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## Teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming and resource programs

Carol W. Geck

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
SAN BERNARDINO

TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD MAINSTREAMING  
AND RESOURCE PROGRAMS

A Project Submitted to  
The Faculty of the School of Education  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Education: Learning Handicapped Option

By

Carol W. Geck, M.A.

San Bernardino, California

1986

APPROVED BY:

Calif. State University, San Bernardino Library

Advisor

Committee Member

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the regular classroom teacher's attitude toward mainstreaming and their perceptions of the role of the resource program. This study was designed to ascertain if an intensive inservice training program would have a differential effect on the teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming.

A thirty-three item attitude survey was distributed to 100 elementary classroom teachers in five schools from the San Bernardino City Unified School District. An experimental group of 60 teachers from three schools was then chosen to take part in a six-week inservice program. When the inservice training was completed, the attitude survey was readministered and the data was analyzed to determine if there was a significant difference in the teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming.

The results of this study revealed that the teachers had a significantly more positive attitude toward the mainstreaming process after the inservice training. There was also a positive difference in the teacher's perceptions about the role of the resource program however, it was not a significant difference.



## INTRODUCTION

Providing each handicapped child with an appropriate education has been mandated by Public Law 94-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. This has led to an increase in children identified as learning disabled being placed in a regular classroom for at least part of the school day, commonly known as "Mainstreaming". As defined by the National Advisory Council on Education Professions Development (1976), mainstreaming is "the conscientious effort to place handicapped children into the least restrictive educational setting which is appropriate to their needs" (p.71). The regulations of Public Law 94-142 outline six factors that must be considered in any placement decision. The placement decision must be: "(1) determined annually; (2) based on the child's Individual Educational Plan(IEP); (3) made to keep the child as close to home as possible; (4) selected from a continuum of placement alternatives; (5) provided by the school that the child normally attends, if appropriate; and (6) considerate of any potentially harmful effects that the child might experience in the placement" (Ellis,1977, p. 163).

The intent implied in mainstreaming is to place children with mild learning disabilities into the regular classroom for as much of the school day as appropriate for that child. A key element in successful mainstreaming is the resource specialist, who serves as a member of the student study team. This team reviews and selects the appropriate placement for learning disabled students. The student with learning disabilities receives most of his or her instruction in the regular



classroom with support from the resource specialist. The resource specialist assists the learning handicapped student through direct instruction, and assists the classroom teacher through consultation. This consultation between regular and special educators may well be the key to the success of the mainstreamed student.

Regular educators are expressing feelings of frustration when trying to teach mainstreamed students. As reported in a study by Gickling & Theobald (1975), many teachers reported having little confidence in their abilities to teach handicapped students. (p. 326). If the resource specialist is not helping to meet the needs of the regular educator, it is not unreasonable that feelings of ineptness and frustration are being felt by those teachers. Therefore, it is doubtful that maximum educational benefits are being reaped by the exceptional students in the regular class setting (Speece & Mandell, 1980, p. 51). One index of the effectiveness of the resource program for mainstreamed handicapped children is the extent to which regular and special educators interface and share responsibility for the child's educational program.

If the success of mainstreaming depends to a large degree upon the attitude of the regular classroom teacher, there is a need to review the literature to determine what the teacher's attitudes have been toward mainstreaming. The second key to successful mainstreaming is the ability of the resource specialist to interface with the classroom teacher. It is therefore necessary to also review the literature to determine the regular educator's attitude toward the resource program.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A sound working relationship between the special educator and the regular classroom teacher is essential for the successful integration of the handicapped student into regular education programs (Schifani, Anderson, & Odle, 1980). If the classroom teacher exhibits a negative attitude toward mainstreaming or toward the resource program, it might be interpreted by handicapped students as a negative attitude toward them. If the teacher's attitude is positive, then the mainstreamed student will have a better attitude, and the learning experience will be more productive for both teacher and student.

Recent studies (Aloia & Aloia, 1982; Bond & Dietrich, 1982; Gickling & Theobald, 1975; Larrivee & Cook, 1979; Shotel, Iano, & McGettigan, 1972; Williams & Algozzine, 1979) have shown that teachers are somewhat reluctant to have mainstreamed students in their classrooms, had lower expectations for mainstreamed students, and had little confidence in their abilities to work with handicapped students.

A review of the literature on teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming and toward the effectiveness of the resource program is provided to clarify these two issues.

## TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD MAINSTREAMING

Regular classroom teachers carry the primary responsibility for the mainstreamed student's academic progress. The manner in which the teacher responds to the needs of an exceptional student may be the most



important variable in determining the success of mainstreaming (Larivee & Cook, 1979; Larivee, 1981).

Researchers have attempted to examine those variables that affect teacher's attitudes. Three categories have been considered: (1) static characteristics such as age, level of education, and teaching experience; (2) contact and exposure to the exceptional child; and (3) training related to skills in teaching exceptional students (Bond & Dietrich, 1982; Harasymiw & Horne, 1975; Larivee & Cook, 1979; Shotel, Iano, & McGettigan, 1972; Speece & Mandell, 1980).

Some of the research has shown positive teacher attitudes, other research has demonstrated negative attitudes among teachers, while other researchers believe that it is the label itself that gives the teachers a negative attitude (Foster, Schmidt, & Sabatino, 1976; Dunn, 1968; Rosenthal, 1963).

Studies reporting negative attitudes on the part of the classroom teacher will be examined first. Bond and Dietrich (1982) found, "20% of the attitudes toward special education resource programs were negative, and those teachers expressing negative attitudes were also negative toward the special education student" (p. 13). They also discovered that the teachers expressing positive attitudes toward the resource program had had at least one class in special education.

Two other studies reporting negative results also evidenced that negative attitudes were highly correlated to the teacher's belief in their ability to teach exceptional students. In the first study, Sickling and Theobald (1975) found that 85% of the regular education



teachers they queried believed that the classroom teacher lacked the necessary skills to teach exceptional students. Ringlaben and Price (1981) also found that 84% of the teachers surveyed did not feel adequately prepared to teach mainstreamed students. Their study also revealed that 47% of the teachers were willing to accept a mainstreamed student into their classrooms. The teachers were willing to accept a mainstreamed student even though they did not feel adequately prepared to teach that student.

A study conducted by Harasymiw & Horne (1975) found a negative correlation to teacher experience and positive attitude. However, Combs and Harper (1967) found years of teaching experience to be unrelated to teacher attitude.

Another factor revealed in the literature is the question of whether regular classroom teachers spend more time with mainstreamed students than with non-labeled students in the classroom (Ivarie, Hogue, & Brulle, 1984). Ivarie, Hogue, & Brulle concluded that elementary teachers spend more time assisting learning disabled students than non-learning disabled students. A similar study (Siperstein & Goding, 1985) found that teachers spent more time with the learning disabled student; however, the quality of the contact was negative.

Since much of the success of the mainstreaming process depends on the regular classroom teacher, a key factor in the placement process should be the attitude and expectations of the classroom teacher (Aloia & Aloia, 1982). Because there is such a disagreement in the literature

as to whether teacher's attitudes toward mainstreaming are positive or negative, there is a need to continue study in this area.

#### TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD RESOURCE PROGRAMS

The second area to be reviewed in the literature is teacher attitudes toward the resource program. If mainstream education is to be successful, regular classroom teachers must work in a cooperative manner to meet the instructional and social needs of handicapped students. Resource specialists and classroom teachers need to consult regularly to ensure that an educational program is appropriate for the mainstreamed child. The resource specialist needs to work with the classroom teacher to establish this educational program and also provide follow-up support services.

The resource specialist provides direct instructional services to exceptional students as well as indirect services through consultation with the classroom teacher. Consultation is necessary in order to maintain a full continuum of services for the handicapped student who receives assistance from the resource room.

Some researchers are opposed to resource programs because they believe that these programs unintentionally perpetuate the old policies of educating handicapped students in isolated environments (Reger, 1972; Cruickshank, 1975). Reger is cautious about sending students to a resource room, isolated from peers that are learning in a regular classroom. He further states that resource programs "take the responsibility of dealing with a child's problem away from the

classroom teacher and places the instructional burden once again on the special education teacher" (p. 357). Cruickshank focuses on the frustrations created for handicapped children when placed into a regular classroom without considering the teacher's preparation, desire and ability to educate a handicapped child. As indicated in the study by Bond & Dietrich (1982), a teacher's negative attitude toward mainstreaming can be interpreted by the handicapped child as negative feelings toward the student. Therefore, the resource specialist needs to develop a close working relationship with the classroom teacher and provide support services so that both the student and teacher will benefit from mainstreaming.

Unfortunately, according to Wiederholt, Hammill, and Brown (1983), "Many schools confine their resource programs to a specifically designated and segregated room. Only in this room does the resource specialist assess the student's instructional and skills needs, prepares teaching plans, and carries out the remediation program for identified students." (p. 3) They also found that in many cases, the resource specialist was not expected to deal with regular classroom teachers to any appreciable extent, and the communication that did take place was usually restricted to general discussions about students who attend the resource program.

Current research into the role of the resource specialist lists consultation with regular classroom teachers as having a high priority (Cohen, 1982; Evans, 1981; Friend, 1984; Gickling, Murphy, & Mallory, 1979; Panko, Panko, & Balocca, 1984; Speece & Mandell, 1980). In addition,

perceptions of the regular classroom teacher (Gickling, Murphy, & Mallory, 1979), and those of the resource specialists (Summer, 1978) concerning their responsibilities indicate that consulting is a desired and expected role of the resource specialist.

Aside from the role of consultant, there is little agreement among classroom teachers, resource specialists, or administrators as to what is the role of the resource specialist. The most comprehensive list is attributed to Wiederholt, Hammill, & Brown (1983). They reported the following duties should be included in the resource specialist's responsibilities:

1. Discussing the educational problems of specific children with teachers.
2. Describing the methodology being used in the resource room.
3. Presenting ideas that the teachers can use in their classes to reinforce and supplement the resource effort.
4. Acquiring information on how separate resource activities can mesh with the child's regular class program.
5. Following up on the progress of children who no longer attend the resource program.
6. Observing the classroom performance of children who have been referred for resource help.
7. Demonstrating techniques by which the teacher can improve the classroom climate, individualize instruction, or manage group behavior.
8. Sharing sundry professional information regarding their respective operations, new programs on the market, and new methods of reading. (p.29)

If the list provided by Wiederholt, Hammill, and Brown is a true indicator of the services that regular educators expect the resource specialist to provide, it is not surprising that there is a high rate of stress and burnout among resource specialists (Weiskopf, 1980).

There appears to be a difference in the resource specialist services that are desired and those that are actually provided



(Evans, 1981; Friend, 1984; Speece & Mandell, 1980). In the study conducted by Speece & Mandell (1989), teachers considered consulting services the most needed and the least available service provided by the resource specialist. These researchers speculated that the resource specialist spent so much time in direct instruction that there was little opportunity for interaction with other teachers. A study conducted by Evans (1981) supported these findings and reported that in her research, 57% of the resource specialist's time was spent in direct instruction, 13% in assessment and diagnosis, and 25% was spent on program maintenance and miscellaneous activities. Evans reported, "Clerical responsibilities required too much of the resource specialist's time, and the time spent in consulting was half the amount it should be." (p. 602)

From reviewing the literature, the resource specialist's ability to consult with the regular classroom teacher is crucial to the success of mainstreaming. If the classroom teacher believes that support services are not being provided, then it is a natural consequence that the teacher's attitude toward mainstreaming will not be positive. The literature suggests that support services are needed and desired. Research also suggests that the teacher's attitude is directly influenced by the amount of support services they receive from the resource specialist. Therefore, continued research into teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming and their perceptions of the role of the resource specialist is warranted. Which is the foundation for the hypothesis of this paper.

*Summary*

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## MAJOR HYPOTHESIS

1. There will be no significant difference between the expressed attitude of classroom teachers toward mainstreaming and their expressed attitudes toward the resource program as measured by a survey of teacher's attitudes toward mainstreaming.
  
2. There will be no significant difference in the expressed attitudes of the experimental group toward mainstreaming students into the regular classroom as a result of inservice training.

## PROCEDURES

The sample population consisted of 100 elementary classroom teachers of grades kindergarten through sixth grade from five elementary schools in the San Bernardino City Unified School District. All subjects received an attitude survey containing a five point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Respondants were asked to circle the indicator that best reflected their feelings toward each statement. The survey examined the regular classroom teacher's attitude toward the mainstreaming process and their perceptions of the role of the resource program. Appendix B contains the attitude survey.

The original scale consisted of 33 items, and was pre-tested by a panel of six elementary teachers and two principals. An item analysis was performed, and the 19 items with the highest item scale correlation

coefficients were chosen to form the final scale. The split-half reliability of the resulting scale, as determined by the Spearman-Brown reliability coefficient, was found to be .92.

An inservice training program consisting of three sessions was given to an experimental group. The group included 60 teachers from three elementary schools. The training was conducted after school, during 45 minute sessions, over a six-week period of time. This inservice was part of the district's policy of mandatory five hours of inservice in special education for regular classroom teachers. The inservice training included: (1) the characteristics of learning handicapped children; (2) the procedures for referring a student for possible placement in special education programs; (3) development of long and short-term goals for IEP'S; (4) adjusting materials for classroom use with learning handicapped students; (5) activities for use in the classroom on handicapped awareness; and (6) behavior management strategies.

After the inservice training was completed, the attitude survey was readministered to this experimental group. The pre and post data was analyzed to determine the mean, standard deviation, and range of scores. A t-test for related measures was calculated to determine if the null hypothesis would be rejected or accepted. The t-value would have to be significant at the .05 level for the null hypothesis to be rejected.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The data for this study was obtained from the survey of teacher's attitudes towards mainstreaming found in Appendix B. The baseline data was collected by distributing 100 surveys to five schools. The principals of each school were contacted prior to distribution of the surveys. They agreed to distribute the questionnaires to their staff members and return them by a specified date. There were 69 surveys returned, for a 69% return rate.

The principals of the three schools used for the experimental group were also contacted to set up dates for the inservice program. The surveys were distributed to the 60 teachers participating in the six-week inservice program at the last session. There were 56 surveys returned, for a 93% return rate.

The procedure was to analyze the data to determine if there was a significant difference in the attitudes of the teachers' toward mainstreaming as a result of the inservice training. A t-test for related measures was conducted to determine if the difference in the scores would be significant at the .05 level. If the t-value was found to be significant at the .05 level, then the null hypothesis would be rejected.

## RESULTS

Section I of the survey covered general background information on the teacher completing the survey. Table 1 presents the data obtained from this section.



Table 1  
Background Information

1. Number of special education students in class	1-2(82%)	3+(18%)
2. Had a special education class	Yes(62%)	NO(38%)
3. Years teaching	1-5(26%)	6-10(21%) 11+(53%)

Section II of the survey analyses the teacher's attitudes toward mainstreaming. Table 2 presents the mean attitude scores for the baseline and experimental group for this section. For the remainder of this paper, the baseline group will be referred to as the control group, and the experimental group as experimental.

In analyzing the data, it was discovered that the scores for the control group ranged from 19 to 51 and the experimental group ranged from 36 to 52. It was then determined that scores falling below 35 would be indicative of negative attitudes toward mainstreaming. To score at 35 or below, the respondents had to indicate less than positive views on 30 % of the items. Twenty-two percent of the control group fell into that category.

Table 2  
Attitude Scores

Source	Mean	sd	Range	t
Control	38.35	6.90	19-51	
Experimental	44.71	4.57	36-52	5.80 *

\* significant at .001

A t-test of related measures was used to compute the difference in the scores between the groups on the teacher's attitudes toward mainstreaming. The computed t-value was 5.80 which was significant at the .001 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The analysis of the data showed that there was a significant difference between the scores of the <sup>baseline</sup> control group and the <sup>Rec'd IV</sup> experimental group. The group that had received the inservice program had a significantly more positive attitude toward mainstreaming than did the control group.

A t-test was also used to analyze the effect of having had a special education course on the attitudes toward mainstreaming. The data is presented in Table 3. Over 80% of the teachers reported they had at least one special education student in their classroom. The analysis pointed out that those teachers who had taken at least one class in the special education field were more positive in their attitudes toward mainstreaming than teachers with no special education class.

Table 3

T-Test For Those Who Had Completed A  
Special Education Class vs Those Who Had Not

Source	Mean	sd	t
Had Class	<u>43.86</u>	3.47	2.46 *
Had Not	<u>31.15</u>	5.71	

\* significant at .10

A comparison of the mean percentages by item for the two groups of teachers indicated that the major differences occurred primarily on items associated with: the best placement for handicapped students; teacher training; and the benefits of a regular class placement on a

handicapped child. The data is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Mean Percentage by Response Categories

ITEM	CONTROL			EXPERIMENTAL		
	SA/A	U	D/SD	SA/A	U	D/SD
Handicapped students should be served in a separate, special class.	57%	16%	27%	12%	17%	71%
Behavior problems will increase.	41%	11%	48%	8%	14%	78%
Mainstreamed students will not be cooperative.	14%	50%	36%	6%	11%	83%
Mainstreamed students will not benefit academically in a regular class.	25%	23%	52%	5%	7%	88%
A disproportionate amount of time is given to the mainstreamed child.	62%	16%	22%	9%	11%	80%
Learning handicapped students will progress more in a special class.	65%	20%	15%	7%	13%	80%
The mainstreamed student will not be easily discouraged.	25%	20%	55%	5%	10%	85%
Mainstreaming has a negative effect on the emotional development of the LD child.	22%	26%	52%	1%	8%	91%
Mainstreaming will not require extra training for teachers.	13%	13%	74%	6%	1%	93%
Would not attend training on mainstreaming.	32%	22%	46%	5%	7%	88%
Learning handicapped students should be given every opportunity to function in a regular classroom.	16%	10%	74%	7%	6%	87%
Would not accept a mainstreamed student in class.	20%	7%	73%	5%	6%	89%

An example of the positive attitude toward mainstreaming exhibited

by the teachers receiving the inservice training is illustrated by the fact that over 80% believed that mainstreamed students would benefit from the regular classroom (item 4, Table 4), and 80% disagreed with the statement that learning handicapped students would progress more in a special class (item 6). Also, 80% of the teachers receiving the inservice training disagreed that mainstreaming causes a disproportionate amount of time to be spent with one student as compared to 22% of the teachers not receiving inservice training (item 5).

Teacher training was believed to be necessary by 93% of the teachers that received the training as compared to 74% of the other group (item 9). If training had been available to the baseline group, 46% would not have attended (item 10).

Fifty-seven percent of the group that was not inserviced believed that handicapped students should be served in special, separate classes. However, 73% of this group also indicated that they would accept a mainstreamed student into their classroom if given a choice (items 1 & 12).

Section three of the attitude survey asked the respondents to answer ten questions pertaining to the resource program. The data is presented in Table 5. It was determined that a score of 15 or lower would indicate a lack of understanding about the role of the resource program. There were 42% of the scores from the control group that fell into this range as compared to 8% of the experimental group. The areas of the most significant difference were: the resource specialist sharing materials for use in the regular classroom; the classroom teacher being present at the annual review of their mainstreamed



student; and inservice training on the development of annual goals for the IEP.

Table 5  
Section 3 Mean Attitude Scores

Source	Mean	sd	Range	t
Control	16.93	4.47	10-23	1.645
Experimental	18.82	6.30	11-30	

A t-test of related means was computed to determine if the difference in the scores between the control group and the experimental group was significant at the .05 level. The computed t-value was 1.645, which was significant at the .10 level, but not at the .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. There was no significant difference in the expressed attitudes toward the resource program.

Section four of the attitude survey (See Table 6), allowed the respondents to check as many items as desired. It was the intension of this section to obtain a global picture of how teachers rate the strengths and weaknesses of mainstreaming. Therefore, the items for both groups were combined for data analysis. Teachers indicated that they needed more time for planning and teaching the learning handicapped student. They believed that mainstreaming was beneficial to the mainstreamed student by removing the stigma of the label and helping the LH student to develop more social skills. Mainstreaming could be improved by having smaller classes and more materials for use with the mainstreamed student. The teachers also indicated a need for better communication between them and the special education teacher.

Table 6

Section 4 Strengths and Weaknesses of Mainstreaming

Benefits of Mainstreaming

- 1st Choice (74%):  
Helps LH children to develop more social skills
- 2nd Choice (70%):  
Removes stigma from handicapped student
- 3rd Choice (65%):  
Makes other children more tolerant and sensitive

Weaknesses of Mainstreaming

- 1st Choice (78%):  
Lack of additional time to teach LH students
- 2nd Choice (74%):  
Lack of additional planning time for LH students
- 3rd Choice (70%):  
Lack of teacher training

How Mainstreaming Can Be Improved

- 1st Choice (87%):  
Smaller classes for teachers with mainstreamed students
- 2nd Choice (71%):  
More materials available for use with mainstreamed students
- 3rd Choice (69%):  
Better communication between the classroom teacher and the special education teacher

Some of the comments written on the questionnaire were:

"Mainstreaming definately makes regular kids more tolerant."

"Classroom aids need to be selected after a trial period."

"Mainstreaming causes too much extra work without proper planning time and materials."

"More teacher training on mainstreaming needs to be provided by the district."

"I would not mind having a mainstreamed student if I had a smaller class. To put a child with special needs, who will take extra preparation time and time in class, into a class of 32+ five year olds is not fair to the teacher, the LH child, or the other children."

"Teachers need prepackaged materials to use with LH students."

"Teacher time would be better spent with those who can and will achieve. There are too many demands already on the time of the regular classroom teacher."

"Individualization of instruction is difficult with 34 students. One year I had 7 special education students in a class of 34."

"Teachers need more training in behavior modification for special needs kids."

"One teacher should not be inundated with the bulk of LH kids at his/her level. For LH kids who are quite behind, consideration of special classes would be helpful. Now it seems that only disruptive students get placed in special day classes, not low academic LH students."

"Any classroom with a bilingual program should not have to have an added problem."

"No combination classes should have LH students."

#### DISCUSSION

*Results*

The results of this study found that there was a significant difference in the expressed attitudes of teachers toward mainstreaming after participating in an inservice program. Twenty-two percent of the teachers in the control group expressed negative attitudes on 30% of the items on the attitude survey. The study also found that those teachers who had had at least one class in special education were more positive in their attitudes toward mainstreaming.

The majority of teachers were willing to accept a mainstreamed student into their classrooms, even when they had expressed feelings that this child would be better served in a special, separate classroom. One teacher commented that there was really no choice in

accepting or rejecting a special education student, therefore, teachers had to realize that they must learn to make the most out of the situation.

A large percentage of teachers would like to see class sizes reduced for those teachers that do have special education students. However, with the ever increasing tight budget situations, it is not a realistic alternative.

This study also found that even though most teachers agreed that mainstreaming would cause classroom teachers to need more training, about one-third of the teachers would not attend such training. The teachers that did attend the inservice training program found that it was beneficial and indicated that 88% would return for further training, if it was offered.

From the analysis of the data, it appears that there is a general lack of understanding about the function of the resource program. Forty-two percent of the group that was not trained had scores that would indicate a negative attitude toward the resource program, or a lack of understanding of the role of the program. All of the respondents indicated that they would like to see more communication between the classroom teacher and the special education teacher.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

The findings of this report suggest that classroom teachers would be willing to work with mainstreamed students if there is support from special education personnel. The support that the teachers have indicated they need is: (1) communication between regular classroom

*Conclusion*

*page 12*

teachers and special educators; (2) materials for use with special education children in the regular classroom; (3) training in behavior modification techniques; and (4) district training programs on mainstreaming for classroom teachers and aids.

Teachers also expressed a concern for overcrowded classrooms, especially when these classes are combination or bilingual classes. This is a need that the administration needs to look into. The focus of the 80's is teacher burnout, therefore, administrators might need to look for additional ways to relieve the stress that the classroom teacher is feeling. An investment in state of the art training programs on how to best meet the needs of special education students in regular classrooms would be one suggestion of how to relieve teacher frustration. Another suggestion would be to require learning handicapped resource specialists to spend a required number of hours in the regular classrooms, directly assisting teachers with their special education needs.

The lack of appropriate materials for use with special education students in regular classrooms is another concern that needs to be addressed. There is an endless assortment of commercial materials on the market, however they are costly. If a school district could set aside a lending room where materials would be available for short-term loan to teachers, that would be ideal. Again, cost is a factor. Teachers have always been known for their creativity. Workshops could be set up on a quarterly basis for teachers to come and make materials for their classrooms. Instead of asking teachers to give up their Saturdays, release time could be allowed for these workshops, much the same as for parent conferences.



Special education personnel also have to make adjustments and accommodations if they want a more positive relationship with their teaching peers. Resource specialists could have an open house in their area at the beginning of the school year. They could show the regular educators materials that they have available, discuss schedules, and set up a regular time to be spent in each classroom. Inservices should also be scheduled throughout the year to help the regular educators deal with the frustrations and apprehensions that they have in learning to work with special education students.

On site administrators could also closely monitor the types of classrooms that special education students are being placed into. If a teacher already has a combination class or several bilingual students, then another classroom might be a better placement for the special education student. Principals can also monitor the types of workshops and conferences that are available to their staff and encourage teachers to attend those that might be beneficial to that teacher. To have a more accurate picture of what the teachers are concerned about, perhaps the principal could have the staff fill out a needs survey quarterly. This would help to match a teacher's concern with an appropriate workshop or conference.

The colleges and universities also have a responsibility to make classes available to help update teacher's knowledge about current education issues. At least one class in special education and one on mainstreaming should be mandatory for all undergraduate education majors. A graduate level course should also be available to help promote the understanding of and acceptance toward handicapped children.

*Further  
Research*

This study pointed out the need for additional research into regular classroom teacher's perceptions about special education programs. Several teachers that participated in the inservice training indicated that prior to the training they thought that mainstreaming meant putting severely handicapped students into regular education classes. Special education continues to be confusing to the regular classroom teacher, and also very threatening. More research is needed to discover the best way to inform and educate teachers on special education topics and programs.

LIMITATIONS

The limitations of this study are: (1) all subjects were taken from one school district; (2) the sample was limited to 100 respondent elementary teachers; (3) the inservice training was limited to time constraints of after school meetings; and (4) it was not possible to randomly assign teachers to the control and experimental group.

APPENDIX A

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

### LEARNING DISABILITIES(LD):

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which shows up as an impairment in the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. There must be a severe discrepancy between the intellectual ability and achievement .

### MAINSTREAMING:

The process of placing students that are diagnosed as learning disabled into the regular classroom for the majority of their instructional day. Special education services are provided by the resource specialist.

### RESOURCE SPECIALIST:

A teacher who is trained in the area of learning handicaps and provides direct instruction to students identified as learning handicapped. Indirect services are also provided to the regular classroom teacher in the form of consultation.

### STUDENT STUDY TEAM:

An interdisciplinary team composed of an administrator, a classroom teacher, a school psychologist, a special education nurse, a speech teacher, a resource specialist, and other members designated by the principal to represent regular education. The purpose of the team is

to discuss students that are referred by the classroom teacher to determine if special education services are needed. Interventions are discussed and if deemed necessary, testing by the psychologist and resource specialist is conducted. The team assists in the appropriate placement of students either in the regular classroom with resource assistance, or into special education classes for the entire day.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN(IEP):

An educational plan developed for the student that is diagnosed as learning disabled. It is developed after assessment by the psychologist and resource specialist, and gives the long and short-term goals for the student for the year. It also gives suggested materials to be used and an indication of how the goals are to be mastered.



APPENDIX B

## A SURVEY OF TEACHER'S ATTITUDES TOWARD MAINSTREAMING

The enactment of Public Law 94-142 in 1975 requires that children with special needs be integrated into the regular classroom to the maximum extent possible. This is commonly referred to as "Mainstreaming". The key ingredient to a child's progress in school is the classroom teacher. This teacher is currently being asked to mainstream learning handicapped students into their classrooms. The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information that will aid the Resource Specialist in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of mainstreaming and the resource program.\*

### SECTION I: Teachers Background

1. Do you have any Special Education Resource children in your class? Yes No  
If so, How many? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Have you ever taken a Special Education class? Yes No
3. How many years have you been teaching? \_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION II: Teacher Opinions

Please circle the number under the column that best describes your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. There are no correct answers; the best answers are those that honestly reflect your opinions.

Scale: SA=Strongly Agree      A=Agree      U=Undecided  
D=Disagree      SD=Strongly Disagree

	<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
1. The needs of handicapped students can be best served through special, separate classes.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Behavior problems will increase among other children with a mainstreamed student in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The mainstreamed student will be uncooperative and not work well with other students.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The mainstreamed student will not benefit academically from being in a regular classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Mainstreaming requires a disproportionate amount of time devoted to one child.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The mainstreamed student will probably progress more quickly in academic skills in a special classroom rather than in a regular classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The mainstreamed student will not be easily discouraged in academic tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Mainstreaming is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the learning disabled child.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Mainstreaming will not require extra training for classroom teachers.	1	2	3	4	5

Scale: SA=Strongly Agree      A=Agree      U=Undecided  
 D=Disagree      SD=Strongly Disagree

SA A U D SD

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. You would not attend special classes or inservice training on mainstreaming.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Learning handicapped students should not be given opportunity to function in the regular-classroom. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Given a choice of accepting or rejecting, you would reject a mainstreamed child in your class.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

SECTION III: The Resource Program

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. There should be <u>continual</u> communication between the resource specialist and the classroom teacher concerning mainstreamed students.         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. It is the responsibility of the resource specialist to share materials for the mainstreamed student with you.                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. The classroom teacher should be present at the Student Study meetings regarding their student.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. The classroom teacher should be present at the annual review of their mainstreamed student.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to participate in the development of annual and short-term goals for their mainstreamed student. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. The resource specialist should share assessment results of your mainstreamed student with you.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. It is the responsibility of the resource specialist to provide in-service training or workshops regarding:   |   |   |   |   |   |
| a. characteristics of learning disabled children   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. procedures for referring a student to the Student Study Team.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. development of annual goals and/or I.E.P.s'.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. techniques and materials for classroom use with mainstreamed students   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

SECTION IV: Strengths/Weaknesses of Mainstreaming  
Check all that apply:

20. What do you consider are the benefits or strengths of mainstreaming learning handicapped(LH) children into the regular classroom?

- a. Removes stigma from handicapped children\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Makes regular-classroom children more tolerant and sensitive\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Helps LH children to have better self-concepts\_\_\_\_\_
- d. Helps LH children to develop more social skills\_\_\_\_\_
- e. Helps LH children to make more academic progress\_\_\_\_\_
- f. Helps "regular" children to make more social skills\_\_\_\_\_
- g. Makes the teacher more tolerant and sensitive\_\_\_\_\_
- h. Encourages the teacher to plan more carefully\_\_\_\_\_
- i. Encourages the teacher to individualize instruction\_\_\_\_\_
- j. Other benefits or strengths:

21. What do you consider are the weaknesses of mainstreaming?

- a. Lack of teacher training\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Improper placement of LH students\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Lack of additional planning time for LH students\_\_\_\_\_
- d. Lack of additional time to teach LH students\_\_\_\_\_
- e. Lack of additional materials for LH students\_\_\_\_\_
- f. Inadequate communication between the classroom teacher and the special education teacher\_\_\_\_\_
- g. Not enough administrative support\_\_\_\_\_
- h. Too much extra work for the classroom teacher\_\_\_\_\_
- i. LH students are out of the classroom for long periods of time\_\_\_\_\_
- j. Other weaknesses:

33. How can mainstreaming be improved?

- a. More teacher training\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Smaller classes for those teachers with mainstreamed students\_\_\_\_\_
- c. More materials available for use with mainstreamed students\_\_\_\_\_
- d. Better placement of students\_\_\_\_\_
- e. The use of teacher aides\_\_\_\_\_
- f. Better communication between the classroom teacher and the special education teacher\_\_\_\_\_
- g. More time for planning\_\_\_\_\_
- h. Other suggestions for improvement:

\*adapted from attitude surveys conducted by Aliola and Aliola(1982), Bond and Dietrich(1982), Hill and Reed(1982), Larrivee and Cook(1979), Ogletree and Atkinson(1982), and Panko, Panko and Balocca(1984).



APPENDIX C

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