Special and General High School Education Teachers’ Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Inclusion in the Classroom In Limited Resource Environments

A Master’s Research Project Presented to

The Faculty of the College of Education

Ohio University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

by

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October 2010
This Master’s Research Project has been approved

for the Department of Teacher Education

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Dedication

This journey would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of my beloved family. My parents have always stood behind me, but they have gone over and beyond in the last couple of years. When I first announced the idea of obtaining a Master’s Degree, I was expecting some opposition. However, my husband, children, and parents were all very encouraging and supportive of the idea. The first quarter went by rather smoothly, without many complications.

Winter quarter was not as easy. I unexpectedly found out I would be giving birth in September. However, I was not willing to quit the program; so I had to make sure everyone was still on board with my decision. My mom’s response throughout this entire process was “we’ll get through it.” She was right, moms are always right!

During the second year of the program my mother and my father stepped up to watch the baby while my husband was at practice with our other two children. My husband and I decided it would be easier to move closer to my parents and his place of employment. As luck would have it, we closed on our dream home and moved the same week the baby was delivered. The up-side was I would now be on maternity leave.

My parents never complained about helping me with the kids, which made everything a lot less stressful for me. I don’t know what I would do without their love and support. Thank you Mom and Dad, I could not have done this without you!

My husband also stepped up to make sure I was at school when necessary and that our children were taken care of in my absence. Thank you Dear!

My two boys and baby girl did not fully understand why mommy was gone so much, but I want them to know how important an education is to my future, as well as their own. Thank you for being patient and understanding. I love you all very much!
# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................5

Introduction .............................................................6

Review of Literature ....................................................7

Method .................................................................13
  Location ...............................................................13
  Participants ...........................................................14
  Instrument ............................................................14
  Procedure ............................................................15

Results .................................................................15
  Special Education ....................................................16
  General Education ...................................................18

Discussion and Recommendations .................................21
  Future Research ......................................................22

Implications for Practice ...........................................23

Conclusion ............................................................23

References .............................................................25

Appendix A ............................................................28
Abstract

The purpose of this research was to determine if special and general education teachers at a High School in the Appalachian region of Ohio have positive or negative attitudes and/or perceptions toward inclusion in the classroom. The participants in this study consisted of 25 high school teachers, five special education teachers or aides, and 20 general education teachers. Data was collected using a researcher-created eight question survey. Previous studies show that teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion tend to be influenced by either their previous experiences in inclusive classrooms and/or the levels of special education training received in working with students with disabilities.
Special and General High School Education Teachers’ Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Inclusion in Their Classrooms in Low-Resource Environments

Numerous studies and research summarizing the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion in the classroom have been reported. More specifically, studies have revealed a positive correlation between the type of attitude and the success of the inclusion program being administered. Teachers are more apt to have a positive outlook regarding inclusion with an increased level of special education training, knowledge, and experience in working with or teaching students with disabilities. In 2001, Van Reusen, Shoho, and Barker stated that, “the amount of special education training or experience in working with students with disabilities appeared to be a contributing factor that related to whether teachers in the sample reported positive or negative attitudes toward the inclusion of students within their classrooms” (p. 5). This makes sense taking into account the fact that people are more comfortable with the familiar rather than the unknown. According to Forlin, Loreman, Sharma, and Earle (2009), “evidently, closer contact with people with disabilities and involvement in teaching students with diverse needs has a significant effect on improving attitudes towards inclusion” (p. 206). The research suggests providing ample education and experience to teachers implementing inclusion in their classroom to ensure success and positive attitudes of students and staff (Forlin, Loreman, Sharma, & Earle, 2009). As stated by Jobb, Rust, and Brissie in 1996, “the more special education coursework teachers had completed, the more positive their attitudes were toward inclusion” (p. 149).
Teachers' attitudes and perceptions are crucial because they can impact the success or failure of students within the classroom (Prom, 1999). Furthermore, these attitudes and/or perceptions can also influence the relationships between staff members and impact the overall success of the inclusion program. In many elementary and secondary schools, not all teachers seemed to possess similar beliefs or understandings of inclusion, which eventually becomes the root of staff tension and dissatisfaction aired in staff meetings and during informal communications (Ryan, 2009). It is up to the staff to work together to provide the best possible education needed to ensure a promising future for students. Research indicates that the lack of knowledge and/or direct experience associated with inclusion in the classroom will produce negative affects on the future of those involved.

**Review of Literature**

Taylor, Smiley, and Ramasamy (2001) stated that, “since the enactment of Public Law 94-142 in 1975, the placement models and the types of services provided for individuals with disabilities have been constantly changing” (p. 3). In spite of documented teacher concerns about mainstreaming and/or inclusion programs, inclusion became a major policy initiative for the U.S. Department of Education and in many states during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Waldron, 2007b, p. 163). Much has changed over the last few decades to lead to successful inclusion programs and positive learning outcomes for those involved. According to Winter (2006), “the policy of including pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in neighborhood schools and general education classes is now firmly established in many jurisdictions worldwide” (p. 85). For this study, inclusion was defined as children with disabilities participating in classroom activities with children who do not have disabilities (Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005, p.
23). Burke and Sutherland reported that, “any teacher who, is willing and capable of adapting their teaching style and curriculum, will have a greater chance of implementing successful inclusion techniques” (p. 165). This should not be a challenge considering one of the main goals of teaching is to differentiate and provide learning strategies that meet the needs of each and every individual.

Additionally, inclusive education requires a flexible and accessible curriculum, accessible school buildings, compulsory differentiation of teaching and assessment, and staff who are trained to implement inclusive practices (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009, p. 544). There is a collaborative effort required from the school, administrators, staff, students, and community to enforce inclusion and produce a positive outcome. According to Santhanam and Hicks (2004), “both staff and students need to feel they are part of the academic community, and not unsafe or vulnerable, in order to achieve their full potential” (p. 100). One of the main concerns of the teaching staff is lack of training and/or experience with students who have special education needs.

In 2009, Ryan found that the pre-service teachers interviewed “noted they may not have enough time to be truly inclusive, yet most suggested that inclusion makes them want to experiment with instructional modes and only a minority suggested they did not have a positive experience with inclusion” (p. 186).

Teachers should not be afraid to try new or different instructional strategies in the classroom. Time is always an issue when it comes to balancing teaching and learning in the classroom, while also trying to ensure everyone is getting the most out of the lesson. Given the unique challenges and demands of educating all students, there is a significant need for general and special education teachers to combine their efforts to create
adequate opportunities for student success and participation (Ross-Hill, 2009, p. 191). This is one reason why it is important for the special education and general education teachers to work collaboratively to build on their own individual strengths to provide the best education possible for all students in the classroom.

Knight (1999) stated that, “every child has unique learning needs requiring an educational program implemented to take into account the wide diversity of their characteristics and needs” (p. 3). According to McCrory-Cole and McLeskey (1997), “the training of teachers of students with disabilities often centers on methods for ensuring student success by adapting instruction” (p. 9). For general and special education teachers, adapting material and methods to meet the needs of all learners should occur on a daily basis.

According to Vaughn and Klingner (1998), “no one educational model will meet the needs of all students with learning disabilities; thus there is an advantage to providing a range of educational models” (p. 86). Multiple instructional strategies are used in the classroom to accommodate for various learning styles, but it is crucial to get to know each individual in order to determine what they will benefit from in the classroom. It is also important to remember to consult parents and other educational professionals in gathering insights and perspectives to guide the decision-making process on how to meet each student’s needs.

According to Knight (1999), “parents, teachers, school executives, specialist teachers, and other major stakeholders need to be involved in the planning, on-going monitoring, and evaluation of a policy” (p. 4). It would be advantageous to devise a plan, but to understand that adaptations will be necessary from year to year depending on the
students and their needs. Horrocks, White, and Roberts (2008) also proposed that, “principals are an important factor in successful inclusion as a result of their influence on the entire educational process” (p. 1472). It is imperative to keep the lines of communication open between all parties who are directly related to each individual.

As Ross-Hill (2009) reported, “the attitudes and concerns displayed by teachers, students, and parents signify a need for intense training and models for the educational community” (p. 189). It appears that the time has come to develop and incorporate extensive training sessions regarding inclusion into the regular school calendar for the benefit of all teachers. Although the training may not be welcomed by all, it is expected for some teachers to perceive the movement toward inclusion as threatening and some resistance is to be expected. Therefore, it is critical to emphasize the importance of planning and teaching students with disabilities by making teachers aware of the advantages of inclusion. As recommended by Knight (1999), “structures need to be set up that support teachers and students as they attempt to bring about changes in their thinking, attitudes and practice” (p. 4). It is not going to be easy, nor will it happen over night, but the outcome will be worth the wait for everyone involved.

Research from recent studies has shown that there are numerous benefits to special education students spending the majority of the day in the regular classroom (Blackorby, Wagner, Cameto, Davies, Levine, & Newman, 2005). In a study of 11,000 students in the United States, it was found that students with disabilities (special education needs) who spend more time in regular classrooms have higher scores on achievement tests, are absent less, and perform closer to grade level than their peers who are withdrawn for instruction (Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhie-Richmond, 2009, p. 535).
Further investigation revealed that these same students at the secondary level, also perform closer to grade level on standards-based achievement tests than their more secluded peers. It was also noted by Jordan, Schwartz, and McGhie-Richmond (2009), that, “teachers who allocate more instructional time, demonstrate better classroom and time management routines, and are able to focus on individual students and groups while the rest of their class is engaged with group and seatwork” (p. 537). Teachers who conserve and use their time to deliver high-quality instruction to the majority of their students are categorized as being most effective in the classroom. Students benefit from being engaged in the learning process. The teacher can emphasize this strategy by providing more one-on-one or small group instruction that is geared toward individual needs.

The findings of Jordan, Schwartz, and McGhie-Richmond (2009), suggest that, “teachers who believe it is their responsibility to instruct students with special education needs in inclusive classes are more effective overall with all of their students and are also more effective in working individually with students with special education needs” (p. 538). Teachers tend to take on more ownership for the education of their students when it is their responsibility to teach them what they need to know. According to Wilkins and Nietfeld, “attitudes regarding inclusion are likely rather stable beliefs that are built upon numerous previous experiences rather than being directed by situational factors” (2004, p. 119).

While further research is clearly desirable, the series of studies suggests there are significant relationships between what teachers believe about ability, disability and the nature of knowledge and how learning is accomplished, and their beliefs about their roles
and responsibilities for instructing all their students (Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhee-Richmond, 2009, p. 540). Therefore, the more positive and experienced the teacher, the better the outcome will be for the success of all students.

Interestingly, teachers seem much more eager to make accommodations for children with physical disabilities compared to cognitive, emotional, or behavioral problems (Jobb, Rust, & Brissie, 1996, p. 151). This evidence could negatively affect students without visible impairments who need accommodations in the classroom. According to Prom (1999), “students’ reactions to various situations may be influenced by the actions of the teacher” (p. 4) which provides another example of why it is so valuable to prepare teachers to be effective in the classroom filled with general and special education students. Although it is not impossible, it is challenging to alter teachers’ beliefs in regards to inclusion. Their beliefs can also be influenced by other members of the school and school system’s approach to inclusion.

To get the most out of pre-service training, it would be more beneficial to provide preservice teachers with ample exposure to students with special needs along with coursework, versus lecture-only. It is not surprising to know that teachers learn more effectively by using hands-on experience, just as they have been taught to use to engage their students. The more years of experience a teacher has, the more opportunities he/she has had to experience various workshops, inclusive experiences, and related experiences with students who have special needs.
Method

Location

The high school selected for this study is located in a small rural community in Southeastern Ohio. The participants were all high school teachers employed by the district to teach students ranging from ninth to twelfth grade with varying levels of academic functioning. Although some students with disabilities are served in regular education classrooms, the majority of students with disabilities attend the special education classroom for instruction in the core academic areas.

According to the Ohio Department of Education website, the average daily student enrollment at the high school is 641, of those students enrolled, 9.3% have disabilities. The poverty status is medium-low poverty with 24.3% of the students categorized as economically disadvantaged. The graduation rate information for the 2009-2010 school year was reported as follows: economically disadvantaged = 94.1%, students with disabilities = 91.7%, and White, non-Hispanic > 95%. The 2009-2010 School Year Report Card indicates the school’s designation = Excellent, the number of state indicators met out of 12 = 12, performance index = 102.6/120, and the Adequate Yearly Progress rated as being “Met”.

This particular setting was selected as a sample of convenience due to familiarity to the researcher. Inviting all teachers at the high school to be participants in this study provided results that would give a clear interpretation of the attitudes and/or perceptions toward inclusion in the classroom teachers within this district.
Participants

A total of 40 high school teachers and classroom aides were invited to participate in this research. Of the 40 teachers, 25 completed and returned the survey within the allotted time frame. Five of the participants were special education teachers or aides, and the remaining 20 were general education teachers. With a 62.5% response rate, this data provides a good indicator of the attitudes and/or perceptions of the general and special education high school teachers. The range of years of teaching experience for the special education teachers ranged from two to 22 years, whereas the range for the general education teachers was five to 24 years.

Instrument

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a survey created by the researcher to gather information about the attitudes and/or perceptions of the teachers toward inclusion in the classroom. One version of the survey was distributed to the general education teachers, and a second version, which mirrored the first one, was distributed to the special education teachers/aides. Each survey consisted of eight short-answer questions. The first question asked teachers to define inclusion. This information was important because of the varying interpretations of inclusion. The survey then asked participants whether or not inclusion was used in their classroom, why or why not, and proceeded to inquire about the Least Restrictive Environment for special education students. Additional questions related to whether or not students with mild disabilities should attend classes with the general education population, and whether or not the teacher co-taught with another teacher or would be willing to do so. Questions were included to determine the level of content-area specific training of special educators and
special education training of general educators. Participants were also asked to list the
type of training that would assist them in doing a better job of teaching the diverse
students in their classroom. The survey concluded by asking about the gender, years of
teaching experience, co-teaching, and/or team teaching. See Appendix A for a copy of
the survey instruments.

Procedures

After receiving approval from the university’s Internal Review Board for Human
Subjects, the researcher obtained approval from the high school principal to distribute the
surveys to potential participants. A copy of the University consent form and survey were
distributed to the mailboxes of all high school general and special education teachers or
aides. The teachers were asked to complete the survey and return it to the researcher’s
mailbox within three days. The participants were informed that the survey should take no
more than 15-20 minutes to complete. Since there were no personal questions identifying
the participants on the survey, they did not have to sign and return the consent form. All
questions were to be directed to the researcher via e-mail or by using her school mailbox.
The mailbox was checked daily to collect all returned surveys.

Results

Data was compiled and results were divided and reported by whether the
responded was a general or special education teacher. Of the 25 participants, five were
special education teachers or aides, and the remaining 20 were general education
teachers.
Special Education

Table 1 summarizes the demographic data from the five special educators who participated in the eight-question survey. Column A reflects the question asked; column B indicates the numerical response and equivalent percent.

**Table 1**

*Special Education Teachers’ Demographic Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Number responding (%)</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience Teaching Special Education</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 and over</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience with a Co-Teacher</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>4 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience as a Team Teacher</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All of the special education teachers correctly defined inclusion according to the definition used for this research. One participant responded, “a special education student will be in a regular classroom full-time, meaning all services will be provided in the classroom regarding any type of handicap”. Another special education teacher defined inclusion as, “including students with special needs in the regular education setting”. In addition, the special educators all answered “yes” to inclusion being practiced in their classroom because some students go to the regular education classroom for more than one period throughout the day.

Not all respondents agreed that all students receiving special services are learning in the Least Restrictive Environment but all of the special educators agreed that students with mild disabilities should attend classes with the general population. However, it is interesting to note that they also addressed the idea of having additional support and/or an aide available as needed.

None of the special education teachers currently co-teach with a general education teacher. On the other hand, they are all open to the idea and would be willing to participate in a co-teaching classroom. As one special education teacher reported, “I think it adds value for the students with two teachers and two teaching styles, more students will ‘get it’”. Three of the educators revealed some training in general education. The other two special education teachers have not had any training to teach in the general education classroom.

In regards to the type of training needed to enhance the teaching of special educators in the general education classroom, knowledge and familiarity of individual IEP’s was mentioned by two educators. In addition, specific content knowledge of the particular subject being taught was also addressed as training that would be beneficial.
**General Education**

Table 2 summarizes the demographics of the 20 general education teachers who participated in the eight question survey. Column A reflects the question asked; column B indicates the numerical responses and equivalent percents.

**Table 2**

*General Education Teachers’ Demographic Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Number responding</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12 (60%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8 (40%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of Experience Teaching General Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>4 (20%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 and over</td>
<td>12 (60%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of Experience with a Co-Teacher</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>18 (90%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of Experience as a Team Teacher</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>16 (80%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the responses, it is evident that general education teachers are familiar with the definition of inclusion, as defined by this research. The next question asked if inclusion was practiced in their classroom, to which 100% of the participants answered "yes". When asked why, most participants answered either because the class is required for graduation or because of the law requiring Least Restrictive Environment for students with special needs. When asked if the students are learning in the Least Restrictive Environment, 90% of the people said "yes" or "sometimes". There were 10% of the participants who said "no". All of the participants agreed that students with mild disabilities should attend classes with the general population. However, a few teachers addressed how it would affect the students without special needs. One teacher wrote, "as long as they are not causing major disruptions to the academic progress of the rest of the class." As stated by another, "if it does not effect the entire classes learning." They also commented on the positive academic and social interaction that will result for all of the students. One participant said, "they should be allowed because it helps general education students to learn to accept and understand people that are different from themselves and helps special education students fit into society and find acceptance."

This is a life lesson that everyone will benefit from. Another said, "they should be in the regular classes as much as possible to facilitate learning and social interaction.”

None of the general education teachers currently co-teach with an Intervention Specialist, however, they are all willing to co-teach. Again, the benefits for students and teachers were mentioned by most of the participants. An experienced teacher said, "an Intervention Specialist would help smooth the adaptation process of inclusion and they would bring their own knowledge and experiences to augment general education student
learning.” One such example is, “collaboration is a benefit to students and teachers.” Another person replied, “extra help is always welcome.” One individual who agreed to co-teach indicated, “but it is out of my comfort zone.” There was another individual who expressed the desire to learn more about how it would be implemented into the curriculum.

The following question inquired about special education training, 40% of the general education teachers have not had any training in that particular area. The remaining 60% have completed special education college courses at the graduate level.

The final short-answer question asked about the type of training that would help the general education teachers do a better job of teaching students with mild disabilities. Numerous responses were given for this particular question. One teacher remarked, “training targeting specific disabilities as student(s) assigned to my class- as needed.” Another related response was, “in-service meetings that teach about specific disabilities and how best to adapt to them in the classroom.” Another requested “help understanding IEP’s and accommodations.” “Various instructional strategies;” was also mentioned. There was also one teacher who said, “learning about behavioral tendencies and learning processes that assist in teaching them.” Another teacher desired “more feedback from special education teachers and supervisors.” One teacher wrote, “the topic I think most in need of coverage would be dealing with paperwork/documentation.” All of these issues are important pieces in the puzzle to make inclusion a success.
Discussion and Recommendations

The results from the survey confirm that special education and general education teachers in the school district are all familiar with the concept of inclusion. Inclusion is implemented in the core academic areas for some students, depending on need and ability. Overall, the majority of the teaching staff believes the students receiving special services are learning in the Least Restrictive Environment. It is unanimous that the educators feel students with mild disabilities should attend classes with the general population. However, they want to make sure that the students without special needs in general classes will not be negatively impacted.

Co-teaching between special education and general education teachers is not practiced at this high school. However, some teachers have had experience with co-teaching while working for other school districts. There was a unanimous response from all educators indicating their willingness to participate in a co-teaching environment.

Several different areas of training were mentioned by teachers as necessary and needed to successfully implement inclusion for all students. It is obvious that the educators have numerous questions and concerns in regards to the implementation of inclusion. “One might legitimately question the professionalism of a teacher who did not question and exercise caution regarding the development of such a program,” as indicated by Waldron (2007a, p. 184). Overall, it seems clear that many teachers have reservations or concerns about inclusion that must be addressed to enable these efforts to succeed (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

It is imperative for the school to provide adequate time, resources, skills, and knowledge to deliver an effective inclusion program. As stated by Scruggs and
Mastropieri (1996), “the ultimate success of mainstreaming/inclusion efforts, then, may well depend on the extent to which such supports are made available” (p. 72).

Interestingly, gender and years of teaching experience did not impact the data collected for this research.

**Future Research**

If the survey was completed by a larger percent of teachers in this school district, it is likely that the results would be similar. It would be interesting to ask more specific questions about inclusion and applying the technique in the classroom. Thinking about putting the technique into play and actually doing it may result in different teacher attitudes and/or perceptions. With the number of students with special learning needs increasing each year, the necessity of regular and special education teachers to interface, each with their unique skills, also increases (Glasure, 2003, p. 18). The research has shown that it takes more than just a teaching staff to make inclusion work (Wilkins & Nietfeld, 2004). Obviously, the administrators, parents, and students would also have to be on board and their input would play a crucial part in this process.

This research coincides with previous research findings that indicate a lack of training and experience with students who require special accommodations as a major concern for general education teachers. In contrast, special education teachers worry about lacking the specific knowledge to co-teach in a particular academic content area in the general education classroom. The fact that most of the general education teachers have experienced some type of special education training may have been a contributing factor to the positive responses provided. More specifically, it would be advantageous to determine the extent of experience and training already experienced.
Implications for Practice

With such a cooperative and understanding group of teachers willing to try something new and different to benefit their students, it would be to everyone’s advantage to devise, provide training for, and implement co-teaching strategies at this high school. Collaborative partnerships between the special education and general education teachers who are willing to share and assist each other in their areas of expertise will prove to be the best tool for implementation of this strategy. According to McCrory-Cole, and McLeskey (1997), “only through sharing the best ideas available in a given secondary setting can effective programs, tailored to the individual needs of a given school, be developed” (p. 23).

One way to provide opportunities for general education and special education teachers to work together would be to have the general education teachers participate in regular visits to the special education classroom, allowing the students and teachers a chance to get to know each other and see how they react in an environment reflecting the accommodations necessary for optimal learning. The opposite would also be advantageous, by having the special education teacher and students invited into the general education classroom to observe and socialize with each other. Research has shown that experience with students who require special needs is more beneficial than providing in-service workshops and/or training only (Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results reveal positive attitudes and/or perceptions of special education and general education teachers at one rural Appalachian high school toward inclusion. With an increased number of participants, there is a slight chance the outcome
would vary. To benefit all students, an inclusion program allowing students with special needs to be educated in the general classroom with a pair of co-teachers determining and delivering instruction, is welcomed by all staff members. Before implementing inclusion, more research is necessary to determine the attitudes and/or perceptions of the administrators, parents, and students. Another area needing further research is the extent of special education training and experience of the educators.
References


Appendix A

Survey for General Education Teachers

Please complete the following information and return to Mrs. Ruff's mailbox by Friday, May 28, 2010.

1.) In your own words, define inclusion.

2.) Is inclusion practiced in your classroom?  Yes  or  No
   Why or why not?

3.) Do you feel that the special education students at Fairfield Union High School are learning in the Least Restrictive Environment, according to IDEA?

4.) Do you feel that students with mild disabilities should or should not attend classes with the general population?  Why or why not?

5.) As a general education High School Teacher, do you co-teach with an Intervention Specialist?  Yes  or  No
   If yes, please describe your experiences.

Would you be willing to co-teach with an Intervention Specialist?  Yes  or  No
   Why or why not?

6.) Have you had any special education training?  Yes  or  No
   Please describe.
7.) What type of training would help you do a better job of teaching of students with mild disabilities?

8.) Please indicate your personal characteristics:

______ Male    ______ Female

Years of teaching experience in the general education classroom. ________

Years of teaching experience with a co-teacher. ________

Years of teaching experience as a team teacher. ________
Appendix A

Survey for Special Education Teachers/Aides

Please complete the following information and return to Mrs. Ruff’s mailbox by Friday, May 28, 2010.

1.) In your own words, define inclusion.

2.) Is inclusion practiced in your classroom?  Yes  or  No
Why or why not?

3.) Do you feel that the special education students at Fairfield Union High School are learning in the Least Restrictive Environment, according to IDEA?

4.) Do you feel that students with mild disabilities should or should not attend classes with the general population?
Why or why not?

5.) As a special education teacher, do you co-teach with a general education teacher?
Yes  or  No
If yes, please describe your experiences.

Would you be willing to co-teach with a general education teacher?  Yes  or  No
Why or why not?

6.) Have you had any general education (content-area specific training)?
Yes or No

Please describe.

7.) What type of training would help you do a better job of teaching students with mild disabilities in the general education classroom?

8.) Please indicate your personal characteristics:

_____ Male  _____ Female

Years of teaching experience in the special education classroom. _________

Years of teaching experience with a co-teacher. _________

Years of teaching experience as a team teacher. _________