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SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL EFFECTS OF INCLUSION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
AND INCLUSION CLASSES

by
Ava Boyce

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
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ABSTRACT

Ava Boyce

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL EFFECTS OF INCLUSION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION AND INCLUSION CLASSES

May 6, 1999

Dr. J. Kuder, Advisor
Master of Arts Degree, Special Education

This study sought to determine whether students with learning disabilities benefited socially and emotionally from inclusion placement when compared to placement in a special education class.

Forty-eight high school students were included in a 17 item attitude scale questionnaire which measured their motivation toward school as well as their self-esteem. Students were surveyed from two inclusion and two special education classes. A second questionnaire measured the attitudes of three special education teachers and three regular education teachers.

The data was analyzed by evaluating the frequency distribution for each question and then comparing the inclusion group to the special education group. Percentage scores were then derived and a comparison was made between each group of students as well as the two groups of teachers.

The results indicated that the inclusion classes had a more positive effect on students' motivation and self-esteem. Additionally, the teacher attitude survey found the regular inclusion teachers more positive in their responses than the special education teachers. The research is consistent with other studies on the benefits of inclusion.

MINI-ABSTRACT

Ava Boyce

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL EFFECTS OF INCLUSION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION AND INCLUSION CLASSES

May 6, 1999

Dr. J. Kuder, Advisor
Master of Arts, Special Education

This research study sought to determine whether students with learning disabilities benefited socially and emotionally from inclusion placement when compared to placement in a special education class. Through an attitude survey questionnaire, students from inclusion classes scored slightly higher in motivation and self-esteem. In addition, regular education teachers were more positive about their students.

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Chapter 1

The Problem

INTRODUCTION

Inclusion isn't a new concept, but its meaning is becoming clearer as teachers are expected to develop educational programs that can serve a diversity of students with "special needs."

Integrating children with a variety of special needs into one setting began when Congress passed the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-142. This act was later renewed as Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ("Inclusion of Special Needs Students: Lessons from Experience"). This act provided children with disabilities to be placed in the same classes as their age-appropriate peers with the right to an education in the least restrictive environment (Blenk, Katie, 1995).

In addition to inclusion, students with special needs have been educated within other educational models. Mainstreaming is one option and allows students to take part in the regular class as long as he or she demonstrates an acceptable level of performance and behavior (Kochhar & West, 1996). Self-contained class is another model, which keeps students with disabilities, who cannot be educated appropriately in a regular classroom, in a special education classroom. A third model that is widely used is the pull-out or resource room. This service gives part-time instruction to students who are members of a regular class but obtain supplemental services in a separate "resource room," or where a child might be a member of a self-contained special education class,

but spend a portion of his or her time “mainstreamed” in regular classes (Power-de Fur & Orelove, 1997).

However, some believe that all students learn better within a single-system approach, instead of separation of general and special education services. In addition, interactions with students, parents and teachers have led us to believe that inclusion is more successful than a dual system approach (Elliott & McKenney, 1998).

Academic and social benefits continue to favor inclusion over exclusion for students with special needs. When students are placed in a diverse setting, especially at the secondary level, friendship networks are formed and help to develop social, communication and problem solving skills.

Inclusion focuses on students with any type of disability and helps confirm the concepts of belonging and individuality. The inclusion movement is becoming stronger as educators set new goals to restructure and improve the academic and social outcomes for students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the mid 1990's, issues of school reform and inclusive education have been addressed and one of the key topics emphasized has been student outcomes (Lipsky, 1997). Since more students with special needs are being recommended by the Child Study Teams for inclusion, it is important to investigate, compare and contrast the social and emotional effects of self-contained and inclusive school programs. Consequently, do children with special needs benefit socially and emotionally when placed in an inclusion setting.

HYPOTHESIS

It is hypothesized that when students are placed in an inclusion classroom, their motivation toward school will increase and self-esteem will heighten.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined below:

Inclusion- A term similar to mainstreaming, but which specifically refers to integration of students with disabilities into regular academic classes with non-disabled peers (Kochhar & West, 1996, pg.10).

Least Restrictive Environment - The LRE component of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990) requires that children and youth with disabilities be educated along with students who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate (Zionts, 1997, pg.15).

Mainstreaming - The placement of a child with a disability alongside non-disabled children in the regular education setting. Connotes the shuttling of the disabled child in and out of regular class without altering the class to accommodate the child (Special Education Dictionary, 1997).

Pull-out program - Resource room instruction or supplemental services.

Dual Educational System - Special education students are educated separately from general education students (Elliott & McKenney, 1998 pg.54).

Regular Education - As distinguished from special education, an established curriculum of academic subjects offered in essentially the same fashion for all children (Special Education Dictionary, 1997).

Team Teaching - The general and special educators plan and teach the academic curriculum to all students within the classroom.

Self-Concept - Growth in understanding and appreciation of one's own characteristics (Peck, Donaldson, Pezzoli, 1990 pg.245).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine if inclusion classes have more positive effects socially and emotionally on a select sample of secondary students, as compared to mainstreamed and self-contained classes.

It will look into the many factors that determine and influence the "inclusion experience" for classified students, while examining the effects teachers play in the outcome of inclusion classes.

OVERVIEW

The remaining chapters of this paper will take a more in-depth look at the research question presented in Chapter One. Chapter Two will review the literature related to inclusion, mainstreaming, pull-out, team teaching and other related topics. Chapter Three will contain information concerning the research design. It will discuss the survey used and explain the population used to complete the study. Chapter Four will review the results, and Chapter Five will continue with the discussion of pertinent information for future consideration.

If the results indicate no increase in motivation or self-esteem, more support and focus will have to be given to the students. Results supporting the hypothesis will hopefully help to expand the inclusion movement.

Chapter 2

Review Of The Literature

In recent years there has been a rush toward inclusion, the concept that children with special needs should be placed in the same classes as their age-appropriate typical peers. After implementation of inclusion in various schools, we still face many concerns. Some of these concerns that are reviewed in this chapter include the issues involved in the research, the experiences and achievement of students with learning disabilities, with regard to their social skills, academic problems, self-concept and the effects inclusion has on the learning disabled student.

THE BACKGROUND RESEARCH IN INCLUSION

In order for inclusion to have meaningful student outcomes, the process of building an environment that is conducive to inclusion takes considerable time, support and commitment from faculty and administration (Tralli, Columbo, Deshler, Schumaker, 1996).

A student's success through the middle school years is dependent on self-esteem and a strong, trusting relationship with a classroom teacher. Segregated from age-level peers, work with different curriculum and materials, and exclusion from activities and discussion can weaken students' self-confidence and relationship with a teacher. In addition, students need a self-contained, heterogeneous setting to further develop the stages in their lives (Elliott & McKenney, 1998).

According to McLaughlin, Warren, and Schofield (1996), a wide range of methodologies has been used to examine the impact of inclusive education on the academic and social skills of students. According to this report, there has been limited research on the experiences and achievements of students with learning disabilities who have been a part of an inclusive setting. However, I.E.P. goal reviews, observations, interviews, and standardized or norm-referenced instruments have been used to further explore achievement. Academic and social knowledge findings from these varied studies suggest that students with widely varying disabilities supported in inclusive settings may do as well as or better than their peers supported in separate classrooms. These findings, however, are not definitive across all disability or academic areas. Despite extensive interventions, some students may not make academic gains. However, findings about the improvement in social interactions and communication skills in inclusive settings are consistently positive. In addition, according to the report several studies have shown the positive impact on the “regular” students in areas such as developing responsibility and positive attitudes about diversity (McLaughlin, Warren & Schofield, 1996).

In another report by Powell (1997), benefits of inclusion are reported to be widespread. The author’s research also supports findings that inclusion not only benefits special education students but “regular” students as well. Inclusion models frequently are in support of collaboration, including methods such as cooperative teaching, co-teaching and team teaching. Students don’t usually differentiate between the two teachers. Consequently, special education students are less stigmatized and viewed more as part of the class. In addition, test scores, organizational skills and grades improve from all

students. They better understand what is expected of them when the special education and regular classroom teacher partnership works.

Emerson and Putnam (1996) report that collaboration among regular and special educators is viewed as critical to the success of students with special needs who are in inclusive classrooms. Through collaborative teaming, both teachers are able to enhance the lines of communication regarding student learning outcomes, methods of instruction, material modification and curricular adaptations. Both teachers face the continued challenge of defining their specific roles and responsibilities, finding sufficient planning and meeting time and communicating effectively with other staff members.

INTERVENTION APPROACHES TO ENHANCE SELF-ESTEEM

A study by Yuhas (1998) examined the effects of positive teaching techniques, non-confrontational teacher attitudes, and a pleasant classroom environment on the self-esteem of students with learning disabilities who were in a special education classroom. It was hypothesized that the self-esteem of a sample of heterogeneous special education students would not be raised by these specific interventions. Since educators have stated that children with learning disabilities feel that they have no control over their lives, it was hoped that these self-management techniques would help the students have more of a "locus of control."

According to the author, the research has contended that students with learning disabilities want to be like everyone else, but be special and unique at the same time. Adolescence is not an easy time and the reality of being different can be the worst thing that can happen to a teenager. Students with learning disabilities do not understand why they have problems. In addition, they need to understand that the experiences they have

are the same as their non-disabled peers. The learning disabled student uses negative self-defense mechanisms to mask feelings of hopelessness and inadequacy. Self-worth can be instilled through a little compassion and understanding. Students look for signs of acceptance, and it is important that teachers be conscious of the messages that are sent to these students.

The Yuhas study included 15 special needs high school students from a low socio-economic background. To determine their level of self-esteem, the students were given the Self-Esteem Inventories as a pre and posttest. The researcher used intervention techniques to help create a stress free, non-confrontational classroom environment. Students were encouraged to use self-management techniques for behavior and academic achievement, as well as techniques suggested in the Educators for Social Responsibility-Conflict Resolution Strategies Manual (1993).

Even though the results indicated that the self-esteem of the students was not significantly raised over the 12 week period, the average mean score was slightly elevated and it was recommended that further research over a prolonged time frame, would probably give more significant results (Yuhas, 1996).

Another approach that has been used to meet the emotional and social difficulties of learning disabled students is "Adventure-Based Counseling." Denti, Liderbach-Vega, (1998) developed a program to improve students' communication skills, self-confidence, trust, respect and problem-solving techniques. The authors point out that children with emotional disturbances have significant difficulties with alienation, antisocial behavior, lack of appropriate peer and adult relationships, and poor self-concept. These students have social and emotional needs that are not met through the "traditional" school setting,

and if some of them are served, they are generally segregated from their peers. The authors felt this action oriented model would provide an active group counseling.

In conjunction with the Riverside County Board of Education, California, the author's purpose was to implement this program to serve as a guide for special and regular education populations in a public school setting. The Adventure-Based Counseling Program's initial trial phases provided transportation to a YMCA camp where the students had the opportunity to participate in a 6 hour Ropes Course. The purpose of this phase was to assess how well this type of program would be received. Actual implementation involved weekly adventure sessions of 60 to 90 minutes on school grounds, including a follow-up discussion of successes, failures and feelings.

Even though modifications were discussed, the authors believed the program provided an opportunity for regular and special education students to develop appropriate peer relationships, learn positive interdependence and appreciate each other's differences. From this experience the authors felt that students with emotional disturbances could participate and remain in regular education environments. Moreover, it helped establish new friendships between regular and special education students.

Butler, Marinov-Glassman (1994) administered measures of perceived competence and perceived achievement to 222 Israeli students in grades 3, 5 and 7. The study was designed to examine some effects of self-esteem in students with learning disabilities so that educators might become more aware of risk factors for negative self-perceptions.

The three samples used in the study were children with learning disabilities attending special schools, children with learning disabilities attending special classes in regular schools, and non-identified low achievers in regular classes.

They found that the effects of educational placement on the self-perceptions of learning disabled children differed with age. This was consistent with developmental trends in self-appraisal and social comparison.

According to the author, self-perceptions at grade 3 were positive and did not differ by domain or educational placement. However, there were different patterns at grade 5. These students tend to be unaffected by social comparison at this age. Perceptions of competence were most favorable among children with learning disabilities in special schools whose reference group consisted of similarly classified students. In contrast, perceptions of competence were least favorable among the low achievers. These students had the highest level of exposure to more competent students. The perceptions of the children attending special classes were low and similar to the low achievers. It was also found that in grade 5, physical competence was lower among students in special classes and low achievers than students in special schools. The authors indicated that this pattern was due to the contact with normal achievers and that this contact undermines perceived competence.

The positive effects of special classes decreased at grade 7 as a result of more exposure to competent peers. The findings imply that children with learning disabilities in special classes tend to compare themselves with non-disabled peers, to the detriment of their self-worth. The author suggests that homogeneous placement seems to be one way to maintain positive self-perceptions among children with learning difficulties. Another

alternative of integrating learning disabled students into fully regular classes would emphasize individual and cooperative, rather than competitive, teaching methods, and students would be evaluated in terms of individual progress rather than normative outcomes.

Bender (1987) suggests that students with learning disabilities are not as actively involved, behaviorally and emotionally, with educational tasks as non-learning disabled students. They also demonstrate deficiencies in self-concept, internal locus of control and reinforce the characterization of a learner who is uninvolved with the educational demands of the task.

The author compared 38 elementary learning disabled students with a group of non-learning disabled peers for temperament, self-concept and locus of control, in order to validate the “inactive learner” characterization of disabled students (Bender, 1987).

The results of the study indicate that learning disabled students rated lower for the temperament variable and self-concept. Bender (1987) suggests that early identification of high-risk children would facilitate earlier behavioral intervention and would also be useful as a predictor of later school achievement. Furthermore, the author states that further study of the relationship between the temperament factor and teaching strategies applied in mainstreamed classrooms would be useful and that programs which involved class changes, exposure to different teachers, peer groups and unscheduled enrichment activities, might facilitate development of flexibility for these students. In addition, there were no significant correlations between locus of control and achievement for either the students with learning disabilities or the non-disabled students.

LITERATURE ON THE EFFECTS OF INCLUSION

Stainback, Stainback, East and Sapon-Shevin (1994) believe there is little research in special education on how inclusion influences the development of a self-identity among students with disabilities. They also acknowledge those who fear that the alternative to segregation might be no better than “dumping students in heterogeneous groups,” which will contribute to lost individual needs.

According to Branthwaite (1985) a person’s self-identity, confidence and feelings of worth influence the way he or she interacts with the environment. Gliedman and Roth (1980) have provided evidence to support the idea that it is important for people with disabilities to develop a positive self-identity that incorporates their disabilities.

The authors point out that educators must look carefully at the ways schools have organized around individual differences. Typical models of special education services have involved identifying individual differences, labeling them, and then providing segregated services. The purpose of their paper was to examine how the inclusion movement could enhance the development of self-identity for the students with learning disabilities.

The authors believe “support groups” would give students the opportunity to “compare notes” and share experiences with peers. Group membership is based on a student’s needs and interests. Authority figures may assist in group formation, but mandated participation would be counter productive. According to Strully and Strully (1985) parents and educators who encourage children with disabilities to have only friends who have disabilities and to participate only in social events for people with disabilities, perpetuate the well-intentioned segregation of years past.

Another recommendation is for the need of school personnel to be sensitive to some students' desire to identify with others who have similar characteristics, interests, or problems. The authors explain that these support groups could be for students whose parents are divorcing or who are having problems with older siblings. The groups would be related to a specific area or topic and not necessarily disability-oriented, although if students who are hearing impaired decided to meet together to discuss their experiences, they could seek others who are so identified or interested and form a group. In addition, these student-initiated interest groups could be made available at all levels of schooling. .

They conclude their article by reminding educators that the goal of inclusion is not to erase differences, but to enable all students to belong within an educational community that validates and values their individuality.

Whinnery, King, Evans and Gable, (1995) designed a study to compare attitudes of students with learning disabilities who receive services in traditional resource rooms to those placed in regular classrooms. The study focused on whether students with learning disabilities in regular classrooms have more positive feelings about themselves and feel more accepted by regular education students and teachers than do the special education students in traditional resource room programs.

The subjects included 48 elementary school students in grades 2-5. These students either received special education services through the resource room program or were part of an inclusion classroom, which incorporated team teaching.

The teachers, following standardized instructions, administered the surveys. All survey items were read to the students, who marked their own responses directly on the

form. The results suggest that the attitudes and feelings of both groups did not differ significantly. The majority of students in both groups apparently felt good about themselves and accepted by their peers and teachers. It was interesting that the students with learning disabilities rated themselves higher on self-esteem questions than did regular students. However, inclusion students perceived themselves to be less intelligent than their regular peers and the resource room students had the lowest opinion of their intelligence. Again, all students responded positively to questions regarding their perception of acceptance by their peers, but the inclusive students did respond slightly more positively than their resource room counterparts.

Another discrepancy was the response of the resource room student to “I often feel left out of class activities.” The author notes that this is a logical answer since this student would have to leave the classroom for some part of the school day and might not feel the status of a full classroom membership. Additionally, there were differences among students’ perceptions relating to their acceptance by the teacher. The resource room students felt that the teacher embarrassed them in front of other students, even though the embarrassment may have been unintentional.

The authors suggest that this study provides limited support for the belief that inclusive settings develop more positive attitudes than do resource room programs. They also believe that inclusion classes need to make significant program and instructional accommodations in order for students with learning disabilities to make satisfactory learning and social adjustments.

A study by Banerji and Dailey (1995) reports the results of a comprehensive evaluation investigating the effectiveness of an inclusive educational program for

elementary students with learning disabilities. The purpose of the study was to attempt an in-depth look at multiple outcomes of an inclusion program. The author reported that information from peer ratings, to assess the social status of students with and without learning disabilities in an inclusive classroom, showed that special education students scored lower on social status when compared to their non-disabled peers, but concluded that the integrated classrooms provided better opportunities for students to blend in socially with their peers. Another finding reported by the author suggests that when students with and without learning disabilities were compared by their self perceptions of scholastic achievement, the lowest result was from the learning disabled students. On the other hand, the author's research states that surveyed elementary students preferred not to have attention drawn to them regarding their learning problems and would rather receive help from their classroom teacher than from a specialist. This information would support use of the inclusion approach, whereby special teachers are not separately identified from general teachers (Banerji & Dailey, 1995).

The first part of the study examined program effects on student attributes and focused on a 5th grade student sample. The second part used a survey to gather information on teacher and parent perceptions of program effectiveness in grades 2 to 4. The last part of the study was based on an analysis of anecdotal information collected by teachers on students served in inclusion settings in grades 2 to 5 (Banerji & Dailey, 1985).

The results indicated beneficial effects of the inclusion model. The outcomes suggested improved self-esteem for students with learning disabilities and in some cases improved motivation. Teachers were more insightful than parents regarding differences

in academic and social behaviors among the two groups of students and reported less positive perceptions of students with learning disabilities regarding behavior. The anecdotal information benefited all the students particularly with regard to the lack of stigma for the students with learning disabilities in the inclusion setting.

Overall, the author's findings are consistent with other studies that have shown students with learning disabilities to have low self-perceptions. Other contributions to the studies' findings, according to the author, are effective teacher-teaming strategies combined with multi-age and multi-grade groupings of students and innovative instructional strategies. Also, according to the study, support from other professionals enhanced the success of the program.

The authors of "Inclusion or Pull-out: Which do students prefer?" believed that students' perceptions were important because they are in a position to judge firsthand the effectiveness of an inclusion model. The authors individually interviewed 32 students with and without learning disabilities who had been involved in an inclusion classroom. Although most of the students in the study preferred the pull-out model, many children were confident that inclusion was meeting their needs academically and socially.

Other findings from this study indicated that the students believed that learning was stressed in their inclusion classrooms, and that plenty of help was available from teachers and peers. Students with learning disabilities said that they got more work done and described the assignments as "harder work." The authors note that this finding might indicate that the special education resource room is not challenging enough for the learning disabled student.

According to the study, the students were able to distinguish between the social and academic benefits of inclusion. The consensus was that the pull-out was preferable for learning, but inclusion was better for making friends and feeling like they “fit in.”

The authors believe that the placement of each child should be considered based on his/her needs. They viewed inclusion as beneficial and preferable for the students who could handle the more difficult work.

The research has shown that students with special needs have social and emotional difficulties that affect their academic standing. Regular education environments seem to have a positive effect on both the learning disabled and non-disabled student.

After reviewing the literature, it can be concluded that there is a need to further study the social and emotional effects of students who are part of an inclusion setting when compared with those students that are placed in a self-contained model. This information would help to insure that special education students are being placed in the best possible setting.

Chapter 3

The Design of the Study

The population of this study consisted of 48 special needs students from a vocational technical high school in a rural setting. Students were in grades 9 through 12. All of the students were completing their English semester and were surveyed from two inclusion and two special education classes. Students from the inclusion classes were surveyed during supplemental instruction. The average number of students in the inclusion classes was 29, which included approximately 7-12 with special needs. The number of students contained in the special education classes was approximately 10.

There are 54 freshmen, 39 sophomores, 36 juniors and 18 seniors who are in special needs and currently enrolled in the school. Most of these students were eligible for special education because of their perceptual impairments (PI) or multiple handicaps (MH). Under NJ State Law 6A:14-3.5, determination of eligibility for special education and related services reads as follows: “Multiply disabled” corresponds to “multiply handicapped” and means the presence of two or more disabling conditions; “Specific learning disability” corresponds to “perceptually impaired” and means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations.

The following study examined students’ attitudes toward school and self-concept. The design consisted of a random population of 48 subjects. Only the grade level of the subject was recorded. The students in this population completed an Attitude Scale

Questionnaire. This questionnaire measured the attitudes of high school students toward themselves when in an inclusion class or special education class.

The questionnaire (see appendix A) contained 17 survey items concerning their attitudes about themselves and school. Items 1 through 9 measured motivation and items 10 through 17 reflected students' self-concept. In addition, a second questionnaire (see appendix B) measured the attitudes of 3 special education teachers and 3 regular education teachers who were either teaching in an inclusion or special education English class. The Attitude Scales were taken from another research paper published in the *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, October, 1995.

Procedure

Permission was received from the special education administrator to administer the questionnaire. The researcher verbally explained the purpose of the student questionnaire to each of the four teachers who administered the survey to the students. The teachers were instructed to have each student indicate his grade level only (name was optional) and respond to each of the 17 questions by checking yes, sometimes, or no. In addition, teachers were instructed to read each question to the students. "Yes" reflected a positive evaluation, "sometimes," unsure and "no," a negative answer. Subjects reported how they felt about school, their perceptions of their own success and whether they felt different from other students. The teachers (including 1 additional special education teacher and 1 regular education teacher) were also instructed to answer 21 survey items to determine their perception of the special education students in their inclusion or special education class. The data were analyzed by evaluating the frequency distribution for each question and then comparing the inclusion group to the special education group.

Chapter 4

Analysis of the Data

The purpose of this study was to determine whether placement in an inclusion class has positive effects socially and emotionally on students with disabilities, when compared to similar students in self-contained special education classes.

Forty-eight students were included in a 17 item attitude survey. Items 1 through 9 of the survey measured motivation and 10 through 17 assessed self-concept.

The total number of possible responses for each group was 408. Percentages were calculated for each “yes,” “sometimes,” and “no” responses within each group. The results for each question are presented in Table I. Overall results indicate that the students in the inclusion classes scored a higher percentage of “yes” responses than the students in the special education classes.

Table II presents and compares the number of “yes”, “sometimes”, and “no” responses from the students in the inclusion and special education classes. Item #4 (“I get along with my teachers and school principal”) was exactly the same in each column. This item measured motivation. Item #15 (“I can help other students in my class”) had the same amount of “yes” responses. This item dealt with self-esteem.

Table III reflects the percentage scores on the two divisions of the survey. Percentages are reported for motivation (items 1-9) and self-esteem (items 10-17). Inclusion classes scored higher in both motivation and self-concept. Motivation represented the greatest difference between the two groups.

In addition, Table IV reports the percentage findings of the teachers' survey. A comparison is made between the attitudes of the special education teachers and the regular education teachers as well as overall results of the survey. The results of the teacher survey indicate that the regular education inclusion teachers had a more positive attitude about the students in their classroom; the response from the special education teachers was more negative. Overall results indicate the total "yes" responses from all the teachers were under 50%.

Table I. RESULTS OF STUDENTS' RESPONSE TO SURVEY

	INCLUSION	SPECIAL EDUCATION
YES	58%	50%
SOMETIMES	33%	42%
NO	9%	8%

Table II. ATTITUDE SCALE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

	INCLUSION			SPECIAL EDUCATION		
	Yes	Sometimes	No	Yes	Sometimes	No
1	17	3	4	13	9	2
2	11	12	1	13	11	0
3	22	1	1	21	3	0
4	19	5	0	19	5	0
5	15	9	0	17	7	0
6	11	11	2	6	15	3
7	22	2	0	14	10	0
8	15	7	2	11	13	0
9	9	12	3	6	13	5
10	10	13	1	7	11	6
11	11	13	0	9	14	1
12	8	9	7	9	14	1
13	14	9	1	12	11	1
14	15	9	0	11	11	2
15	13	8	3	13	9	2
16	12	3	9	11	7	6
17	12	7	5	13	8	3

Table III. RESULTS FOR SELF-CONCEPT AND MOTIVATION
(YES response only)

	INCLUSION	SPECIAL EDUCATION
MOTIVATION	65%	56%
SELF-CONCEPT	49%	44%

Table IV. RESULTS OF TEACHERS' RESPONSE

	INCLUSION	SPECIAL EDUCATION
YES	38%	6%
SOMETIMES	59%	75%
NO	3%	19%
TOTAL		
YES	22%	
SOMETIMES	67%	
NO	11%	

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect inclusion has socially and emotionally on high school students with special needs when compared to students who are in special education classes.

Although the results of the attitude scale questionnaire were statistically insignificant, the students who were in the inclusion group showed a higher percentage of “yes” responses compared to their special education counterparts. Additionally, the results of the questions measuring motivation and self-concept also had a higher percentage of positive responses.

It was hypothesized that students who are placed in an inclusion classroom would increase their motivation toward school and build feelings of self-worth. The results suggest that students in inclusion classes tend to have higher motivation and slightly elevated self-concept than students in the special education classes.

The Teacher Attitude Survey results indicated an elevated response from the regular inclusion teachers compared to the special education teachers. It appears that their perceptions were generally more positive than the special education teachers whose responses were significantly more negative. Overall, there were favorable results from all the teachers concerning the attitudes toward inclusion.

Many authors have done research on inclusion, but few have conducted studies on the students’ experiences with regard to this type of setting. However, the research

supports the need for heterogeneous opportunities that will improve social interactions and communication skills. A common theme taken from the research seems to be that inclusion helps to establish new friendships between regular and special education students. It may be concluded that this research seems to be consistent with other studies on the benefits of inclusion. For example, Elliott & McKenney (1998) emphasized the importance of being with age-level peers, working with different curriculum and materials, as well as being included in activities and discussions. Combined, this would strengthen students' self-confidence and relationships with teachers. Strully and Strully (1985) demonstrated that children with disabilities not only need to have opportunities for student interest groups, but that the goal of inclusion should be to give opportunity to feel a sense of belonging within an educational community that validates and values individuality.

There are several limitations to this research. The first limitation with this study is the number of students who were surveyed. In order to determine conclusively whether inclusion classes increase self-esteem, it would be necessary to have a larger population of subjects. A larger sample size would present a more valid representation of students.

Secondly, there was a limited amount of control in administering the survey. Even though verbal instructions were given to each teacher by the researcher, students may or may not have had the questions read to them. This might have led to misinterpretation of questions and produced inaccurate responses. In addition, students may or may not have taken the survey seriously. This also would have had an effect on the results. Written instructions to the teachers would have helped to alleviate this

problem or the researcher could have chosen to interview the students.

Another limitation was the different grade levels of the subjects. Because of the different backgrounds and experiences with inclusion, an even number of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors would help to insure a more accurate study.

This research suggests that there are some benefits of inclusion classes. Since the laws are supporting education in the least restrictive environment, this approach clearly helps to develop the emotional growth of the special education student and is more beneficial than a strictly special education class.

In addition, there are other factors that enhance motivation and self- concept in the inclusion setting. Teachers have to be positive role models and need to be aware of their influence when working together as a “team.” In order to accomplish this, they must “collaborate” on their methods and philosophy of teaching. As emphasized by Powell (1997), students don’t usually differentiate between the two teachers in an inclusion model. Class size is another factor influencing motivation and self-esteem. Large classes would make it more difficult to provide for individual needs and should be a planning consideration.

Inclusion is a diverse setting that allows all students to learn to work together much like they will in the “real world.” More research and investigation is needed to support these positive emotional effects.

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APPENDIX A

Name _____
(optional)

Grade _____

Attitude Scale Questionnaire

	Survey Items	Yes	Sometimes	No
1.	I feel like I belong in my school			
2.	I get along well with my classmates.			
3.	I come to school regularly.			
4.	I get along well with my teachers and school principal.			
5.	I am well-behaved in class.			
6.	I ask for help when I need it.			
7.	I try to do well in school.			
8.	I try to concentrate on learning most of the time.			
9.	I enjoy school.			
10.	I answer questions in class.			
11.	I understand the things that I'm learning.			
12.	I feel good about the things I'm learning at school.			
13.	I can do most of my schoolwork without help.			
14.	I think I can do whatever the teacher asks.			
15.	I can help other students in my class.			
16.	I don't feel different from other kids in my class.			
17.	I am proud of my work in school.			

APPENDIX B

Teacher Questionnaire

Assigned class _____
(Inclusion/Special Education)

	Survey Items	Yes	Sometimes	No
1.	Most students exhibit a sense of belonging to the school.			
2.	Most students interact easily with his/her peers.			
3.	Most students attend school regularly.			
4.	Most students possess the social skills needed to relate to authority figures.			
5.	Most students are not disruptive in class.			
6.	Most students seek help when needed.			
7.	Most students stay on task most of the time.			
8.	Most students want to perform well in school.			
9.	Most students talk enthusiastically about school.			
10.	Most students do his/her work on his/her own initiative.			
11.	Most students complete schoolwork on time.			
12.	Most students understand the things that I'm teaching.			
13.	Most students express that she/he feels good about the things we are learning at school.			
14.	Most students can do most of his/her schoolwork without help.			
15.	Most students show pride in his/her work.			
16.	When the students answer questions, he/she is usually right.			
17.	Most students can do his/her work as well as most other students.			
18.	Most students seem happy.			
19.	Most students frequently assume leadership roles in class.			
20.	Most students exhibit positive self-esteem/self-concept.			
21.	If the student is in special education, he/she is not bothered by this knowledge.			