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SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF CLASSIFIED
VERSUS NON-CLASSIFIED
STUDENTS

by
Sandi Kresch Bregler

A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate
Division of Rowan College
1996

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved 5/15/96

ABSTRACT

Sandi Kresch Bregler

Social Acceptance of Classified versus Non-Classified Students

1996

Dr. Jay Kuder

Special Education

The purpose of this study was to examine the social acceptance status of classified students versus non-classified students. Another purpose was to identify reasons why students perceive someone as having lower social status. A total of 95 students completed a rating scale and were surveyed for a nomination scale. Out of the 95 students, 27 were classified as learning disabled (21 boys, 11 girls). The scales and surveys allowed all the students to rate one another on peer ratings of liking and disliking and social acceptance. Students who were classified rated within the top 50%, of overall students, as being accepted and chosen as friends of other students. The students reasons for choosing their friends was mainly because the person they chose, was nice to them. The findings highlight the importance of mainstreaming students and keeping "labels" to a minimum for continued success and for improving self esteem.

MINI - ABSTRACT

Sandi Kresch Bregler

Social Acceptance of Classified versus Non-Classified Students

1996

Dr. Jay Kuder

Special Education

The purpose of this study was to examine the social acceptance status of classified versus non-classified students and why students choose to be friendly with whom they choose. The findings show that classified students were chosen in the top 50%, as being accepted and chosen, as friends of other students.

Chapter 1 - Introduction to Thesis Research

Social acceptance is an important aspect in the lives of many preadolescent students. There have been numerous studies on the social acceptance of classified versus non-classified students. It has repeatedly been found that learning disabled students have lower social status in school settings than their non-classified peers (Gresham, 1982,1983; Madge, Affleck, & Lowenbraun, 1990).

Social acceptance is perhaps the most fundamental psychological need, that is, the need to have others approve of us and our actions. We all want people to like us. What our peers think of us matters greatly. There is almost no limit to what some people will do to get certain other people to approve of and therefore like them. Conversely, such people will often do anything to avoid creating the circumstances that will lead others to disapprove of and therefore dislike them.

The role of the peer group has a great impact on social acceptance, this may influence others perceptions of certain individuals. Acceptance by others has such a big effect on our self esteem and often our successes in life.

I am interested in using the information I find in my research to assess interpersonal relationships among classified and non-classified students in more than one setting. I have been teaching special education for the past nine years, and have consistently seen students with low social status. With the new inclusion, in-class support, and resource center programs, hopefully we will see a change in social status since special education students would no longer be overtly labeled by being pulled out of the classroom on a regular or frequent basis.

The problem that will be examined by this research study is as follows: Is there a difference in the social acceptance status of sixth grade students placed in self-contained classrooms, resource rooms, or in-class support classrooms as compared to non-classified students. A related question is what factors account for the differences, if any, in social acceptance.

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are being defined as:

self-contained class - those students who are classified, who spend their academic part of the day with the same teacher who is certified in special education

resource room class - those students who are classified, who see a special education teacher for one or all of the following classes: math, reading, and english and who are mainstreamed for the remainder of the day

in-class support class - those students who are classified, but are in "regular" classes where there are two teachers, one certified in education and the other in special education

classified students - students who are classified according to the results of the child study team's evaluation, the child study team consists of a psychologist, a social worker, and a learning disabilities consultant

Hypothesis:

It has been observed that students in the self-contained class seem to be friendly with other self-contained students and students in the resource center choose to be friendly with other resource room students as well as non-classified students. This is due to either placement or the fact that classified students tend to exhibit poor socialization skills, having the same inadequacies and deficits. I believe that these friendships are made due to the students placement because they are with others who are functioning within their skill level.

One of the purposes for doing this research is to find out with whom students choose to be friendly with and how there can be a more diversified mixture

of social status'. Society has built physical, social, and psychological barriers for those who are different (Fox & Weaver, 1989). In general, non-classified students often have little interest in making accommodations for someone who has limitations. Classified students often display deficits not only in behaviorally learned social skills but also cognitively and that makes them a little different and easily distinguishable from non-classified students.

Another purpose, of this research, is to examine the effects of inclusion on social status and to find a way to alleviate the problem and attain a reason for what causes non-classified students to perceive someone with a disability (a classified student) as having lower social status.

I expect to find that classified students in the self-contained class choose to be friendly primarily with other self-contained students. Students in the resource center will have a mixture of friends - some classified and some who are non-classified. Students in the in-class support and non-classified placement will be friendly primarily with non-classified students.

I expect to use the information that I find as a basis for increasing social skills training, at least in my own classroom, so that there may be a nice combination of friendships based on everyday lifeskills and not someone's classification.

Impact on teaching - Teachers have difficulty in defining and measuring social skills. Few educators have received training in the teaching of social skills. It is possible that some teachers have a negative attitude toward poorly socialized students which makes it very difficult for these students to improve their social status. In order for teachers to prepare students and make a significant positive

change, teachers themselves, should be provided with strategies for actively dealing with “socially rejected” children.

Impact on administrative decision making - Administrators place non-classified students in certain level classes according to their achievement test results. Classified students are also placed according to test results and also the results of the child study team’s evaluations.

Social skills training is a definite benefit for all students. If social skills was implemented into the regular and special education curriculums, perhaps the administration would be able to place students according to students social skills levels and educators could be encouraged to explore ways of incorporating successful programs and strategies for regularly promoting students’ social competence and peer acceptance into their own instruction. Teachers would then know what would still need to be done to further enhance the social growth of the students. Another issue to examine would be mainstreaming in non-academic classes, so not to sacrifice self-esteem and academic progress for socialization purposes.

Overview of rest of thesis - In chapter two, I will be reviewing different literature articles on the social acceptance status of sixth grade self-contained students, resource room students, in-class support students, and non-classified students. I will examine different reviews, express different points of views, and different theories. In chapter three, I will be designing a research study to address my topic.

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

The social acceptance of learning disabled students among their non-handicapped peers has been of major interest and has been studied extensively since the practice of mainstreaming. The concept of mainstreaming is serving the handicapped student within the regular school program, with support services and personnel, rather than placing students in self-contained special classes. This concept relates to the least restrictive environment (LRE). The LRE is a concept expressed by the courts in the 1970's, mandating that each handicapped person should be educated or served in the most "normal" setting possible.

All students are entitled to an appropriate education since the passing of The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142). It is a federal law that has been described as a "Bill of Rights for the Handicapped", which includes many provisions and special features including free appropriate education, definitions of the various handicaps, priorities for special education services, protective safeguards, and procedures for developing the mandatory individualized education program. Failure to develop interventions to improve the social position of handicapped students represents a failure to provide them with the education that they are entitled too (Leyser & Gottlieb, 1980).

Learning disabled students have consistently been found to be less accepted than their non-handicapped peers (LaGreca & Stone, 1990; Sabornie & Kauffman, 1986; Leyser & Gottlieb, 1980). Many researchers believe that handicapped students can benefit educationally and socially from being in programs with non-handicapped students. This does not always go as planned because students with handicaps are not always accepted by their peers. This occurs because of the general lack of knowledge of the ways to enhance social skills. It is

when learning disabled students are liked, accepted, and chosen as friends, that mainstreaming becomes a positive influence on the lives of both handicapped and non-handicapped students (Johnson & Johnson, 1981).

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between children's social competence and later life adjustment. Peer acceptance or rejection exerts a significant impact on handicapped students self esteem or self concept. A student's self concept is the sum total of all the characteristics a person attributes to himself, and the positive and negative values he attaches to these characteristics (Semmel & Cheney, 1979). Socially incompetent children have been found to have a high incidence of school maladjustment (Coben & Zigmond, 1986).

Although there seems to be contrasting evidence in the research on self concepts of handicapped versus non-handicapped peers, there are significant signs that handicapped students do have a relatively lower self concept and self concept has been linked with lower intellectual functioning.

Specific characteristics of learning disabled students that prevent them from achieving successful peer interaction and acceptance are discussed in many of the articles reviewed. Two of the most widely used types of sociometric measures for assessing interpersonal relationships among students are positive and negative nomination scales and peer rating scales. With peer nomination scales, students are asked to specify or select a certain number of classmates who fit a certain criterion. Peer rating scales allow each student to rate all other students on a scale of 1 to 5 according to a certain criterion. The advantages of the peer rating scale is that each student is included (Gresham, 1983).

Studies related to social skills

Leyser and Gottlieb (1980) examined a way to improve the social status of rejected pupils. Eighteen elementary classes from three rural schools were selected to participate. Four pretested "socially rejected students" were placed into each group. The students rated their classmates on a three point scale indicating whether the classmate being rated was "a friend", "all right", or "not liked". Teachers participated in a two hour workshop to introduce them to intervention strategies for improving the social status of rejected pupils.

Results of this study indicated that when teachers were well trained in social skills, that after a ten week intervention, there was success in improving the social acceptance of the "socially rejected students".

Bryan's 1973 study was done to determine the peer popularity of learning disabled students who had also taken part in a sociometric study the previous year. For this study, 25 of the original 84 students were available for retesting. Most of the 21 boys and 4 girls were caucasian learning disabled students. These 25 students were in 20 different elementary schools. The control sample of students were selected randomly and matched to the other students according to sex and race.

Two sociometric measures were used. In the first one, the students were to choose three classmates as friends, class neighbors, and birthday party invitees. And the second, three classmates who were not friends, class neighbors, or birthday party invitees. All students were told that their responses would not be shared with anyone.

The results of this study show that the learning disabled students definitely received more votes on social rejection and fewer votes on social attraction. When compared with the previous years results, it appears that learning disabled students were rejected across time and that even in a new class and a new grade, they are not generally given a new start.

Cohen and Zigmund's 1986 study had two purposes: (1) to investigate the social status of learning disabled students and (2) to compare the outcome differences of a rating scale sociometric with those of a peer nomination method. The subjects for this study were students who were generally served in the self contained class but did receive approximately eighteen periods per week mainstreamed into the regular education class. There were 237 students involved, 194 regular education students and 43 learning disabled students from ten third through fifth grade classes from a public, urban school district.

The peer nomination method consisted of asking students to name three classmates that they would choose to sit next to in class and also to name three classmates they would least like to sit next to in the same class. The rating scale method used in this study was the How I Feel Toward Others (HIFTO) by Agard, Veldman, Kaufman, and Semmel, 1978. This required each student to rate all the other students in that class. The students could respond with four choices

- (1) acceptance of the person being rated
- (2) indifference/tolerance
- (3) rejection
- (4) do not know

These responses were represented by faces, either smiling, straight or frowning faces. The don't know category had a question mark. The rating scale method was administered immediately following the peer nomination method.

The results of this study using the nomination data showed that the learning disabled students were less accepted than the regular class students. The learning disabled students were selected less frequently than their classmates. The results using the peer rating scale showed that the learning disabled students received fewer acceptance ratings but that both groups received equal percentages on the rejection/tolerance rating.

Scranton and Ryckman (1979) conducted a study to investigate the social acceptance and rejection of learning disabled students in an open school setting. This type of setting, made it difficult to know which students were going to which classrooms, so other students were unaware of those students going for resource pull-out.

The study involved 42 students who were receiving resource support and the control group was selected randomly and matched to the learning disabled students by homeroom. The students ranged from first through third grade. The sociometric scale used was a positive/negative question - answer format. The students were able to give three classmates names for each question, but they did not have to. The questions were as follows:

- (1) Who are the children in your class that you like the best?
- (2) If you were to have your seat changed, who would you like to have sit in the seat next to you?
- (3) Who are the children in your class that you like to play with the best?
- (4) If you were to have your seat changed, who wouldn't you like to have sit next to you?
- (5) Who are the children in your class that you do not like to play with?
- (6) Who are the children in your class that you do not like?

The students were asked the same questions after a period of two weeks. The reliability over the two week interval ranged from .63 to .87.

The results of this study showed that the girls in the control group were far more superior than the learning disabled girls, yet there was no significant differences between the males on the positive or on the negative questions. Scranton and Ryckman seem to believe that girls generally achieve at a faster rate than boys and that the learning disabled girls were not achieving at grade level expectancies.

Sale and Carey, 1995, conducted a study to examine the sociometric status of children with disabilities in a full-inclusion school that did not use eligibility labels for students receiving special education services. There were 524 students interviewed, out of this number, 28 students were minorities. All students were in full-inclusion in a Western United States school district. This study used a positive and negative nomination technique. An interview script was used so that each student being interviewed was asked the exact same questions and given the same directions. After the interviewer introduced himself and made the student feel comfortable, the following questions were asked:

- (1) Who do you like most in your class?
- (2) Who do you like least in your class?
- (3) Why did you choose _____ as you liking the most?
- (4) Why did you choose _____ as you liking the least?

If at anytime during the interview process, the examiner felt that the student was uncomfortable answering the questions, the interview would be terminated. This did not happen during any of the 524 interviews.

The results indicated that the students who would most likely be “labeled” were viewed the most negatively, having notably lower social preference scores and notably higher social-impact scores compared to their classmates. Therefore, we can assess that just because we take away the “label” of special needs students, we are not alleviating any problems they may face due to social acceptance status.

Sabornie and Kauffman’s 1986 study on the social acceptance of learning disabled students was performed using forty six learning disabled students who were mainstreamed for part of the day. There was a total of 830 students from grades nine through twelve from a Central Virginia school district. These students were matched with an equal number of non-handicapped students in six schools.

The students were matched according to race, grade, sex, socioeconomic status (information received from free/reduced lunch data), and participation in extracurricular activities. The sociometric rating scale used was the Ohio Social Acceptance Scale (OSAS) which is a six point scale requiring students to rate their classmates on the following criteria:

1= my very, very best friends

2= my other fiends

3= not my friends, but okay

4= don't know them

5= don't care for them

6= dislike them

The names of all the classmates were presented on a roster and the students gave each name a number. Each numerical rating was assigned a weight, except #4. Students sociometric status was computed by totaling the ratings received. The sum was then divided by the number of students who assigned a 1,2,3,5, or 6 rating.

The results of this study showed that although the learning disabled students, as a group, scored lower in sociometric status than the non-handicapped students, the two groups did not differ significantly. OSAS test-retest reliability ranges from .66 to .90. These results help us to believe that the mainstreaming of education can be socially rewarding for some learning disabled students.

Madge, Affleck, and Lowenbraun's 1990 study of the social status of elementary students with learning disabilities served by the Integrated Classroom Model (ICM) as compared to the social status of elementary students served in a regular class with resource room support closely resembles the subjects that I will

be presenting in my chapter three study of this thesis. In this study, social status was determined by assessing interpersonal relationships among students, using a peer rating method. The Integrated Classroom Model consists of 1/3 special education students with mild disabilities and 2/3 average to above-average non-handicapped students, all of whom are educated in the same classroom for the entire school day.

The subjects used in this study were all caucasian, none of the students had physical characteristics that would automatically classify them and both groups, the experimental and the control group, had equal socioeconomic status (which was determined by using information from the districts reduced price lunch data). The students were asked who they would give stickers to if they had only five to give away. After the student responded, the examiner would say, "Ok, now pretend you have five more stickers, who would you give them to?" This procedure continued until all students in the class were chosen.

These results showed that learning disabled students choose each other quite often. Resource room students were chosen in the lower quarter of the class by their regular education peers. The Integrated Classroom Model students had a much better chance of being chosen in the upper half than a student who left the room for resource instruction. In general, students who have learning disabilities are less accepted by their regular education peers. Learning disabled students also seem to choose each other more frequently than would be predicted. The test-retest correlation was .88 to .92 and the current validity was .61.

Discussion

Social problems related to learning disabilities are not necessarily alleviated by placing students into regular classrooms. Social skills needs to be developed through education and training programs.

According to Fox and Weaver, there are two approaches for fostering positive social acceptance of learning disabled students in the mainstreamed settings. One way would be to modify the behavior of the learning disabled student and the other approach would be to change the non-handicapped groups attitude toward those classmates who are different. In order to modify behavior, social skills would need to be taught. This is difficult to assess because the skills are hard to define, and the functional relationship between social skills deficits and problems relating with others is unclear (Fox and Weaver, 1989). The second approach, to improve attitudes towards handicapped peers, can be done through many programs and strategies available within the schools, such as, peer tutoring, role playing, exposure, and cooperative learning techniques.

Mainstreaming can be very beneficial for learning disabled students if the necessary social skills are taught for positive interaction and social acceptance (Gresham, 1982). Educators need to be trained in the area of social skills. It is suggested that social skills training be incorporated into the regular education curriculum, as well as the special needs curriculum, so that all educators can promote student learning of appropriate social skills.

Social skill is the sum total of our ability to interact with other people. It is the ability to take proper social actions and understand other's reactions to them and be able to respond to that event. Social skills include any of the gestures we may use during any type of interaction such as, eye contact, voice tone, and facial expressions. These skills are learned and with practice, not only do we become

better at them, they become automatic. Social skills should be taught more deliberately today than in previous years. While many of us learned our social skills through examples at home and experiences with friends, students depend on modeling, specific instruction, and practice. The most important single aspect of the handicapped — non-handicapped student relationship relates to opportunities for practicing social skills.

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Chapter 3 - Methodology

Subjects

The number of subjects included in this study total 95. All of these students are in sixth grade and receive their education in a middle class, large, rural school district in Sewell, New Jersey. Out of the 95 students, 27 students are classified as learning disabled, Eight students are receiving their education in the self contained classroom, nine students are placed in the resource center and 10 students are placed in the in-class support room. All of these students are classified as perceptually impaired.

Setting

This study was conducted within the students regular classroom setting. The classified students were questioned during their regular class, either a mainstreamed class or during homeroom, and also during their special education class setting.

Apparatus

A peer nomination scale and a peer rating scale was used to evaluate the social acceptance status of handicapped students placed in the resource in the in-class support rooms as compared to the non-handicapped students. Both scales used are included in this chapter.

Measures

The peer nomination scale used was adapted from the study performed by Sale & Carey (1995). It included four questions which were asked to the students on an individual basis. The students chose one person that they liked the most in their class and why and one person that they liked the least in their classroom and why. The names were then tallied and the students received a liked-most score and a liked-least score.

The peer rating scale used was adapted from Sabornie & Kauffman's 1986 study. The students were asked to fill out a rating sheet for each student in their class using the following five point rating scale:

- 1= my very best friends
- 2= my other friends
- 3= not friendly with but they're okay
- 4= don't like them
- 5= don't know them

These scores were then given a weight (#1=4, #2=3, #3=2, #4=1, #5=0) and each student was given a total amount of points. The higher the points, the higher the social status.

Procedures

The students were given a general introduction of the purpose of the study and they were told that their answers would be used to help build a better classroom community.

The peer nomination scale script is as follows:

1. Introduction of myself. "Hi. My name is_____. I'm presently working on my Master's Degree at Rowan College of New

Jersey and I would like to ask you some questions. I'll be calling on you one by one. Your answers will be used to help build more friendships and will not be discussed with any of your classmates."

2. Students were called upon one at a time and brought out into the hallway where there was desks and chairs set up.
3. Record students name on top of form.
4. Begin interview with the students and remind them that everything they say is confidential and will not be shared with anyone.
5. Question #1 - Who do you like the most in your class?
6. Question #2 - Why do you like _____ the most?
7. Question #3 - Who do you like least in your class?
8. Question #4 - Why do you like _____ the least?
9. Question #5 - Who do you like the most on the team?
10. Question #6 - Why do you like _____ the most?
11. Question #7 - Who do you like the least on the team?
12. Question #8 - Why do you like _____ the least?
13. Interview is completed. The students was thanked and reminded to keep their answers to themselves.
14. After all students were questioned, a general closing was made to the whole class.

The peer rating scale form included a list of the students in the class with the rating scale listed at the top of the page. The students were instructed to place a number from 1 - 5, according to the rating scale, next to each students name. All students should have a number next to their name.

PEER RATING SCALE FORM

Students name _____

Students age _____

Who do you like the most in your class? _____

Why do you like _____ the most? _____

Who do you like the least in your class? _____

Why do you like _____ the least? _____

Who do you like the most on this team? _____

Why do you like _____ the most? _____

Who do you like the least on this team? _____

Why do you like _____ the least? _____

PEER NOMINATION FORM

Fill in a number next to every classmates name, according to this scale:

1 = my very best friends

2 = my other friends

3 = not friendly with but they're okay

4 = don't like them

5 = don't know them

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR NAME

(a student roster for the class will be given to each student)

Chapter 4 - Data Collection

The peer rating scale was used with four classes. All four classes consisted of students who were in the regular education program, some were classified and receiving in-class support and some were receiving resource support. The following information shows the frequency distribution charts followed by percentage charts showing the results of how each student ranked among their classmates. The sociometric rating scale used was a modified version of the Ohio Social Acceptance Scale (OSAS) which required students to rate their classmates on the following criteria:

- #1= my very best friends
- #2= my other friends
- #3= not friendly with, but they're okay
- #4= don't like them
- #5= don't know them

The charts are divided to show how non-classified students compared to the in-class support students and the resource room students. Following the charts for the four classes is an overall percentage chart for the 95 students who are in the four classes. These scores were then given a weight and each student was given a total amount of points. The higher the points, the higher the social status. This is shown on the ranked order chart included in this section.

The frequency distribution charts show how the students rated among their classmates. In class I, chart #1, two non-classified and one resource room student received a total of five points for being chosen as "my very best friend". The top scorer for "my other friends" was an in-class support student, who received 11

votes and a non-classified student, who received 10 votes. In class II, chart #2, the highest number of points for “my very best friend”, was given to a resource room student, who received a total of seven points and for “my other friends”, class III, chart #3, two students received a score of five points for “my very best friend”. one student was non-classified and the other was receiving in-class support instruction. The student receiving the highest amount of points for “my other friends” was also an in-class support student. In class IV, chart #4, an in-class support student received the highest number of votes for being “my very best friend” and a non-classified student received a score of 13 as being “my other friend”.

The percentage charts show how each group of students (non-classified, in-class support, and resource) each scored as a group. In class I, chart #5, non-classified students and resource room students both received the same percentage as being chosen as “best friends” and the in-class support students had the highest percentage, 44.3% for being chosen as “my other friends”. In class II, chart #6, the resource room students had the highest percentage, 17.1%, for being chosen as “best friends” and the in-class support students rated the highest, with a 36.2%, for “my other friends”. In class III, chart #7, the non-classified students rated the highest, with a 8.1%, for “my best friends “ and the in-class support students had the highest percentage , with a 27.3%, for “my other friends”. In class IV, chart #8. the in class support students rated the highest, with an 11.9%, for “my best friends” and the non-classified students had the highest percentage, with a 25.4%, for “my other friends”. Overall, the resource room students were chosen more often as being a “best friend” and the in-class support students were chosen the most as being “my other friends”.

The ranked order chart, chart #10, shows how students ranked after tallying the points they received from the peer rating scale. In class I, III, and IV, the students who received the highest amount of points are classified and receiving in-class support. In class II, a resource room student received the highest number of points.

Chart #1

Frequency Distribution Chart of Rating Scale Results for Class I					
Non - classified students	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends'	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
C.C	2	10	4	0	0
T.C	1	4	8	3	0
P.C	5	6	4	0	1
B.D	0	1	9	5	1
M.G	1	4	8	0	2
L.H	0	3	4	4	5
A.N	1	6	2	4	4
J.R	5	5	5	0	2
In - class support students	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends'	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
A.C	2	11	3	0	0
M.M	0	3	5	7	0
M.R	0	6	8	2	0
J.H	1	9	2	4	0
E.P	0	6	8	1	1
Resource room students	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends'	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
J.C	1	7	5	2	1
M.G	0	5	6	2	1
M.H	2	5	7	0	2
J.O	5	8	1	1	1
C.R	2	5	7	0	2
S.T	1	6	8	0	1

Chart #2

Frequency Distribution Chart of Rating Scale Results for Class II					
Non - classified students	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
B.B	0	11	7	3	3
C.B	2	3	7	6	6
B.C	2	9	6	2	4
G.D	4	11	4	0	3
C.D	2	5	9	1	8
E.D	3	10	4	3	4
B.G	4	8	5	0	7
A.H	3	10	6	4	0
J.J	2	4	4	3	9
E.K	5	1	2	4	9
M.K	0	8	7	3	5
M.L	2	7	3	1	11
R.M	3	2	7	6	6
B.M	4	9	3	2	5
K.M	1	6	5	4	8
M.P	1	13	3	2	4
M.P	2	2	5	1	13
K.Q	5	5	6	2	4
D.T	2	4	6	3	8
R.V	4	9	1	9	1
S.W	3	5	3	8	5
In - class support students	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
J.F	3	8	5	7	1
J.H	2	9	4	6	2
Resource room students	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
J.C	1	6	3	5	8
C.R	7	7	5	2	2
D.T	4	7	8	2	3

Chart #3

Frequency Distribution Chart of Rating Scale Results for Class III					
Non - classified students	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
J.C	1	7	9	3	2
T.C	1	5	12	4	0
B.D	1	2	8	9	2
K.H	3	10	5	2	2
C.I	1	11	6	1	3
M.K	1	3	11	5	2
M.L	2	10	8	1	2
P.M	1	3	6	11	1
T.M	1	8	8	4	1
A.M	3	7	8	2	2
J.N	2	5	13	1	1
K.P	1	5	8	3	5
K.P	1	6	12	2	1
T.P	0	8	10	3	2
J.R	4	3	11	2	2
G.S	5	5	5	4	3
T.S	2	9	7	3	1
M.U	1	2	13	5	1
B.Z	3	5	8	5	2
In - class support students	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
A.C	0	12	8	2	0
G.D	0	5	6	11	0
D.M	5	3	6	5	3
M.M	0	2	9	11	0
E.P	0	9	7	3	3
M.R	1	5	11	5	0
Resource room students	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
M.G	0	6	7	9	1

Chart #4

Frequency Distribution Chart of Rating Scale Results for Class IV					
Non - classified students	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
C.B	2	2	8	7	4
B.C	3	6	13	0	2
T.C	4	3	4	8	1
E.D	3	7	7	3	2
E.G	0	13	5	1	3
M.H	2	7	5	2	7
P.M	2	2	4	11	3
J.N	1	5	8	4	3
S.P	1	3	14	1	3
K.Q	2	7	8	3	2
E.R	4	7	8	0	3
J.R	4	11	5	0	2
R.R	1	7	7	3	4
N.B	4	1	8	7	2
A.H	2	4	13	2	2
In - class support students	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
A.C	4	11	5	0	2
G.D	0	3	10	7	2
J.F	4	7	5	4	2
J.H	3	3	7	6	3
D.M	6	2	8	4	3
M.M	2	2	8	8	2
E.P	2	2	13	3	2
M.R	0	4	6	8	4
Resource room students	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
M.G	0	3	9	5	5

Chart #5

Percentage Chart of Rating Scale Results for Class I					
Classification	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
Non - classified students	11.7%	29.7%	34.4%	12.5%	11.7%
In - class support students	3.8%	44.3%	32.9%	17.7%	1.3%
Resource room students	11.7%	38.3%	36.2%	5.3%	8.5%

Chart #6

Percentage Chart of Rating Scale Results for Class II					
Classification	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
Non - classified students	11%	29%	21.1%	13.7%	25.2%
In - class support students	10.6%	36.2%	19.1%	27.7%	6.4%
Resource room students	17.1%	28.6%	22.9%	12.9%	16.6%

Chart #7

Percentage Chart of Rating Scale Results for Class III					
Classification	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
Non - classified students	8.1%	27.1%	39.9%	16.6%	8.3%
In - class support students	4.5%	27.3%	35.6%	28%	4.5%
Resource room students	0%	26.1%	30.4%	39.1%	4.3%

Chart #8

Percentage Chart of Rating Scale Results for Class IV					
Classification	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
Non - classified students	10.5%	25.4%	35.3%	15.9%	12.9%
In - class support students	11.9%	19.2%	35%	22.6%	11.3%
Resource room students	0%	13.6%	40.9%	22.7%	22.7%

Chart #9

Overall Percentage Chart of Rating Scale Results for Classes I,II,III,& IV					
Classification	#1 = My Very Best Friends	#2 = My Other Friends	#3 = Not Friendly with but they're OK	#4 = Don't Like Them	#5 = Don't Know Them
Non - classified students	10.1%	27.6%	31.6%	15%	15.7%
In - class support students	8%	28%	33.1%	23.9%	6.9%
Resource room students	11%	31.1%	31.6%	13.4%	12.9%

Chart #10

Ranked Order from Peer Rating Scale Results				
Status	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
#1	A.C (ICS) J.O	C.R (RC)	A.C (ICS) M.L	A.C (ICS) J.R
#2	P.C	G.D A.H	K.H	B.C E.R
#3	C.C	D.T (RC)	A.M	J.F (ICS)
#4	J.R	R.V	C.I J.N	E.D E.G
#5	S.T (RC)	K.Q	J.R G.S	K.Q
#6	C.R (RC) J.C (RC) M.H (RC)	E.D	T.M K.P B.Z	D.M (ICS)
#7	J.H (ICS)	B.B	T.C	T.C
#8	T.C M.R (ICS) E.P (ICS)	B.C J.F (ICS) J.H (ICS) B.M	J.C D.M (ICS) M.R (ICS)	S.P R.R
#9	M.G	M.K	E.P (ICS)	J.N E.P (ICS)
#10	A.N	R.M S.W	T.S	M.H J.H (ICS) A.H
#11	M.M (ICS)	C.B	M.G (RC) M.K	N.B
#12	M.G (RC)	C.D M.L K.M	M.U	C.B
#13	B.D		G.D (ICS) K.P	G.D (ICS)
#14	L.H			P.M M.M (ICS)
#15				M.G (RC) M.R (ICS)

The peer nomination scale was used with 95 students. A positive and negative nomination technique was used with an interview script so that each student being interviewed was asked the exact same questions and given the same directions. The following questions were asked:

1. Who do you like the most in this class?
2. Why do you like this person the most?
3. Who do you like the least in this class?
4. Why do you like this person the least?

The same questions were again asked but the students were able to choose anyone on the team (a total of 133 students). Out of this total number, I have listed the top five students who were liked the most among their classmates and the top five students who were liked the least along with direct quotes from their classmates of why they liked or disliked each student. Next to each students initials, is their classification.

<u>Liked the Most</u>	<u>Liked the Least</u>
J.O (resource) “...friends for a long time” “...he’s nice to me”	B.D (non-classified) “...gets on my nerves” “...don’t really know him”
P.C (non-classified) “...good sense of humor” “...share the same interests”	R.P (resource) “...he’s weird” “...he’s snobby”
D.T (resource) “...she’s nice to me” “...she’s funny”	G.S (non-classified) “...acts stupid” “...he’s annoying”
T.C (non-classified) “...he’s cool” “...I like to talk to him”	K.F (in-class support) “...she gets on my nerves” “...she calls me names”
D.M (in-class support) “...he’s nice to me” “...same interests”	T.C (non-classified) “...He beats me up” “...he fights a lot”

For the most part, students liked the classmates they liked because they are nice, they've been friendly with them for years, the students are kind ,nice, and they share the same interests. The reasons students didn't like other students were because they were annoying, they felt that the students acted weird and that they got on each others nerves. Another reason a lot of students chose was that they just didn't know the students well enough.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

In this study, I looked at the social acceptance of classified students as compared to non-classified students. It has been observed, in previous research, that students in the self-contained class seem to be friendly with other self-contained students and students in the resource center choose to be friendly with other resource room students as well as non-classified students. This is due to either placement or the fact that classified students tend to exhibit poor socialization skills, having the same inadequacies and deficits. My hypothesis was that these friendships are made due to students placement because they are with others who are functioning within their skill level.

What I found, after completing my research, is that the resource room students and the in-class support students ranked high, on social acceptance, within the the non-classified students. My hypothesis was not confirmed. To some extent, the friendships were categorized by placement, students chose other students in their class, either mainstreamed, in-class support, or resource, although many classified students chose and were chosen as close friends to non-classified students.

My findings did not compare to what others have found in similar research studies. Of all the literature I reviewed, the classified students had an overall lower social acceptance status and a higher rejection scale than those students who were not classified. Bryan's 1973 study showed that classified students definitely received more social rejection and fewer votes on social acceptance, Cohen and Zigmond's 1986 study showed that classified students were less accepted and selected less frequently and Sale and Carey's 1995 study showed that classified students were viewed most negatively over non-classified students. Three

additional studies had some of the same results as I found in my research. Scranton and Ryckman's 1979 study showed that classified girls rated lower than non-classified girls although there was no significant difference between the males, Sabornie and Kauffman's 1986 study showed that although classified students scored lower, on the social acceptance scale, than the non-classified students, the two groups did not differ significantly, and Madge, Affleck, & Lowenbraun's 1990 study showed that the in-class support students were chosen more frequently than the resource room students. I found that classified students were chosen as often or more often than non-classified students. Perhaps when we eliminate labeling and encourage mainstreaming, there is a positive effect on a students self esteem and it increases the opportunities for students to be involved.

In the study that I completed, I questioned the students as to whom they liked or disliked and why and also the students were asked to rate their classmates according to the order they liked them. The two forms of surveys used were a positive and negative nomination scale and a peer rating scale. The advantages of the peer rating scale is that each student is included.

The results from my study showed that the resource room students had the highest percentage of being chosen as friends and the in-class support students ranked the second highest. Out of the 95 students who participated in the study, the top five students who were liked the most, three of the five were classified and out of the top five students who were liked the least, only two of the five were classified.

If I was to redo my study, I would not have included the self contained class because I was unable to interview the students because they are not mainstreamed with non-classified students at all throughout the school day. Other than that variable that I did not plan for, I felt that my study went quite well and that my research was organized and easily put into perspective.

I am hoping my study leads to the use of social skills training in all classes, those that contain classified as well as a non-classified students. For future research on this topic, perhaps a program that has used a social skills training program can be compared to another program that has not used social skills training and then compare how the students would rate one another.

When learning disabled students are liked, accepted, and chosen as friends, mainstreaming becomes a positive influence on the lives of both classified and non-classified students.