

California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

Theses Digitization Project

John M. Pfau Library

2013

The importance of the teacher's role and opinions on individual education plans

Shallymar Ileana Bender

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project>



Part of the [Disability and Equity in Education Commons](#), and the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bender, Shallymar Ileana, "The importance of the teacher's role and opinions on individual education plans" (2013). *Theses Digitization Project*. 4097.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/4097>

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEACHER'S ROLE AND OPINIONS
ON INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS

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

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Shallymar Ileana Bender

June 2013


THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEACHER'S ROLE AND OPINIONS
ON INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS

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

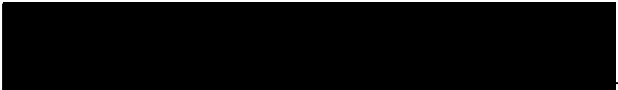
by
Shallymar Ileana Bender

June 2013

Approved by:


Dr. Carolyn McAllister, Faculty Supervisor
Social Work

6/4/13
Date


Dr. Rosemary McCaslin,
M.S.W. Research Coordinator

ABSTRACT

This study focused on gathering a better understanding of what teachers are familiar with when working with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), and how this affects the implementation of IEPs in the mainstream classroom. This study also focused on accommodations teachers are required to make, or additional information needed to accommodate for the needs of children with special needs in the mainstream classroom. An online survey, using social media as a recruitment tool to gather a sample for the study, was used to collect information. Sixty-two individuals participated in this study. Quantitative results showed that teachers with special education credentialing did not find the general education environment as accommodating for children with special needs as those teachers without special education credentialing, and when consultation was available to teachers, there was more comfort in working with children with special needs in the mainstream classroom. Qualitative findings showed that participants wanted an aide in their classroom, more training in working with children with special needs, and to have more information about accommodations to classroom and curricula

available. Future research should consider replicating this study with teachers currently working with children with special needs, gathering a larger sample size, and using multiple sources for reaching out to participants.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research project could not have been done without the help of many people. A special thank you goes to all the participants that partook in the surveys for this project. Also to all the teachers that inspired the topic for this research topic.

A special thank you to family and friends for helping with the process of this project by sharing the online survey with other teachers and individuals in the community to promote success in this project.

Thank you to family for supporting me in time of need and for the motivation to keep pushing forward. Thank you to my husband Matthew Bender for believing in me to reach for my goals. A huge thank you to Dr. Carolyn McAllister for the support and guidance during this research project. Thank you to everyone!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Problem Statement.....	1
History of Education for Children with Special Needs.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	7
Significance of the Project for Social Work.....	11
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction.....	14
History of Individual Education Plans.....	14
Practice of Developing Individual Education Plans.....	16
Teachers Wanting Further Training.....	18
Theories Guiding Conceptualization.....	21
Summary.....	24
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	
Introduction.....	26
Study Design.....	26
Sampling.....	28
Data Collection and Instruments.....	29
Procedures.....	32
Protection of Human Subjects.....	32

Data Analysis.....	33
Summary.....	34
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	
Introduction.....	35
Presentation of the Findings.....	35
Descriptive Statistics.....	35
Environment Supporting Inclusion Scale.....	40
Data Analysis.....	41
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	
Introduction.....	48
Discussion.....	48
Limitations and Strengths.....	52
Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research.....	54
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE.....	59
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT.....	65
APPENDIX C: DEBRIEFING STATEMENT.....	67
REFERENCES.....	69

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants.....	37
Table 2. Types of Disabilities.....	39
Table 3. Services and Supports for Promoting Inclusion.....	40
Table 4. Qualitative Information.....	45

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Information that is discussed in this section is the problem statement, the history of education with children with special needs, the purpose of the study, and the significance this project has with the social work field. The history of education with children with special needs describes when special education became more common in the United States of America and what steps were taken to assist in creating programs for children with special needs.

Problem Statement

Children with special needs are a part of public and private school classrooms all over the United States of America and other parts of the world. Some children have special needs that require minimal attention, such as a different placement in the room so a child can see the white board or hear the teacher. Other children have complex needs, such as needing help with simple tasks such as going to the restroom, writing their own name on paper, or interacting with peers in the classroom. These accommodations are outlined through the Individual

Education Plans (IEPs), which help school staff, teachers, and parents set goals, objectives and services for the child's specific needs (Bateman, 2009). As increasing numbers of children with special needs are being accommodated and educated in General Education settings, teachers and assistants in those settings become part of the Special Education system in the school. Simpson (2004) explained that teachers that are working with special needs children in their general education classrooms need to be given information about the specific curricula needed to provide the education the child needs, but that many times the teachers do not receive this information therefore are not able to teach at the level the children need.

History of Education for Children with Special Needs

America first showed interest in children with special needs in 1890 and ensured that all children received education, and minor adjustments were completed in 1918 which stated students would choose their classes based on interest (Dunn, 1970). In 1950, there was an awareness of differences in progress in schools but no changes were made to education (Dunn, 1970). The Program

of Learning in Accordance with Needs (PLAN) originated in 1969, and the main focus of this was to make sure that each child was meeting the requirements of the state in which they were attending school (Dunn, 1970). Dunn also explains that PLAN was modified in 1918 to establish standardization of core courses that all students would be required to take while they attended school, up until secondary school.

The use of IEPs for children with special needs became more widely used in the 1950's and 1960's to help with placing children in special day classes (Dunn, 1970). According to Dunn, the special day classes were defined as students being able to "study different content, in different amounts, at different rates, and via different methods" as long as the educational requirements for the child's functioning level are being met (1970, p. 222). The information being taught in classrooms to all children should be at the standardized level, but if there is a child with an IEP, those needs are to be met as well as the needs for all other children in the classroom (Bateman, 2009).

In the 1960's advocates were looking for support to help with free appropriate public education (FAPE) to

children with disabilities (ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, 2003). In 1966 Congress became more active in this by establishing the Bureau for Education of the Handicapped which helped to gather small amounts of funds for children with special needs (ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, 2003). After some time, legislators found there were many students that were not receiving the education, thus Public Law 94-142 was enacted to address the issue by providing funding to help reduce the costs of programs for children with special needs (ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, 2003). These issues have remained as important, and FAPE is now called the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that states that all children from infancy to age 21 with special needs receive the services and education that each child requires (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004). IDEA was created in 2004 to help with distributing the proper resources and education to individuals with special needs, and then revised in 2006 to include infants, toddlers, and any preschool aged children as well (Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act, 2004). The FAPE mandate and the LRE (Least Restrictive Environment) mandate which has been interpreted to mean mainstreaming or inclusion in general education settings and allowing that children receive the services or changes they need (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was started in 1965 and amended in 2001, focuses on providing "fair, equal, and significant opportunities to obtaining a high-quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments." (The No Child Left Behind Act, 2001, p.15). Along with the amendment to NCLB, teachers are to be properly trained and prepared for any special needs curriculum the children in their classrooms require (No Child Left Behind), but as mentioned by Bateman (2009) teachers are not being equipped properly. Currently the issue that is of concern is if teachers are actually meeting the requirements from PLAN, IDEA and NCLB or are teachers left to learn the information about the children in their classrooms on their own without proper training. The IDEA Act (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004) explains that after

about 30 years of research, there has been evidence that shows that including children with special needs participating in mainstream education, urging the children to meet developmental goals, challenge the expectations of the child, and support them in having productive and independent lives, has been shown to be effective for all individuals in the mainstream classroom.

Webb, Greco, Sloper, and Beecham (2008) state that there are advantages of having special needs children in the main stream classroom. It not only helps the children with educational and social skills, but it helps to reduce unlawful discrimination issues and promotes inclusion. Studies have stated that because so many special needs individuals have been included in the general education classes, it is no longer necessary to take time to think or consider if a special needs child is fit for the general education class (Turnbull, Turnbull, & Wehmeyer 2006, as cited in Loiacono & Valenti, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to measure what teachers are already familiar with in regards to IEPs, and how this affects the implementation of IEPs in the classroom. Understanding IEPs is important because children with special needs deserve education like all other individuals and deserve to be included in education. Bryant, Smith and Bryant (2008) as stated in Loiacono and Valenti (2010) explain that inclusion is an "educational setting in which students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum, participate in school activities alongside students without disabilities, and attend their neighborhood schools" (p.2). If a child is not receiving individualized help in the classrooms, or being fully included, then they are not meeting the education standards nor are they meeting their own highest potential. Teachers that have children in their classroom with IEPs should meet the requirements of the plan to ensure the best education for the student. When a teacher fails to meet the plan they are failing to meet their job requirements which entail meeting all educational standards with all students in their classrooms (Whitney,

2009; Fkolade & Adeniyi, 2009). Not only are teachers failing to meet their job requirements, but children are not receiving the education they were guaranteed.

There are teachers that struggle to incorporate special education material into the mainstream classroom, and therefore fail to meet the needs of the child with an IEP as well as the requirements from NCLB (No Child Left Behind, 2001). Some teachers feel that having a child incorporated with the mainstream should be changed back to having only special day classes, but do not take into account that some of the children with IEPs have minimal limitations, i.e. sitting closer to the white board.

Individuals that should be concerned with how IEPs are written and if the needs of the child are being met include: the school district, the school, the school staff including the principal and anyone that is pertinent to the case, teachers from whom the child receives instruction from, the child's parents, and at some times the child themselves (Bateman, 2009; Loiacono, & Valenti, 2010). Whitney (2009) explains that it is important for these individuals to be a part of the individualized education plan so that there is a clear understanding as to what is expected from each person and

what is required in order to meet the needs of the child and the parent. Whitney (2009) explains that there have been situations where secondary teachers are simply informed that there is a student in their classroom that has an IEP, but are not told who it is. This leads to teachers neglecting the special need of the child in classrooms. Whitney (2009) states that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) clarifies that it is not considered breaking confidentiality to inform all educators of the IEP, who the child is, and what can be done to help the child succeed in the classroom. She also mentions that if there is fear of breach of confidentiality, it is acceptable to ask for written consent from the parent to give information to all educators regarding their child's IEP (Whitney, 2009).

The final part of including a child with special needs in a mainstream classroom is to ensure that the child is in a least restrictive environment and this is to ensure that the child with special needs is receiving their education at the most comfortable level of instruction (Blecker & Boakes, 2010). When teachers are not able to meet the needs of all the children in their classroom, they may negatively be impacting the child

with special needs and others in the classroom (Whitney, 2009; Fkolade & Adeniyi, 2009). The findings can lead to ways of working with teachers in learning more effective ways of discussing IEPs and the curricula that are required for specific diagnoses, such as autism, ADHD, depression and other diagnoses, so that the needs of the children are being met and reducing stress for teachers and other educators. This can also lead to a reduced stigma toward children from teachers and peers. Improving the quality of attention to IEPs can help ensure that all educators are meeting the needs of the child and help build better relationships between children and adults affiliated with the IEP.

The focus of this study is to measure the effectiveness of IEPs and how teachers are following through with the goals and objectives that were discussed at meetings with child and parent. Another focus is to determine if a teacher knows they have a child in their class, see what accommodations have been made, and learn what changes should be made in the schools. This will be addressed by having teachers fill out surveys that ask how teachers feel about working with IEPs and ask

teachers what would be most beneficial for them in order to be the most efficient teacher they can be.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

The focus of this project is to help inform schools and teachers that there are special needs children and the importance of equal education among all individuals. The role of a school social worker in this project would be to advocate for the children and their families in helping to receive the resources required for the specific children. The school social worker would make sure that the requirements from Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are being met such as accessibility to resources and laws being followed. The ADA states that equality for all is an important role, therefore the social worker will be able to ensure that equality for children with special needs is being met (ADA Home Page, 2011). School based social workers can help to promote furthering the education of IEPs and their importance in the schools. Pryor, Kent, McGunn, and Leroy (1996) explain that expanding on the role of social work in the schools would be beneficial in assisting with

social and emotional adjustment of students in inclusive schools, including preparing students to celebrate human differences, facilitating the transition process for newly included students, consulting collaboratively with teachers, revising the school curriculum to address social and emotional needs, providing services to students in general education settings, and expanding inclusive education concepts throughout a school. (p. 670)

With the information gained from this study, social workers will be able to determine what needs to be reviewed further and what would be the best way to educate teachers and all other personnel that work with special needs children. Using a micro stance, a social worker can gather information from teachers to determine what would be most helpful to teachers. Then using a macro stance, the social worker can provide a training to teachers at school levels to help promote proper use of IEPs in the classroom as well as to help reduce the stressors of multiple curricula in one classroom. By conducting training for the educators, the social worker can make sure that questions are answered and techniques

used to help make the classroom experience be the best
that it can be for all involved.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section will discuss the history of IEPs and how they have been implemented. Along with this information, the views of how teachers feel about inclusion will be discussed to help to provide a clear understanding of what teachers lack in their preparations for teaching special needs children in the mainstream classroom. Other topics that will be discussed are theories that pertain to the topic of IEPs such as systems theory and developmental theory.

History of Individual Education Plans

Turnbull (2009) explains that there was a different view of how special needs children were treated in the 1970's. In 1975 there were two main problems with how schools treated individuals with special needs, which were exclusion and misclassification (Turnbull, 2009). "Pure" exclusion meant that schools would not allow the children in the schools at all, and "functional" exclusion meant that schools would admit the children to the schools but would not offer the children the full

benefit of education or resources (Turnbull, 2009). The second issue that occurred in 1975 was "misclassification" which meant that schools were placing children in special education classes that did not have a disability or schools were placing children with disabilities into wrong categories or populations of people (Turnbull, 2009).

Brown versus the Board of Education's (1954) main focus was to enforce equality of education to all individuals, as well as removing segregation in the special education classes as well as in the mainstream classes (Turnbull, 2009; Brown Foundation, 2012). Although there were aspects of the case that were implemented into schools, it was not until 2002 that Congress attempted to combine special education classes with mainstream classes, and this was in response to the public's complaints of keeping the special needs children too dependent (Turnbull, 2009). In 2001 the information was then taken and put into the No Child Left Behind Act to help reassure that there was equal education for all (No Child Left Behind, 2001; Turnbull, 2009; Kilanowski-Press, Foote, Rinaldo, 2010).

Practice of Developing Individual Education Plans

The IEP allows for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and student (if age appropriate) to come together and create a plan to help with the child's academic success (A Guide to the Individualized Education Program, 2000). The steps that are taken to ensure that a child needs an IEP are: identify the child as needed additional sources, evaluate the child, decide the eligibility, define the child as eligible for services, schedule an IEP meeting which includes teachers, staff, parents, and any other individuals the family would like to participate in the meeting, hold the IEP meeting and write down all information gathered, provide IEP services to the child, the child's performance is measured and shared with the parents, the child's IEP is reviewed annually, and the child is reevaluated every three years (A Guide to the Individualized Education Program, 2000). Each IEP describes educational program to meet child's unique needs. The IEP must include:

current academic performance, annual goals that child can accomplish, list of special education and

related services, participation with nondisabled children, participate in state and district wide tests, dates and location where IEP will begin, transition service needs, needed transition services, age of majority (if applicable), and measuring progress. (A Guide to the Individualized Education Program, 2000, p.5)

Having the members that are involved in the child's life participate in the IEP process can help to better ensure that the child is receiving the appropriate services they need.

There has been some research conducted that asked teachers and psychologists about how they felt when filling out IEPs and what challenges they faced (Tike Bafra & Kargin, 2009). Tike Bafra and Kargin's (2009) study shows that teachers had less negative feelings doing the IEP documentation process than was expected and it was hypothesized that because the teachers are the ones responsible for the education of the students, there tend to be positive attitudes towards IEPs. This study also found that when teachers attended in-service trainings about IEPs, attitudes toward them would be negative because of the extensive paperwork requirements

(Tike Bafra, & Kargin, 2009). The authors also mentioned that teachers feel much more confident in filling out IEPs when there is a team of school personnel, such as counselors and other teachers, filling out the paperwork together because there is more information from multiple sources to help be more accurate (Tike Bafra, & Kargin, 2009). Although some research has been conducted to see how school teachers and school psychologists feel about completing IEPs, this research was conducted in Turkey; thus further research needs to be conducted as well as in other parts of the world.

Teachers Wanting Further Training

Other parts of the world have taken inclusion of special needs children into the mainstream school as a large step toward equality for all (Webb, Greco, Sloper, & Beechan, 2008). The United States is currently including children with special needs in mainstream classrooms with IEPs and some class time in a special day class. Whitney (2009) states that having special needs children in mainstream classes may cause some interruption in the teaching flow for teachers because they are not accustomed to working with curricula that

are specialized to individual children. Whitney (2009) and Combs, Elliot, and Whipple (2010) also mention that some teachers become so frustrated with the demands of the IEPs that they feel like a child should be taken out of the school and placed in a special day program where the children can get their needs met. Although this would be beneficial for the teachers, the schools are required by state laws to teach the children without making them feel like they do not belong or are inadequate to be in the classroom or the school (Whitney, 2009).

Garmon (2005), and Blecker and Boakes (2010) state that in order for a teacher to be the most beneficial teacher, there is a specific disposition that is required in working with children with special needs which is being open minded to the child and to themselves, although there are some teachers that just feel they do not have the proper support or training in the classrooms. Kilanowski-Press, Foote, and Rinaldo (2010) found that teachers were more effective in the classroom when they had help either through training or co-teaching with a teacher in special education. Other teachers have stated they feel they are lacking the proper information when working with children with disabilities due to

having to implement curricula for the mainstream and special needs children in their classrooms (Block & Rizzo, 1995; Block & Obrušnikova, 2007; Kilanowski-Press, Foote, & Rinaldo, 2010).

A study conducted in Greece stated similar information about teachers wanting more information in working with special needs children as well as having further assistance in the classrooms by having an aid with them that has the education in working with special needs children (Agaliotis & Kalyva, 2011). Tuomainen, Palonen, and Hakkarainen (2010) explain that although teachers communicate among each other for additional information on curricula decisions for children with special needs in the general education classroom, teachers have still reported they do not feel like they have the appropriate resources in setting up the most accommodating classroom.

Further studies about how teachers interact with students and IEPs would help to further the design of this study. More research on the different socioeconomic statuses of schools would help to determine the types of interactions that teachers have with their children as well as the education of the teacher because these

factors may have an impact on how interactions in classrooms generally are.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

An important theory to consider when looking at this study is systems theory. Systems theory states that one part of an individual system can be affected by other aspects of the system. So for the sake of this study, if a teacher does not respond to an IEP in the proper manner, a part of the child's educational system is disrupted and he or she is not getting an adequate education. Asking teachers their opinions on what would be the most beneficial addition to their own education will help to improve any concerns or lack of information. According to Lesser and Pope (2011), a system is comprised of parts that all work together in an orderly way to obtain a common goal. In the case of working with special needs children, the common goal would be teachers working together with any resources to make the classroom the most accommodating that it can be. The person-in-environment approach takes into account how the individual participates in their environment, and in this case it would be the child in the school environment

(Lesser & Pope, 2011). Informing teachers about the importance of following IEPs and then evaluating the training process will improve the coordination of systems between the teacher and child, leading to a more positive learning process.

Another theory that is relevant to this study is the Ecological Perspective because it looks at how individuals fit in to their environment (Lesser & Pope, 2011). The Ecological perspective states "no one type of social or physical environment can be considered optimal for all people" (Lesser & Pope, 2011, p. 21), and this fits in with the idea of inclusion and making sure that the special needs child is in the least restrictive environment possible so they are able to achieve their highest potential. The Ecological perspective also includes the social worker whose main goal should be to help create change for the teachers working with special needs children in the general education classroom (Lesser & Pope, 2011). One of the fundamental concepts of ecological perspective is adaptiveness; this explains that if there is not goodness of fit, people will seek to change things, but it may not necessarily be for the best. Using adaptiveness when considering teachers, it is

important to help the teachers to gain enough information about the children in their classrooms so they are able to meet the fit of everyone and have the most productive curricula they can have. Ensuring that teachers are as prepared as possible can help improve the views they have of including special needs children in their classrooms.

Prior to conducting any research, it is important to take into account Kirkpatrick's Theory of Evaluations to have a better understanding of what teachers know (Praslova, 2010). Kirkpatrick's theory states that Level 2 evaluations are to be conducted before training to assess the amount of knowledge an individual has on a topic. Then after the training has been conducted, Level 2 evaluations are done again to see how successful the training was to the individuals involved (Praslova, 2010). Praslova (2010) also explains that Kirkpatrick's Level 3 of evaluation is important in determining if the education from the training has then been used in the work place. This theory helps to identify the success of trainings right after they are administered, and then measures how effective the training continues to be months after it was administered. This theory can be beneficial in surveying teachers about their knowledge of

IEPs and the resources from which they would benefit. After research is conducted, the information can be used to help schools and teachers with ways of working together to conduct a training program to assist teachers with their struggles in combining multiple curricula and meeting the standards from the state and schools.

Summary

This literature review has discussed legal aspects of IEPs including PLAN, IDEA, NCLB, and the Brown versus The Board of Education to give a historical background of what children with special needs have gone through in the past. Although there have been amendments to IDEA and NCLB, there are still aspects of these propositions that need to be addressed and reconsidered to help teachers set up the least resistant classrooms they can to include children with special needs in the mainstream classroom. Along with the legal information, teachers' opinions were discussed in order to show that many school teachers feel similarly in that they do not have sufficient resources to help reduce stress. Some teachers stated that having an aid was beneficial in their classrooms because the aid was able to help set up curricula for specific children

and assist the children when they need help, but there are not very many aids that work with teachers in the classrooms. The main goal of this study is to determine what teachers would like to see change in the resources they receive when children with special needs are in their classrooms, and to incorporate the knowledge of a social worker to help meet these needs.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the methodology used throughout the current study. It will elaborate on what the researcher explored and by which means it was explored. The survey will be discussed, and the survey determined how teachers feel about the inclusion of special needs children in the mainstream classroom, and what the main challenges are for these teachers. Teachers with prior special needs education and experience were questioned to determine the amount of resources and additional support they have from other professionals.

Study Design

The purpose of this study is to evaluate how teachers view having children with special needs in their classrooms, and what challenges they face when trying to set up a curricula for these children. This information was gathered by the use of an electronic survey completed by teachers to gather their opinions of working with Individual Educational Plan's and what they understand about IEPs. The survey asked how teachers felt about

working with students that have IEPs in their classroom and how it affects other learning strategies or teaching methods in the classroom. The survey asked questions such as "Were you provided with the child's IEP?" and "Were you invited to participate in the IEP meeting with school officials and parents?"

A survey of this kind helped the researcher to have a better understanding of how teachers feel about IEPs and how they may or may not hinder the teaching process in the classroom. A survey can also help a school determine what to do to help teachers learn new skills when developing new curricula for the students. The focus of this study is to measure the effectiveness of IEPs and how teachers are following through with the goals and objectives that were discussed at meetings with child and parent. Another focus is to determine if a teacher has worked with a child with an IEP in their class, see what accommodations have been made in the classroom, learn what assistance or support teachers feel would benefit them, and learn what changes should be made at schools to better assist teachers.

Sampling

The sample for this study is teachers that work in mainstream classrooms that have children in their classrooms that have IEPs. This study examined at 62 teachers' opinions on how they interact with the children in their classrooms, how they prepare curricula, and what struggles they face when they have to incorporate IEP specifications to the classroom. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a snowball sample based on challenges in obtaining a random sample of teachers. Because this study is not affiliated with any school district, obtaining a list of area public educators was impossible. Snowball sampling allowed this researcher to gather a sample of teachers through a variety of networks (Cozby, 2009). One important factor that the researcher incorporated in the study is to differentiate between teachers that have education and experience in working with special needs children as compared to teachers that have only had a few experiences with special needs children.

Data Collection and Instruments

The data that was collected was the opinions that teachers have about IEPs, having special needs children in the mainstream classroom, and what teachers feel would help them better their successes in the classroom. The independent variables in this study are characteristics of teachers that have experience and education in working with special needs children and teachers that do not have much experience or education in working with special needs children. The dependent variables in this study are the attitudes teachers have toward having children with special needs in their classrooms as well as what resources are offered to the teachers when working with this population.

The researcher created a questionnaire with the emphasis of asking teachers their experiences in working with children with special needs. The questions are geared to have the teachers review their experience with IEPs and what they feel would help benefit them in the classroom. Questions also review information about the types of disabilities teachers have worked with, if there have been social workers available at the school, and gather information about how teachers feel their schools

are involved in providing information about the child with special needs and the requirements from the child's IEP. The questionnaire also includes a demographics section asking gender, age, length of time teaching, if the teacher is certified in special education, what grade they are currently teaching, and what state they are from. All of this information will help the researcher utilize the help of a social worker at the schools to support the teachers and staff that work with special needs children in the mainstream classroom.

A strength in using a questionnaire to collect the data is that teachers did not have to spend time away from their instruction for an interview due to it being available to teachers on the internet. Another strength is that the teachers will be able to participate in the survey at their own pace and when they have the time to take the survey. Although the survey had the flexibility of having teachers fill it out when they have the opportunity to, it does have its draw backs such as not being able to guarantee the participant has the requirements needed for accurate questionnaire completion, or that the results can generalize to the

entire teacher population (Cozby, 2009; Petersen, & Valdez, 2005).

Some questions that were asked on the survey are Likert scale items such as "Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about your school" 1 being strongly agree, 2 agree, 3 neutral, 4 disagree, 5 strongly disagree. "What is your comfort level in working with special needs children in the mainstream classroom?," "Regular and special educators have integrated their efforts and resources so that they may work together as a team," and "Teachers are concerned about appearing incompetent if they seek peer collaboration in working with students. Other questions in the survey are open ended questions leaving the teachers to answer as they feel fit. There are also closed-ended questions seeking a yes or no answer. Some of these questions will also require an "if yes, please explain" answer. This questionnaire will be disseminated via the use of Survey Monkey to allow for ease of access for teachers.

Procedures

The researcher contacted teachers that previously shared concern about working with children with special needs and asked them to participate in the questionnaire as well as asking those individuals to recruit other participants. The researcher also sent out email messages to peers asking for individuals to share the link to Survey Monkey to teachers they may know. The research also utilized social media, such as Facebook, and sent a message every week out to individuals that may be teachers or know teachers.

Protection of Human Subjects

When participants clicked on the link to participate, they would first read the informed consent and their permission to participate was assumed through their completion of the survey. Participants were also able to skip any question they did not feel comfortable answering. Once the teacher is taking the survey, they are able to fill out the survey where they feel most comfortable. When teachers finished filling out the surveys they were thanked for their participation and they were debriefed with the purpose of the survey and

informed that if there are any questions they could contact the researcher.

Data Analysis

The type of research that was conducted for this study is mixed methods, as both quantitative and qualitative data was collected. When looking at the collected data, the researcher looked to see if there was a pattern in what teachers were seeking in regards to resources and coded the responses to help organize the data. Once coded, then the researcher was able to analyze and determine where teachers feel there was more difficulty in having children with special needs in their classroom, as well as determined how many teachers felt there was no issue with having these children in the mainstream classroom.

After reviewing the findings of the study, researcher conducted analytical tests. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were run to determine what participants stated would improve classroom settings i.e. resources, a teacher aide, more training, and demographic information. Researcher then conducted an analytical bivariate consisting of Pearson r , correlations, and

t-tests to determine if teachers being specialized in special education had significant impact on the resources or support they needed.

Qualitative data was collected to find the most common and the least common responses in regards to most common resource needed, consultation and support available, what was most challenging and beneficial in having children with special needs in the mainstream classroom, what training would be beneficial, and what social services or social worker support was available for participants. Researcher condensed all information gathered and totaled information to report the findings.

Summary

The methodology of this topic is to interpret how teachers view IEPs and what is the best way for a social worker to assist teachers to achieve their goals in the classrooms. With the information about what resources teachers would benefit from the most, social workers will be able to assist in a new perspective of IEPs in the classroom, finding ways of implementing the resources for most teachers to use, and help inform schools about changes that need to take place.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher will discuss the result from the statistical analyses. The researcher first reviewed the descriptive statistics, discussed the scale used in the research, and then the bivariate statistics. Finally, the researcher will summarize the open ended questions by categorizing the responses.

Presentation of the Findings

Descriptive Statistics

The current study consisted of 62 participants. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the current study. There were 33 (53.2%) females, 12 (19.4%) males, and there were 17 (27.4%) individuals that did not complete this question. The age ranges were from 20 to 60+ years of age. Of the 62 participants that responded to this question, 3 (4.8%) were between the ages of 20-29, 24 (38.7 %) were between the ages of 30-39, 11(17.7%) were between the ages of 40-49, 5 (8.1 %) were between the ages of 50-59, and 1 (1.6%) were 60+, and 18 did not respond to that question. Participants were asked

the amount of years they had been teaching. 1 (1.6%) reported teaching 0-3 years, 11 (17.7%) reported teaching 4-7 years, 10 (16.1%) reported teaching for 8-11 years, and 22 (35.5%) reported teaching for over 11 years. When asked what state participants were currently teaching, 36 (58.1%) stated California, 1 (1.6%) stated Delaware, 1 (1.6%) stated Illinois, 1 (1.6%) stated Maryland, 1 (1.6%) stated Montana, 1 (1.6%) stated New Jersey, 1 (1.6%) stated New York, 1 (1.6%) stated Pennsylvania, and 19 (30.6%) of participants did not complete this question. Participants were also asked if they were certified in working with children with special needs. Of the 62 participants, 6 were certified, 35 were not, and 11 did not answer the question.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender (N = 62)		
Male	12	19.4
Female	33	53.5
Missing	17	27.4
Age		
20-29	3	4.8
30-39	24	38.7
40-49	11	17.1
50-59	5	8.1
60+	1	1.6
Missing	18	29.0
Number of Years Teaching		
0-3	1	1.6
4-7	11	17.1
8-11	10	16.1
11+	22	35.5
Missing	18	29.0
State Teaching		
California	36	58.1
Delaware	1	1.6
Illinois	1	1.6
Maryland	1	1.6
Montana	1	1.6
New Jersey	1	1.6
New York	1	1.6
Pennsylvania	1	1.6
Missing	19	30.6
Certified in Special Needs		
Yes	6	33.7
No	35	40.3
Missing	11	26.0

Participants were also asked about what grades they were currently teaching and what grades they have previously taught. Kindergarten 2 currently, 6 previously, First grade 3 currently, 7 previously, Second grade 3 currently, 6 previously, Third grade 1 currently, 4 previously, Fourth grade 3 currently, 8 previously, Fifth grade 2 currently, 9 previously, Sixth grade 10 currently, 20 previously, Seventh grade 10 currently, 27 previously, Eighth grade 14 currently, 27 previously, Ninth grade 10 currently, 19 previously, Tenth grade 11 currently, 16 previously, Eleventh grade 16 currently, 16 previously, and Twelfth grade 16 currently, 16 previously. Participants also answered what disabilities they have worked with. Of the 62 participants, 28 worked with autism, 0 with deaf-blindness, 0 with deafness, 9 with developmental delays, 18 with emotional disturbances, 8 with hearing impairments, 18 with intellectual disabilities, 8 with multiple disabilities, 4 with orthopedic impairments, 9 with other health impairments, 32 with specific learning disabilities, 24 with speech or language impairments, 4 with traumatic brain injuries, and 5 with visual impairment including blindness.

Table 2. Types of Disabilities

Disability	Frequency (N)
Autism	28
Deaf-Blindness	0
Deafness	0
Developmental Delay	9
Emotional Disturbance	18
Hearing Impairment	8
Intellectual Disability	18
Multiple Disabilities	8
Orthopedic Impairments	4
Other Health Impairments	9
Specific Learning Disability	32
Speech or Language Impairment	24
Traumatic Brain Injury	4
Visual Impairment including Blindness	5

Participants were asked about services and supports for promoting inclusion in the classrooms. Questions asked if participants were provided with IEPs, if they received additional resources in the classroom, if consultation was available, and if the participants sought out consultation. Of the 62 participants, 39 were provided with IEPs, 21 received additional resources in the classroom, 37 had access to consultation, and 39 sought out consultation services.

Table 3. Services and Supports for Promoting Inclusion

Variable	Frequency (N)
Provided with IEP	
Yes	39
No	13
Missing	10
Received additional Resources	
Yes	21
No	31
Missing	10
Consultation Available	
Yes	37
No	12
Missing	13
Sought Consultation	
Yes	39
No	10
Missing	13

Environment Supporting Inclusion Scale

The current study included the Environment Supporting Inclusion Scale, which was adapted from the scale used by Blecker and Boakes (2010). The scale consisted of eleven questions. Questions focused on the level of support in the classroom and the level of support and comfort participants felt that led to inclusive classrooms. Participants rated their level of agreement to statements using a 5 point Likert-scale

ranging from 5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-neutral, 2-disagree, 1-strongly disagree. There were three questions that were reverse coded for analysis. The scores for the current study could range from 11 to 55. Higher scores would indicate participants comfort level and environment that supports children with special needs and lower scores would indicate less comfort level with children with special needs in the environment. The actual scores ranged from 25 to 52 with an average and standard deviation of $M = 39.1$, and $SD = 5.78$.

Data Analysis

The researcher conducted tests to look at the relationships between the Environment Supporting Inclusion Scale and the demographic information of participants. It was found that gender did not significantly impact the view of inclusion. The researcher found that the age of the participant and the number of years teaching was significantly correlated ($r^2 = .520$, $p < .05$). Participants being certified in working with children with special needs showed to be significant ($t(39) = -2.67$, $p = .011$). Teachers certified in working with children with special needs reported

lower average Environment Supporting Inclusion Scale scores ($M = 33.67$) than teachers not certified ($M = 40.03$). Tests were run to view the relationships between the scale and the factors of support. It was found that a participant receiving the IEP, receiving additional resources in the classroom, and seeking out consultation was not significant. The researcher found that participants reporting they had consultation available to them and helping them feel more comfortable in their classroom environment was significant ($t(39) = 2.06, p = .045$). Participants reporting they had consultation available to them had higher average scores on the Environment Supporting Inclusion Scale ($M = 39.91$) than those that reported not having consultation available ($M = 35.14$).

Participants were asked open ended questions about access to IEPs, classroom resources, consultation services, what most challenging in working with children with special needs, what is most beneficial in having children with special needs in the mainstream classroom, additional training that could be provided, and what types of social services are provided at schools. The researcher collected and reviewed the data provided by

participants. When asked what would be more beneficial when having a child with and IEP in their classroom having additional resources (11), having an aide in the classroom (9), more professional development or training (8), having more peer support (5), having a resource teacher (4) and (1) individual reported no resources to improve classroom functioning. Participants explained that additional resources needed with working with children with special needs having an aide in the classroom (7), having more materials (6), having additional training (3), and (1) reported no resources. When asked what participants consult with peers about, which materials to use (15) was the most common response, the need of an aide in the classroom (7), discussed what information to speak to special education teachers about (7), what are the methods to use in the classroom (6), special modifications needed for the classroom (3), consulted on trainings (3), and consulted with school psychologists (2). When asked about what consultation is available to participants, consulting with special education teachers (11) was most often reported, speaking with a specialist (10), speaking with a psychologist (10), speaking with teams at school (7), consulting with

RSP teachers (5), consulting with specific therapists, i.e. occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech/language pathologists (3), speaking with caseworkers (3), consulting with a nurse (2), and having administration support (2) participants felt more supported by their schools. When asked what was most challenging about having special education students in a general education classroom, accommodations, both of the physical classroom (14) and of the curriculum (9) was the most common response. Other challenges included a general lack of resources (7), not having an aid or enough time (6), not having enough training (5), not having parental involvement (5), and not having administration support (2).

When asked what was the most beneficial aspect of working with children with special needs, participants reported feeling better about what they do (12), seeing the positive change in child's self-perception (11), having an aide or administration support (6), the view of diversity that all children are still children (5), observation of the child's improvement (5), proper materials (3), working with an IEP worker (3), and parental support was most beneficial (2). When asked

about training opportunities that could enhance or improve working with children with special needs, having specific disability training (19), having an aide in the classroom that is trained (10), having support (6), a summary information about the child (4), training on materials to use in the classroom (4), curriculum training (4), and (1) was unsure. When asked what social services or if a social worker was available for consultation, participants reported having professional support (12), information on counseling and therapy services (8), spoke with a social worker (3), having training in specific areas (2), and (1) was unsure.

Table 4. Qualitative Information

Variable	Frequency (N)
IEP Additional Resources	
Aide in class	9
Professional Development/Training	8
Peer Support	5
Resource Teacher	4
None	1
Additional Classroom Resources	
Aide in Class	7
Materials	6
Training	3
None	1

Variable	Frequency (N)
Consultation available in School	
Special Education Teacher	11
Specialist	10
Consultation available in School	
Special Education Teacher	11
Specialist	10
Psychologist	10
Teams	7
RSP Teachers	5
Specific Therapists (OT, PT, SLP)	3
Caseworker	3
Administration	2
Nurse	2
Most Challenging	
Classroom Accommodations	14
Curriculum Accommodations	9
Resources	7
No Aide/Lack of time	6
Lack of Parental Involvement	5
Lack of Training	5
IEP Support	2
Lack of Administration Support	2
Most Beneficial	
Teachers Positive Self View	12
Children Positive Self View	11
Aide/Administration Support	6
Diversity/All Children are the same	5
Observed Child Improvement	5
Materials	3
IEP Worker	3
Parental Support	2
Unsure	1

Variable	Frequency (N)
Training Opportunities	
Specific Disability Training	19
Support	10
Aide	6
Summery/Information on Child	4
Materials	4
Information on Curriculum	4
Unsure	1
Social Services/Social Worker Available	
Professional Support	12
Counseling/Therapy Services	8
Social Worker Support	3
Training	2
Unsure	1

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter briefly discusses the significant results of the study. The chapter addresses the supporting data and the key findings. Strengths and limitations of the study are also discussed. The chapter also focuses on recommendations for social work practice, policy, and research. The chapter then ends with an exploration of the broader implications for social work practice, policy, and research.

Discussion

The current study focused to gather a better understanding of what teachers are familiar with when working with IEPs and how this affects the implementation of IEPs in the classroom. The study also focused on the accommodations teachers are required to make, or need additional information on how to accommodate for changes in the classroom and curricula to meet the requirements of the children with special needs in their mainstream classroom. This study found that gender of the participant does not significantly impact the view of

inclusion of children with special needs into the mainstream classroom. It was found that the age of the participant and the number of years was found to be correlated, and this can mean that the older the participant is, the more likely they are to have been teaching for a longer period of time. This finding makes sense because age is correlated with amount of years teaching, and it would have been a surprise if this had not been a significant finding.

The current study also found that when a teacher was certified in working with children with special needs they felt less supported and comfortable having a child with special needs in their classroom than a teacher that was not certified in special education. This contradicts information from previous research reports. This could possibly mean that individuals with a special education credential actually know what is potentially possible or useful and have higher expectations. Another possibility is that these individuals work with students that are more impaired than teachers having children with special needs in the mainstream classroom. Tike Barfa, and Kargin (2009) explained that teachers certified in special education tend to feel more confident when working with

children with special needs because they have more education and strategies than teachers that are not certified. Although this study found that when participants received IEP information, additional resources in the classroom or sought consultation not to be significant, it was found that when consultation was available when needed, allowed for the teachers to feel more comfortable when working with children with special needs. Tike Bafra, and Kargin (2009) state that this is because there are multiple sources to obtain this information as well as the information being more accurate and teachers feel they can work with children with special needs in the mainstream classroom.

This study found that when asked about what additional IEP resources participants would like more of in their classroom, it was found that having an additional aide in the class and having more professional development/training were the most common responses. Participants also stated that having more classroom aides and materials would allow teachers to work with children with special needs more easily. Tike Bafra, and Kargin (2009) explain that when teachers are involved or informed about the IEP process or resources, teachers

tend to have a positive attitude when working with children with special needs in the mainstream classroom. Tike Bafra, and Kargin (2009) also explained that when teachers feel they can consult with peers it is beneficial in gathering multiple resources and accurate information and teachers feel more confident and supported. In this study, teachers reported having special education teachers, specialists, and psychologists available for consulting about materials and methods to use in the classroom. Garmon (2005), and Blecker and Boakes (2010) found that teachers wanted to be and feel more supported when working with children with special needs to be able to provide the best classroom environment for all students.

This study looked at what teachers felt was most challenging when working with children with special needs and found that the most common responses were having to accommodate the classroom and the curricula for their students. Whitney (2009) explains that this is related to teachers feeling there is some interruption in the flow of teaching due to teachers not being accustomed to working with specialized curricula. When asked what is more beneficial when was working with children with

special needs the most common responses were improved teachers self-view and the improved child's self-view. Humphrey and Symes (2013) explain that having improved self-view for teachers and students was viewed as a positive reason for including children with special needs in the mainstream classroom.

Participants were also asked about what training opportunities they would like or benefit from. The most common response to this was having specific disability training and more training for their support staff. Participants also reported that in regards to social services or social worker availability the most common responses were that participants sought help from them regarding professional support and referred children to counseling or therapy services. Further research needs to be conducted to understand the relationship between support, resources and training and teachers feeling more comfortable having children with special needs in their classrooms.

Limitations and Strengths

This study consisted of 62 participants; in order to have a more representative sample for the population a

larger sample and broader in the sense of location would affect the outcome and the results of the study. The current study also used a convenient sample in that it was an online survey and participants were sought using social media. Another impact of using social media to announce the survey is that a particular group of participants could have passed on the survey or seen the survey. Further knowledge of the study would have to be done to gather a more wide variety of participants. The current study also did not have a for sure method of ensuring that all participants were teachers. Further research using only a sample that consists of teachers will help to understand what is best to provide teachers with when working with children with special needs.

A strength of this study was that the researcher was able to have the University IRB approve the study to approach teachers using an internet survey. This also allowed the survey to be completed when the participants were able to take time and complete the survey. Also it allowed for the researcher to collect the data and analyze the data with ease. Due to the survey taking place online, it allowed for some diversity in the participants such as differing ages, length of time

teaching, state teaching, and the grades the teachers worked with. Maintaining confidentiality was also a strength because the researcher does not know who the participants are which may have allowed for more open and honest responses. Another strength for this study was that it was easy to understand in the directions provided to the participants as well as following the prompts on the webpage for the survey.

The use of qualitative and quantitative data has limitations and strengths. A limitation of qualitative data is that it is limited to a response. A strength is that participants are able to answer and for researcher to collect (Weinbach & Grinnell, 2010). A limitation of quantitative data is the length of time it may take the participant to answer questions and for the researcher to gather and condense information gathered. A strength of qualitative data is for participants to expand on their answers and for researchers to have that knowledge (Weinbach & Grinnell, 2010).

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

The National Center for Educational Statistics (2011) explain that 5.8% of children with Autism were

served in the mainstream classroom. The information gathered from the current study states that many of the participants felt they had children with Autism in their mainstream classroom. When comparing the information from the study to the National Center for Educational Statistics, it appears that the numbers are higher in the current study because this study relied on teachers to recall the students with special education needs in their classrooms, it appears that these teachers were more aware of students with autism than are actually represented in the classroom. This may indicate a higher need for general education teachers to learn about Autism Spectrum Disorders over other disabilities. Social workers can help provide the proper education for teachers in the mainstream classrooms about the statistics and behavior information about children with special needs i.e. symptoms that are relevant to Autism.

The current study also shows that many individuals feel they have children with specific learning disabilities and speech or language impairment in their classroom. The National Center for Educational Statistics states that 37.5% of children with specific learning disabilities were in the main stream classroom, and 21.8%

of children had speech or language impairment in the mainstream classroom. This information is not proportionate to The National Center for Educational Statistics. The current study reflects that teachers are noticing the children they are having behavior issues with, and not the actual special need of the child.

Social work education can help to influence educating individuals working with children with special needs by educating future social workers more on methods, resources, changes to make in the environments, and how to help and support the individuals working with children with special needs. Social workers focusing on mental health could educate individuals working with children with special needs about symptom reduction as well as how to communicate with parents that is willing to participate in the children's lives.

Social workers can work with schools to implement training programs to inform mainstream teachers on how to best work in inclusive environments that are also least restrictive, and assist to make accommodations and adaptations easiest for teachers. Tike Bafra, and Kargin (2009) explain that when teachers have the proper

training and support, having children with special needs in the mainstream classroom is seen as a positive aspect.

Further research is needed to help understand what teachers will truly benefit from when working with children with special needs. Further studies could also review programs or information provided by social workers and how they have impacted the views of teachers working with children with special needs in the mainstream classroom. For future studies it would be beneficial for the sample size to be larger to be able to gather more information that can be generalized to the population. With gathering more information, it would also be beneficial for researchers to gather a specific sample size for teachers with special education certificates and compare information of an equal sample size of teachers that are not certified in special education to gather information about specific areas where teachers feel more comfortable working with children with special needs and where individuals struggle. The current study used a social network to reach out to participants of a wide variety and this method could be used in future research. A change that can be made is have more time for the

survey to be available for participants, as well as use multiple social media websites to announce the study.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions are to be answered over the current school year that you are teaching. If you are in between school years, the questions should be answered regarding the most recent school year you taught.

1. Do you currently have special needs children in your class?
Yes
No

If yes, please answer these questions on your most recent child with special needs

Were you provided with that child's IEP? Yes/No

Were you invited to participate in the IEP meeting with school officials and parents? Yes/No

Were you provided additional resources?

Yes, what were they?

No

If no,

Have you ever had special needs children in your class? Yes

No, thank you for participating, and this now concludes the survey

Were you provided with that child's IEP?

Were you invited to participate in the IEP meeting with school officials and parents?

Were you provided additional resources?

Yes, what were they?

2. Did you receive any additional classroom resources to assist in having a special needs child in your classroom? If yes, what were the classroom resources?
3. When working with a child with special needs, did you feel the need to consult with other peers regarding the child with special needs? If yes, what did you consult on?
4. Currently at your school, is there consultation available for you when you have questions regarding the special needs child in your class? If yes, what kinds of consultation?

5. When working with special needs children, what is the most common impairment in the classroom? (Check all that apply)
- Autism
 - Deaf-blindness
 - Deafness
 - Developmental delay
 - Emotional disturbance
 - Hearing impairment
 - Intellectual disability
 - Multiple disabilities
 - Orthopedic impairment
 - Other health impairment
 - Specific learning disability
 - Speech or language impairment
 - Traumatic brain injury
 - Visual impairment, including blindness
6. What have you felt has been most challenging when working with a special needs child in your classroom?
7. What have you felt has been most beneficial when working with a special needs child in your classroom?
8. What training or support would you like to see to feel more comfortable in teaching in a mainstream classroom with special needs children included in the day?
9. Are there social workers or other types of social services available at your school? If yes, what kinds of support to the social workers/social services practitioners provide?
10. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about your school.

1	2	3	4	5
<u>Strongly</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u>
<u>Agree</u>				<u>Disagree</u>

What is your comfort level in working with special needs children in the mainstream classroom?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

We begin with the premise that a student belongs in the classroom he/she would attend if not disabled

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

We cluster students with disabilities into special groups and classrooms

1 2 3 4 5

We support the concept that children with learning disabilities profit from friendships with non-disabled students and not disabled students profit from friendships with students having disabilities.

1 2 3 4 5

Regular and special educators have integrated their efforts and resources so that they may work together as a team

1 2 3 4 5

Sufficient time and staff development has been provided for educators to collaborate effectively.

1 2 3 4 5

Teachers are isolated in separate departments with separate supervisors and budgets.

1 2 3 4 5

The administration has created a work climate in which staff is supported as they provide assistance to one another.

1 2 3 4 5

Teachers are concerned about appearing incompetent if they seek peer collaboration in working with students.

1 2 3 4 5

We actively encourage the full participation of students with disabilities in the life of the school, including extracurricular activities.

1 2 3 4 5

We provide for students with disabilities as much of the school curriculum that they can master. We modify that curriculum as necessary so these students can share experiences with their peers.

1 2 3 4 5

11. Your Gender:

Female:

Male:

12. Your Age Range:
- 20-29
 - 30-39
 - 40-49
 - 50-59
 - Over 60
13. For how many years have you been teaching?
- 0-3 years
 - 4-7 years
 - 8-11 years
 - Over 11 years
14. Are you certified in special education?
- Yes
 - No
15. In which of the following grade levels have you taught? Check all that apply
- Kindergarten
 - First
 - Second
 - Third
 - Fourth
 - Fifth
 - Sixth
 - Seventh
 - Eighth
 - Ninth
 - Tenth
 - Eleventh
 - Twelfth

16. What grade are you currently teaching? Check all that apply

Kindergarten

First

Second

Third

Fourth

Fifth

Sixth

Seventh

Eighth

Ninth

Tenth

Eleventh

Twelfth

17. What state do you teach in?

Adapted from Blecker, N. S., & Boakes, N. J. (2010). Creating a learning environment for all children: Are teachers able and willing? *International Journal of Inclusion Education*, 14(5), 435-447.

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate the perceptions teachers have of working with special needs children in the mainstream classroom. This study is being conducted by Shallymar Robinson under the supervision of Carolyn McAllister, Assistant Professor, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the School of Social Work Sub-committee of the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: To evaluate the experiences of teachers working with special needs curricula and mainstream curricula in the same classroom.

DESCRIPTION: This study consists of a confidential survey.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate in this study will not involve any penalty. You may discontinue participation or choose not to answer part of the study at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY: Your participation in this survey is confidential. Your survey will be completed on Survey Monkey. You will not be asked to give your name or any other information identifying you. The information taken from the survey website will not include your name or other personal identifiers. The records of the study will be stored on a password protected computer.

DURATION: It is expected that this survey will take 15 – 20 minutes to complete.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks to your participation in this study.

BENEFITS: This study will provide the researcher information to help improve the resources and training in working with special needs children in the mainstream classroom. Your participation will help future teachers with resources to be more efficient when teaching multiple curricula in one classroom.

CONTACT: If there are questions about the study regarding rights of participants, please contact Dr. Carolyn McAllister at cmcallis@csusb.edu or by phone at (909)537-5559.

RESULTS: Results can be obtained regarding this study in the Pfau Library at California State University San Bernardino after September of 2013.

CONSENT: Your consent to participate in this study is implied in your completion of the survey.

APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

This study you have just completed was designed to gather the opinions of teachers on what resources would benefit in helping reduce stress in the classroom when working with the requirements of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) and implementing a curriculum for the mainstream classroom. The researcher is interested in feedback from teachers to help work with schools on bettering these experiences for everyone.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Carolyn McAllister at (909) 537-5559. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact Dr. Carolyn McAllister at (909) 537-5559 in July 2013.

REFERENCES

- ADA Enforcement. (2011). Retrieved February 12, 2012, from <http://www.ada.gov/enforcement/html>
- Agaliotis, I., & Kalyva, E. (2011). A survey of Greek general and special education teachers' perceptions regarding the role of the special needs coordinator: Implications for educational policy on inclusion and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 543-551.
- Bateman, B. (2009). Legal requirements for transition components of the IEP. <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/trans.legal.bateman.htm>
- Blecker, N. S., & Boakes, N. J. (2010). Creating a learning environment for all children: Are teachers able and willing? *International Journal of Inclusion Education*, 14(5), 435-447.
- Block, M. E., & Obrusnikova, I. (2007). Inclusion in physical education: A review of the literature from 1995-2005. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 24, 103-124.
- Block, M. E., & Rizzo, T. L. (1995). Attitudes and attributes of physical educators associated with teaching individuals with severe and profound disabilities. *Journal of the Associated People with Sever Handicaps*, 20(1), 80-87.
- Brown Foundation. (2012). Retrieved February 12, 2012, from <http://brownvboard.org/content/Building-blocks>
- Combs, S., Elliott, S., & Whipple, K. (2010). Elementary physical education teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special needs: A qualitative investigation. *International Journal of Special Education*, 25(1), 114-125.
- Cozby, P. (2009). *Methods in behavioral research* (10th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill

- Digest of Education Statistics. (2011). *The national center for educational statistics*.
http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/tables/dt11_046.asp?referrer=list
- Dunn, J. (1970). The plan approach to curriculum definition. *Education*, 221-238.
- Fakolade, O. A., & Adeniyi, S. O. (2009). Attitudes of teachers toward the inclusion of children with special needs in the general education classroom: The case of teachers in selected schools in Nigeria. *The Journal of the International Association of Special Education*, 10(1), 60-64.
- Garmon, M. A. (2005). Six key factors for changing preservice teachers' attitudes/beliefs about diversity. *Educational Studies*, 38(3), 275-286.
- Humphrey, N., & Symes, W. (2013). Inclusive education for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in secondary mainstream schools: Teacher attitudes, experience and knowledge. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(1), 32-46
- Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act. (2004). Retrieved February 12, 2012, from <http://idea.ed.gov/download/statute.html>.
- Kilanowski-Press, L., Foote, C. J., & Rinaldo, V. J. (2010). Inclusion classrooms and teachers: A survey of current practice. *International Journal of Special Education*, 25(3), 43-56.
- Kupper, L. & Kohanek, J. (2000) A guide to the individualized education program. *Office of special education and rehabilitative services U.S. department of education*, 1-40.
- Lesser, J. G., & Pope, D. S. (2011). *Human behavior and the social environment: Theory and practice* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education Inc.

- Loiacono, V., & Valenti, V. (2010). General education teachers need to be prepared to co-teach the increasing number of children with autism in inclusive settings. *International Journal of Special Education*, 25(3), 24-32.
- Petersen, R. D., & Valdez, A. (2005). Using snowball-based methods in hidden populations to generate a randomized community sample of gang-affiliated adolescents. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 3(2), 151-167.
- Praslova, L. (2010). Adaptation of Kirkpatrick's four levels of training criteria to assessment of learning outcomes and program evaluation in higher education. *Springer Science and Business Media*, 215-225.
- No Child Left Behind Act. (2001). Retrieved February 12, 2012 from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>.
- Pryor, C. B., Kent, C., McGunn, C., & LeRoy, B. (1996). Redesigning social work in inclusive schools. *National Association of Social Workers, Inc.*, 668-676.
- Simpson, R. (2004). Finding effective intervention and personnel preparation practices for students with autism spectrum disorders. *Exceptional Children*, 70, 135-144.
- Tike Bafra, L., & Kargin, T. (2009). Investigating the attitudes of elementary school teachers, school psychologists and guidance research center personnel on the process of preparing the individualized educational program and challenges faced during the related process. *Educational Sciences: Theories & Practice*, 1960-1971.
- Turnbull, H. R. (2009). A modest proposal in four parts. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 42(1), 1-10.

- Tuomainen, J., Palonen, T., & Hakkarainen, K. (2010). A special education teacher's networks: A Finnish case. *International Journal of Special Education*, 25(1), 46-58.
- Webb, R., Greco, V., Sloper, P., & Beecham, J. (2008). Key workers and schools: Meeting the needs of children and young people with disabilities. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 23(3), 189-205.
- Weinback, R. W., & Grinnell Jr., R. M. (2010). *Statistics for social workers*. Boston, MA: Pearson
- Whitney, S. (2009). Teacher says, "I don't care if he has an IEP." <http://www.wrightslaw.com/heath/dont.care.iep.htm>