

5-6-1996

# A comparative study of the attitudes of experienced vs inexperienced teachers toward inclusion

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES OF  
EXPERIENCED VS INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS  
TOWARD INCLUSION

Danielle Dicken

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate Division of  
Rowan College  
April 23, 1996

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved 5/6/96

## ABSTRACT

Danielle Dicken

A Comparison of the Attitudes of Experienced vs. Inexperienced Teachers Toward  
Inclusion

Dr. Midge Shuff  
Learning Disabilities

The purpose of this study was to examine the preference for a disability teachers with previous experience teaching included students have versus teachers with no experience teaching special education students in the regular classroom. It was hypothesized that (a) Teachers who have taught included students will have no significant preference level for a specific disability; and (b) teachers with no experience teaching included students will have a definite level of preference.

The study uses a descriptive design. A total of 50 teachers were surveyed among three districts. Twenty surveys from the experienced group and 20 surveys from the inexperienced group were randomly selected.

The hypotheses was upheld in that findings of this study indicate that teachers with no experience teaching students with disabilities in the regular class have a definite preference level for specific disabilities. Also, both groups surveyed agreed that students with behavior disabilities should not be in the regular class. Teacher competency and training were also discussed.

## MINI-ABSTRACT

This is a study using a descriptive design. The purpose of this study was to examine the preference for a disability teachers with previous experience teaching included students have versus teachers with no experience teaching special education students in the classroom. A total of 50 teachers were surveyed. Twenty surveys from the experienced group and 20 surveys from the inexperienced group were randomly selected. It was hypothesized that teachers who have taught included students would have no significant preference level for a specific disability and teachers with no experience teaching included students will have a definite level of preference. Results indicate that teachers with no experience teaching included students have a definite preference level for specific disabilities.

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### A

## Chapter One

### Introduction

With the implementation of Public Law 94-142, students with disabilities have participated with other students in various school programs (Truesdell & Abramson, 1992). Initially, mainstreaming occurred in noninstructional settings such as the playground, lunch, and assemblies. Eventually, students with disabilities participated in regular classes for physical education, art, music, and library. For these students, most of their time was spent in a self-contained special education class.

During the last decade, we have seen the transition of students with disabilities from self-contained special education classes into regular education classes through what is called *inclusion*. Inclusion refers to the educational option for all students, regardless of their disability, to be educated in age-appropriate regular classes in their neighborhood schools with necessary support (Nietupski, McDonald & Nietupski, 1992). Attempts at successful efforts to plan, implement, and continue participation in a least restrictive environment are not easily found.

Bacon and Scholz (1991) note that regular education teachers have not reacted favorably to the increased inclusion of students into regular classrooms. Bender (1985) reviewed a number of studies and found that teachers were very concerned about the

ability of students to complete academic work and maintain social relations with peers. In addition, teachers also voiced concern about personal levels of preparation for inclusion and the amount of time that children with disabilities may require. One reason for these reactions may be the lack of inservicing on the topic of inclusion.

Presently, teacher attitudes toward inclusion are a vital issue when examining teacher influences upon included students. Findings reveal the notion that regular education teachers harbor negative attitudes toward students included into regular classes (Alfred, Brulle & Shank, 1990). According to Hudson, Reisberg, and Wolf (1983), inclusion may not succeed if teachers do not hold positive attitudes toward this practice. Since inclusion is now being practiced, research is needed to examine not only teacher attitudes toward included students but also preference for a disability. Teacher's attitudes toward inclusive education may be expected to vary based on the social, physical, academic, or behavioral accommodations that students with disabilities need in order to participate in activities in regular classes regardless of their handicap classification (Wilczenski, 1995).

### **Focus of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the preference for a disability teachers with previous experience teaching included students have versus teachers with no experience teaching special education students in the regular classroom. For the purpose of discussion, the term "experience" refers to a classroom teacher with a minimum of one year teaching experience who has had an included student, with support, in his or her classroom. The term "included student" refers to a student who is determined to have a



classified handicap, is determined to be eligible for special education, and is serviced in a regular classroom.

This study hypothesizes that: (a) Teachers who have taught included students will have no significant preference level for a specific disability; and (b) teachers with no experience teaching included students will have a definite level of preference.

## Chapter Two

### Review of the Literature

#### Introduction

Today, in education, the current trend is directed toward inclusion. Inclusion is based on the concept of students with disabilities attending the neighborhood school that he or she would normally go to if he or she were not handicapped (Wilmore, 1994). In addition, students with disabilities would be placed in chronologically age-appropriate grades (Guralnick, 1982). Inclusion also means that the necessary supports for a disabled student would be provided within the general education classroom. With this model, assistance is provided in the areas of curriculum modification, participation, and social integration by special education/support teachers, paraprofessionals, integration facilitators, and/or non-disabled peers (Hall & Hall, 1987).

Advocates of inclusion argue that the regular classroom is the only true least restrictive environment (Wilmore, 1994). They assert that all disabled children do better socially and academically when exposed to normal performing students. In addition, normal children need to learn how to live in society with handicapped people.

Successful implementation of inclusion programs is dependent upon many variables. Some of the considerations are relevant to both special and regular education teachers. One of the considerations is the relationship between the classrooms of regular

and special education.

The culture of special education has been maintained under conditions of isolation and segregation (Goessling, 1994). Therefore, a separate belief system has been established. Thus, regular education had no need for a connection. Although the two groups of teachers have often taught in the same school building, classroom boundaries were rarely crossed. Teachers have existed in separate worlds with no connection to one another. This situation has been strengthened by feelings of ethnocentrism - a belief that "nobody else can teach them" (Goessling, 1994).

As inclusion becomes more complex, regular education teachers are greatly affected. Generally, teachers are overloaded to begin with. Fullan (1991) gives examples of teachers handling the increasing demands of technology, curriculum, at risk students, and districts making budget cuts. A major change, such as inclusion, may be viewed with skepticism. Initial perception of change is often about the impact of the change on ones' work (Hall & Hall, 1987). Fullan (1991) states that many innovations are adopted with no clear explanation, thereby supporting skepticism. This fact, coupled with inadequate resources, can result in teachers' experiencing their own level of confidence decrease.

It would be an advantage if teachers could have sufficient preparation, knowledge and training to make inclusion work. According to Wilczenski (1995), poor inclusion practices (e.g., no inservice or consultations, etc.) have had a negative effect on teacher attitudes toward accepting an included student. However, review of the literature suggests that teachers who have had a positive inclusion experience feel successful and base it on their own level of competence (Wilczenski, 1992).

The rest of this chapter explores current literature regarding teacher competency as it is related to inclusive education. Studies in the area of inclusion have indicated that teachers' positive attitudes and feelings of competency have been reported to be essential if disabled students are to have successful inclusion experiences. As Wilczenski (1992) and Bender (1985) have found, positive self competency attitudes may result in positive inclusive experiences. These studies have failed to link teacher competency with the preferences for a specific level of disability.

The review continues with discussion about teacher training. It will continue with the rationale for the current study and end with the statement of the hypothesis.

### **Teacher Competency**

Teacher competency is a term that has been consistently seen throughout literature pertaining to inclusion. For example, Peterson (1983) states that teachers' attitudes toward including children with disabilities tends to be more positive when teachers perceive themselves to be competent educating these students. Often, when change occurs, teachers have a tendency to self-evaluate themselves in order to be prepared. Having little background in an area also affects how one might approach a task, but often goes back to self-competency (Fullan, 1991).

Teacher competency refers to how a teacher views his or her ability to fulfill a task. For the purpose of this literature review, teacher competency is related to inclusion.

Janney, Snell, Beers, and Raynes (1995) studied teacher competency by interviewing 26 general education teachers. In response to a question about initial beliefs and ideas in regard to inclusion, only 12% felt they were not competent to have an

included child. The limitation to this study, in addition to the small sample size, was the fact that 80% of the teachers in this district volunteered to be the general education teacher of an included student. Also, participants were part of a planned change from segregated to integrated education (Janney, et al., 1995). These findings were very similar to work done by Bradley and West (1994).

The purpose of the Bradley and West (1994) study initially was to assess staff training needs. However, by proceeding with the study, they encountered the factor of teacher competency. By interviewing 32 staff members, they found that the majority of general education teachers believed themselves to be self competent and prepared for inclusion. However, it is important to note that only 12 of the staff members were general education teachers. The rest of the staff were special education teachers (5), related services personnel (5), building administrators (5), and special education aides (5) (Bradley & West, 1994).

Both Hanney et al. (1995) and Bradley and West (1994) have seriously limited the proclaimed strengths of their findings. Both studies, by using small sample sizes, (i.e., 26 and 32, respectively), may have limited the possibility of encountering true feelings of competency. The other flaw of both studies is the method by which both went about gathering information. In interviews, interviewees may have a tendency to react to the topic and mirror what the interviewer is expecting to hear (Fullan, 1991). The generalization of the findings of these studies, therefore, cannot be assumed to other areas of education, only to the specific area from which they originated.

Another study which replicates the method of gathering information by interview is

an additional study done by Janney, Snell, Beers, and Raynes (1995). Fifty-three teachers and administrators were interviewed in a group setting that was a round table discussion. Ninety-two percent of the administrators believed teachers in their district were competent to reach included students. In addition, 85% of teachers interviewed believed they were competent to teach included students

There are important factors involved in the Janney et al., (1995) study that should not be overlooked. First, administrators picked the teachers to be involved in this study. Second, the interviews occurred in a large focus group. The possibility for bias here is very evident. Teachers and administrators in the same focus group may foster a mirror effect of reacting to those who speak before you.

Each of these studies (Janney et al., 1995, Bradley & West, 1994, Janney et al. 1995) have common weaknesses, such as small sample size, method of retrieving information, and previous background with the topic. Some strengths include the diversity of teaching levels and experience. Two of the studies (Bradley & West, 1994 ;Janney et al.) included administrators, related service personnel, and special educators, from grades Kindergarten through 8.

Although the studies described above involved teachers in grades Kindergarten through 8, other studies have been done with those not yet in the teaching field. Take, for example, a study done by Leyser (1986). Two hundred and sixteen undergraduates majoring in elementary education completed a Teacher Mainstreaming Competency Questionnaire during their last week of student teaching. The first rating was of the extent to which they felt teachers needed to be skilled, and the second was of the extent to which

they possessed the competency. Seventy-five percent of respondents felt as though they needed to be skilled but did not feel they possessed the competency. The discrepancies between importance and ability ratings were used for training priorities. Therefore, the results of this study can be directly applied to college teacher training programs.

So far, the studies reviewed have focused on teacher competency. None of the above studies proposed competency for a specific handicapping condition based on severity. Nor do they mention the link between competency and attitude.

### **Teacher Training**

A consistent factor related to the inclusion of handicapped students into regular classroom was teacher training (Finn, 1980). Teacher training is an issue that has been researched along with inclusion. Teacher training refers to the practice school districts providing teachers with information and application procedures about inclusion (Stephens & Brown, 1980).

According to Stephens and Brown (1980), in most teacher preparation programs, perspective teachers often fail to receive information about full inclusion. Because of this, they suggest, it is critical to make every effort to provide appropriate training for teachers.

Research done by Goessling (1994) examines 14 teachers, in grades Kindergarten through 12, of students with severe disabilities who are serviced in the regular classroom. Although the definition varies from state to state, in this study, a severe disability was described as a wide range of students with multiple physical, medical, mental, social, and emotional disabilities. The teachers identified themselves as regular education teachers during a focus group. The focus group met in a meeting room together and responded to

questions regarding necessary requirements for successful inclusion. A facilitator record recorded all responses.

All of the teachers, according to Goessling (1994), noted an increased demand in collaboration, supervision of support services personnel, and curriculum modification. Most importantly, all noted that the one inservice training they received was sufficient for their inclusion experience that year.

Although this study presented the issue of teacher training, it does not give an adequate sample size. In addition, a focus group may be biased. There is sometimes concern with group discussions that participants may share information that is sometimes not valid (Goessling, 1992). Participants may sometimes feel obligated to share information that is not necessarily true, only partially.

In a study done by Stephens and Braun (1980), 1,034 teachers in grades Kindergarten through 8, from 10 school districts, responded to a questionnaire. On this questionnaire, teachers were asked to answer questions about what would make a successful inclusion program. Sixty-one percent of the teachers asked indicated a need for a additional teacher training. Unfortunately what Stephens and Braun (1980) fail to acknowledge is the fact that of the 61% who responded with a need for more training, only 13% received training prior to having an included student.

Another study done by Zigmond, Leven, and Laurie (1985), replicated the findings of Stephens and Braun (1980). Using the same methodology, a questionnaire was completed by 151 secondary school teachers who had a learning disabled student. Just as Stephens and Braun (1980) asked what is needed to make a successful inclusion program,



these researchers posed a similar question: "What is the administrator's role in inclusion?"

Results similar to Stephens and Braun (1980) were reported, including the finding that 68% of the staff felt that they did not have enough teacher training prior to having and included student (Zigmond et al., 1985). Of interest, however, was the finding that 65% felt positive about accepting students with disabilities.

Using the same methodology, Finn (1980), questioned 40 fourth and fifth grade teachers in one rural school district. A questionnaire was used to measure the effectiveness of previous inservicing and to identify concerns regarding inclusion. The questionnaire used was a Likert type scale and left a section for open questions (e.g., list your concerns about having an included student) (Finn, 1980). Seventy percent of the respondents said training provided by the district was effective.

However, there are serious limitations to this study. First, respondents were from one rural district, limiting the sample. Second, teachers who had included students received additional training prior to receiving the included students. By having received additional training, the respondents may not have considered the question of more inservicing as relevant.

All of the studies reviewed so far have similar strengths and weaknesses. Research is more valid with a large sample, as in the Stephens and Braun (1980) and Zigmond et al. (1985) studies. Both of these studies included larger numbers of teachers from multiple districts. In addition, by using a questionnaire, you are entitling the respondent to confidentiality, excluding the study done by Goessling (1994).

However, despite the concerns regarding sample size and methodology, once

common result is compelling: most teachers feel the need for more teacher training.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom with their age-appropriate peers continues to be a topic of debate. Due to the continuing movement toward inclusion, teachers are responsible for its implementation. Having reviewed literature on inclusion, the common underlying factor with inclusion is teacher attitude.

The purpose of this study is to measure teachers' attitudes for a specific level of disability and to see if teaching experience is a determining factor. To date, few if any studies correlate teaching experience and preference for a specific level of a disability.

### **Limitations of the Study**

A questionnaire will be used to complete this research. One limitation is the return rate of surveys. Using three schools will hopefully increase the rate of return, but does not necessarily guarantee it. In addition, when using a questionnaire, you are forced to depend upon the integrity of those completing it.

### **Statement of the Hypothesis**

This study hypothesizes that: Teachers who have taught included students will have no significant preference for a specific disability; and teachers with no experience teaching included students will have a level of preference.

## Chapter Three

### Methodology

#### Introduction

This is a study using a descriptive design. This is a commonly used design to investigate teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of handicapped students in the regular classroom as reflected by the studies reviewed in the previous chapter.

#### Participants

The sample included 150 regular class teachers in New Jersey, representing urban, suburban, and inner city school districts across the state. Questionnaires were distributed (see Appendix A) during an after school meeting in their respective schools. A total of 50 questionnaires were returned.

The three districts will be referred to as District A (urban), District B (suburban), and District C (inner city). District A is a lower middle, culturally diverse district with approximately 8,200 students enrolled. District B is an upper middle, predominately white, affluent district with approximately 6,400 students enrolled. District C is a socio-economically disadvantaged district with a large minority population. The approximate number of students enrolled is 7,300.

#### Materials

The 16-item scale was used to measure attitudes toward inclusive education. The specific focus was on teacher's attitudes toward placement in the regular class for students requiring social, physical, academic, or behavioral accommodations in the classroom.

Social integration referred to the placement of students with social difficulties in regular classes. Items concerning physical integration referred to the placement of students with physical or sensory disabilities in regular classes. Academic integration pertained to the placement of students with learning problems in regular classes.

The survey used a 6-point Likert type scale and was anchored by extreme ratings of strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (6). In addition, an information sheet relative to teacher data (e.g., years teaching, ethnic background) was also distributed.

### **Procedure**

Questionnaires were distributed during meetings after school. Participants were given a definition of inclusion and told to complete both sides of the survey on a voluntary basis. Participants were directed to read the survey carefully before choosing one of the six answers. When surveys were complete, participants were to place the survey in a marked envelope in the school office. The researcher gathered surveys on a daily basis.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Results**

This is a study using a descriptive design. This is a common design used to investigate teacher attitudes toward inclusion as reflected in the previous chapters. The purpose of this study was to examine the preference for a disability teachers with previous experience teaching included students have versus teachers with no experience teaching special education students in the classroom. A total of 50 teachers were surveyed. Twenty surveys from the experienced group and 20 surveys from the inexperienced group were randomly selected.

#### **Social Factor**

Mean rankings were obtained from the four statements on the survey questioning social factors. The four questions were;

Students who are shy and withdrawn should be in regular classes. (4)

Students whose speech is difficult to understand should be in regular classes. (6)

Students who use sign language or communication boards should be in regular classes. (11)

Students who are frequently absent from school should be in regular classes. (16)

The mean ranking on these questions for the experienced group was 5.03 and for the inexperienced 4.36. The difference between these means was significant,  $t(158) = 3.32$ ,  $p < .001$ . Table 1 presents the mean responses and standard deviations for each of these questions.

**Table 1**

**Mean Responses for Statements Regarding Social Factors**

Statement	Exp.	Standard Deviation	Inexp.	Standard Deviation
4	5.55	0.51	5.25	0.97
6	4.9	0.64	4.3	1.59
11	4.65	0.99	3.4	1.5
16	5	0.86	4.5	1.7

**Physical Factor**

Mean rankings were obtained on the survey to establish differences between experienced and inexperienced teachers toward students with physical disabilities based on the responses to the following statements:

Students who cannot move without help from others should be in regular classes. (3)

Students who cannot read standard print and need to use Braille should be in regular classes. (7)

Students who need training in self-help skills and activities of daily living should be in regular classes. (10)

Students who cannot hear conversational speech should be in regular classes. (14)

The overall mean ranking obtained by the experienced group was 4.30, while that obtained by the inexperienced group was 2.99. Table 2 presents the mean ratings and standard deviation for each statement in this cluster.

**Table 2**

**Mean Responses for Statements Regarding Physical Factors**

Statement	Exp.	Standard Deviation	Inexp.	Standard Deviation
3	4.85	0.67	3.9	1.86
7	4.8	0.89	2.95	1.8
10	3.85	1.63	2.65	1.5
14	3.7	1.3	2.45	1.37

There was a highly significant discrepancy between the mean scores in this cluster between the experienced teachers ( $M = 4.30$ ) and the inexperienced teachers, ( $M = 2.99$ ),  $t(158) = 5.52, p < .0001$ . Additionally, separate pairwise comparisons indicated that significant discrepancies between the two groups were evident for each of the four questions in this cluster:

Statement 3  $t(38) = 2.12, p < .05$

Statement 7  $t(38) = 4.13, p < .0001$

Statement 10  $t(38) = 2.42, p < .05$

Statement 14  $t(38) = 2.97, p < .01$

**Academic Factor**

Mean rankings were also obtained for the four statements on the survey questioning academic factors. The statements are listed below.

Students whose academic achievement is 2 or more years below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes. (1)

Students whose academic achievement is 1 year below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes. (5)

Students who have difficulty expressing their thoughts verbally should be in regular classes. (9)

Students who need an individualized functional academic program in everyday reading and math skills should be in regular classes. (13)

Results are presented in Table 3. The mean scores indicate that, overall, there is a significant preference for a student with academic disabilities. The ratings are higher and more positive. However, as indicated in Table 3, statements 5 and 9 represent responses more similar between the groups. The t-test differed, but the two items appear minimal.

**Table 3**

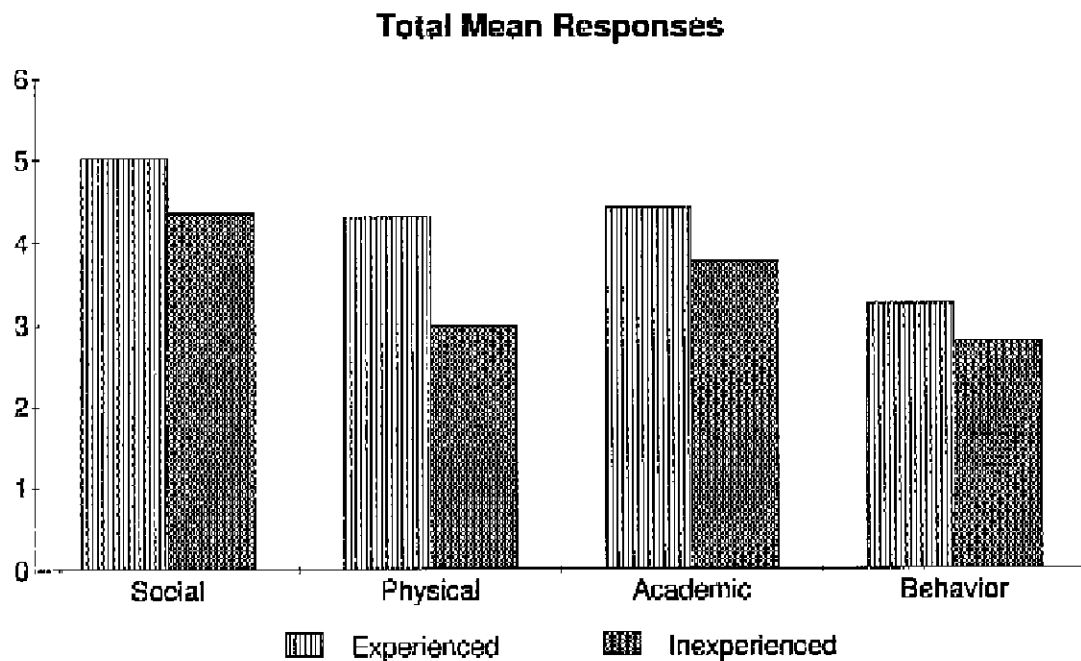
**Mean Responses for Statements Regarding Academic Factors**

Statement	Exp.	Standard Deviation	Inexp.	Standard Deviation
1	3.75	1.56	2.55	1.1
5	5	1.03	4.75	1.59
9	5.2	0.7	4.85	1.04
13	3.75	0.97	2.9	1.41

There was a significant discrepancy between the responses of experienced and inexperienced teachers,  $t(158) = 2.83, p < .01$ . The mean scores obtained for this cluster appear to be swayed by two statements. A comparison of clusters appear in Figure 1.



Figure 1



### Behavior Factor

The rankings obtained on the survey related to the behavior clusters indicate that there was no significant discrepancy between the responses of the two groups (experienced  $M = 3.25$ ; inexperienced  $M = 2.79$ ). Table 4 represents this. The four statements are listed below.

Students who are physically aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes. (2)

Students who are verbally aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes. (8)

Students who cannot control their behavior and disrupt activities should be in regular classes. (12)

Students who do not follow school rules for conduct should be in regular classes. (15)

**Table 4**

**Mean Responses to Statements Regarding Behavior Factors**

Statement	Exp.	Standard Deviation	Inexp.	Standard Deviation
2	2.3	1.13	2.15	1.04
8	3.5	1.27	2.75	0.97
12	2.2	0.95	1.75	0.85
15	3.25	1.37	2.45	1.19

Although there was no significant difference between groups for the cluster as a whole, there was a significant difference between groups in their responses to statement number 8,  $t(38) = 2.09$ ,  $p < .05$ . This suggests experienced teachers might be more tolerant of verbal outbursts than the inexperienced.

**Summary**

As illustrated above, it appears that experience does make a difference in terms of teacher attitudes, specifically preference for a specific disability.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion**

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the preference for a disability teachers with previous experience teaching included students have versus teachers with no experience teaching special education students in the regular classroom. It was hypothesized that (a) Teachers who have taught included students will have no significant preference level for a specific disability; and (b) teachers with no experience teaching included students will have a definite level of preference. The hypotheses of this study were met although the difference is not as clear as originally anticipated.

Teachers who had experience teaching included students had consistent scores within the four factors of strongly agree and agree. The one exception was the behavior factor. The experienced teachers disagreed that students with behavior disabilities should be in regular classes.

The teachers who did not have experience teaching included students had scores ranging from the agree to the disagree range. Social disabilities were the preference for this group as indicated by most of the ratings being in the agree range. Inexperienced teachers somewhat agreed that students with physical and academic disabilities should be in the regular class. Consistent with the experienced teacher, inexperienced teachers felt that students with behavior disabilities should not be in the regular class.

These findings provide insight into the ways inexperienced teachers respond to the possibility of having a handicapped student in his or her class. In addition, it gives an indication of which disabilities are seen as more difficult to accommodate.

### **Social Factor**

The mean scores indicated that both groups believed that students with social disabilities should be in the regular classroom.

These findings underscore the tension between implementing instructional modifications in the inclusive setting as opposed to social interventions. Perhaps the demands of both teachers involved in the inclusion of social disabilities seem to be less significant and therefore easier to accommodate.

### **Physical Factor**

The physical factor was the area with the most severe discrepancy. Experienced teachers believed students with physical disabilities should be in the regular class. The inexperienced group on the other hand indicated that they would not prefer a student with physical disabilities in the regular class.

One of the rationales for inclusion is the perceived independence and improved functional skills for students with physical disabilities. However, the rankings given by the inexperienced group represent a preconceived notion that students with physical disabilities would require more teacher involvement and time. The responses made by the inexperienced group are a good indicator of why it is important that teachers be inserviced prior to any type of inclusion taking place.

### **Academic Factor**

There was a discrepancy between the rankings obtained by the experienced group and the inexperienced group. Responses indicated that experienced teachers had no significant preference, but the inexperienced teachers did not feel as though students with academic disabilities should be educated in the regular class.

Responses to this cluster of statements indicate that it is possible that inexperienced teachers feel more accountable to meet academic needs . By not taking advantage of alternate assessment, grading, and other academic adaptations, students with academic disabilities could truly suffer in the included setting.

### **Behavior Factor**

Neither the experienced group, nor the inexperienced group had a preference for students with behavior disabilities. They both agreed with the statements addressing the integration of students manifesting behavioral problems.

These responses are representative of attitudinal comments frequently made when discussing inclusion. Feelings of fear and frustration about having to deal with the new role are often expressed. In addition, teachers found it easiest to deal with statements describing the need for only minor regular class accommodations, such as social integration. Integrating students with behavioral disabilities would require substantial accommodations.

### **Limitations**

By using a survey, researchers rely upon the honesty and integrity of the respondents. Although surveys were collected from three districts, the responses may have been determined by what the respondent felt he or she should state.

Perhaps the response pattern seen was due to the structure of the statements. The statements were phrased in a manner that forced teachers to respond.

### **Recommendations**

These findings seem to indicate the stereotypical fear that education has toward change. It appears that without experiencing inclusion, one can make assumptions about what the change in the regular class will bring.

For future studies, it would be beneficial to either interview teachers either by phone or in person. Future research should also include some type of inservice prior to participation in the survey.

## **Conclusions**

Inclusion for students with all disabilities is a very difficult task. It requires training, teacher competency, and consultations. Having preconceived notions, or preference for a specific disability can be interpreted as a natural reaction to the confusion and uncertainty that result from the changing role expectancies in a school. The challenge for schools today is to understand that teachers will try to do their job, as long as they are aware of the changes involved. These changes should be supported through continuous efforts to develop new skills and provide teachers with the knowledge base and support needed to make inclusion successful.

## Appendix A

is scale concerns requirements for placing students with disabilities in the "least restrictive" educational environment. Inclusive education means that all students with disabilities are mainstreamed and become the responsibility of the regular class teacher who is supported by specialists.

### INSTRUCTIONS

On the blank line, please place the number indicating your reaction to each item according to how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Provide an answer for every item.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	5	4	3	2	1

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Students whose academic achievement is 2 or more years below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.</p> <p>2. Students who are physically aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.</p> <p>3. Students who cannot move without help from others should be in regular classes.</p> <p>4. Students who are shy and withdrawn should be in regular classes.</p> <p>5. Students whose academic achievement is 1 year below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.</p> <p>6. Students whose speech is difficult to understand should be in regular classes.</p> <p>7. Students who cannot read standard print and need to use Braille should be in regular classes.</p> <p>8. Students who are verbally aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.</p> | <p>9. Students who have difficulty expressing their thoughts verbally should be in regular classes.</p> <p>10. Students who need training in self-help skills and activities of daily living should be in regular classes.</p> <p>11. Students who use sign language or communication boards should be in regular classes.</p> <p>12. Students who cannot control their behavior and disrupt activities should be in regular classes.</p> <p>13. Students who need an individualized functional academic program in everyday reading and math skills should be in regular classes.</p> <p>14. Students who cannot hear conversational speech should be in regular classes.</p> <p>15. Students who do not follow school rules for conduct should be in regular classes.</p> <p>16. Students who are frequently absent from school should be in regular classes.</p> |
|--|---|