualitative study: What are the levels of concern and suggestions for improvement of elementary regular teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with disabilities?

The *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* was used to collect quantitative data and three focus group interviews were conducted in a manner that provided supporting details for the quantitative study. This study used participants that had between 5 to 30 years of experience in elementary education in a South Texas school district with a population that was predominantly Hispanic. The data collection procedures described includes the SoCQ and focus group interviews designed to draw out concerns related to the implementation of inclusion in a South Texas school district.

CHAPTER IV

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to: (a) identify the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers in one South Texas school concerning the implementation of inclusion; (b) identify the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion; (c) explore in depth the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms, and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom concerning the implementation of inclusion; (d) explore in depth the levels of concern of campus administrators who do and do not utilize inclusionary practices in their respective campuses. While identifying levels of concern of teachers and campus leadership, this study attempted to address those concerns to determine what perceptual suggestions could improve the education of special education students that are and are not participating in inclusion as a method of education.

Chapter IV will present the findings of the quantitative findings and of this study. To structure the presentation of these results, this chapter is divided into three main sections: (a) population and descriptive findings, (b) checks of statistical assumptions, and (c) presentation of the results from the inferential tests according to each research question and null hypothesis. The

chapter concludes with a final summary of the results. The following research questions and associated statistical hypotheses guided the quantitative study:

Quantitative Research Questions

1) Are there differences in the levels of concern between elementary regular and special education teachers who are practicing inclusion in their classrooms using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?
2) Are there differences in the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?
3) Are there differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?
4) Are there differences in the levels of concern between (a) elementary regular education teachers (b) elementary special education teachers and (c) campus administrators using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?

Null Hypotheses

1) There are no differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers who are practicing inclusion in their classrooms on any of the seven factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006).

2) There are no differences in the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district on any of the seven factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006).
3) There are no differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom on any of the seven factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006).
4) There are no differences in the levels of concern between concern between (a) elementary regular education teachers (b) elementary special education teachers and (c) campus administrators, on any of the seven factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006).

Description of the Sample

An online questionnaire which included an agreement to participate, demographic questions, and the 35 statements of the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (SoCQ; George, et al., 2006) was sent to 423 elementary regular and special education teachers, as well as 10 campus administrators in one South Texas school district (N = 439). A total of 197 responses were received. Of the 197 responses, n = 27 respondents declined permission to be included in the study and these records were removed from the dataset. An additional 10 records did not include any responses to the SoCQ items and were removed from the dataset. The number of complete records (N = 126) was smaller than the 30% response rate required by the dissertation committee, and therefore adjustments had to be made in order to include incomplete records. The manual for

use and scoring of the SoCQ (George et al., 2006) suggested use of raw data scores of the summed items for each of the seven variable constructs during inferential analysis (pg. 28). To account for the missing-ness of SoCQ items from the respondents' incomplete records, it was decided that the mean scores would be computed for each participant on each of the seven SoCQ constructs to preserve as many records as possible for analysis. Using the mean (average) rather than the summed raw score for each respondent was an option given in the SoCQ guidance to handle missing-ness in the dataset (George et al., 2006, pg. 26). Averaging vs. summing the scores resulted in $N = 157$ records retained. Of the 157 records retained, four records did not meet the requirements of the multivariate outlier assumption for use in MANOVA tests and these four records were removed. Thus, a total of $N = 153$ records were retained for the quantitative study, which is a response rate of 153/439 = 35%.

The sample ($N = 153$) consisted of six groups of school personnel, designated by letter (A though F). Table 1 presents the size (n) of each of the six groups and the frequency counts and percentages of the responses to each of the demographic variables according to the six groups and for all groups combined. The majority of the respondents had been involved in inclusion for five or more years (51% of all groups). All of the administrators (100%) had been involved in inclusion for five years or more, while only about one-third of the teachers in Groups B and C had five or more years of experience in inclusion. The number of years of involvement in inclusion ranged from never to 5 or more years. The majority of all respondents considered themselves as either "intermediate" or "old hand" in their practice of inclusion (106 respondents, 69%). However, only one teacher in Group E (special education teacher not using inclusionary practices at this time) believed he/she was an intermediate user and the majority of teachers in

Group E (4 teachers, 80% of Group E) were either non-users or past users of inclusion. Over three-quarters of all respondents (76%) had received formal training regarding inclusion. This percentage was similar for each individual group with the exception of teachers in Group A (regular teachers with special education students using inclusionary practices, with only 63% having had formal inclusion training. Twenty-five respondents (16.3) reported that they were currently in the first or second year of use of some major innovation or program other than inclusion.

Table 1

Frequency Counts and Percentages of the Demographic Survey Items, According to Each Respondent Group (N = 153)

	Respondent Group (*n*)						
							All Groups
	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E	Group F	(*N* =153)
Survey Item	(*n* = 62)	(*n* = 23)	(*n* = 32)	(*n* = 14)	(*n* = 5)	(*n* = 17)	
How long have you been involved with inclusion, not counting this year?							
Never	2 (3.2)	2 (8.7)	6 (18.8)	---	1 (20.0)	---	11 (7.2)
1 year	6 (9.7)	3 (13.0)	---	1 (7.1)	---	---	10 (6.5)
2 years	6 (9.7)	4 (17.4)	9 (28.1)	---	1 (20.0)	---	20 (13.1)
3 years	9 (14.5)	3 (13.0)	4 (12.5)	4 (28.6)	---	---	20 (13.1)
4 years	6 (9.7)	3 (13.0)	2 (6.3)	2 (14.3)	---	---	13 (8.5)
≥ 5 years	32 (51.6)	8 (34.8)	11 (34.4)	7 (50.0)	3 (60.0)	17 (100.0)	78 (51.0)
No response	1 (1.6)	---	---	---	---	---	1 (0.7)
In your use of inclusion, do you consider yourself to be a(n):							
Non-user	1 (1.6)	4 (17.4)	7 (21.9)	---	1 (20.0)	---	13 (8.5)
Novice	12 (19.4)	6 (26.1)	5 (15.6)	---	---	---	23 (15.0)
Intermediate	34 (54.8)	8 (34.8)	13 (40.6)	9 (64.3)	1 (20.0)	2 (11.8)	67 (43.8)
Old hand	14 (22.6)	5 (21.7)	4 (12.5)	5 (35.7)	---	11 (64.7)	39 (25.5)
Past user	---	---	2 (6.3)	---	3 (60.0)	4 (23.5)	9 (5.9)

No response	1 (1.6)	---	1 (3.1)	---	---	---	2 (1.3)
Have your received formal training regarding inclusion (workshops, courses?)							
Yes	39 (62.9)	20 (87.0)	24 (75.0)	13 (92.9)	4 (80.0)	16 (94.1)	116 (75.8)
No	23 (37.1)	3 (13.0)	8 (25.0)	1 (7.1)	1 (20.0)	1 (5.9)	37 (24.2)
Are you currently in the first or second year of use of some major innovation or program other than inclusion?							
Yes	9 (14.5)	2 (8.7)	6 (18.8)	3 (21.4)	1 (20.0)	4 (23.5)	25 (16.3)
No	53 (85.5)	21 (91.3)	25 (78.1)	11 (78.6)	4 (80.0)	13 (76.5)	127 (83.0)
No response	---	---	1 (3.1)	---	---	---	1 (0.7)

Note. Values for each survey item category are noted in each "Group" column as: Frequency Count (% of Group).
Group Designations are as follows:
Group A = Regular teacher with special education students using inclusionary practices.
Group B = Regular teacher with special education students not using inclusionary practices.
Group C = Regular teacher with no special education students at this time.
Group D = Special education teacher using inclusionary practices.
Group E = Special Education teacher not using inclusionary practices at this time.
Group F = Campus administrator utilizing inclusionary practices.

Instrumentation Reliability

Cronbach's coefficient alpha for internal consistency reliability for the seven variable constructs of the SoCQ was checked in SPSS. A Cronbach's alpha value of .70 or greater indicates adequate reliability of an instrument with the data collected (Field, 2005). Table 2 presents the Cronbach's alpha coefficients as well as the measures of central tendency for the averaged raw scores derived from the SOC. With the exception of the constructs for awareness and information, the items returned Cronbach's alpha values well above the .70 cutoff for reliability.

Checks of the items comprising the awareness construct showed that item 3 in the original SoCQ was worded as, "I am more confident about another innovation." Alluding to a respondent being more concerned with *another innovation other than inclusion*. However, the question on the survey for this study was phrased as. "I am more concerned *about inclusion*." This phrasing suggested that a respondent answer directly about his/her concern regarding inclusion itself. The SoCQ item #3 was reverse coded to see if perhaps changing the direction of scoring of the responses would improve the reliability of the construct. However, the Cronbach's alpha value remained at $\alpha = .367$. Removing item #3 from the awareness construct resulted in a Cronbach's alpha value for the 4-item awareness construct (with only SoCQ items 12, 21, 23, and 30) or $\alpha = .419$, which was still well below the recommended. One cannot be absolutely certain of the reason, but it may be that readers were confused about the meaning of item #3 and perhaps the awareness construct in general. Therefore, the awareness construct was not included in the hypothesis tests of this study.

The items comprising the information construct were checked and no anomalies were noted. The Cronbach's alpha value of $\alpha = .669$ was close to the .70 cutoff. According to Field (2005), a lower Cronbach's coefficient alpha can be expected for measures in the field of psychology or social sciences. Also, Cronbach's alpha coefficients are sensitive to sample size and the number of items constituting a given construct. The sample size was adequate for this study. However, the information construct was comprised of only five items. It was therefore determined that the low number of items in the construct was negatively affecting the construct. Additionally, the SoCQ instrumentation has been used in many research studies with varied populations and returns good reliability. Therefore, despite a Cronbach's coefficient alpha below the usually recommended .70, this measure was retained and used for analysis.

Since the dependent variable of awareness was not used in hypothesis testing, the statistical hypotheses tested in this study were revised accordingly at this point to include six dependent variables instead of seven.

Table 2

Measures of Central Tendency and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the Dependent Variables of this Study (N = 153)

Dependent Variable	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	Range	*A*
Awareness	3.71	1.01	3.80	0.00 – 5.80	.367
Information	4.14	1.22	4.20	0.40 – 6.60	.669
Personal	4.45	1.29	4.40	1.00 – 7.00	.802
Management	3.72	1.37	4.00	0.80 – 6.80	.759
Consequence	4.42	1.49	4.60	0.80 – 7.00	.840
Collaboration	4.27	1.36	4.20	0.67 – 7.00	.806
Refocusing	4.00	1.37	4.00	0.00 – 7.00	.761

Note. *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation; *Mdn* = Median; α = Cronbach's alpha.
The dependent variable of awareness was not included in hypothesis testing due to poor internal consistency reliability as evidenced in the low Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Assumptions for Inferential Analysis

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to test null hypotheses 1, 3, and 4. A repeated measures analysis of variance (RM-ANOVA) was used to address null hypothesis 2. The dataset (*N* = 153) was investigated for the MANOVA and RM-ANOVA assumptions of absence of missing data, adequate sample size, absence of univariate and multivariate outliers, univariate and multivariate normality, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, linearity and homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity.

The scores for each of the six variable constructs were derived as averages in order control for the missing-ness in the dataset. The averaging of the constructs eliminated all missing data for the hypothesis tests. Therefore, the assumption of absence of missing data was met.

A requirement for adequate sample size for a MANOVA is that there should be more research units in the smallest group than there are dependent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). This was the case for this study. There were a total of six dependent variables included in the MANOVA and all of the cell sizes in the MANOVA analyses included more than six respondents. Therefore the assumption of adequate sample size was not violated.

Outliers in a dataset have the potential to distort the results of an inferential analysis. A check of boxplots for the six dependent variables was performed to visually inspect for univariate outliers. The boxplots indicated that four of the constructs (information, consequence, collaboration, and refocus) contained one outlier each. Each outlier was further examined, and it was determined that there were no extreme outliers. Extreme outliers are defined as values that extended beyond 1.5 box-lengths from the edge of the box (Pallant, 2013). Additionally, the outlying values for all of the dependent variables were within the range of possible values. Since all outliers were in the acceptable range of the variables and none of the outliers were extreme or pulling the mean far from the median on the constructs (see Table 2), it was determined that the outliers were not adversely affecting the dataset (McKnight et al., 2007). Therefore, with the adjustments, the outlier assumption was met.

Univariate normality for the scores of the three dependent variables was investigated with SPSS Explore. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (K-S) for normality indicated that only three of the six dependent variables (information, persona, and refocusing) were normally distributed at

the $p < .01$ level. However, the K-S test is sensitive to larger sample sizes, with significant findings returned when sample sizes are larger ($n > 50$; Pallant, 2007). A visual check of the histogram and Normal Q-Q plot for the six dependent variables indicated distributions close to normal. As mentioned previously, the mean and median values for the variable were relatively close in value (see Table 2), suggesting that any outliers or skewness were not adversely affecting the distribution. Therefore, the assumption of normality was met.

Multivariate normality for the scores of the six dependent variables was investigated with SPSS using Mahalanobis distance criteria on the dataset which included $N = 157$ cases. Mahalanobis distance is the distance of a particular case from the centroid of the remaining cases, where the centroid is the point created by the means of all the variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The Mahalanobis Distance Test for multivariate normality indicated that four of the cases had a z-score of greater than 24.32, the critical value for concluding a violation of multivariate normality (Pallant, 2013). Therefore, the four cases were removed which resulted in a dataset of $N = 153$ records used for this study.

Investigation of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices was investigated with Box's M test of equality of covariance matrices, a test included in the SPSS output of the MANOVA and RM-ANOVA analyses. A p-value of $p < .01$ on Box's M suggests a violation of the assumption. To control for any violation of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, SPSS also generates a test statistics of Pillai's trace for interpretation. Thus, Pillai's trace statistics were used to interpret the omnibus tests of the MANOVA and RM-ANOVA analyses for this study.

Assumptions of linearity between study variables and homoscedasticity, requirements for the six dependent variables were checked with scatterplots of the data. The assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity were met. Multicollinearity diagnostics for the MANOVA and RM-ANOVA were performed using SPSS via correlational analysis. Multicollinearity may be assumed if there is a high correlation ($r > .90$) between the dependent variables (Pallant, 2013). None of the dependent variables were highly correlated at the $r > .90$ level, indicating a lack of multicollinearity. The correlation coefficients of the six dependent variables retained for inferential analyses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficients for Variable Constructs Used for Inferential Analysis (N = 153)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Information	---				
2. Personal	.792	---			
3. Management	.607	.622	---		
4. Consequence	.642	.791	.576	---	
5. Collaboration	.577	.741	.438	.789	---
6. Refocusing	.640	.793	.619	.838	.774

Note. All correlations are significant at the $p < .01$ level.

Test of Hypotheses

Findings Related to Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked, "Are there differences in the levels of concern between elementary regular and special education teachers who are practicing inclusion in their classrooms using the SoCQ (George et al., 2006)?" To best address this research question, a MANOVA analysis was performed to test the following null hypothesis:

H_0: There are no differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers who are practicing inclusion in their classrooms on any of the six factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006).

Six dependent variables were included in the MANOVA, (1) information, (2) personal, (3) management, (4) consequence, (5) collaboration, and (6) refocusing. One independent variable was included to represent teacher group, with two levels of (a) regular teachers with special education students using inclusionary practices (Group A, $n = 62$), and (b) special education teachers using inclusionary practices (Group D, $n = 14$).

Results indicated that there was significance for the independent variable of teacher group, F (6, 69) = 3.01, $p = .011$; Pillai's Trace = 0.21; $\eta_p^2 = 0.21$, indicating a significant difference between the two teacher groups in terms of at least one of the six SoCQ variable constructs. According to generally accepted criteria (Cohen, 1988) the strength of effect sizes for η_p^2can be classified as small (.01), medium (.06) and large (.14). The effect size for the significant effect of teacher group indicated that approximately 21% of the variance in the six dependent variables as a whole was explained by the teacher group variable.

Between-subjects effects were examined with a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level to further investigate the significant results found for teacher group relates to each of the six individual dependent variables. The Bonferroni adjustment is computed by dividing the study alpha level by the number of dependent variables tested in the analysis. Thus, significant between-subjects effects were noted at the p = .05/6 = .008. Significance was not found between the two teacher groups on any of the six dependent variables at the p = .008 level. A summary table of the between-subjects tests of significance is presented in Table 4.

Conclusion as it Relates to the Null Hypothesis

Do not reject the null hypothesis. There is not sufficient evidence to indicate that there are differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers who are practicing inclusion in their classrooms on any of the six factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire.*

Table 4

Results of the Between-Subjects Effects of the MANOVA Analysis Performed to Investigate Effects for the Independent Variable of Teacher Group as it Relates to the Six Dependent Variables of Study (N = 76)

Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	*F*	*p*-value	Partial Eta Squared
Information	2.07	1	1.53	.221	.020
Personal	0.68	1	0.42	.518	.006
Management	1.36	1	0.68	.414	.009
Consequence	1.71	1	0.78	.379	.010
Collaboration	4.81	1	2.60	.111	.034
Refocusing	0.59	1	0.36	.551	.005

Note. *df* = Degrees of Freedom; *F* = F-Statistic.

Findings Related to Research Question 2

Research question 2 asked, "Are there differences in the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?" To best address this research question, a RM-ANOVA analysis was performed to test the following null hypothesis:

H_0: There are no differences in the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district on any of the six factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006).

Six dependent variables were included in the RM-ANOVA, (1) information, (2) personal, (3) management, (4) consequence, (5) collaboration, and (6) refocusing. Only the campus administrators (n = 16) were included in the analysis. Since each campus administrator was scored on each of the six dependent variables, the RM-ANOVA was used to adjust for correlations between dependent variable measurements.

Results indicated that there was a significant difference between at least one pair of the six dependent variables for the campus administrators, F (5, 12) = 12.14, $p < .0005$; Pillai's Trace = 0.84; $\eta_p^2 = 0.84$.

Within-subjects effects were examined via pairwise comparisons between the six dependent variables using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level ($p < .008$) to further investigate the significant results. A summary of the estimated marginal means and standard errors for each of the six dependent variables is presented in Table 5.

Pairwise comparisons indicated that campus administrators scored significantly lower on information (M = 3.35, SEM = 0.34) than on personal (M = 3.98, SEM = 0.41; p = .001) and when compared to collaboration (M = 4.59, SEM = 0.32; p = .001)

Management scores (M = 2.65, SEM = 0.30) were significantly lower than personal (p = .006), consequence (M = 4.13, SEM = 0.37; p = .002), collaboration (p = .001).

The campus administrators scored significantly higher on collaboration when compared to information (p = .001). lower on refocusing (M = 4.00, SEM = 0.11) when compared to personal ($p < .0005$), consequence ($p < .0005$), and collaboration (p = .004)

Conclusion as it Relates to the Null Hypothesis

Reject the null hypothesis. There is sufficient evidence to indicate that there are differences in the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district on any of the six factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George, et al., 2006).

Table 5

Estimated Marginal Means and Standard Errors for the Six Dependent Variables Tested in RM-ANOVA for the Campus Administrators (N = 16)

Variable	*M*	*SEM*	95% Confidence Interval for the Mean	
			Lower	Upper
Information	3.53	0.34	2.63	4.08
Personal	3.98	0.41	3.12	4.84
Management	2.65	0.30	2.00	3.29
Consequence	4.13	0.37	3.35	4.91
Collaboration	4.59	0.32	3.91	5.27
Refocusing	4.01	0.42	3.12	4.91

Note. M = Mean; *SEM* = Standard Error of the Mean.

Findings Related to Research Question 3

Research question 3 asked, "Are there differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?" To best address this research question, a MANOVA analysis was performed to test the following null hypothesis:

H_0: There are no differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom on any of the seven factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George, et al., 2006).

Six dependent variables were included in the MANOVA, (1) information, (2) personal, (3) management, (4) consequence, (5) collaboration, and (6) refocusing. One independent variable was included to represent teacher group, with two levels of (a) regular teachers with special education students in their classrooms (Groups A and B, $n = 85$), and (b) special education teachers using inclusionary practices (Group D, $n = 14$).

Results indicated that there was significance for the independent variable of teacher group, F (6, 92) = 3.63, $p = .003$; Pillai's Trace = 0.19; $\eta_p^2 = 0.19$, indicating a significant difference between the two teacher groups in terms of at least one of the six SoCQ variable constructs. The effect size for the significant effect of teacher group indicated that approximately 19% of the variance in the six dependent variables as a whole was explained by the teacher group variable.

Between-subjects effects were examined with a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level ($p < .008$) to further investigate the significant results found for teacher group relates to each of the six individual dependent variables. Significance was not found between the two teacher groups on any of the six dependent variables at the $p = .008$ level. A summary table of the between-subjects tests of significance is presented in Table 6.

Conclusion as it Relates to the Null Hypothesis

Do not reject the null hypothesis. There is not sufficient evidence to indicate that there are differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom on any of the seven factors derived from the SoCQ.

Table 6

Results of the Between-Subjects Effects of the MANOVA Analysis Performed to Investigate Effects for the Independent Variable of Teacher Group as it Relates to the Six Dependent Variables of Study (N = 99)

Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	*F*	*p*-value	Partial Eta Squared
Information	2.78	1	2.20	.141	0.02
Personal	0.77	1	0.52	.474	0.01
Management	1.57	1	0.87	.354	0.01
Consequence	1.41	1	0.69	.408	0.01
Collaboration	5.19	1	3.07	.083	0.03
Refocusing	0.50	1	0.32	.570	<0.01

Note. *df* = Degrees of Freedom; *F* = F-Statistic.

Findings Related to Research Question 4

Research question 4 asked, "Are there differences in the levels of concern between (a) elementary regular education teachers (b) elementary special education teachers and (c) campus administrators using the *Stages of Concern* (George et al., 2006)?" To best address this research question, a MANOVA analysis was performed to test the following null hypothesis:

H_0: There are no differences in the levels of concern between concern between (a) elementary regular education teachers (b) elementary special education teachers and (c) campus administrators, on any of the seven factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006).

Six dependent variables were included in the MANOVA, (1) information, (2) personal, (3) management, (4) consequence, (5) collaboration, and (6) refocusing. One independent variable was included to represent respondent group, with three levels of (a) regular teachers (n = 117) (b) special education teachers (n = 19), and (c) campus administrators (n = 16).

Results indicated that there was significance for the independent variable of respondent group, F (12, 292) = 4.61, $p < .0005$; Pillai's Trace = 0.32; $\eta_p^2 = 0.16$, indicating a significant difference between the three respondent groups in terms of at least one of the six SoCQ variable constructs. The effect size for the significant effect of respondent group indicated that approximately 16% of the variance in the six dependent variables as a whole was explained by the respondent group variable.

Between-subjects effects were examined with a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level ($p < .008$) to further investigate the significant results found for respondent group as relates to each of the six individual dependent variables. Significance was found between the three respondent

groups for the dependent variable of management F (2,150) = 6.28, p = .002; η_p^2 = 0.08. Pairwise comparisons were performed to investigate where the difference were between the three respondent groups for the management variable. Campus administrators had significantly lower mean scores (M = 2.65, SEM = 0.32) than both regular teachers (M = 3.86, SEM = 0.12; p = .002) and special education teachers (M = 3.81, SEM = 0.31; p = .029). None of the other dependent variables were statistically significant. A summary table of the between-subjects tests of significance is presented in Table 7.

Conclusion as it Relates to the Null Hypothesis

Reject the null hypothesis. There is sufficient evidence to indicate that there are differences in the levels of concern between (a) elementary regular education teachers (b) elementary special education teachers and (c) campus administrators, on any of the seven factors derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire.*

Table 7

Results of the Between-Subjects Effects of the MANOVA Analysis Performed to Investigate Effects for the Independent Variable of Respondent Group as it Relates to the Six Dependent Variables of Study (N = 153)

Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	*F*	*p*-value	Partial Eta Squared
Information	13.14	2	4.66	.011	0.06
Personal	4.22	2	1.28	.282	0.02
Management	22.14	2	6.28	.002	0.08
Consequence	6.37	2	1.44	.239	0.02
Collaboration	12.36	2	3.46	.034	0.04
Refocusing	0.18	2	0.05	.954	< 0.01

Note. *df* = Degrees of Freedom; *F* = F-Statistic.

Summary

Chapter 4 began with a description of the response rate and the demographics of the participants in the study. Following the report of demographics, reliability of the SoCQ instrument was checked. The variable of awareness did not show good internal consistency reliability. This was likely due to misspecification of the wording of item #3 in the survey and or confusion on the part of the respondents. The assumptions for the MANOVA and RM-ANOVA

tests were then presented. Tests of hypotheses were presented according to each of the four research questions.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to investigate research question 1. Although the omnibus test indicated statistical significance, none of the Bonferroni adjusted dependent variables were statistically significant between the teacher groups.

A RM-ANOVA was performed for research question 2 to investigate differences between the six dependent variables only for the campus administrators. Significance was found on the omnibus test. Pairwise comparisons indicated that campus administrators scored significantly lower on information (M = 3.35, SEM = 0.34) than on personal (M = 3.98, SEM = 0.41; p = .001) and collaboration (M = 4.59, SEM = 0.32; p = .001).

Management scores (M = 2.65, SEM = 0.30) were significantly lower than personal (p = .006), consequence (M = 4.13, SEM = 0.37; p = .002), collaboration (p = .001).

The campus administrators scored significantly higher on collaboration when compared to information (p = .001). lower on refocusing (M = 4.00, SEM = 0.11) when compared to personal (p < .0005), consequence (p < .0005), and collaboration (p = .004).

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to investigate research question 3. Although the omnibus test indicated statistical significance, none of the Bonferroni adjusted dependent variables were statistically significant between the teacher groups.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to investigate research question 4. The omnibus test indicated statistical significance and one Bonferroni adjusted dependent variable, management, was statistically significant between the respondent groups. Campus administrators had significantly lower mean management scores (M = 2.65, SEM =

0.32) than both regular teachers (M = 3.86, SEM = 0.12; p = .002) and special education teachers (M = 3.81, SEM = 0.31; p = .029). None of the other dependent variables were statistically significant for research question 4.

The next chapter will include the qualitative findings of this study. The results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses will then compared to extant theory and the literature in the final chapter.

CHAPTER V

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to: (a) identify the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers in one South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion; (b) identify the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion; (c) explore in depth the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms, and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom concerning the implementation of inclusion; (d) explore in depth the levels of concern of campus administrators who do and do not utilize inclusionary practices in their respective campuses. While identifying levels of concern of teachers and campus leadership, this study attempted to address those concerns to determine what perceptual suggestions could improve the education of special education students that are and are not participating in inclusion as a method of education.

Chapter V will present the findings of the qualitative inquiry of this study. The following overarching research question guided the qualitative research:

Qualitative Research Question

What are the levels of concern and suggestions for improvement of elementary regular teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with disabilities?

Study Participants

The researcher purposely sampled using the results from the quantitative study surveys for inclusion in the qualitative focus group interviews. Years of experience, years of experience using inclusion, and position held in the district or campus guided this purposive sampling. The researcher then administered three focus group interviews using an open ended interview process (See Appendix B) that included elementary regular education teachers (n = 12), elementary special education teachers (n = 2), and campus administrators (n = 6). The three focus groups included individuals who practiced inclusion and individuals who do not practice inclusion in their respective classrooms/campuses.

Table 1 presents a listing of the individuals' pseudonyms which comprised each of the three focus groups. The years of experience of the focus group participants ranged from 1 to 30 years (M = 12.7 years, SD = 7.1 years). Seventeen of the participants were female (85% of participants) and three (15%) were male. Due to district reorganization of leadership, many teachers who initially volunteered to be part of the focus group interviews chose not to participate because they felt apprehensive of the changes.

Table 8

Frequencies and Percentages of Group Membership and Demographic Variables Collected for Qualitative Study Focus Group Participants (N = 20)

Focus Group / Participant	Gender	Current position	Experience in Education (in years)	Experience with inclusion (Yes/No)
Focus Group 1				
Renee	Female	Teacher, 2nd grade	11	No
Julie	Female	Teacher, elementary special education	3 (current pos.)	Yes
Ann	Female	Teacher, early childhood	30	Yes
Jane	Female	Teacher, kindergarten – 2nd grade	9	No
Nancy	Female	Teacher, 4th grade math	10	No
Gianna	Female	Teacher, kindergarten – 2nd grade	6	No
Brianna	Female	Teacher, 1st – 4th grade	21	No

Focus Group 2

Jolie	Female	Teacher, 3rd grade writing	12	Yes
Jackie	Female	Teacher, 1st – 3rd grade (inclusion)	15	Yes
Emily	Female	Teacher, 1st – 3rd grade, 5th grade	6	Yes
Julissa	Female	Teacher, kindergarten	11	No
Maya	Female	Teacher, kindergarten-3rd grade	11	No
Kayla	Female	Teacher, 2nd -3rd grade math and science	10	No
Marcy	Female	Teacher, elementary special education	18	Yes

Focus Group 3

Marie	Female	Principal, elementary	15	Yes
Ms. Isabel	Female	Assistant principal, elementary	1 (current pos.)	Yes
Martha	Female	Assistant principal, charter campus	9	Yes
William	Male	Interim vice principal, elementary	12	Yes

		Interim principal, pre-K – 8th		
Joe	Male	grade	19	Yes
Rick	Male	Principal, elementary	25	Yes

Note. (current pos.) = Experience in Current Position.

Data Collection

The researcher administered three focus groups using an open ended interview process (See Appendices B & C) that included elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and campus administrators. The individuals were contacted and an approved IRB letter of consent (See Appendix G) was provided before participation in the study. A question and answer session was conducted with the intent of demonstrating and establishing a level of integrity and credibility on the part of the participants and the researcher. The researcher then provided a copy of needed documents, including interview protocol, letter of consent, and copy of the IRB (See Appendices B, C, E, and G) submitted to the Superintendent of Schools where the research took place.

Two interview protocols consisting of ten open-ended questions were utilized. One protocol was used for the teachers (Appendix B) and the second protocol was used for the principals (Appendix C). All interviews were recorded using a recording device. The recorded interviews were then transcribed by the researcher. Researcher's notes also supported the responses elicited through the interview process. The participants in the study were given the opportunity to review the transcripts from their interviews to ensure accuracy. The transcribed interviews were then saved into PDF files and used for qualitative analysis.

The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005) was used to review and sort the qualitative data. The IPA approach involves a close examination of the experiences and meaning-making activities of interviewees (Reid, et al.,2005). The qualitative responses from the transcribed PDF documents were sorted and coded in detail, with the focus shifting between the key responses of the focus group participants to the researcher's interpretation of the meaning of those responses (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). The IPA was used in order to better understand what a given experience of a participant was like (phenomenology) and how the researcher made sense of it (interpretation).

The researcher then reviewed each interview and performed a preliminary grouping of every expression relevant to each interview question and the research questions of the study. The preliminary grouping was performed by reviewing each of the ten open-ended response items and classifying all relevant information. The preliminary groupings of responses were then condensed as themes emerged from the data review and classification process.

The themes were then cross-referenced with each focus group interview record in order to create a textual structural description of the perceptions and essence of the participants' levels of concern and suggestions for improvement as related to the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with disabilities. Each expression relevant to each participant's experience was checked for its relationship to the purpose statement and the research question. This process led to the identification and final determination of the themes of the qualitative study. Table 2 presents the themes derived from the data analysis.

Table 9

Emergent Themes from the Three Focus Group Interviews as it Relates to the Qualitative Research Question

Qualitative Research Question: What are the levels of concern and suggestions for improvement of elementary regular teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with disabilities?

Theme	Description
Collaboration	Teachers and principals mentioned the need for present and constant collaboration, between instructors, administration, and parents, in order for inclusion to be effective. However, special education teachers were seen as the main resource for input and implementation of inclusion practices in the classroom.
Best of Both Worlds	Teachers also noted that inclusion in the social structure and activities of the traditional classroom provided special needs students the opportunity to expand their

	environment and experiences and decreased isolation of the special education students.
Sense of Community	The teachers commented that the example set by the general education and special education teachers working together to help all of the students in the inclusion classroom modeled a sense of community to students.
	One teacher mentioned that inclusion fostered empathy in general education students towards the special needs students.
Classroom Disruption	Some teachers and administrators felt that inclusion increased instances of classroom disruption, and that more support was needed from the administration, especially as relates to the need for added support (teaching assistants, paras) and the process for handling disruptive students.
Role Ambiguity due to inadequate teacher training	Teachers working together in inclusion classrooms found that they sometimes clashed over instruction and disciplinary practices, and were unclear of their roles in working together. Teachers and principals felt that this was due to a need for more and better training of staff working in the inclusion environment. One

	principal mentioned a problem with "inclusion-confusion" due to a lack of clear training practices. Of note, the principals appeared to be much better trained than the teachers on inclusion resources, laws and practices.
Disparity of Opinion on the use of IEP's	For the most part, teachers felt the use of IEP's was helpful to the inclusionary classroom process, but some principals expressed doubt regarding the effectiveness of IEP's. Principals also expressed concerns that inclusion may adversely affect all students' rights to a quality free appropriate public education (FAPE).
Teacher Turnover	Principals expressed frustration with the monetary and temporal costs of training teachers who left the district shortly after they completed the program.
Transition Concerns	Principals expressed concern that the laws and regulations of NCLB and inclusion of SE students in the traditional classroom did not help to facilitate transitioning of SE students to traditional classrooms and environments. Many agreed that one-on-one or sheltered instruction was needed to move the special education student forward in the learning process.

Study Findings

The study findings are reported according to the themes (see Table 9). Although the themes are reported individually, many of the participants' responses could be attributed to more than one theme. When a participant's responses could be classified to more than one theme, their response was reported to the theme where it made the most impact to the study findings. Also, the whole of all responses in the focus groups are not presented in the narrative, but the comments and narratives included were felt by the researcher to best represent the themes of the qualitative findings.

Collaboration. Teachers and principals mentioned the need for present and constant collaboration between instructors, administrators, and parents, in order for inclusion to be effective. However, many of the regular education teachers stated they deferred to the teachers of the special education students for direction on inclusion practices for the classroom. The principals were well-informed of the laws and processes providing for the needs of special education students but also found that at the classroom level much of the inclusion processes and practices fell onto the special education teacher. But ultimately, the responsibility was on the principal.

All seven teachers in Focus Group One mentioned that they followed the guidance of the special education teacher to implement tools and practices of inclusion. Jane also noted that she used the individualized education plan (IEP) as a resource for planning the instruction for her inclusion classes; however, she did not have experience in writing an IEP. Of the other six teachers only Julie, the special education teacher, had experience in writing IEPs. Although the majority of the teachers did not have experience in writing IEPs, all seven of them felt the IEP

was an effective resource. All seven teachers attended admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) meetings at least occasionally. Nancy noted that she attended, "…every single time."

When asked if they received help, many of the teachers said they did and mentioned resource teachers (special education teachers). Brianna, when probed, mentioned that campus administrators were helpful. Ann answered "Not really," when asked if she received help. Gianna said, "Sometimes." While administrators felt collaboration was their strong suit, many times teachers did not feel that sense of strong collaboration.

Teachers in Focus Group Two responded similarly to the teachers in Focus Group One. They all agreed that the IEP was a useful resource, but only Marcy, the special education teacher, had written IEPs. The regular education teachers deferred to the special education teacher for direction in the planning and use of inclusion practices in the classroom. Emily noted that she felt the IEPs were effective, and explained a bit further, mirroring somewhat the sentiments of both teacher focus groups:

I would say that I am somewhat familiar [with IEPs]. And have seen that they are effective to what I understand how to use them [*sic*]. I do have a spreadsheet that I organized and I use. My students are put on there, their modifications and anything that needs to be done. But I would really want to learn more about everything that is on the paper that they give you. I have attended ARD meetings as a Regular Ed teacher and when I do have questions I ask the Special Ed teacher on campus.

Maya mentioned that she would like to be more involved with the progress of the special education students in her kindergarten classroom, "I see more that kids are being first identified

and tested when they're with us [me and Julissa] so we really don't get to see any of the results, or how anything has changed."

Kayla was probed by the interviewer who asked if she received help from administrators and counselors. Kayla answered "yes" to each probing question. She appeared to be reluctant to add any explanation to her blunt "yes."

Focus Group Three included the six administrators. All six were well-informed of special education laws and practices, IEPs, and ARD meetings. The principals also felt the IEPs and ARD meetings were effective in the inclusion setting. When asked if he received help with IEPs, Rick stated:

Most definitely. Luckily even in our small school district we do have a Special Ed. District personnel [*sic*] that comes out and works with us, and trains the teacher, and has always been made available to assist us in those areas. I think, at least at my campus, the extent of special needs children that are on out campus, is not very severe. Now, I worked at bigger campuses where we've had all kinds of, I was a principal, and at a high school in Dallas, we had the regional deaf assigned to our campus. And so, yes. I also oversaw an autistic program for a summer program in Dallas as well, and so the different needs, and I guess the depth of assistance that each child needs in those different programs, I mean, it's more vast than what we offer here, and needs to be more hand-on involving with the administration and the teacher to make sure that those kids get everything that they need because the challenges are great.

Marie brought up the role that parents played in the collaborative process:

On the IEPs, I hear that, teachers, teachers, teachers. What about parents? You know you need to educate your parents as well and they need to know because they have the child at home too,

they know the disabilities of the child and they need to know which are the goals [sic]. They've [the special education students] got milestones for each grade level just like they do as for each [regular education student's] grade level. So what I try to do is educate my parents and tell them, you know, okay, what are the attainable goals that you want them to do and it's always in percentages…and hold the teachers accountable for it…And I always say, homework, homework, and all so yeah. But you [the parent] could also help your child at home to reach those goals much faster.

Marie also noted, "…it's not just all on the teacher, it's on them [the parents] as well." Marie further commented that she welcomed the parents into the classroom. Martha mentioned that she asks for parental input and involvement but some parents expect the school to handle most of the work, "I do have to agree that sometimes I get parents…they kind of expect us to make it work in some way." Collaboration was a major theme that was supported by all participants.

Best of Both Worlds. Teachers noted that inclusion in the social structure and activities of the traditional classroom provided special needs students the opportunity to expand their environment and experiences. Renee, a teacher in Focus Group One, said, "If inclusion is used the student gets to stay in class with the regular education teacher's lesson and they also get the one-on-one with the inclusion teacher being there. So they get the best of both worlds."

Nancy noted that the inclusion environment allowed the special education students to feel comfortable and to feel that they were not isolated from the instruction and activities of a general education classroom.

Ann noted that the inclusion classroom environment allowed for the special education students to function in the classroom and to learn how to handle "real life situations." Marcy, the special education teacher in Focus Group Two elaborated on the benefits to special education students as well as the general education students in the inclusion classroom:

> I believe that it's the least restrictive environment for the students to remain in the classroom and partake of the classroom activities as a member of their unit. The advantage as well is that they are with their peers and they see appropriate role modeling from peers and not just from the General Education teacher but they also see the Special Education teacher walking in and offering assistance to not just that one [special education] student but as well as other students who may need help as well. And that way [the special education students] don't feel as if they are being different in having to leave the classroom.

Both administrators and teachers see the benefit of inclusion for the special education student, it is apparent the special education teachers see the ultimate value of inclusion for special education students, that opinion was not held as strongly by regular education teachers.

Sense of Community. The teachers commented that the example set by the general education and special education teachers working together to help all of the students in the inclusion classroom modeled a sense of community to students. Julie, the special education teacher in Focus Group One stated:

I feel like we get that extra help for the [special education] student. You see them struggling but the other teacher, the inclusion teacher, is right there to help them stay on task and

to help break it up where it's easier for them to understand without having to stop the lesson and go for help.

Julie also noted that the inclusion environment also fostered a sense of community between the students, saying, "I think that even the [general education] students are able to help the [special education] student. The students are learning from other students, that's one advantage."

Brianna mentioned the sense of community of inclusion had the added benefit of bolstering the special education students' self-esteem:

> …Because sometimes when they [the special education students] get pulled out for resource they don't want to be labeled. Like, "I'm going out for resource." And second, I think it helps the regular ed teacher. I guess because I had training a few years ago and they spoke about having inclusion where you have a co-teacher. And I think it helps the regular teacher with the other kids also because they are not only there to help the resource kids they help the other kids. It works both ways.

The teachers of Focus Group Two mentioned the inclusion classroom allowed them to get to know the special education students better and to understand the conditions they need to thrive. Marcy mentioned that not only the special education students benefitted, but also general education students who may experience social or learning difficulties:

> The general ed teacher has that extra support from the special ed teacher and not only assisted her with that one student, but with a group of students that may need that help. Your at-risk students that may have been tested but did not qualify, but you know that they are struggling.

Julie, the special education teacher, mirrored the belief that a great benefit was not removing the special education student from the classroom for instruction in addition to the sense of community modeled between the general education and special education teachers as well as the effects on students:

> I see a lot of advantages [to inclusion]. A very obvious one being that the student is actually allowed to stay in class and participate with the rest of their peers and does not have to be pulled out and miss out on any instruction that the teacher has. I also think that they [both teachers] are able to collaborate with students in their classroom and I think that also helps in cases like a peer instruction, In my class, being a writing teacher, I see that those students that do receive inclusion are able to peer edit the students' work and actually are able to help each other. But I think most importantly it's not having time to remove that [special education] student from the classroom for any other instruction.

According to Jane, a teacher in Focus Group One, the sense of community helped to foster empathy in the general education students, "They [general education students] see that the classroom is diverse and that students learn at different rates. I think that they can gain some maturity to help the kids that need help." The strength of including a special education teacher into the regular education class was strong in this theme of the study.

Classroom Disruption. Some teachers and administrators felt that inclusion increased instances of classroom disruption, and that more support was needed from the administration, especially as it relates to the need for added support (teaching assistants, paras) and the process for handling disruptive students. When asked about barriers to implementing inclusion teachers in Focus Groups One and Two mentioned that sometimes two teachers in the classroom,

teaching at the same time, talking at the same time, was confusing and interrupted the flow of instruction. Also a shortage of special education teachers, teaching assistants, and paras was noted in both focus groups.

Student behavior sometimes interrupted the instructional process. Emily, a teacher in Focus Group Two, noted that she sometimes encountered students with behavioral problems that disrupted the classroom, but also noted that they were "nothing you can't work with."

Two kindergarten teachers in Focus Group Two mentioned that the skill sets and behavior of some students who were in the *general education* population were worthy of referral to a special education assessment, and that the lengthy assessment process resulted in disruption to the classroom until the student was placed into special education. Julissa, a kindergarten teacher described a student who was in her inclusion classroom for about five months before he was referred into special education:

> I did have a student that was autistic and was misplaced at the beginning of the school year, so he did have other conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. And the barriers that I did encounter with that one student was behavior issues [*sic*]. Again, it did disrupt class instruction, it did take away, she would throw tantrums. And that kind of behavior was a distraction.

Maya offered insight on a current situation in her classroom, and also expressed her feelings of inadequacy and fears in working with the student:

> WOW, my experience is very similar to Julissa's and it is actually happening this year. This boy was tested, this is his second year in kindergarten, they tested him but mom did it outside of the school district. Nothing came of it, she never went and got results, which

> I don't understand to this day…He was doing things such as throwing chairs, throwing pencils, crayons, scissors, hitting everyone in the classroom. So we have gone through the whole year and just this week we had his ARD meeting. But he was termed "mildly autistic." He has, he is labeled, Emotionally Disturbed. And he has ADHD. And [his] parents are not willing to put him on any meds so that I am having to deal with all of this that I am not familiar with at all and just trying to keep him safe and keep my students safe.

Some teachers also mentioned that although the special education students were included in the general education classroom instruction, many of them did not wish to use the tools and helps provided to assist in learning due to being self-conscious or not wanting to be labelled as a special education student, especially in the higher grades. Nancy, a teacher in Focus Group 1, said:

> What I see this year in my classroom is the special education students refuse to use the materials that are given. They are either embarrassed to use them or you think they don't want to use them. I had four special education students this year and none of them want to use whatever the inclusion teacher gives them. I believe that because even though they are not leaving the classroom, I still think that that they know that the [general education] students know that they [the special education students] are different.

Nancy gave an example:

> [The special education students think], 'Well, they're [the general education students] not using the place value chart, why am I going to take mine out?' They are either kind of embarrassed or they don't see it as fair. And they don't use it. And we have to force them

to take out all the supplemental aids that they can use. So, this is new to me. It's the first time I see it, but I'm a 4th grade teacher now. Maybe the kids are getting older and they are feeling kind of embarrassed.

The principals of Focus Group Three also commented on problems with disruption in the inclusion classroom and also noted that they were ultimately responsible for any negative ramifications of disruption of the classroom environment. Will said:

> My input is from a safety point of view. What a student's needs surpass those that, what a teacher can do for that child at times, because sometimes we have students that are runners and/or cannot use the bathroom by themselves, and are what-not. And they have already been included in the classroom…I'm not saying I'm not for inclusion, just stating that, when those safety concerns arise, and they aren't you know, met, we are still accountable.

In conclusion, it is apparent that all participants were concerned with the disruption often associated with the inclusion classroom.

Role Ambiguity Due to Inadequate Teacher Training. Teachers working together in inclusion classrooms found that they sometimes clashed over instruction and disciplinary practices, and were unclear of their roles in working together. Teachers and principals felt that this was due to a need for more and better training of staff working in the inclusion environment.

The teachers in Focus Group One felt that the general education teachers did not receive adequate training for special needs students and the inclusion classroom. Julie, the special education teacher noted:

> General education teachers don't receive enough training at all. Us, the special education teachers, have to go in and tell them, 'Okay, this is what students have to do, what they are able to do, or she is not able to work on.' So I don't think there's enough training for them.

When probed by the researcher, who asked Julie if she felt that the general education teachers on her campus had sufficient training, Julie responded, "I give my regular ed teachers all the information they need to know. If they follow, it's another thing. They [sometimes] don't follow it, it does vary." Julie continued:

> In my opinion, I need to make sure that each teacher is working with that student. I need to make sure that the student gets the modifications that [he] needs in order for him to be successful in the classroom. Now, if the student is failing, okay, now you [general education teacher] tell me what you are doing and I will help you out too so that student can pass that task, or that assignment, right? Some teachers, sometimes they just don't, you know, [the general education teachers will say] they're special ed and you give me the grade and that's it.

The general education teachers in Focus Group Two also commented on the lack of proper training for the inclusion classroom environment. Emily said that there was a barrier of training because, "I have not received any training." Marcy, the special education teacher offered a different perspective to the barrier:

> I believe it's not so much the training, it's just that we don't have the sufficient staff to provide the appropriate inclusion practices AND to support the students in the general education population. We do have students who have behavior problems. They do have

> meltdowns in the general education classroom. The general education population students are observing these behaviors, melt downs, or inappropriate behaviors that are being displayed. So that takes time away from their [general education students'] education as well.

Maya stated that she believed proper resources were available, but felt inadequately trained to work with the behavioral aspects other needs of the special education students, saying:

> I think more right now with me, since I am kinder-lower level, I would like the help or the training to be able to deal with these kids as they are in the process of being tested because I really don't know, I'm just as lost as the student and the parents. You know, some kind of guidance [would be helpful].

The administrators in Focus Group Three also noted role ambiguity. Joe mentioned the different levels of teacher training and involvement in the inclusion process as a problem, while noting that administrators are ultimately accountable for the success of an inclusion program. Marie also noted that general education teachers often felt the special education teacher was more of an assistant than a peer and mentioned the term inclusion-confusion:

> They [general education teachers'] thought the…[special education teacher] was going to come in, and [general education teacher] have an extra set of hands in the classroom. And that's not the way we [administrators] wanted inclusion to be seen. So I did a training on that. She's not the extra set; you could team teach. She's not the extra set, she's not going to be your helper. She's not going to be your para. She's also a teacher. So we called [the training] 'Inclusion-Confusion.'

When prompted to elaborate more on 'inclusion-confusion' Marie continued, "Because [the general education teachers] were saying that they didn't have the training, the students were all going to be confused in the classroom. So I called my training 'Inclusion-Confusion.' Of note, the principals appeared to be much better trained than the teachers on inclusion resources, laws and practices.

Disparity of Opinion on The Use of IEPs. For the most part, teachers felt the use of IEP's was helpful to the inclusionary classroom process, but some principals expressed doubt regarding the effectiveness of IEP's. The principals also noted additional concerns of accountability and inclusion classrooms as being part of a "numbers game." Joe mentioned that the IEP was more of a prescriptive tool used to lay the plan but not useful in monitoring progress or success of a special education student. But the requirements of compliance with laws and regulations forces inclusion at the expense of general education students, with little accountability for the results achieved. Joe further stated:

> …because the big word is FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education), are we providing FAPE? And if we, for some, to some degree are, then we're meeting [requirements], we're being compliant. I think there has to be another method to monitor, and to have, because these are huge accountability points, and my concern would be, you know, who is ultimately responsible, and that's the person who signs off on them [the IEPs] and that's the administrator.

Rick agreed with Joe and further elaborated more on IEPs, FAPE, and the social-economic aspects of special education and inclusion, and his frustration with the process:

I think that one of the things that I've always personally felt was we were being a scapegoat. I say we, as educators in the field, and in school and what-not. For years, when I was a teacher, we heard about crack babies and all, you know, with the influx of the drugs and what-not, and how all these kids were entered into the system. But then the Federal government and the State look at us, "This kid is special ed." Well, if we see an influx of different societal factors coming up creating students that are going to have those needs, okay, how can we be looking at less and less kids in special ed? I think they [governmental agencies] confuse that with racial issues, and saying that they had too many Hispanics, or too many Black kids in special education, so we have to drop those numbers now…I'm not here to point to any kind of race or whatever, but the predominate population that were struggling are the poor in society, are going to be the minorities, so they're going to have more tendencies to have maybe more kids who are falling behind. I think we did a disservice of having to do, you know, least restricted environment and doing the FAPE and making sure the numbers are low. And I think which [sic] forced districts to look at having…we've got to put them in the classroom, that's where we got the inclusion. You know, that was a new way to do it, even though the State, the government, never even recognized that. It was our way of taking those numbers down to meet the percentages that the government said we needed to have in the students that are in resource, and self-contained, and everything else.

Marie noted that the IEPs are effective, "depending on how you use them." She also noted that they were just a guide, a foundation, and that the teachers "can always do more"

than what is planned in the IEP. The focus group interviews further accented the problem of using IEP's effectively, knowingly and understanding them fully.

Teacher Turnover. Principals expressed frustration with the monetary and temporal costs of training teachers who left the district shortly after they completed the program. Rick mentioned it was a problem in his smaller district, saying:

> I don't want to jump on a soapbox, but, you know, a turnover of staff always forces us to go back to square one in the training…we can't develop the staff to be proficient, then to mastery, because there is such a turnover. So that's something that a small district like ours are always facing [sic]. I mean…you think you've got a new reading, I mean math teacher, and the year they leave, mid-year, and it's like, "What are you going to do now?"

Other principals mentioned the need for ongoing training throughout the year, not just one training at the beginning of the teacher's employment. Joe said that when speaking with the special education teachers, "They [the special education teachers] have spoken to us about needing additional training. They've gone to maybe one training with the focus in the beginning of the year." He noted, and the other principals concurred, that more training was needed throughout the year, especially as relates to modifications and accommodations for the needs of the special education students.

Will mentioned that the training for modifications and accommodations needed to be "explicitly spelled out."

Joe stated, "If we had something in the beginning of the year for those teachers, and middle of the year for the other new teachers…you know, you never know, then I think we'd have a better take on all of this."

Marie mentioned that one school district mandated that the special education teacher reviewed the lesson plans, accommodations, and modifications for each special education student. She then provided suggestions and resources to meet the student's needs and provided follow-up support and more planning every three weeks with the general education teacher. Maria noted, "We never had to say, "Oh, we need more training." Well, we had the training, she [the special education teacher] would get all the training she needed, she would trickle it down to us."

Rick suggested, and Isabel agreed, that an individual special education teacher should be assigned to each grade level or subject area to help with training and minimizing the impact of teacher turnover on the inclusion processes.

Transition Concerns. The principals expressed concern that the laws and regulations of NCLB and inclusion of special education students in the traditional classroom did not help to facilitate transitioning of special education students to traditional classrooms and environments. Many agreed that some one-on-one or sheltered instruction was needed to move the special education student forward in the learning process.

Rick noted again how "inclusion" was the current "magic word" in addressing the needs of special education students, and that one must be wary of depending solely on inclusion to address all problems:

> It's not about inclusion, it's about what kind of help can I have to provide for the student to catch him up? I can't just keep including them and then do less, because they're not going to catch up. And so I think we just have to really be careful in looking at the labels, because we're a society full of labels. We have to look at what we're really going to do

> for those kids and if we do inclusion, we do it with the expectation that kids are going to come to grade level. And if it means pulling them out of inclusion to do some one-on-one, to bring them up, and catch them up because they're bumping their heads against a wall for reducing fractions, guess what? I'm going to pull them aside because they're having problems with multiplication. They're having problems with procedures and processes. It's going to take some one-on-one to catch them up and then bring them back [into the inclusion classroom] so they can keep running. But if they are always trying to keep up with the pack…I think it defeats the purpose in the long run. Again, with fidelity and everything we do with the purpose in mind that the kid is going to be successful, we're going to do, whatever it takes. And we're not limited to just inclusion.

Will also mentioned that in addition to buy-in of the teachers for inclusion, sheltered instruction would be useful because, "…then they [the special education students] are able to move about the room. They're able to learn in fun ways and they are able to learn from each other."

Martha summed it up nicely, "In the end always do what's best for the student. Not the best, just what's best for the student. Don't look at any[one] program. Don't lay bull. Just do what's best for the child, because the child is going to have to suffer [if he/she is not given the best for him/her].

Summary

The qualitative findings were used to address the research question, "What are the levels of concern and suggestions for improvement of elementary regular teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of

inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with disabilities?"

A total of 20 participants in three focus groups answered a series of open-ended questions regarding their levels of concern and suggestions for improvement of the inclusion program. A total of eight themes emerged and were detailed in this chapter. Positive themes related to inclusion included collaboration, best of both worlds, and sense of community. Negative themes related to inclusion included classroom disruption, role ambiguity due to inadequate teacher training, disparity of opinion on the use of IEP's, teacher turnover, and transition concerns for the students.

The results of the qualitative and quantitative analyses will then be compared with the literature in the final chapter.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATONS

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to: (a) identify the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers in one South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion; (b) identify the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion; (c) explore in depth the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms, and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom concerning the implementation of inclusion; (d) explore in depth the levels of concerns of campus administrators who do and do not utilize inclusionary practices in their respective campuses. This study attempted to address those concerns to determine what perceptual suggestions could improve the education of special education students that are and are not participating in inclusion as a method of education. This study addressed five research questions.

1) Are there differences in the levels of concern between elementary regular and special education teachers who are practicing inclusion in their classrooms using the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006)?

2) Are there differences in the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district using the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006)?
3) Are there differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom using the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006)?
4) Are there differences in the levels of concern between (a) elementary regular education teachers (b) elementary special education teachers and (c) campus administrators using the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2006)?
5) What are the levels of concern and suggestions for improvement of elementary regular education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with disabilities?

Summary of Literature

As demonstrated in current literature, "In the twenty-first century inclusive education is considered as the right of every child to be part of mainstream society" (De Boer & Pijl 2015, p. 29). This study supported the need for students with disabilities to be included in the least restrictive environment so they may be part of the regular educational setting. All students no matter their disability should feel that they are a contributing member of their campus. Booth (1999) offers a wider perspective of inclusion as a process of increasing participation of children and reducing their exclusion from the curricula, cultures, and communities of a school. Due to

this perspective of inclusion, these changes resonate more on social and political levels than in daily practice in schools. As stated by Peters (2003), inclusive education may be implemented with different goals, based on different motives, reflecting different classifications of disabilities, and providing services within different contexts. Developments at policy level are important, but ultimately, inclusive education comes down to changing education in the school and classroom (Ainscow & Miles 2008; Croft, 2010). This study strongly supports the research of Ainscow, Booth, Croft and Miles.

In addition, not much knowledge is available about the implementation process and its experiences. This study tried to bridge this gap. The argument here is that if projects undertaken were known to be effective in terms of an increase in the numbers of students with disabilities in regular schools then these projects could be replicated. This leads to a serious gap in our knowledge regarding the effects of these projects in inclusive education (De Boer & Pijl (2015). Much has changed with legislation. According to Rizga (2015):

> On December 10, 2015, President Barack Obama signed the long-awaited overhaul of The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), one of our country's most important education laws. The Every Student Succeeds Act which tackles several issues in George W. Bush's signature 2002 education law was approved by large bipartisan margins in the House. This came as a huge relief to many education advocates, parents, students, and lawmakers who have been trying to improve increasingly unpopular NCLB for more than a decade. The Every Student Succeeds Act keeps the biggest pieces of NCLB in place. Students are still required to take yearly tests in math and reading from third to eighth grade and once in high school. Schools will have to report the results of these tests by subgroups

> such as race, English-language proficiency, poverty, and special education. States will be required to intervene in schools that are not meeting their goals. But they, not the federal government, will decide how to turn things around. States not the feds, will now be responsible for measuring students' academic progress (p.2).

Only time will tell how successful or unsuccessful The Every Student Succeeds Act will become; however, some educators feel it is a step in the right direction for educational reform. This study created awareness of the differences between policy statements and actual implementation of inclusionary practices.

Methodology

The methodology utilized in this study was a QUAN-QUAL mixed methods approach. As a triangulation design, the researcher wants to directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings or to validate or expand quantitative results with qualitative data (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Additionally, Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) indicated that the validating quantitative data model is implemented when researchers are interested in validating and expanding upon information collected from a survey. This current study will implement a validation and expansion of information collected from a survey, SoCQ, and followed by three focus group interviews.

Quantitative Summary

The quantitative data collection component of the study utilized the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* developed by George et al., (2006). The SoCQ is the primary tool for determining where an individual is in the stages of concern over an event. According to George et al. (2006), the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* related to the implementation of an innovation, in this case,

inclusion, range from (0) awareness, (1) informational, (2) personal, (3)management, (4) consequence, (5) collaboration and (6) refocusing. The method of selection employed in this study was to survey the entire elementary population (N=439). Therefore, this questionnaire was utilized to gain insight on regular education teachers', special education teachers', and principals' concerns related to inclusionary practices. The variable of awareness did not show good internal consistency reliability. This was likely due to misspecification of the wording on item three in the survey and/or confusion on the part of the respondents. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and repeated measure analysis of variance (RM-ANOVA) models were performed to compare various independent groupings of personnel, (regular education teachers, special education teachers and administrators). Quantitative data were analyzed to consider the differences in the mean averaged scores of the seven dependent variable constructs derived from the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire.* In addition, all procedures were best aligned to answer the quantitative research questions.

Qualitative Summary

Three focus group interviews were used to collect qualitative data for the study. These focus groups consisted of elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and elementary campus administrators using an interview protocol (See Appendices B and C). Data analysis followed a protocol that analyzed the raw data into codes to discover emergent themes related to inclusionary practices. These themes were: (1) collaboration, (2) best of both worlds, (3) sense of community, (4) classroom disruption, (5) role ambiguity due to inadequate teacher training, (6) disparity of opinion on the use of IEP's, (7) teacher turnover, and

(8) transition concerns. Trustworthiness of the data was determined using member check and external audit techniques (Creswell, 2013).

The conclusion section to this chapter discusses interpretations of the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data collected in the study. The quantitative results reflect that there are differences in the levels of concern. The qualitative data provides themes that support the levels of concern. This study draws conclusions that support the issues that there are levels of concern in implementing inclusion in elementary schools.

Conclusions for Quantitative Analyses

Findings for research question one did not demonstrate sufficient evidence to indicate that there are differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers who are practicing inclusion in their classrooms on any of the six factors derived from the SoCQ. While significance cannot be proven at the Bonferroni adjusted alpha level ($p<.008$), this research question between-subjects effects were noted at the $p=.05/6=.008$. It raises a question for further study.

Research question two concluded that there is sufficient evidence to indicate that there are differences in the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district on any of the six factors derived from the SoCQ. The Bonferroni adjusted level ($p<.008$) was utilized to further investigate the significant results. Thus, this conclusion rejected the null hypothesis for this research question.

Findings for research question three did not demonstrate sufficient evidence to indicate that there are differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms and elementary special education

teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom on any of the seven factors derived from the SoCQ. Between-subjects were examined with a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level ($p<.008$) to further investigate the significant results found for this teacher group as it relates to each of the six individual dependent variables. Significance was not found between the two teacher groups on any of the six dependent variables on the $p=.008$ level. This also raises a question for further study.

Findings for the fourth and final quantitative research question in this study claim that there is sufficient evidence to indicate that there are differences in the levels of concern between (a) elementary regular education teachers (b) elementary special education teachers and (c) campus administrators, of the seven factors derived from the SoCQ. Between-subjects effects were examined with a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level ($p<.008$) to further investigate the significant results found for respondent group as it relates to each of the six individual dependent variables. Thus, this conclusion rejected the null hypothesis for this research question.

As a researcher, I concluded the following from these findings. With research question one, where there were no differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers raised a red flag for the researcher. One can only make the following conclusions: (1) Teachers did not understand the questions thoroughly. This is supported by Parasuraman (1991) who stated that the wording for the survey should be short and concise. Each question should be clearly stated so that there is no misunderstanding about what is being said. 2) Teachers completed the survey very quickly without taking the time to read each question carefully. For the researcher to have avoided this, she should have conducted a small test (5-10) people to make sure that the respondents clearly understood the questions

(Parasuraman, 1991). (3) Teachers clearly did not have a clear of understanding of what inclusion actually entails. This is supported by Odom (2002) who stated that teachers may not be equipped with proper services to appropriately service special needs students. (4) Teachers do not know their roles and responsibilities when it comes to inclusion. This is supported in the literature in a case study conducted by Smith and Smith (2000) where 27.7% of teachers felt ineffective in inclusive classrooms. (5) Teachers are hesitant and fearful when it comes to answering surveys in an area of education. (6) The SoCQ was not adequate in that teachers did not understand it fully.

Research question two did have sufficient evidence to indicate that there are differences in the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive School District. With research question two, management scores were significantly lower than the other dependent variables and collaboration was significantly higher when compared to the other dependent variables. One can only conclude that management scores were lower are due to the following: (1) Administrators may not have enough time to organize themselves accordingly, and their workload is too intense. This is supported by Janney et al., (1995) as they stated that when administrators relinquished some control in the area of inclusion to teachers, probability of the program's success increased. Therefore, this would alleviate some of the workload on the campus administrators. (2) There could be a conflict between the administrators' interest and their responsibilities. Administrators must understand that they are responsible for educating all students. Marzano et al., (2005) stated that principals must understand the change process; they must understand which leadership responsibilities to emphasize and how to emphasize them. (3) They are not capable or adequately trained themselves in the area of inclusion. Just as important

as it was to have teachers who were properly trained, the same went for the schools' administration (Patterson, Marshall & Bowling, 2000). (4) They are too involved with other nonacademic issues that they do not spend enough time with inclusion. Teachers time and time again expressed this sentiment. The literature supported this when Bunch and Finnegan (2000) reported concerns were the issues of professional adequacy, teacher overload, and the fear of insufficient support in the area of inclusion. (5) Coordinating with people and work involved is too tedious and time consuming. According to Stump (2000), this was difficult work to develop and sustain collaborative inclusionary program and it required the staff's full cooperation and commitment. The stage of collaboration was higher when compared to the other dependent variables. One can conclude this is so because: (1) administrators do want to help their staff in the area of inclusion, (2) campus administrators do want to build relationships with their staff, (3) administrators do want to work with all grade levels in the area of inclusion, (4) administrators want to know how inclusion is working in other schools, and (5) administrators do want to coordinate their efforts with others to maximize inclusion's effects. This is supported in the literature. Rieck and Wadsworth-Dugger (2000) stated that once the administrator relinquishes authority on aspects of education, teachers have a sense of control in their ability to make decisions that directly impact their classroom. Research question three did not demonstrate sufficient evidence to indicate that there are differences in the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom on any of the seven factors derived from the SoCQ. As a researcher, one can conclude that: (1) Teachers do not experience any concerns with having students with disabilities into their

classroom. This was supported by this study. However, literature refutes this finding. As previously stated in a study conducted by Smith and Smith (2000), teachers reported specific concerns. There were class load, classroom support, collaborative planning time, implementation of the practice, continuous training, and whether or not there would be continual reassessment of the practice and design. Bunch and Finnegan (2000) further supported this and stated that teachers had issues in professional adequacy, teacher overload, and fear of insufficient support. (2) Teachers were hesitant to answer the questions honestly, and were fearful of reprisals. According to Parasuraman (1991) one needed to make sure that when asking the questions, make sure they are in a neutral way. According to Parasuraman (1991) the researcher must write a brief statement why you are collecting the information and reassure each respondent that the information is entirely anonymous. This should have been emphasized over and over of by the researcher, so that the participants would not have doubts about completing it. (3) Teachers did not want to seem they were being negative in their responses. According to Parasuram (1991) many people are hesitant to answer questions about themselves and their opinions. (4) Teachers did not fully understand the questions in the SoCQ. This is supported by Parasuraman (1991) who stated that the wording for the survey should be short and concise. Each question should be clearly stated so that there is no misunderstanding about what is being said.

The fourth and final research question did have significance between (a) elementary regular education teachers, (b) elementary special education teachers, and (c) campus administrators. The significance was in the management stage. The researcher can conclude that in the area of management, teachers, like the administrators have a difficult time with

organizational skills, time management, the inability to manage all that inclusion entails, working with others is too demanding, and time is spent working on other nonacademic problems. This is supported in the literature in that Sage and Burello (1994) reported that the school leader's beliefs and perceptions toward the practice of inclusion and toward special education in general were critical factors that influenced teacher's perception toward their students with disabilities. According to Marzano et al., (2005) leaders must engage in behaviors that are consistent with the magnitude of the change represented by the innovation, in this case, inclusion.

In general, these findings proved to be meaningful. Teachers and administrators need to sit and work together to prioritize these issues. Many discussions are going to have to place in order for there to be a common understanding of what everyone's role is in implementing inclusion properly. However, before the teachers are trained in the area mentioned above, the administrators need to set the tone and set the example at their campus. Without them taking the lead and taking initiative, we will find ourselves in the same predicament.

In conclusion, extensive statistical analyses were utilized for the quantitative portion of this study. The assumptions for the MANOVA and RM-ANOVA tests were presented. Test of hypotheses were presented according to each of the four quantitative research questions.

Conclusions for Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis of data from the three focus group interviews provides rich information to explore the issue of inclusion as it pertains to elementary regular education teachers, special education teachers, and campus administrators. The fifth research question, stated: What are the levels of concern and suggestions for improvement of elementary regular

education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with disabilities?

According to Creswell (2013), stated that in a qualitative research process, the researcher needs to stay focused on learning what the participants hold on the issue or problem. The participants in the qualitative portion of this study were selected purposively. The most knowledgeable and information rich candidates were chosen by the researcher to support the qualitative focus group interviews. The researcher had to keep in mind that these participants agreed to take part in study, even though they feared reprisals.

After the researcher reviewed all the qualitative data, the preliminary groupings of responses were then condensed as themes from the data review and classification process. The following emergent themes were from the three focus group interviews as it related to the overarching qualitative research question: (1) collaboration, (2) best of both worlds, (3) sense of community, (4) classroom disruption, (5) role ambiguity due to inadequate teacher training, (6) disparity of opinion on the use of IEP's, (7) teacher turnover, and (8) transition concerns.

These emergent themes substantiated with the SoCQ levels of concern. Therefore, the researcher opted to conduct a SoCQ versus emergent themes. The *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* related to the implementation of an innovation, in this case, inclusion, range from (0) awareness, (1) informational, (2) personal, (3)management, (4) consequence, (5) collaboration and (6) refocusing and the emergent themes were: (1) collaboration, (2) best of both worlds, (3) sense of community, (4) classroom disruption, (5) role ambiguity due to inadequate teacher training, (6) disparity of opinion on the use of IEP's, (7) teacher turnover (8)

transition concerns. Using the seven levels of concern and the eight qualitative themes, the researcher grouped all the levels of concern and the qualitative themes together, noting the following six commonalities between the two studies: 1) information with disparity and best of both worlds, (2) personal with sense of community, (3) management with teacher turnover, classroom disruption and transition concerns, (4) consequence with disparity and role ambiguity, (5) collaboration with collaboration, and (6) refocusing with classroom disruption.

The following statements from the participants support the grouping above. Under information with disparity and best of both worlds, the following statement from participant Martha summed it up, "Don't look at any [one] program. Don't lay bull. Just do what's best for the child, because the child is going to have to suffer [if he/she is not given the best for him/her]." Students with disabilities must be given the best curriculum and instruction to enable them to succeed in the world. It is essential that regular education teachers and special education teachers work together to provide the best program for each individual student.

The pairing of personal with sense of community is supported by Marcy who states, "…from the special ed teacher that not only assisted her with that one student, but with a group of students that may need help, your at-risk students that may have been tested but did not qualify, but you know they are struggling [receive assistance]." This belief was heard repeatedly from most of the teacher focus group interviews. From an administrative point of view, this is the strength of the inclusive classroom because the regular education teacher and the special education teacher become a team providing the best curriculum and instruction that benefits all students. This sense of community shown by the teachers bleeds over to the students and thus creates common practice for all.

With management and classroom disruption, the teacher participants felt that more support was needed from administrators as it relates to student discipline. Maya stated "He was doing things such as throwing chairs, throwing pencils, crayons, scissors, hitting everyone in the classroom." This particular pairing creates the greatest concern for campus administrators. Creating the balance between the strength of inclusion and the risks of classroom disruptions becomes a tightrope that has to be carefully maneuvered to keep all students and teachers functioning in a safe environment.

The fifth pairing of collaboration with itself was a significant finding in the quantitative portion of the study and was supported in great detail in the qualitative portion of the study. Teachers claimed that they attended Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings, however some of them felt they needed more training on IEP's, mainly on how they are written. Emily noted, "I would say I'm somewhat familiar [with IEP's]. But I would really love to learn more about everything that is on the paper that they give you. Kayla was asked if she received help from her campus administrators, she answered "yes," but she appeared to be reluctant to add any explanation to her blunt "yes." This significant finding may exist because of a lack of communication between the campus administrators and teachers. Administrators seem to believe that the regular education teachers work closely with the special education teachers to develop the IEP's; this may not be the case. This assumption may create harm to students with special needs because regular education teachers may not take the time to collaborate with the special education teachers, this lack of collaboration may have created the significance of this level of concern. Collaboration was a major theme that was supported by all the participants in the qualitative portion of the study.

In the qualitative portion of this study, the research can conclude the following: (1) Regular education teachers and special education teachers want support from their campus administrators. According to Bowe, 2003 and Shade and Stewart, 2001, in order for teachers to have a positive attitude toward inclusionary practices, the entire school must be receptive and show support for the various needs of all learners. (2) Teachers want classroom management support. In a study by Smith and Smith (2000) one the concerns teachers reported was that they needed classroom support. (3) Teachers want staff development support. This was also supported by the study conducted by Smith and Smith (2000), found that teachers needed and wanted continuous training. (4) More time for the regular education teachers and special education teachers to collaborate. Smith and Smith (2000), stated that ensuring appropriate time for teacher collaboration is essential for inclusion to work. (5) Administrators need to take the time to discuss with all teachers the meaning of IEP's and their importance to students. Maroldo (1994), found that special education teachers and general education teachers need to learn common language, due to the isolation they experienced, this included but not limited to learning the meanings of IEP's. (6) Administrators need to be readily available to assist teachers when they are called upon for assistance. According to Downing (2008), the delivery of inclusion required great support from all individuals within a school setting, especially school administrators. (7) Administrators need to fully understand what inclusion actually entails for it to work effectively. This is supported in the literature by Stump (2000) who listed three suggestions to enhance the outcomes of students integrated in the regular education classrooms. Also in the literature, Giagreco and Doyle, 2007 offered ten recommendations to general

education teachers working in an inclusive setting; these ten recommendations support the researcher's conclusions in this qualitative portion of this study.

The quantitative and qualitative findings did support one another in this study. The SoCQ demonstrated that more collaboration was needed, thus this was supported by the focus group interviews. Collaboration was an emergent theme in the qualitative study, and in went hand in hand with stage five of the SoCQ. Participants made it known that in order for inclusion to work effectively, collaboration was extremely necessary. It was repeated time and time again in the focus group interviews. Collaboration was also a major theme in the literature. According to Mastopieri and Struggs, 2004, teachers have the opportunity to excel in conferencing skills and socialization skills, as they collaborated with special education teachers, IEP teams, and co-teachers. In this study, the participants in the qualitative focus groups wanted to spend more time with each other, in order to do what is best for the students. Maroldo (1994) found that special education and general education teachers needed to learn common language, due to the isolation they had experienced. Each member of the collaborative team accepted the responsibilities for student outcomes by decisions made by the team members.

As a researcher, one can also conclude that management in the quantitative portion related with classroom disruption and sense of community. Teachers want their campus administrators to assist them with classroom disruptions as they occur. Teachers want their campus administrators to be visible and conduct classroom visits frequently, so they may see for themselves what is actually occurring in the classroom. Teachers also commented that campus administrators need to set the example of helping all staff, and make everyone feel that inclusion is an endeavor that must be successfully implemented in the campus. As stated in the literature,

teamwork, cooperation, and shared vision were repeatedly identified as important factors of inclusion (Thousand & Villa, 1990). Allen and Schwarz (2001) stated that inclusion was not a placement issue or a set of strategies but was belonging to a community. Titone (2005) stated in the literature that "Inclusion is not something different it's just adding to the philosophy that we already have…" (p.32).

As stated in previous research, whether inclusion was in an elementary, middle or high school, changes occurred for both general and special education teachers. This adjustment took place when collaboration with special education teacher and the general education teacher were planning and discussing lessons together, (Giangreco & Doyle, 2007). In order for a regular education teacher to have a positive attitude toward inclusionary practices, the entire school must be receptive and show support for the various needs of all types of learners (Bowe, 2003). As a researcher, this summed up what needs to occur at an elementary campus for inclusion to be effective.

The next section discusses implications of this study for teachers and administrators. This section will be followed by recommendations.

Implications for Teachers and Administrators

Regular education teachers or special education teachers need to be supported. The current study suggested significance between the levels of concern and suggestions for improvement of elementary regular education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with disabilities. According to the two teacher focus group interviews, and the SoCQ the lack of administrative support was a concern. Some of the

participants indicated that they received some support from their administrators but could always utilize more assistance in areas such as staff development or classroom management. The delivery of inclusion required great support from all individuals within a school setting, especially school administrators (Carter & Hughes, 2005). The participants indicated the need for continuous administrative support in key areas especially in the area of collaboration between the regular education teachers and the special education teachers. Campus staff felt that the time crunch to meet the goals of the campus is so important, that providing the extra time to receive administrative support for inclusion often times is ignored initially and often times is not revisited. This is supported in the literature by Cook (2002) who indicated that teachers were not effectively prepared to handle special education students in their regular education classes. This led to poor attitudes by teachers based on their lack of confidence and a perceived lack of proper training. The literature also stated that teachers responded that inclusion increased the demands on the regular education teacher and discussed concerns that the workload was worrisome and overwhelming. Bunch and Finnegan (2000) reported concerns were the issues of professional adequacy, teacher overload, and the fear of insufficient support. As the issue of including students with disabilities expands, regular education teachers look to administrators and special education teachers for support (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999). Without sufficient support, including students with disabilities may result in failure (Hefflin & Bullock, 1999). As previous and current research has proven, administrative support is an important factor to a productive and positive inclusive program. This current study addressed significant issues with the fact that regular education teachers, special education teachers, and campus administrators are not effectively collaborating about the needs of the inclusive classroom. When classroom

disruptions occur often the regular education teacher and/or the special education teacher are left to handle the situation with little administrative assistance or support. This may indicate a stronger need for administrative preparation programs to prepare principal candidates for their role in supporting all students, especially those students who are in a special education program.

Campus administrators have to be well informed of special education laws, applications, procedures, and guidelines. According to Frost and Kersten (2001)"…although principals are not necessarily prepared to be the instructional leaders to special education teachers, in the wake of legislation and school reform, it is critical that they assume this responsibility to ensure program effectiveness and student achievement" (p.6). Additionally, Sanzo and Sherman (2011) determined the role that laws and legislation have played in the implementation of programs within schools by stating, "External policy changes such as the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act often serve as the impetus for planning within a district" (p.6). Therefore, it is the campus administrators' responsibility to train their teachers and staff in these areas. The findings in the quantitative portion of this research indicated that there is a significant difference in the levels of concern between teachers, regular and special education, and the campus administrators using the SoCQ. Management was also supported by the qualitative focus group interviews. The management component of the SoCQ focused on the leaders' ability to understand the process and task of using inclusionary practices. Management was defined as the ability of the campus administrator to be efficient and organized. The campus administrator needed the skills of management and scheduling to be able to operate an effective inclusionary program. Mamlin (1999) stated that elements of effective leadership were providing collaboration among staff and someone who is not only informed but has the ability to

relate that information in an effective way to staff. Administrators set the tone at their campuses, so they need to show that they support their teachers when they ask for help. Administrators and teachers need to always stay on the same path when it comes to all students' educational successes. Inclusion depends on the collaboration and cooperation of the administrators, regular education teachers, and special education teachers.

The noteworthy findings that prevailed for the researcher focused on the lack of action by administrators to provide more training in the area of inclusion. All teachers, both regular and special, voiced a need to have a campus administrator who is constantly visible and readily available to assist them when an issue arises. These two topics were significant in the quantitative surveys and supported in the qualitative focus groups. These are age old problems for administrators and teachers alike. Administrators need to be cognizant of their teachers' concerns, especially when it comes to educating their students with special needs. The literature supports this research study. According to Bartlett et al., (2002) they suggested that administrators provide support of staff members through "joint problem solving, maintaining data, facilitating staff development programs, providing emotional support in tough times, … and assessing program efforts (242). It was reported that teachers viewed the school leader as essential to the success of inclusionary practices (Paterson et al., 2000).

In essence this study added to what is already known about inclusive education. More staff development is needed for elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and elementary campus administrators. This study extended the need for more staff development, not only in the quantitative portion of the study, but more so in the qualitative portion. Also, this study extended the need for more collaboration between the

elementary regular education teachers, elementary special education teachers, and the elementary campus principals. It is important to note that administrative support was perceived by teachers as crucial in their own perceptions or attitudes of inclusionary practices.

Recommendations

The success of an inclusive program depends upon the relationship between the administrators and the teachers, and this is supported by McDonnell et al., (2003). This study determined the levels of concern regular education teachers, special education teachers and administrators have towards the use or non-use of inclusionary practices. Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations can be made.

Campus administrators need to understand the importance that their support has on the success of their teachers. Marzano et al., (2005) argued principals' leadership was a critical factor to implementing change in schools. The current study indicated a level of concern when it came to the issue of collaboration. According to the teachers interviewed, they want their campus administrators to keep them informed of current special education laws, applications, procedures and guidelines this was also supported by the research of Sanzo et al., (2011). Teachers interviewed in this study wanted to learn more about student IEP's. Teachers wanted to receive support in the form of adequate planning time and proper instructional materials. This is supported in the literature by Kotter and Cohen (2002), who stated that principals must understand which leadership responsibilities to emphasize when supporting staff. In essence, campus administrators must prioritize continuous staff development to support the inclusionary practices of their campus. Therefore, all students will improve academically with the collaboration and staff development that support the benefits of a strong inclusionary program.

This study strongly recommends that in order to provide a solid inclusive educational program, time must be allotted for collaboration as well as staff development. This is supported by Stump (2000) who stated that it [inclusion] is difficult work to develop and sustain a collaborative inclusionary program and that it required full cooperation and commitment. Secondly, all students will benefit by the sense of community established by the regular education and special education teachers. It is recommended that these teachers work as a team, empowering each other to provide the best instruction for all students in the classroom. This can only happen with a strong sense of community. This is supported by Kavale and Forness (2000) who stated that in order for the change to be well received and have a lasting impact, the principal should serve as a "coach" to the change process rather than insisting that change be implemented.

Thirdly, classroom management and classroom disruption is important and essential to the success of all students. It is recommended that the campus administrative team become more involved in supporting the teachers who participate in the inclusion program. The flow of the classroom must be positive, and if severe disruptions alter the success of the inclusive process. The administrative team must respond quickly and efficiently when these major disruptions occur. This was supported in the literature, Daane et al., (2000).

The recommendations in this study are based upon the levels of concern, measured for regular education teachers, special education teachers, and campus administrators. Further support for these levels of concern emerged from the focus group interviews in the qualitative portion of this study.

Future Research

The current research discovered that there are levels of concern with regular education teachers, special education teachers, and campus administrators when it comes to inclusive education. It is recommended that future research is needed to further investigate these levels of concern. This information will be useful to campus administrators, regular education teachers and special education teachers only if knowledge can be bridged between research and actual practice. It is clear that administrators still do not have a clear understanding of what their role is in producing an active inclusionary program. Principals play a key role in setting the tone and vision for inclusive schools (Polat, 2011). Principals as transformational leaders have the ability to influence and motivate their teachers and support staff members to also have positive attitudes toward working with all students, especially students with special needs (Ainscow & Sandhill, 2010). They have the ability to make informed placement decisions and to cultivate inclusive school environments that service all students equally in a non-discriminatory setting (Pazey & Cole, 2013). Hopefully, this study will help administrators understand their teachers' concerns on how to properly implement inclusionary programs. Developing a better understanding of how to assist regular education teachers and special education teachers who serve students with disabilities will improve everyone's perception of inclusion. Working towards including students with disabilities not only helps those students but it provides a positive impact on school districts statewide.

Recommendations for future research are as follows:

1) Survey a larger population of regular education teachers, special education teachers, and campus administrators across the state of Texas to investigate whether areas of

Hispanic populations differ from other ethnic populations. This information would support inclusive classrooms.

2) Create larger numbers of participants in the focus group interviews to collect stronger data supporting or not supporting inclusionary practices.

According to research by Balyer (2012) supported inclusionary practices as benefitting all students, especially students with special needs is necessary for it to work properly. This study further supports the strong need for collaboration and cooperation between campus administrators, regular education teacher, and special education teacher to create a proactive learning community for all students. Successful inclusion requires the collaboration of the administrators, teachers, and other support staff (Aydin et al., 2013). This study enhanced previous research in the need for inclusionary practices and the reason why is it important to implement it properly. However, more research is necessary to educate campus administrators on how and why inclusionary programs are essential in the educational success of students with disabilities.

Summary

Chapter six provided summaries, conclusions, implications and recommendations for this mixed-methods study. The researcher summarized current literature, and related it to the current study. The quantitative results of SoCQ indicated levels of concern from survey participants. The qualitative results from the focus group interviews further defined the emergent themes found in Table 9, supporting the levels of concern. The implications for this study are that administrators must support the teachers' need for professional development to improve inclusion. Recommendations for further study indicated that researchers should survey a larger

population of regular education teachers, special education teachers, and campus administrators across the state of Texas to further support the results of this study. Another recommendation is to increase the number of participants contributing to the study. Research supports the use of inclusion for students with disabilities and the support of administrators is essential for a strong inclusionary program.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

STAGES OF CONCERN QUESTIONNAIRE

Stages of Concern Questionnaire

Name (optional): _____

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine what people who are using or thinking about using various programs are concerned about at various times during the adoption process.

The items were developed from typical responses of school and college teachers who ranged from no knowledge at all about various programs to many years' experience using them. Therefore, **many of the items on this questionnaire may appear to be of little relevance or irrelevant to you at this time.** For the completely irrelevant items, please circle "0" on the scale. Other items will represent those concerns you do have, in varying degrees of intensity, and should be marked higher on the scale.

For example:

This statement is very true of me at this time.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**
This statement is somewhat true of me now.	0	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7
This statement is not at all true of me at this time.	0	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7
This statement seems irrelevant to me.	**0**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please respond to the items in terms of **your present concerns,** or how you feel about your involvement with **inclusion**. We do not hold to any one definition of inclusion so please think of it in terms of your own perception of what it involves. Phrases such as "this approach" and "the new system" all refer to inclusion. Remember to respond to each item in terms of your present concerns about your involvement or potential involvement with inclusion.

Thank you for taking time to complete this task.

0	1 2	3 4 5	6 7
Irrelevant now	Not true of me now	Somewhat true of me now	Very true of me

Circle One Number for Each Item

1. I am concerned about students' attitudes toward inclusion	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. I now know of some other approaches that might work better.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. I am more concerned about inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. I am concerned about not having enough time to organize myself each day.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. I would like to help other faculty in their use of inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. I have a very limited knowledge of inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. I would like to know the effect of reorganization on my professional status.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. I am concerned about conflict between my interests and my responsibilities.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I am concerned about revising my use of inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. I would like to develop working relationships with both our faculty and outside faculty using inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. I am concerned about how inclusion affects students.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. I am not concerned about inclusion at this time.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. I would like to know who will make the decisions in the new system.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. I would like to discuss the possibility of using inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. I would like to know what resources are available if we decide to adopt inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. I am concerned about my inability to manage all that inclusion requires.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. I would like to know how my teaching or administration is supposed to change.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. I would like to familiarize other departments or persons with the progress of inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. I am concerned about evaluating my impact on students.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. I would like to revise inclusion's approach.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. I am preoccupied with things other than inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. I would like to modify our use of inclusion based on the experiences of our students.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. I spend little time thinking about inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. I would like to excite my students about their part in inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. I am concerned about time spent working with nonacademic problems related to inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. I would like to know what the use of inclusion will require in the immediate future.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. I would like to coordinate my efforts with others to maximize inclusion's effects.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. I would like to have more information on time and energy commitments required by inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. I would like to know what other faculty are doing in this area.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. Currently, other priorities prevent me from focusing my attention on inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

31. I would like to determine how to supplement, enhance, or replace inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
32. I would like to use feedback from students to change the program.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
33. I would like to know how my role will change when I am using inclusion.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
34. Coordination of tasks and people is taking too much of my time.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
35. I would like to know how inclusion is better than what we have now.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please complete the following:

1. How long have you been involved with inclusion, not counting this year?

Never ___ 1 year ___ 2 years ___ 3 years ___ 4 years ___ 5 or more ____

2. In your use of inclusion, do you consider yourself to be a:

non-user ___ novice ___ intermediate ___ old hand ___ past user ____

3. Have you received formal training regarding inclusion (workshops, courses)?

Yes ____ No ____

4. Are you currently in the first or second year of use of some major innovation or

program other than this one?

Yes ____ No ____

If yes, please describe briefly:

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your help!

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR TEACHERS

Time of Interview: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Position of Interviewee: _____

Brief description of research project: The purpose of this mixed methods study is to: (a) identify the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers in one South Texas school concerning the implementation of inclusion; (b) identify the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district concerning the implementation of inclusion; (c) explore in depth the levels of concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms, and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom concerning the implementation of inclusion; (d) explore in depth the

levels of concern of campus administrators who do and do not utilize inclusionary practices in their respective campuses.

What are the levels of concern and suggestions for improvement of elementary regular teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with disabilities?

Questions:	**Field Notes:**
1. State your name and give background information about you and your position here. **Probe:** Length of time in position Relationship to Inclusion Leadership responsibilities if any	
2. How informed are you with special education law? **Probe:** Inclusion? Time? Material?	

3. How familiar are you with Individualized Educational Plans and do you believe they are effective? **Probe:** Experience writing them? Attending ARD meetings? Receive help?	
4. How do you see yourself implementing the inclusion of special education students in your classroom? **Probe:** Collaborations Materials and resources	
5. What advantages do you see to using inclusion? Explain **Probe:** Student advantages Teacher advantages	

6. What barriers do you encounter with implementing inclusion in your classroom? Explain **Probe:** Things that do not work Training SPED students in classrooms	
7. Do you feel you have been provided with proper resources to adequately implement inclusion in your classroom? **Probe:** Materials Training	
8. Please explain your perceptions of staff development for inclusionary practices and evaluate its effectiveness. **Probe:** ass size? aterials?	

ader support? 'ED teacher support? gion I Trainings?	
9. Do you feel you are adequately supported by your campus administration? Explain **Probe:** Materials? SPED Teacher? Administrative?	
10. What are your suggestions for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices in your classroom?	
11. Please feel free to add any information I may have left out that you believe is important to this study	

Thank you for participating in this study.

This protocol is based on Sample Interview Protocol in Creswell (2013).

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR THE PRINCIPAL

Time of Interview: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Position of Interviewee: _____

Brief description of research project: The purpose of this mixed methods study is to: (a) to identify the levels of concern of elementary regular and special education teachers in one South Texas school; (b) to identify the levels of concern of campus administrators in one inclusive South Texas school district; (c) to explore in depth the levels concern of elementary regular education teachers who have students with disabilities integrated in their classrooms, and elementary special education teachers who are integrated into the regular education classroom; (d) to explore in depth the levels of concern of campus administrators who do and do not utilize inclusionary practices in their respective campuses.

What are the levels of concern and suggestions for improvement of elementary regular teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in one South Texas school district have for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices as a means of educating students with disabilities?

Questions:	**Field Notes:**
1. State your name and give background information about you and your position here. **Probe:** Length of time in position Relationship to Inclusion Leadership responsibilities if any	
2. How informed are you with special education law? **Probe:** Inclusion? Time? Material?	
3. How familiar are you with Individualized Educational Plans and do you believe they are effective?	

Probe: Experience writing them? Attending ARD meetings? Receive help?	
4. How do you see yourself implementing the inclusion of special education students on your campus? **Probe:** Collaborations? Materials and resources? District SPED support?	
5. What advantages do you see to using inclusionary practices? Explain **Probe:** Student advantages Teacher advantages	
6. What barriers do you encounter with implementing inclusion in your classroom? Explain **Probe:**	

Things that do not work? Training? SPED students in classrooms?	
7. Do you feel you have been provided with proper resources to adequately implement inclusion on your campus **Probe:** Materials? Training? Superintendent?	
8. Please explain your perceptions of staff development for inclusionary practices and evaluate its effectiveness. **Probe:** Resources? District support? SPED teacher support? Region I Trainings?	

9. Do you feel you are adequately supported by the district administration? Explain **Probe:** Materials and resources? SPED Teachers? Campus administration training?	
10. What are your suggestions for the use or non-use of inclusionary practices on your campus?	
11. Please feel free to add any information I may have left out that you believe is important to this study	

Thank you for participating in this study.

This protocol is based on Sample Interview Protocol in Creswell (2013).

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

SUPERINTENDENT LETTER

Lauren Y. Arce
2006 E. Second St.
Weslaco, TX 78596
956-497-5584

Weslaco ISD Administration Bldg.
314 W. 4th Street
Weslaco, Texas 78596

Attn: Superintendent Ruben Alejandro

Re: Approval for Dissertation Study

Dear Dr. Ruben Alejandro, Superintendent of Schools:

As you already know, I am pursuing a doctoral degree at the University of Texas Pan American in Edinburg, Texas. I am working under the supervision of Dr. Shirley Mills in the College of Education at the University of Texas Pan American. As part of my dissertation study I propose to conduct an online survey and conduct six focus group interviews with regular education teachers, special education teachers, and campus administrators. The study is intended to outline elementary teachers and principals concerns in the implementation of inclusion within the district. The study will involve taped interviews of the professionals mentioned above. I feel certain that this study will not pose any unusual risk to these participants and the district, campuses, and participants' confidentiality will be protected with the use of pseudonyms.

The purpose of this letter is to seek your approval to conduct this study in Weslaco Independent School District, specifically at the elementary campuses. As I will need your approval in writing, I would respectfully request you respond in that manner. I thank you in advance for your help in this endeavor and look forward to hearing from you soon on this matter.

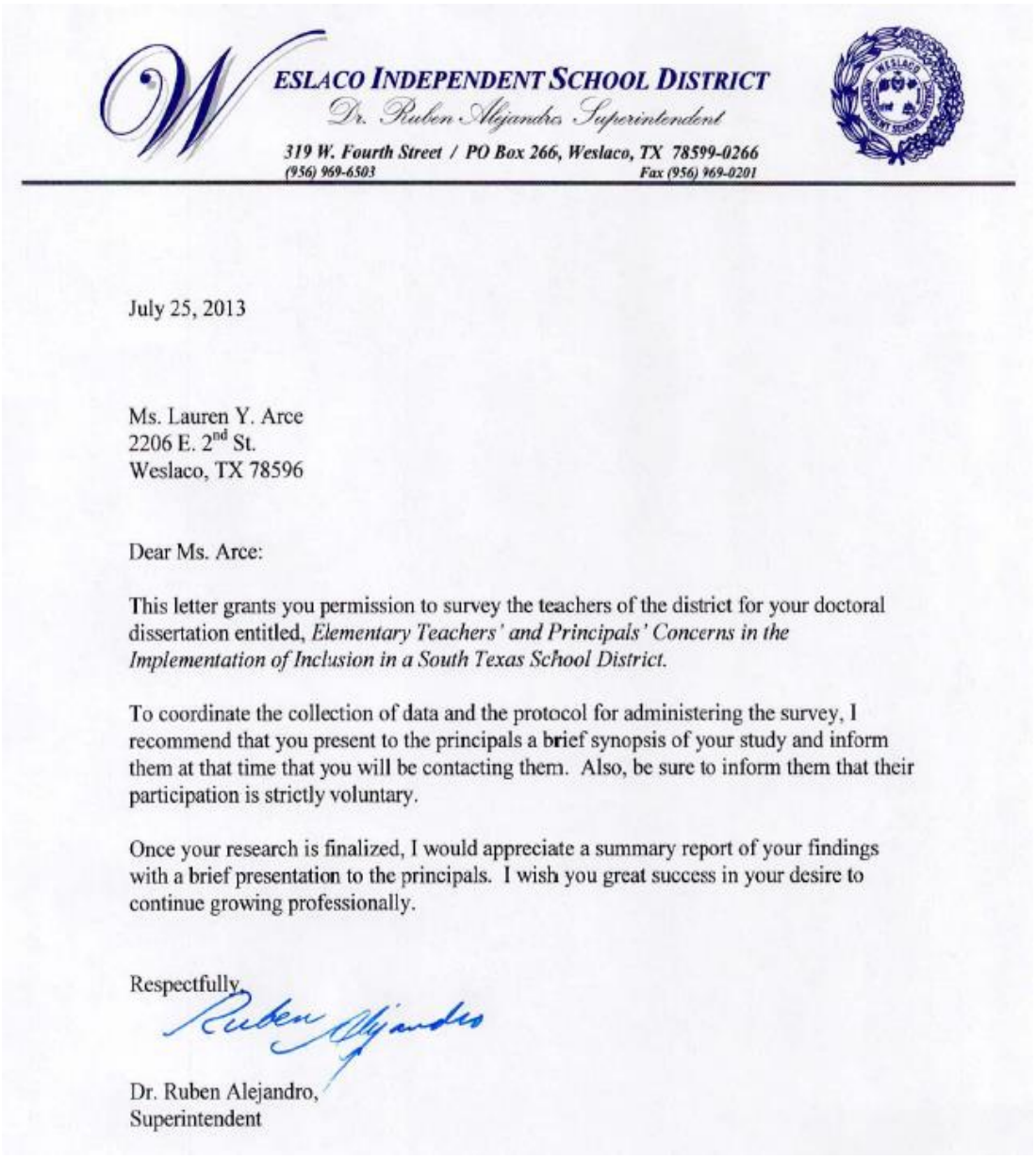
Sincerely,

Lauren Y. Arce, Principal, PFC Mario Ybarra Elementary School
Educational Leadership Doctoral Student

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

SUPERINTENDENT APPROVAL



WESLACO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Dr. Ruben Alejandro, Superintendent
319 W. Fourth Street / PO Box 266, Weslaco, TX 78599-0266
(956) 969-6503 Fax (956) 969-0201

July 25, 2013

Ms. Lauren Y. Arce
2206 E. 2nd St.
Weslaco, TX 78596

Dear Ms. Arce:

This letter grants you permission to survey the teachers of the district for your doctoral dissertation entitled, *Elementary Teachers' and Principals' Concerns in the Implementation of Inclusion in a South Texas School District.*

To coordinate the collection of data and the protocol for administering the survey, I recommend that you present to the principals a brief synopsis of your study and inform them at that time that you will be contacting them. Also, be sure to inform them that their participation is strictly voluntary.

Once your research is finalized, I would appreciate a summary report of your findings with a brief presentation to the principals. I wish you great success in your desire to continue growing professionally.

Respectfully,

Dr. Ruben Alejandro,
Superintendent

APPENDIX F

APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Study title: Elementary Teachers' and Principals' Concerns in the Implementation of Inclusion in a South Texas School District

This research is being conducted by Lauren Y. Arce, a doctoral student from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley/UTRGV, under the supervision of Dr. Shirley Mills. I am conducting a research study to report on elementary teachers' and principals' concerns in the implementation of inclusion in one South Texas public school district. I hope that the information will help individuals related to the implementation of inclusion and will serve to offer valuable feedback to the school system and to those related to the implementation of inclusion.

You have been invited to participate in the study, so I can conduct an interview about issues and concerns related to the implementation of inclusion. The interview is expected to last approximately 60 minutes. Your individual responses will be treated as confidentially. Your participation is completely voluntary; although you have shown interest in participating in this study, you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time and can choose not to answer specific questions.

In order to ensure the accuracy of recorded statements, we will be recording the session on audiotape and later transcribing the tapes. The tapes will not be marked with your names and will be securely stored in a locked cabinet at UTRGV. The recordings themselves will only be used for research purposes and will not be given to anyone not directly involved in the research. After five years, the tapes will be destroyed or erased.

Your responses may be quoted in whole or in part in publications or presentations based on this research. If quotes are used, your real name will be replaced by a made up name (pseudonym) and any additional information that might directly identify you will be excluded.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protection (IRB). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or if you feel that your rights as a participant were not adequately met by the researcher, please contact the IRB at 956.665.2889 or irb@utrgv.edu.

Researcher Name: Lauren Y. Arce
Contact information: Phone: (956)-497-5584
Email: larce@wisd.us

Supervisor Name: Shirley J. Mills, Ph.D.
Email: Shirley.mills@utrgv.edu
Contact Information: Phone: (956)665-7444

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
IRB APPROVED
IRB# 2013-089-08 (961702)
Expires: 09/23/2017

APPENDIX G

APPENDIX G

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO USE STAGES OF CONCERN QUESTIONNAIRE

Nancy Reynolds
Information Resource Center
SEDL
4700 Meuller Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78723

Dear Mrs. Nancy Reynolds,

I am a doctoral student at the University of Texas Pan American in the Educational Leadership program. For my dissertation topic I am studying elementary teachers' and principals' concerns in the implementation of inclusion in a South Texas school district,

I am writing to request permission to use the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (SoCQ) as my survey instrument. Please reply to me in writing if you are willing to grant permission for this request.

If you have any questions about the doctoral program, myself, or the nature of my study, please do not hesitate to contact me. You may also contact my dissertation chairperson, Dr. S. Mills at millssj@utpa.edu (956)-292-7444.

Thank you for your consideration to my request.

Sincerely,

Lauren Y. Arce, Principal, PFC Mario Ybarra Elementary School
Educational Leadership Doctoral Student

APPENDIX H

APPENDIX H

STAGE OF CONCERN QUESTIONNAIRE LICENSE AGREEMENT

ADVANCING RESEARCH
SEDL
IMPROVING EDUCATION

SEDL License Agreement

To: Lauren Arce (Licensee)
Campus Principal
Weslaco Independent School District
2006 E. 2nd St.
Weslaco, TX 78596

From: Nancy Reynolds
Information Associate
SEDL
Information Resource Center-Copyright Permissions
4700 Mueller Blvd.
Austin, TX 78723

Subject: License Agreement to reprint and distribute SEDL materials

Date: March 26, 2013

Thank you for your interest in using the **Stages of Concern Questionnaire** (SoCQ 075) published in *Measuring Implementation In Schools: Stages of Concern Questionnaire* by SEDL in 2006 and written by Archie A. George, Gene E. Hall, and Suzanne M. Stiegelbauer. In this publication, the SoCQ 075 appears as Appendix A, pages 79-82; it is also available in electronic format as SEDL's *Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) Online*, and in the book *Taking Charge of Change*, revised ed., published in 2006 and written by Shirley M. Hord, William L. Rutherford, Leslie Huling, and Gene E. Hall, on pages 48-49.

The SoCQ 075 will be referred to as the "work" in this permission agreement. SEDL is pleased to grant permission for use of the work by the Licensee who will distribute it to approximately 433 teachers and principals in the Weslaco Independent School District. The following are the terms, conditions, and limitations governing this limited permission to reproduce the work:

1. All reprinting and distribution activities shall be solely in the media in which the work has been made available for your use (i.e., copies made from a print copy or by purchasing access to the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire Online* available at http://www.sedl.org/pubs/catalog/items/cbam21.html on the SEDL website) and shall be used for educational, non-profit use only. Precise compliance with the following terms and conditions shall be required for any permitted reproduction of the work described above.

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Voice: 800-476-6861
Fax: 512-476-2286
www.sedl.org
4700 MUELLER BLVD., AUSTIN, TX 78723

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Thank you, again, for your interest in using SEDL's **Stages of Concern Questionnaire** (SoCQ 075). If you have any questions, please contact me at 800-476-6861, ext. 6548 or 512-391-6548, or by e-mail at nancy.reynolds@sedl.org.

Sincerely,

Nancy Reynolds — April 3, 2013

Nancy Reynolds for SEDL — Date signed

Agreed and accepted:

Signature: Lauren Arce — 4-3-2013

Date signed

Printed Name: LAUREN ARCE

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX I

IRB APPROVAL

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

The Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protection (IRB)
Division of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development
Office of Research Compliance

October 7, 2016

To: Lauren Arce, ED.D

Cc: Shirley Mills

From: Institutional Review Board

Subject: Approval of a Request to Continue Research

IRBNet ID: 961702-1

IRB# 2013-089-09

Project Title: "Elementary Teachers' and Principals' Concerns in the Implementation of Inclusion in a South Texas School District"

Dear Researcher,

The IRB protocol referenced above has been reviewed and **APPROVED FOR CONTINUATION ON October 7, 2016**.

Basis for approval: Continuing Review (Expedited, Category # 7)

Approval expiration date: September 23, 2017

Recruitment and Informed Consent: You must follow the recruitment and consent procedures that were approved. If your study uses an informed consent form or study information handout, you will receive an IRB-approval stamped PDF of the document(s) for distribution to subjects.

Modifications to the approved protocol: Modifications to the approved protocol (including recruitment methods, study procedures, survey/interview questions, personnel, consent form, or subject population), must be submitted to the IRB for approval. Changes should not be implemented until approved by the IRB.

Approval expiration and renewal: Your study approval expires on the date noted above. Before that date you will need to submit a continuing review request for approval. Failure to submit this request will result in your study file being closed on the approval expiration date.

Data retention: All research data and signed informed consent documents should be retained for a *minimum* of 3 years after *completion* of the study.

Closure of the Study: Please be sure to inform the IRB when you have completed your study, have graduated, and/or have left the university as an employee. A final report should be submitted for completed studies or studies that will be completed by their respective expiration date.

Approved by: Wendy A. Lawrence Fowler

Dr. Wendy Lawrence Fowler
Vice Chair/Acting Chair, Institutional Review Board

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lauren Arce received her Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in May 2017. Additional degrees include, a Master of Education in Educational Administration from the University of Texas Pan American in 2002 and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas Pan American in 1995. She can be reached at laurencastro@hotmail.com