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Educators' Attitudes Towards Implementation of Inclusive Education

Kimberly Evans Holmes
dkhkeh@verizon.net

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EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION
OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
in
Special Education

by
Kimberly Evans Holmes

March 2018

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Approved by:

Sang Nam, First Reader

Kathleen Phillips, Second Reader

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand educators' attitudes toward implementation of inclusive education. The survey study investigated the collaborative efforts, responsibility, accommodations, and training these educators are working towards teaching students in an inclusive environment. This study adopted a descriptive survey design, where 59 educators completed the online survey regarding their attitudes towards implementation of inclusive education. The opinions regarding necessary accommodations for students with Individual Education Program (IEPs) were extremely supportive; whereby 98% of educators feel that they are willing to make necessary accommodations for students. Overwhelmingly, the educators disagree that they are not provided with sufficient training opportunities in order to teach students with disabilities. The educators agree that they need more training in order to appropriately plan and advocate effectively for students.

The major findings on research questions reveal that 53% of educators in this district strongly agree that they feel comfortable in working collaboratively with each other regarding students with IEPs. Also, 22% of educators strongly disagree that the regular education teachers should only be responsible for teaching students who are not identified as having special needs. In spite of the small sample which was a school district in Southern California that was used for this survey, the findings of the study were valuable for several reasons. First, the

educators' attitudes towards inclusive education were more positive than negative; and second, both special and general educators like to collaborate, display responsibility, and accommodate services to students with disabilities.

Key Words: General education, special education, teacher, inclusive education, inclusion, student with disabilities.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Inclusive education has been a long debated topic of school reform for many years. Since the passage of the No Child Left behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, there has been discussion as well as debate about how the law impacts those students who have disabilities. Inclusion involves the placing of students with learning disabilities and/or impairments in general education classrooms and integrating their education experiences with students in a general education class. In as much, Roach (1995) states inclusion is described as a place or a specific “method of instruction, but rather a philosophy of supporting children in their learning, a philosophy that holds that all children can learn” (pp. 295-296).

Startlingly, more than 40 years later, Dudley-Marling & Burns (2014) acknowledged when children with disabilities were entirely “excluded from public education to the current situation in which all students with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education” and most students occupy a substantial portion of their school day in classrooms together with their peers who do not have disabilities (p. 18). In addition, other compelling rationale for inclusive education includes moral, philosophical, and ethical components. This justification is discrimination of any group of people and could possibly be a

“violation of civil rights” (Thousand & Villa, 2000, p. 83). Lastly, Lienert & Grosse (2003) acknowledged that the method of a successful inclusive education is a “two-way process” and consequently, rules and procedures need to be adjusted to prevent future difficulties (p. 48).

As represented in Figure 1, this data represents information provided by the U.S. Department of Education from the 38th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for 2016. This data represents several factors regarding students who were educated with their peers. In this particular 38th Annual Report to Congress, 62.6% of students with disabilities (SWDs) were inside the regular classroom 80% or more of the day. In comparison, 18.6% of SWDs were inside the regular classroom 40% to 79% of the day. Additionally, 13.5% of the SWDs were educated with their peers inside the regular classroom less than 40% of the day. Finally, other factors relating to students who were educated with their peers were 5.3% in other environments (U.S. Department of Education 2016, p. 28).

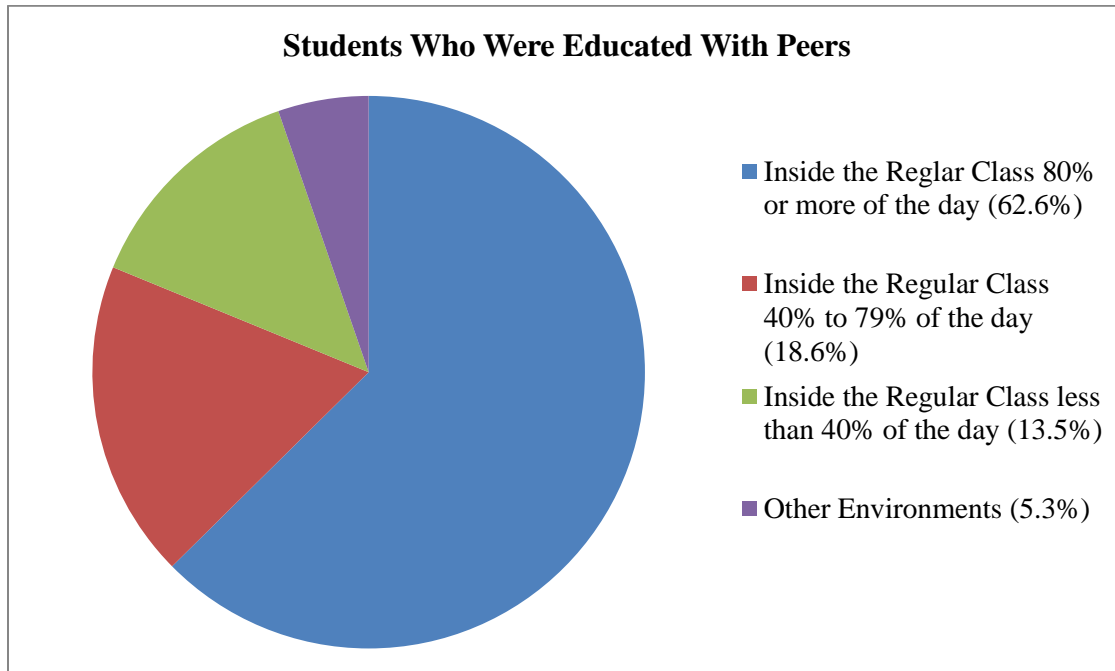


Figure 1. Students Who Were Educated With Peers.

In fact, Wilson (2000) confirmed that there are an “increasing number of students with disabilities” who have been placed in general education settings (p/ 120). Although these numbers are small, they are significant. The recent national data indicate that during the 2013-2014 school years, approximately 61.8% of all students with disabilities (ages 3 – 21) were receiving a major portion of their education within general education classrooms (Institute of Education Sciences, 2016, p. 160).

Also, an important statistic from the U.S. Department of Education from Fall 2014 is the number and percentage of children and students ages 3 through 21 served under *IDEA*, Part B is 634,564 and 7.6% of the population is served respectfully (U.S. Department of Education 2016. p.282).

Interestingly from that report, the U.S. Department of Education (2016) states that from 2005 through 2014 the percentage of students ages 6 through 21, served under *IDEA*, Part B, and educated inside the general education classroom 80% or more of the day increased from 53.6 percent to 62.6 percent. Also, the percentage of students'- ages 6 through 21, served under *IDEA*, and educated inside the general education classroom for no more than 79% of the day and no less than 40% of the day decreased from 25.8 percent in 2005 to 18.6 percent in 2014. Similarly, the percentage of these students educated inside the general education classroom for less than 40% of the day decreased from 16.6 percent to 13.5 percent between those years. Finally, the percentage of students ages 6 through 21, served under *IDEA*, and educated in "Other Environments" increased from 4 percent in 2005 to 5.3 percent in 2014 (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, p.82). These statistics from the U.S. Department of Education are confirming that students are being educated more in an inclusive education than before.

The purpose of this study is to understand educators' attitudes toward implementation of inclusive education in a Southern California school district. The survey study investigated their positivity as well as negativity towards implementation of inclusive education with the following specific research questions: What are the opinions of educators on collaboration to include students with IEPs in general education settings? What are the opinions of

educators on necessary accommodations for students with IEPs? What are the opinions of educators on the responsibility for teaching students with IEPs? What are the opinions of educators on their training and support for teaching students with IEPs?

These questions represent the 22 survey questions educators completed with an online survey. In addition, the answers to these questions reveal how positive or negative educator's attitudes are towards inclusive education in small Southern California school district. Inclusion conjures up different attitudes depending on the role of the educator. Special Education teachers often view inclusion differently than General Education Teachers. Chesley & Calaluce Jr., (1998) state that some educators claim that full inclusion is nonexistence and only "exists" to those who are proponents (p. 488). However, P.L. 94-142 was passed and this guaranteed a free appropriate education to every child with a disability. Whether you are a supporter or a non-supporter of inclusive education, there are definitely pros and cons on this subject. In addition, there have been accomplishments and failures of inclusive education. Nevertheless, what will be the ultimate success for inclusive education or will inclusive education demonstrate a failure?

Inclusive education has been and will be a long debated topic of school reform for many years to come. Although we have made developments in the progress of students with disabilities, inclusive education is here to stay.

However, others view the increased proportion of students with disabilities in regular education as a “step toward truly inclusive schools” (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014, p. 15).

Purpose of the Study

This study surveyed educators’ attitudes toward implementation of inclusive education within a school district in Southern California; and examined the collaborative efforts, responsibility, and training of these educators towards teaching students in an inclusive environment. Kraska & Boyle (2014) agree that the importance of teachers in successful implementation of inclusion is evident since teachers are the people who are in charge of providing educational services to those students in a mainstream classroom (p. 230). More importantly, Swain (2012) said “teachers with more positive attitudes toward inclusion are more apt to...meet the needs of individuals with a range of abilities” (p. 76).

Just as attitude and implementation work together, so does the use of strategies educators need to use to implement inclusion. Educators at any career stage can, however, implement a number of simple strategies to increase their effectiveness and grow more confident in inclusive environments. Educators can start out with small changes for students with special needs without disturbing the routine of the class for other students (Hardin & Hardin, 2002, p. 176). Without question, this is important because it demonstrates that

educators in the district are accommodating each child irrespective of their ability or disability.

General educators are being asked, as well as being required, to take a more active role in educating students with disabilities. The present study was designed to reveal any emergent themes regarding these educators' beliefs and practices about inclusion. The themes are important to understand educators' attitudes on inclusive education and the enthusiasm to teach in an inclusive education school or classroom. Although there are some general education teachers that feel differently about how students with disabilities should be taught. Some feel that they should come prepared, and others feel that should not have any difficult behavior. However they feel, McHatton & McCray (2007) state that teachers "need to be prepared to work with all learners" if teachers are educating students with disabilities in general education settings (p. 26).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In the early 1900's John Dewey was instrumental in the beginning of the inclusion movement. He believed that inclusive education was a start in the "reform effort" (Thousand & Villa 2000, p.76). Then, in 1954, major changes occurred with *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. Changes were made affecting developments in law, politics, and ultimately education. This law led to families demanding "equal educational opportunities" for their children and challenging school districts who exclude "their children with disabilities" (Lienert & Grosse 2003, p. 43).

In the 1960's several instances of activism on behalf of children with disabilities occurred as well. One case in point was *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*. This case involved a group of parents of whose children had been identified as mentally retarded successfully challenged a state law that absorbed school districts of responsibility for educating students deemed to be uneducable or untrainable. The result of the case was that the State of Pennsylvania acknowledged its responsibility that all students will be provided with a free education.

During the 1970's Congress enacted some major changes and The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 was passed. Lienert & Grosse (2003) confirmed it was "to prohibit discrimination against individuals in institutions receiving federal financial assistance (p. 43). This law was important because it represents legal concepts of equality for all students. It paved the way for inclusion to be supported. Another case that was in court was the *Roncker v. Walter* in 1983. Thousand & Villa (2000) said this case "addressed the issue of bringing educational services to the child versus bringing the child to the services" (p. 83). The ruling was in favor of inclusion, but it also determined that placement must be made on an individual basis.

Next, the circumstances changed with the passage of PL 94-142. This public law provided that all students with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment. In 1990 PL 94-142 reauthorized as PL 101-476 Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA). An additional case from 1993 was *Oberti v. Board of Education of Borough of Clementon School District*; which was about a boy with Down Syndrome to receive his education in his neighborhood regular school with adequate and necessary supports, placing the burden of proof for compliance with the IDEA's mainstreaming requirements squarely upon the school district and the state rather than the family. The school district did not provide him with the resources and support he needed to succeed in an inclusive

environment. In addition, the judge in this case ruled that the staff was not properly trained to assist this student in his success.

Another case in 1994 was *Sacramento Unified School District v. Holland* in which students with disabilities more than ever were assumed to participate in general education. Thousand & Villa (2000) confirmed that in this particular case, Judge Levi said that “when school districts place students with disabilities, the presumption and starting point is the mainstream” (p. 83). Also, Judge Levi acknowledged that the general education classroom was the appropriate placement and that he highlighted the social benefits of inclusion for this student.

Over the last thirty years, since PL 94-142 was enacted, these court case decisions have changed the way students with disabilities have had to interpret the language of the law.

Attitudes on Inclusive Education

General Education Attitudes

In order for inclusive education to work properly, there needs to be collaborative efforts between all educators. This includes the collaboration between general and special education teachers. They need to work together to meet all the needs of students with disabilities. However, when educators are trying their best to collaborate, often times their attitude and behavior of other educators can be fundamental in the success or failure of inclusive programs.

There are a number of concerns prompting their attitudes, as well as behaviors on the part of general educators. Wilson (2000) confirmed that “teacher attitude can actually play a greater role in the educational placement of a student with disability” (p. 122).

In order to be successful in this, schools need to identify and address educator concerns before implementation of inclusion begins. Salend and Duhaney (1999) discovered that “two thirds of general educators supported the placement of students with disabilities in GE classrooms and only one third or fewer...reported they had the training or resources to implement inclusion effectively” (p.120).

Overall it is important for all educators to take responsibility and work collaboratively in order for the students to be successful. Allday, Neilsen-Gatti & Hudson (2014) feel those teachers who “accept responsibility to lead an inclusive classroom...are more likely to improve their quality of instruction” (p. 299). The overall perspective of an inclusive classroom Wilson (2000) states is that collaboration “among educators has several advantages” (p. 127).

In order to “be effective and efficient collaborative team members” Thousand and Villa (2000) suggest “having an opportunity to collaborate” is an important component in order for inclusion to work (p. 85). All in the all, the benefits for the students outweigh all of the disadvantages.

Special Education Teacher Attitudes

Just as important as general educators, special educators need to have a positive attitude regarding inclusive education in order for it to be successful. These teachers, Cook, Semmel, & Gerber (2000) said are “often sought as experts to take responsibility for and lead the day to day implementation of inclusion reforms” (p. 200). These particular educators are highly interested in meeting the educational needs and goals for their students. Cook, Semmel, & Gerber (1999) confirm that they are “dedicated to meeting the needs of students with disabilities” because they have received specialized training...and are frequently seen as knowledgeable advocates for students with disabilities” (p.200).

Special education teachers often feel that general education teachers are detached when dealing with inclusion and placing their student’s appropriately. Jones (2012) feels that “the dissemination of information to general education teachers comprises one facet of the special education teacher’s collaborative role” (p. 297). However, Olson, Chalmers & Hoover (1997) confirm that in order to “provide effective services to students with disabilities, the development of collaborative relationships between general and special educators has been shown to increase the perceptions of general educators” (p. 28).

There needs to be more emphasis on the part of both general and special education teachers regarding serving children with disabilities. Roach (1995)

feels “that teachers be brought together to learn, plan, and share the successes and failures of inclusion” (p. 298). The goal of the IDEA is clearly to strengthen the connection between special education and the general education curriculum while ensuring due process and “high academic achievement standards” for individuals with disabilities (IDEA 2004). The need for collaboration between general and special educators is essential if directives within IDEA are to be met.

Within this research, the study focused on a small percentage of educators within a school district; and within those parameters it discussed how inclusion works, the practices for educator’s attitudes implementing inclusion, and strategies educators are using to implement inclusion. The (n=9) special education teachers addressed this by stating that inclusion is allowing special education students to be included in a general education classroom setting with the support of a special education teacher. More importantly, question 5 asked if they felt comfortable working collaboratively regarding students with IEPs. Ninety-seven percent agreed that they felt comfortable in this situation.

Administration Attitudes

Not only do general educators and special educators play an important role in inclusive education, so does administration, more specifically the principal. Cook, Semmel & Gerber (2000) state that “the support and leadership of principals has been documented to be successful for inclusion” (p. 200). However, well supportive they may be, attitude and commitment also plays an

important role in it as well. As leaders of the school, they determine and implement decisions. In order for schools to become more successful in including students with special needs, attitudinal, organizational, and instructional changes must take place. Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) agree that “a major player in the change process is the school principal” (p. 181).

In order for inclusive education to be implemented into schools, researchers have studied different implementation methods for principals to use. Cohen (2015) found that “five traits were necessary in order to implement change”. One important trait noted was to be able to “plan and instruct...an inclusive school which provides educational services for all students” (p. 759).

The principal must also have skills to create and support their staff. They must show a willingness to increase collaboration, cooperative learning, peer coaching, and curriculum modifications in order for inclusion to be successful for all key personnel. In order for it to be beneficial for staff, Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) said “the decisions made through collaboration...must be recognized as appropriate for that group, at that moment, on that issue” (p. 182).

All in all the principal’s attitude and responsibility for inclusion to work at any school site is vital and important. Praisner (2003) agree that “principals’ attitudes about inclusion could result in...increased opportunities for students” (p. 136).

In summarizing these attitudes on inclusive education, educators need to remember the intent to support children with disabilities.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Participants

An invitation to complete a survey was sent to 75 participating educators, of which 59 educators completed the online survey questionnaire asking respondents to rank their agreement with questions regarding their attitude on inclusion (78.66% return rate). These participants included special education teachers (n = 9); general education teachers (n = 40); speech-language pathologists (n = 2); school psychologists (n = 2); other (n = 6), which comprised of (Program Specialist, School Counselor, Administrator, Intervention Specialist, or a Mental Health Therapist). The data was collected during the spring of 2017 and the first initial email was sent out on May 30, 2017. Table 1 shows the characteristics of participants, including gender, position at school, and the location where they work with students who have disabilities. The participants in this sample were predominately female (91%) and male (8%) rate. Data indicates that 69% of teachers work with students with disabilities in a general education classroom setting.

Table 1. Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Sample <i>n</i> (%)
Gender	
Male	5 (8)
Female	53 (91)
Position at School	
Special Education Teacher	9 (15)
General Education Teacher	40 (68)
Speech / Language Pathologist	2 (3)
School Psychologist	2 (3)
Other	6 (10)
(Program Specialist, School Counselor, Administrator, Intervention Specialist, Mental Health Therapist)	
Where do you work with children with IEP's	
In a general education classroom	41 (69)
In a special education classroom	8 (14)
In a non-classroom (office, small work space etc.)	4 (7)
Other	4 (7)
(Facilitator/Administrator; Both in class and pull out settings; GE classrooms, SE classrooms, non-classroom space); Both general education and special education classrooms)	
I do not work directly with children who have IEP's	2 (3)

Data Collection

The survey instrument was a questionnaire that included structured and unstructured questions. There were a total of twenty six questions addressing the topic of inclusion. Out of the twenty six, twenty four were structured consisting of a Likert scale items, which ranged from 1 to 6 (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree or disagree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree, and 6 = don't know). The last two questions were unstructured questions that asked

the participants to respond in their own words about inclusion. All items addressed attitude toward inclusion (e.g., All efforts should be made to educate students who have an IEP in the regular education classroom; I believe teachers feel supported when faced with challenges presented by students with behavioral difficulties in the classroom; and I feel comfortable in working collaboratively with special education teachers and regular education teachers regarding students with IEPs).

The questions obtained for this survey was developed by several influences. One factor was with familiarity and experience with inclusive education through participating school district as a special education teacher. The other factor was the discussion amongst the general education population in this school district. Next, the questions for the survey were submitted to the Special Education, Rehabilitation & Counseling Department for their review. The survey as a whole provided quantitative data on an educators' attitude on the topic of inclusive education on two different approaches. The first three questions collected information about participants, such as gender, position held at school, and location of said services. The next section contained 22 questions about intended to examine an educators' attitude towards inclusive education.

Next, the survey was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) through California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) began with an approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) through California State

University, San Bernardino. In addition, a consent letter from the researcher's school district had to be provided with the approval from the IRB Board. The survey questionnaire was designed and distributed through California State University's San Bernardino Technological Department. The software system, Qualtrics, was used to design and construct the survey. The survey was then emailed to (n = 75) respondents of a certain school district via CSUSB's email system. Out of the fifty-nine survey questionnaires completed, fifty-eight survey questionnaires were fully completed, however one was started, but not fully completed.

The participants' responses to the twenty-four Likert survey questions were transcribed and categorized by question. It should also be noted that not all participants responded to every question (Question 1, (n = 58); Question 13, (n=58); Question 14, (n = 58); Question 15, (n = 58); and Question 22, (n = 58). The difference in the number of these responses versus the others is that there was one participant who started the survey, but did not finish it.

In addition, the participants' responses to the two open ended questions were recorded and categorized by question. It should also be noted that not all participants responded to both open-ended questions: Question 25 (n = 59); and Question 26 (n = 55). The differences in the number of these responses versus the other ones could be the educator's job title or they did not report any response.

Limitations

The methodology of this study includes a few limitations. One limitation is that it focuses on a small sample size of educators in this school district. Perhaps if the total number (n = 482) of educators employed in this school district completed the survey, results of the data would be different.

Table 2. Survey Questions

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q1. The special education teacher works directly with the general education teachers at my site securing special education students for my classroom. T = 58	14 (24)	13 (22)	10 (17)	13 (22)	4 (7)	2 (3)	2 (3)
Q2. The principal or administrator should facilitate the implementation of special education services / programs at your site. T=59	20 (34)	22 (37)	10 (17)	6 (10)	1 (2)	0	0
Q 3. I need more training in order to appropriately plan and advocate effectively for students with an IEP for learning	8 (14)	15 (25)	15 (25)	7 (12)	3 (5)	7 (12)	4 (5)

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
problems. T = 59							
Q 4. Teachers and support staff collaborate on issues which may arise with students with an IEP. T = 59	15 (25)	26 (44)	9 (15)	0	7 (12)	1 (2)	1 (2)
Q5. I feel comfortable in working collaboratively with special education teachers and regular education teachers regarding students with IEPs. T = 59	31 (53)	17 (29)	10 (17)	0	1 (2)	0	0
Q6. Students presenting 2 or more years below grade level should be in special education classes. T = 59	9 (15)	12 (20)	10 (17)	18 (31)	4 (7)	6 (10)	0
Q7. Students diagnosed with autism should be in a special education classroom. T = 59	2 (3)	2 (3)	14 (24)	25 (42)	6 (10)	9 (15)	1 (2)
Q8. All efforts should be made to educate students who have an IEP in the regular education classroom. T = 59	21 (36)	17 (29)	14 (24)	4 (7)	1 (2)	2 (3)	0
Q9. Students who are verbally aggressive	3 (5)	6 (10)	13 (22)	6 (10)	15 (25)	9 (15)	7 (12)

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
towards others can be maintained in regular education classes. T= 59							
Q10. Special education teachers should teach students who hold an IEP. T = 59	4 (7)	6 (10)	17 (29)	17 (29)	8 (14)	5 (8)	2 (4)
Q11. I believe teachers feel supported when faced with challenges presented by students with behavioral difficulties in the classroom. T = 59	2 (3)	5 (8)	12 (20)	2 (3)	18 (31)	15 (25)	5 (8)
Q12. Teachers are provided with sufficient training opportunities in order to teach students with disabilities. T = 59	1 (2)	3 (5)	8 (14)	5 (8)	14 (24)	10 (17)	10 (17)
Q13. My background has successfully prepared me for managing, planning, and advocating for students with special needs (i.e. behavioral difficulties). T= 58	11 (19)	14 (24)	15 (26)	2 (3)	10 (17)	5 (9)	1 (2)
Q14. Teachers are provided with sufficient support for students with IEPs in their classrooms. T = 58	0	7 (12)	15 (26)	6 (10)	10 (17)	14 (24)	6 (10)

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q15. Regular education teachers should only be responsible for teaching students who are not identified as having special needs. T = 58	3 (5)	1 (2)	3 (5)	6 (10)	14 (24)	18 (31)	13 (22)
Q16. Both regular education and special education teachers should teach students with an IEP. T= 59	19 (32)	30 (51)	7 (12)	2 (3)	0	1 (2)	0
Q17. Teachers need more training in order to appropriately teach students with an IEP for behavioral problems. T= 59	27 (46)	20 (34)	10 (17)	2 (3)	0	0	0
Q18. Teachers feel supported when faced with challenges presented by students with learning difficulties in their classrooms. T=59	0	6 (10)	13 (22)	8 (14)	15 (25)	14 (23)	3 (5)
Q19. Teachers feel comfortable in approaching their colleagues for help when teaching students with special needs. T=59	12 (20)	16 (27)	22 (37)	4 (7)	3 (5)	2 (3)	0
Q20. Special education teachers might lose their jobs if	0	0	4 (7)	10 (17)	3 (5)	23 (39)	19 (32)

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
regular education teachers teach students with IEPs. T=59							
Q21. Do you feel frustrated over the lack of time to collaborate with special education teachers regarding appropriate intervention and modifications that could grant further exposure to the general education curriculum? T=59	17 (29)	14 (24)	14 (24)	7 (12)	2 (3)	2 (3)	3 (5)
Q22. How willing are you to make necessary accommodations for students with disabilities? T=58	24 (41)	27 (47)	6 (10)	1 (2)	0	0	0

Opened Ended Questions

Question 23: How do you define inclusion?

The subjects in this study were given two open-ended essay questions (Question 23 and Question 24 respectfully) to share comments or information they have about inclusion. Out of the 59 respondents, all subjects answered this statement survey question. The majority of participants' responses to this question was understandable of the topic and had genuine concerns for

students. Comments ranged from their actual description of inclusion (e.g., student with specific learning disabilities or those on an IEP working collaboratively with general education students in the classroom). A majority of the responses stated that inclusion is including students with special needs in general education classrooms (e.g., including special education students into general education to the fullest extent possible which is based on the special education student's needs).

Question 24: What adaptations and planning do you use for inclusion?

Out of the 59 responders to this essay question, (n=55) added comments to the survey question. The majority of participants' responses to this question provided details and examples of adaptations and several variations educators use for inclusive education. Comments ranged from movement, modifications, and collaboration (e.g., I use multiple strategies that I have gained in my schooling as well as continuing professional development. I research online different strategies. I collaborate with special education teachers and school psychologists as well as speech and language). The special education teachers and/or general education teachers that are actually working with each other had good descriptions and variations (e.g., The special education teacher and I would plan the lessons together, and then modify in necessary for our special education students. We would modify simplify directions or make the foldable for them. We had larger print and some kids might work in small groups or with peers).

Interesting to note that (n = 4) participants' responses to not fully utilizing inclusion (e.g., we are currently not fully including students at our sites, we are working on mainstreaming and that in itself is difficult for general education teachers to accept because they do not feel it is their job to teach special education student. We plan within IEP meetings and collaborate between special education and general education teachers).

CHAPTER FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand educators' attitudes toward implementation of inclusive education. This study focused on a small percentage of educators including 59 educators within a school district in Southern California. The survey study particularly investigated the collaborative efforts, responsibility, accommodations, and training these educators are working towards teaching students in an inclusive education. Within this study, (n=40) general education teachers provided their attitude on inclusion and how it works for them. They shared their approach on how they implement inclusion as well as strategies they are using for inclusion. One educator shared that growth and goal setting is significant for inclusion. Also, one educator shared that strategies they use are special seating, paper, writing instruments, etc. This group demonstrates, as well as meets the everyday concerns by these general education teachers who teach students with disabilities.

The (n=9) special education teachers addressed this by stating that inclusive education is allowing special education students to be included in a general education classroom setting with the support of a special education teacher. More importantly, question 22 asked the question if they felt comfortable in working collaboratively with special education teachers and regular education

teachers regarding students with IEPs. A majority of 97% agreed that they felt comfortable in this situation.

Within those parameters of the study, the survey discussed the collaborative efforts, responsibility, accommodations, and training these educators are working towards teaching students in an inclusive education. It also examines the dedication of educators to teach students with disabilities. Also the survey recognizes the educators' positivity as well as negativity on the effects of inclusive education. More valuable is that it addresses the everyday issues experienced by educators who teach students with disabilities.

The educators in this district overwhelmingly agree that their special education teacher works directly with the general education teachers at their site addressing the needs for students with disabilities. Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez (2009) agree that "general and special education teachers must be skilled in collaboration to meet accountability standards" addressing the needs for students with disabilities (p. 235).

Results from this study reveal different attitudes on inclusive education from educators. Two of the questions (Question 6) and (Question 7) had a higher percentage for the neither agree nor disagree category answers. Question 6 addresses the following question: Students presenting 2 or more years below grade level should be in special education classes. Educators responded (31%) for the neither agree nor disagree. Every educator wants their students to

succeed. Their success may take time and often requires flexibility and adjustments. McLeskey & Pugach (1996) confirm that “it takes fundamental changes in how we think about classrooms and school communities and...in the methodologies we use to create them” (p. 234).

Also, (Question 7) had a higher percentage (42%) for the neither agree nor disagree category answer. It stated that students diagnosed with autism should be in a special education classroom. Data collected from the National Center for Education Statistics (2016) indicate that 39.7% of students with autism spend at least 80% of their time in a general education classroom (U.S. Department of Education...2016). In fact, Mesibov & Shea (1996) agree that “educating students with autism requires an understanding of the unique cognitive, social sensory and behavioral deficits that characterize this developmental disability” (p. 342).

Perhaps if more training, support, and adaptations are given to teachers, this percentage of neither agree nor disagree would change. Mesibov & Shea (1996) said that while some teachers may feel frustrated, some “modifications can be made...necessary for their students with autism” (p. 343).

Another overwhelming response (88%) from the educators was whether the principal or administrator should facilitate the implementation of special education services and/or programs. The importance of administrative support in various forms (i.e. planning, information, collaboration) is vital to the success of inclusion

at any site. Barnett & Monda-Amaya (1998) agree that a “higher level of anxiety...is likely to accompany inclusive education if teachers and principals are not comfortable or confident in providing appropriate services to mainstreamed students” (p.183).

There were three items associated with training for educators. The first item (Question 3) stated that a vast number of educators (64%) feel that they need more training in order to appropriately plan and advocate effectively for students with an IEP for learning problems. The next item, (Question 12) referred that teachers are provided with sufficient training opportunities in order to teach students with disabilities. This response warranted (71%) of teachers disagreeing with this statement. Roach (1995) confirmed that general and special education teachers may vary in their levels of training and experience, and...some teachers may be left feeling ill-prepared and resentful” (p. 298). The third item (Question 17) stated that teachers need more training in order to appropriately teach students with an IEP for behavioral problems. A substantial number (97%) agreed that this statement is true. Roach (1995) agreed that “teachers...need more training and support once students with disabilities are placed in their classrooms” (p. 298).

The topic of collaboration is always an interesting concept among educators, especially when it has to do with inclusion. There were five items related to collaboration on this survey. The first subject (Question 4) stated that teachers

and support staff collaborate on issues which may arise with students with an IEP. A large percentage of teachers (84%) confirmed that this is occurring. Allday, Gatti & Hudson (2014) said that “effective collaboration between general and special education teachers requires that all teachers work together” to meet the needs of students with disabilities (p. 301).

The second subject on collaboration (Question 5) addressed the question of, “I feel comfortable in working collaboratively with special education teachers and regular education teachers regarding students with IEPs.” This response was significant with 99% in agreement. Thousand & Villa (2000) agree that having “the skills to be an effective and efficient collaborative team member is a minimum requirement for inclusive education to work” (p. 85).

The third subject on collaboration (Question 21) specifies that teachers and support staff collaborate on issues which may arise with students with an IEP. A total 80% of teachers agreed that this is taking place. Allday, Gatti & Hudson (2014) said that teachers must have “effective collaborative skills to successfully include students with disabilities in their classroom” in order to assess and modify their learning (p. 301).

Question 22 discussed whether educators felt comfortable working collaboratively with special education teachers and regular education teachers regarding students with IEPs. The significant response (97%) was in agreement to this statement. The last subject on the survey regarding collaboration was

Question 23. It discussed whether educators felt frustrated over the lack of time for collaboration with special education teachers regarding appropriate intervention and modifications and if that time that would allow further exposure to the general education curriculum. This answer prompted a large percentage (77%) in agreement on this topic. Allday, Gatti & Hudson (2014) said that in order to “maximize learning opportunities for all students...the ability to collaborate, develop, plan and deliver individualized lessons” is needed to meet the needs of these student with disabilities (p.299).

All students who have disabilities benefit from inclusive education, especially if it is implemented effectively. All educators need to take responsibility by meeting the needs of these students. Question 24 addresses educators’ willingness to make necessary accommodations for students with disabilities. Surprisingly, 98% of teachers agree on this topic and are willing to make accommodations. Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez (2009) said that “general education teachers now assume a more active role in...IEPs by helping determine appropriate accommodations and modifications” for students with disabilities (p. 235).

This paper has described the results of an educators’ attitude on inclusive education. Wilson (2000) said “a growing...body of empirical work continues to indicate the positive effects of inclusion education for students with special needs, their general education peers, and professionals involved in the inclusive

effort” (p. 120). In order for change to occur, the behavior of both general and special educators needs to change. This will ultimately create an impact on students with disabilities.

Conclusion

In spite of the small sample of educators used for this survey, the results of an educators’ attitude on inclusive education for this school district were valuable. The survey study investigated the collaborative efforts, responsibility, accommodations, and training these educators are working towards teaching students who are not identified as having special needs in an inclusive environment. The data collected and responses that educators provided with their opinions on collaboration to include students with IEPs in general education settings were supportive. There is data to support that collaborative efforts between general and special education has been shown to increase services to students with disabilities. The recommendations I feel for this school district is just to continue supporting the educators regarding this topic because the data revealed that 97% of educators in this district strongly agree that they feel comfortable in working collaboratively.

The responsibility of our educators in this district is to take responsibility by meeting the needs of our students. In order to meet those needs, educators need to be willing to work collaboratively in the first place. Based on the comments received from the open ended questions the majority of the educator’s

responses were genuine for our students. The recommendation for this is to continue to meet the needs of the students each and every day.

The opinions that were given from educators regarding necessary accommodations for students with IEPs were extremely supportive; whereby 98% of educators feel that they are willing to make necessary accommodations for students. Clearly, this does not need any recommendations to make it any more effective. In the end, the data collected and the responses that educators provided prove that both special and general educators have the attitude to accommodate and provide service to students with disabilities.

The one area of concern for this school district was training. Overwhelmingly the statistics indicate that educators disagree that they are not provided with sufficient training opportunities in order to teach students with disabilities. The educators agree that they need more training in order to appropriately plan and advocate effectively for students. It is highly recommend that this topic be shared with the school district in order for our educators to be more successful with students in an inclusive education.

Inclusive education works when those who collaborate make it work. For those educators, that are making inclusion work, they know what it takes to work together. It takes necessary commitment and change. It takes how we think about our attitude and beliefs which ultimately takes commitment and organization.

In order for inclusion to work, students with disabilities need exposure to their general education peers. This helps self-esteem, supports language development, and social skills. It's important, Allday, Gatti & Hudson (2014) said, that "teachers who proactively accept responsibility to lead an inclusive classroom is more likely to display receptivity toward inclusion" (p. 299).

Throughout this entire research, one item that was noticed was that there is no perfect set of rules for inclusion or a perfect model. As the old saying goes, "It takes a village to raise a child." With inclusion, McLeskey & Pugach (1996) said "expecting perfection is unreasonable, but setting high expectations for what inclusive classrooms look like and working deliberately and consistently toward them is not" (p. 234). In conclusion, in order for change to occur, the attitude of both general and special educators needs to change. This will ultimately create a positive impact on students with disabilities.

APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

IRB-FY2017-164 - Initial: IRB Administrative Review Approval Letter

1 message

mgillesp@csusb.edu <mgillesp@csusb.edu>
To: 001338817@coyote.csusb.edu, snam@csusb.edu

Thu, May 18, 2017 at 9:34 AM

May 18, 2017

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Administrative (Exempt) Review

IRB# FY2017-164

Status : Approved

Ms. Kimberly Holmes and Prof. Sang Nam
Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation and Counseling
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Ms. Holmes and Prof. Nam:

Your application to use human subjects, titled, "A Teacher's Perception on Inclusion," has been reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of California State University, San Bernardino has determined that your application meets the requirements for exemption from IRB review Federal requirements under 45 CFR 46. As the researcher under the exempt category you do not have to follow the requirements under 45 CFR 46 which requires annual renewal and documentation of written informed consent which are not required for the exempt category. However, exempt status still requires you to attain consent from participants before conducting your research.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional approvals which may be required.

Your responsibilities as the researcher/investigator reporting to the IRB Committee include the following 4 requirements as mandated by the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 listed below. Please note that the protocol change form and renewal form are located on the IRB website under the forms menu. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years. Please notify the IRB Research Compliance Officer for any of the following:

- **Submit a protocol change form if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your research prospectus/protocol for review and approval of the IRB before implemented in your research,**
- **If any unanticipated/adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research, and**
- **When your project has ended by emailing the IRB Research Compliance Officer.**

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the Research Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval identification number (listed at the top) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

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