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ABSTRACT

This study examined the feelings of competency of 30 regular and special middle school teachers in one Suffolk County (New York) school district about educating children with special needs in a fully inclusive setting. A two-part questionnaire provided: (1) demographic and training background information for the teachers; and (2) the teachers' responses to questions that indicated their attitudes toward inclusion, their own competency, and beliefs about the adequacy of their own training and support. The study examined correlations between the two parts and found that generally teachers felt competent in teaching special needs children in inclusive settings, especially if their background experiences included sufficient training and support. As the severity of a child's disability increased, teachers' feelings of competency decreased. Results support providing teachers with specialized training as schools move toward increased inclusion and developing guidelines for practice. Appendices include the questionnaire, data analysis, and the text of teacher comments on the questionnaire. (Contains 19 references.) (DB)

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TEACHERS' FEELINGS OF COMPETENCY IN EDUCATING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION SETTING

By:

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Abstract

There has been a shift in the education system towards inclusion, which dictates meeting the needs of special children within the regular education setting. Teachers within the regular education setting will become the primary deliverers of services, yet, their views have been noticeably absent from this forum. This study examined teachers' feelings of competency when educating children with special needs in a fully inclusive setting to determine if feelings of competency are related to the amount of training and support provided to them. Questionnaires and demographic information were collected with a total response rate of 30 out of 140. A correlation was performed at an alpha level of .01 between the index comprised of the first six questions and an index of the last 12 questions on the questionnaire. Results showed that teachers who are informed and trained feel more competent.

Introduction

Historically, teachers have worked in isolation teaching populations of students who had some essential similarities and with one teacher to a class. Those children with special needs were taught in separate classrooms with their own teachers. In recent years, there has been a shift in the education system towards mainstreaming and inclusion because of the dual beliefs that special education is ineffective and that all children should be educated in the least restrictive environment. This has brought about advocacy for mainstreaming, and more recently, inclusion. Mainstreaming and inclusion, however, are not synonymous. The concept of mainstreaming is that students, who are in special classes, participate in some regular classes and earn their way back into regular education; it is a reintegration process. The concept of inclusion is that all students remain in their regular education classes and services are brought to them, a "push in" as opposed to a "pull out" process (Lidz, 2001).

The philosophy of inclusion envisions teams of general education and special education teachers working collaboratively to combine their knowledge, perspectives and skills. Such collaboration ideally requires commitment and communication by teams of teachers working together, by school

administrators, and by the school system and the community at large.

The shift to inclusion was prompted by Public Law 94-142, The Education of the Handicapped Act of 1975. This law required that students with special needs be educated in the "least restrictive environment," which means that students must be placed in an environment in which they can experience the most success (Hines and Johnston, 1996). During the early years, when Public Law 94-142 was being implemented, most states did not assume that the least restrictive environment would be the regular classroom, and placement options such as "pullout" were implemented instead (Walther-Thomas, 1997).

Hines and Johnston (1996) saw inclusion as the merging of regular and special education. Inclusion has become a major component in school reform issues due to legal mandates, court orders, the beliefs of parents and educators, and the implementations of committees who make decisions for students with disabilities.

Fully inclusive education must meet the needs of special children within the regular classroom setting, without any assignment to a special education setting (Lidz, 2001). It should be obvious that the success of students with disabilities in the regular education setting would require many curriculum modifications and many support services (Lidz, 2001). At

present, however, it is not at all clear that teachers have the necessary supports in place to feel competent in such a complex undertaking, and it would seem that the success of inclusion remains in doubt. A more methodical exploration of teachers' notions about their ability to successfully include special children within their classroom settings would be useful.

Purpose of study

This study will attempt to examine teachers' feelings of competency when educating children with special needs in the regular education setting in order to determine whether teachers' feelings of competency in an inclusive setting are related to the amount of training they have had and the amount of support that they are given. For the purpose of this study, inclusion is defined as the provision of services to students with special needs in the regular classroom as opposed to pulling students out of the classroom to receive these special services.

Significance of the Study

The effectiveness of inclusion may depend a great deal on the attitudes of teachers and support staff (Galis & Tanner, 1995). Lidz (2001) suggested that the assignment of children to settings "needs to be carried out in a highly individualistic way that takes into consideration evidence of effectiveness, the

needs of the learner, and the preferences of the family and the student" (p.478).

There remains general agreement among educators that both supportive services and staff development are necessary in order for teachers to educate special needs children effectively (Lidz, 2001). The question remains: are teachers' needs being adequately met in order for them to feel competent and capable of educating students with special needs within the regular classroom setting?

A recent comprehensive survey conducted in the state of Georgia by Galis and Tanner (1995) found that regular education teachers were the group with the least positive attitudes toward inclusive education. If this is true in general, and regular educators have negative feelings about the possibility of inclusive education, it should prove exceedingly difficult to effectively promulgate the philosophy of a least restrictive environment for all students and carry forward inclusive concepts successfully. Interestingly, Galis and Tanner (1995), also found that younger teachers, in spite of the fact that they had been exposed to many more ideas about educational reform, held more negative views about inclusion than did older, more seasoned teachers.

As it is possible that negative attitudes reflect feelings of lack of competence, this study addresses the issue of how

competent teachers feel to teach children with special needs. If feelings of competence are an issue, then this can be remediated by activities to increase competence with a view towards helping teachers to implement policies that will produce successful outcomes for their students in inclusive settings.

Statement of Research Questions

The present study addresses the issue of determining the variables that might affect teachers' feelings of competency in educating children with special needs within the general education setting. The research questions to be answered by this study are as follows:

1. How competent do teachers feel regarding teaching children with special needs?
2. How competent do teachers feel in educating children with varying disabilities (mild, moderate or severe)?
3. a. What is the relationship between number of years of experience teachers have and their feelings of competency to teach children with special needs?
   b. What is the relationship between number of years of the teachers' experience in inclusive settings and their feelings of competency?
   c. What is the relationship between number of years of experience teaching in non-inclusive settings and teachers' feelings of competency?
   d. What is the relationship between teachers' feeling of being informed and trained and teachers' feelings

of competency in educating children with special needs?

Review of Literature

The 1975 Education for Handicapped Children Act was updated in 1990 and the new law "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" (IDEA) replaced Public Law 94-142. These laws mandated free and appropriate public education for every child or youth between the ages of three and twenty-one, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability he or she may have (Walther-Thomas, 1997). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, signed into law by President Clinton, indicated the need for all educators to be responsible for the provision of services to all students. This amendment permits educators to plan for students who are at-risk even though there is no active disability.

The issue of inclusion has been at the forefront of education since the advent of the Regular Education Initiative (REI), with the focus on shared responsibility in educating students with learning problems, under the administration of Madeleine Will (1986), Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Will's concerns focused on the quality and effectiveness of educating children with special needs. Yet, inclusion has too often been viewed as a moral and legal issue that can be addressed exclusively at the conceptual level rather than implemented (Bricker, 1995; Kavale and

Forness, 2000). However, Kavale and Forness (2000) pointed out that a philosophy of inclusion altered the education of all students and hence general education itself. They felt that sufficient empirical evidence to support inclusion had neither been gathered nor sought, when policy is instituted, and the evidence that existed has proven equivocal. The ideology to produce change appears to have superceded the commitment to collect empirical evidence, and the issue of "what works" has remained unanswered.

Increasingly, special education reform has come to be symbolized by the term "inclusive schools" (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994). However, inclusion advocates support the statement that segregating children by diagnosis or handicap is not necessarily in the best interests of the child (Schleien & Heyne, 1997). Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) criticized the assertion by advocates of full inclusion that separate programming is inherently unequal and immoral.

In the early days of inclusion, Schultz (1982) believed that regular classroom teachers were ill-prepared to work effectively with special needs children and criticized the lack of training in special education methods for non-specialists in teacher education curriculums. Schultz (1982) documented the questions and concerns among these practitioners by means of a questionnaire. Results of this study of 102 teachers documented

that they felt a lack of expertise (competence) when dealing with special needs students in their classes. The teachers studied were not comfortable with the level of their current skills, knowledge, or attitudes towards inclusion and felt that their concerns were not being adequately addressed. The author stated that: "More research needs to be conducted to determine and prioritize issues and concerns of regular classroom teachers who work with special needs students" (Schultz, 1982, p. 367).

Supporters of inclusion believe that placing disabled students in the regular education setting promotes greater acceptance by their peers and that they gain more academic knowledge through teacher instruction and small group activities (Grider, 1995). Bricker (1995) advocated the need for additional training to manage the challenges of inclusion since most professionals and paraprofessionals trained to work with children without disabilities knew little about disabilities or about how impairments may affect children with disabilities.

There seems to be some controversy and a great deal of confusion among teachers as to how inclusion will affect them (Brown, 1997). Brown, a proponent of inclusion, recognized the need of all children to share a sense of belonging and argued for the provision of inservice training prior to the transition of special needs children into regular education classrooms. Brown (1997) felt that inclusion practices of benefit to the

teacher would include the provision of flexibility in the administration of instruction through use of co-teachers and support from other professionals.

Many professional educational organizations have discussed the issue of inclusion, but the views of regular classroom teachers have been noticeably absent from these arenas; yet, these teachers will be the primary deliverers of services and are the educators most directly affected by these changes. The attitude of the general education teacher is a primary factor in the success or failure of policies such as mainstreaming and inclusion (Hannah & Pilner, 1983).

Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher and Saumell (1996) studied a large number of teachers and concluded that most teachers had strong negative feelings about inclusion. Teachers expressed a variety of concerns about inclusion, including the time and effort to be taken from students without disabilities. They also expressed concern about the lack of sufficient resources and support (Werts, Wolery, Snyder, Caldwell, and Salisbury, 1996).

Vaughn et. al. (1996) conducted group discussions with teachers on the issue of inclusion and found their feelings to be negative. According to these authors, teacher fears included concern for the academic success of all the students, concern about lawsuits, and fear of increased workloads. They also felt

that they were inadequately prepared to educate students with special needs and feared that they would not be competent to meet their students' needs.

Minke, Bear, Deemer, and Griffin (1996) looked at teachers' perceptions of their own competence in a survey that concerned attitudes of teachers regarding inclusion of children with mild disabilities. Perceptions of self-efficacy, competence, teaching satisfaction and judgement of the appropriateness of classroom adaptations were examined. It should be noted that in this study, the special education teachers held the most positive view of inclusion while regular classroom teachers in regular classroom settings held the least positive views. This finding supports the notion that training and possibly years of experience with children with special needs may be relevant factors affecting teachers' attitudes and feelings of competence. This outcome reaffirms the notion that it would be important to further ascertain the feelings of regular classroom teachers towards inclusion since significantly negative views of competency would indicate the need for a multiplicity of interventions to support regular classroom teachers in any successful transition to inclusion.

Stoiber, Gettinger, and Goetz (1998) found that practitioners' (special educators, regular educators, paraprofessionals and support service personnel) beliefs about

inclusion were influenced by their level of education, training, and years of experience. Those with the least specialized training reported being the least prepared to work with children with severe disabilities. Practitioners with extensive and specialized training held more positive beliefs. Practitioners voiced concern about the need for more time for planning and collaboration. They believed that they needed inservice training to provide them with appropriate teaching and intervention strategies. The authors also called for increased communication skills and teamwork training for practitioners. They need peer support and ongoing opportunities for professional development.

It is clear that the brunt of responsibility for implementing educational programs for all students falls upon teachers, but it remains unclear as to whether teachers are receiving the necessary training to aid them in educating children with special needs (Lidz, 2001). Teachers are a critical part of the process and, yet, there appears to be much apprehension on the part of teachers concerning inclusion. There can be no doubt that the attitude of the general education teacher is a crucial factor in the success or failure of a policy such as inclusion. There is a need for empirical evidence regarding the need for support for teachers' competence when inclusion is implemented in the regular education setting.

Instructional support teams, special supportive services, inservice training and others might be put in place for the teachers in order to facilitate successful outcomes for the students. Therefore, the question of whether or not teachers feel competent regarding inclusion is an important one to address.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of regular education and special education teachers who were currently teaching in a fully-inclusive setting. This was a convenience sample of teachers from the Northport school district in Suffolk County, New York. Return rates were low with a total of 30 out of 140. The final sample of teachers included 16.7% men and 83.3% women with a mean age of 38 years. All participants in this study are white, and 26 are at the Masters level, 3 at the Doctoral level, and 1 at the Bachelors level of education. The average of years in teaching was 9.3; the average number of years in an inclusive setting was 6.1 years; and the average number of years educating children with special needs in non-inclusive setting was 3.2 years.

Materials

A two-part questionnaire was designed for this study consisting of 18 questions: the first section provided demographic information about the participants. The questions were based on recent quantitative survey research on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). In a comprehensive study by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996), which encompassed a synthesis of research which had been conducted from 1958 through 1995 organized around key questions relating

to inclusion issues. Questions used from Scruggs and Mastropieri's (1996) were related to teachers' beliefs about sufficient time, skills, training, and resources. Questions pertaining to feelings of competency were generated by this examiner. The questionnaire and cover letter are in Appendix A.

Procedure

The Northport School District superintendent put the researcher in touch with Mr. John Lynch, Director of People Services, of the Northport school district. Mr. Lynch was provided with a sample of the questionnaire and presented it to the Board of Directors. Upon approval from the Board, Mr. Lynch put the researcher in contact with two principals of this fully-inclusive school district. The principals contacted were, Mr. Stu Goldberg of East Northport Middle School (65 teachers) and Mr. Thomas Heinegg of Northport Middle School (75 teachers). Both schools were provided with a sufficient number of cover letters explaining the need for the study and the questionnaires, together with self-addressed, stamped return envelopes, for all the teachers in the two settings. The principles distributed the questionnaires, and the teachers returned them to the principals to be mailed in the prepaid, addressed envelopes provided by the researcher. Because of the difficulty of asking these individuals to offer more time and

effort, further follow-up to encourage greater participation was not possible.

Of the 140 questionnaires mailed to two Northport middle schools, only 30 were returned. This produced a response rate of 21 percent.

Results

When the questionnaires were returned, they were scored to derive an average index for each question across the 30 participants. The results for the research questions are as follows:

1. How competent do teachers feel regarding teaching children with special needs? On a scale of 0 through 4 with 0 equal to strongly disagree and 4 strongly agree, teachers on an average scored 2.7, which indicates that they strongly agree to feeling competent in teaching children with special needs.
2. How competent do teachers feel in educating children with varying disabilities (mild, moderate or severe)? The results from percentages that were derived are as follows: 96.7% agree/strongly to feeling competent in educating children with mild disabilities; 80% agree/strongly agree to feeling competent in educating children with moderate disabilities; and only 36.7% agree/strongly agree to feeling competent in educating children with severe disabilities. As the severity of the child's disabilities increases the teachers' feelings of competency decreases.

Correlations were performed to answer research questions 3a, 3b, and 3c, and the results were not significant. However, research question 3d was highly significant.

3. d. What is the relationship between teachers' feelings of being informed and trained and teachers' feelings of competency in educating children with Special needs? A correlation was performed between the index which was comprised of the first 6 questions on the survey -- an index of being informed/trained, and an index of the last 12 questions, an index of feelings of competency (see Table 6). The results yielded an r (30)= .606, p < .01. This outcome confirms the finding that teachers who are more informed and trained feel more competent in educating children with special needs in an inclusive setting.

Percentages were derived for each separate question answered within each questionnaire (see Appendix C). The results yielded descriptive information relating to teachers' feelings of competency. Out of the 30 teachers who participated in this study, 70% were pleased to have had the opportunity to teach within an inclusive setting. This is a positive result in that teachers appeared willing to participate when given the appropriate and necessary support. One teacher commented," You

need to have the training and support in order for the students to succeed." Another teacher stated, "I would appreciate more training." In terms of having sufficient guidelines, it seems that there would be a greater acceptance of students with disabilities if teachers had sufficient guidelines to tell them what to do. Only 36.7% agreed/strongly agreed that they had sufficient guidelines, whereas 63.3% disagreed/strongly disagreed. Regarding this issue of sufficient guidelines, one teacher commented, "As a special education teacher, I feel that inclusion is valuable. However, there needs to be more education as to how this program should run." On the item regarding feelings of competency when teaching children with most types of mild special needs, 96.7% of the teachers reported that they agreed/strongly agreed that they felt competent. In contrast, only 23% agreed/strongly agreed that they felt competent when teaching children with severe special needs and 77% disagreed/strongly disagreed. These results indicate that, as the severity of a child's disability increases, there is a corresponding decrease in teachers' feelings of competency. These feelings were described by one teacher who wrote, "I feel that we, as a school district, lump all the students no matter what their handicap in the inclusion classes. This setting is not for everyone. There should still be a spectrum of classes (self-contained) to help the student who struggles in the

inclusion class." Additional teachers' comments are compiled in Appendix D.

It was hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between teachers' feelings about being informed and trained and teachers' feelings of competency. That is, the more training and support teachers have in educating children with special needs in an inclusive setting, the greater their feelings of competency. The results of this study supported this hypothesis.

Discussion

In recent years, there has been a shift in the education system towards mainstreaming and inclusion because of the dual beliefs that special education is ineffective and that all children should be educated in the least restrictive environment.

The results of this study suggest that it is important to assess whether or not teachers feel competent regarding inclusion and to discern what areas need to be focused on in order to increase their feelings' of competency in educating children with special needs in an inclusive setting.

The successful integration of special children into the regular classroom setting (inclusion) would require multiple supports and curriculum changes. Although professional organizations have discussed the issue of inclusion, the views of general classroom teachers have been noticeably absent from this arena. 'It should be apparent that since classroom teachers are the primary deliverers of service and the group of educators most affected by these changes, their view of what is needed to make inclusion a successful philosophy in education should be well-noted and documented.

In the words of one teacher in the study "You need to have the training and support in order for the students to succeed." Enrichment for the teacher is an important element in

successfully implementing inclusion. The results of this study demonstrate that teachers, who are informed, trained, and feel supported feel more competent in educating children with special needs in an inclusive setting. The study also suggests that the sufficient guidelines is of great importance for successful implementation of inclusion and would enable teachers to feel more comfortable with participating in teaching in an inclusive setting, thus, making the transition to inclusion more effective.

The research reviewed (Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher & Saumell, 1996) demonstrated that group discussions conducted with general classroom teachers found their feelings regarding inclusion to be strongly negative. If this is true, steps must be taken to offer support services to teachers when inclusion takes place. This study suggests that these negative attitudes may reflect feelings of lack of competence.

The study also indicates that, as the severity of the child's disability increases, teachers' feelings of competency decrease. With regard to the questionnaire item concerning feelings of competency in teaching children with most types of mild special needs, 96.7% of the teachers reported that they agreed. In contrast, only 36.7% agreed that they felt competent in teaching children with severe special needs and 63.3% disagreed on this item. This finding points to the need for

additional training and support so that it would be possible to increase teachers' feelings of competency when dealing with more severely impaired children.

In an effort to facilitate feelings of competency in teachers and prepare them for the inclusive classroom role, it would seem that specialized training may be necessary. The school psychologist can play an important facilitative role in this process by providing consultative and supportive services. In addition, communication training between administrators and teachers could be an effective tool for increasing teacher's feelings of competency. In order to effectively interact with staff, administrators must first be able to understand their needs and have them understand the goals of the program they are to implement. Training could begin with focusing on these processes and then be followed with communication training. Research shows that interpersonal communication is unclear and inefficient to some degree in every school and that the capability of communication is considered to be below optimum in "more than 99 percent of human organizations" (Schmuck, Runkel, Saturen, Martell, and Derr, 1985, p. 25). The interpersonal relationships of school staff can greatly impact the social environment of the students, so we must address the deficiencies in communication among staff in order to successfully address

the deficiencies of the student. The school psychologist has an important role to play in this arena.

Some interesting follow-up research might compare the attitudes towards inclusion of teachers who have already had specialized training and support in the area of educating children with special needs in the regular education setting, to those of teachers who have not had this additional training and support, with a view toward designing and implementing new training programs. In addition, there should be a focus on identifying the resources and supports that are necessary for successful implementation of inclusion, how those resources and supports are provided, and what are the effects that occur when those resources and supports are provided.

The limitations of this study are primarily the low response rate; therefore, the results are limited in their generalizability. The teachers from this study were from only two schools in the same geographic area, which makes this a poor representative sample of the population. The questionnaire might have addressed the issue of support in more depth in an effort to determine what the teachers' felt they needed.

The school psychologist should be at the forefront of implementing training programs, facilitating interpersonal communications training, and offering consistent staff support

when a program as complex and challenging as inclusion is implemented in the schools.

Finally, the evidence regarding the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of inclusion requires that it be implemented under the most optimal circumstances. Teachers, as the primary implementers, need to be and feel competent in order for these effects to be determined.

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Appendix A
Working as a Teacher in an Inclusive Setting

Please respond in terms of how you feel at the present time. Circle the number that best describes your experience on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1=strongly disagree and 4=strongly agree.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

My experience in educating children with special needs within the regular classroom:	
1. I am pleased to have had this challenging opportunity.	1 2 3 4
2. I feel I have sufficient guidelines to tell me what to do.	1 2 3 4
3. I feel I have sufficient skills to teach students with special needs in my class.	1 2 3 4
4. I feel I have sufficient training to teach students with special needs in my class.	1 2 3 4
5. I feel I have sufficient resources (teaching materials, etc.) for teaching students with special needs in my class.	1 2 3 4
6. I feel I have sufficient assistance for teaching students with special needs in my class.	1 2 3 4
7. I feel competent teaching children with most types of mild special needs.	1 2 3 4
8. I feel competent teaching children with most types of moderate special needs.	1 2 3 4
9. I feel competent teaching children with most types of severe special needs.	1 2 3 4
10. I feel competent managing the behavior of students with mild special needs.	1 2 3 4
11. I feel competent managing the behavior of children with moderate special needs.	1 2 3 4
12. I feel competent managing the behavior of children with severe special needs.	1 2 3 4
13. I feel competent teaching children with some special needs than with others. Please rate:	
a. Mental retardation	1 2 3 4
b. Behavior problems	1 2 3 4
c. Motor impairments	1 2 3 4
d. Visual impairments	1 2 3 4
e. Hearing impairments	1 2 3 4
f. Emotional disturbance	1 2 3 4

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Appendix A (page 2)
Experiences in Teaching in Inclusion Setting

Thank you for your assistance with this study. The information gathered in this questionnaire will be used for a research study for a master's thesis.

About your class:

Current teaching level _____ (6th, 7th, or 8th grade)

Number of students in your class_____

Number of students with special needs in your class _____

Number of students with: learning disability_____ mental retardation_____ behavior problems_____ motor impairment_____

Visual impairment_____ hearing impairment_____ emotional disturbance_____ other(specify)_____

About yourself:
Your current age in years _____

Gender: Male___ Female___

Ethnic background (American Indian, Asian, African American, Hispanic, White, other)_____

Level of Education: B.A._____ M.A. _____ Doctoral_____

Total years of teaching experience: _____

Number of years teaching children with special needs in a non-inclusive setting: _____

Number of years in inclusive setting: _____

Comments or feelings on teaching within an inclusive setting:_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix B

Demographic Variables and General Index of Competency

Gender	Age	Level of Education	Years of Teaching In Non-Inclusive Setting	Years of Teaching In Inclusive Setting	*Number of Students In Your Class	General Index on Feelings Of Competency	Number of Children with Special Needs	General Index on Being Informed/ Trained (1-6)	General Index on Feelings of Competency (7-18)
Male	32	Masters	1	8	115	2.38	5	2.50	2.33
Male	40	Masters	0	10	125	2.27	5	2.16	2.33
Male	55	Masters	20	10	100	2.11	6	2.16	2.25
Male	33	½ Doctoral	0	8	100	3.50	18	3.16	3.66
Male	24	Bachelors	0	1	117	2.94	30	2.33	3.25
Female	56	Masters	0	8	121	2.16	15	2.00	2.25
Female	37	Masters	0	4	100	2.33	6	2.33	2.33
Female	39	Doctoral	0	4	125	2.38	10	2.33	2.41
Female	30	Masters	0	6	100	2.16	5	2.83	2.66
Female	25	Masters	1	2	48	3.27	17	3.50	3.16
Female	37	Masters	0	3	100	2.11	6	2.33	2.41
Female	57	Masters	15	7	98	2.22	2	3.00	1.83
Female	35	Masters	4	8	130	2.55	13	3.33	1.83
Female	35	Masters	2	3	110	3.38	7	3.50	3.33
Female	37	Masters	2	12	125	2.61	1	2.66	2.58
Female	24	Masters	3	1	65	3.00	13	3.33	1.83
Female	33	Masters	5	3	40	3.38	9	3.50	3.33
Female	44	Masters	0	9	79	2.50	20	2.33	2.58

Appendix B (page 2)

Demographic Variables and General Index of Competency

Gender	Age	Level of Education	Years of Teaching in Non-inclusive Setting	Years of Teaching in Inclusive Setting	* Number of Students in Your Class	General Index on Feelings Of Competency	Number of Children with Special Needs	General Index on Being Informed/ Trained (1-6)	General Index on Feelings of Competency (7-18)
Female	44	Masters	15	5	40	2.38	8	2.50	2.33
Female	31	Masters	2	4	107	3.72	19	4.00	3.58
Female	31	Masters	0	9	120	3.94	8	4.00	3.91
Female	24	Masters	0	2	100	3.61	2	3.66	3.00
Female	40	Masters	5	10	125	3.33	8	3.66	3.16
Female	54	Masters	15	10	115	3.27	6	3.66	2.83
Female	35	Masters	0	9	105	2.72	10	2.16	3.00
Female	50	Doctoral	5	5	115	1.00	0	1.00	1.00
Female	37	Masters	0	3	109	2.44	26	2.00	2.66
Female	50	Masters	0	6	90	2.66	11	2.16	3.16
Female	47	Masters	0	5	110	2.77	24	2.16	3.08
Female	36	Masters	1	8	110	2.72	7	2.16	3.00

Note: Ethnic Background of all participants is white
* Number of students for each participant is based on a total of students over a 5-period day.

Appendix C

Questionnaire Response in Percentages

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am pleased to have had this challenging opportunity.	3.3	26.7	36.7	33.3
2. I feel I have sufficient guidelines to tell me what to do.	23.3	40.0	23.3	13.4
3. I feel I have sufficient skills to teach students with special needs in my class.	3.3	16.7	46.7	33.3
4. I feel I have sufficient training to teach students with special needs in my class.	6.7	36.7	23.3	33.3
5. I feel I have sufficient resources (teaching materials, etc.) for teaching students with special needs in my class.	3.3	36.7	36.7	23.3
6. I feel I have sufficient assistance for teaching students with special needs in my class.	20.0	20.0	50.0	10.0
7. I feel competent teaching children with most types of mild special needs.	3.3	------	43.3	53.4
8. I feel competent teaching children with most types of moderate special needs.	3.3	16.7	46.7	33.3
9. I feel competent teaching children with most types of severe special needs.	30.0	33.3	30.0	6.7
10. I feel competent managing the behavior of children with mild special needs.	3.3	-------	36.7	60.0
11. I feel competent managing the behavior of children with moderate special needs.	3.3	6.7	43.3	46.7
12. I feel competent managing the behavior of children with severe special needs.	23.7	53.3	16.7	6.7
13. I feel competent teaching children with some special needs than with others. The following were rated: a. mental retardation	36.7	23.3	33.3	6.7
b. behavior problems	3.3	20.0	56.7	20.0
c. motor impairments	6.7	23.3	46.7	23.3
d. visual impairments	16.7	36.6	26.7	20.0
e. hearing impairments	16.7	26.7	36.6	20.0
f. emotional disturbance	20.0	36.7	20.0	23.3

Appendix D

Teachers' Personal Responses Concerning Teaching Within an Inclusive Setting

1. There is a need for special schools. All children do not belong in inclusion. Honestly, it's worse for the child. They are doomed to failure. We have to realize this and not include everyone (47-year-old female; 24 years in teaching).
2. Inclusive setting doesn't work for all students. A special-needs teacher must be in the classroom at all times, and should add to the class not disrupt by having conversations with "their students." Students with needs should not outnumber regular students. Some students cannot handle the classroom and their rights should not be more important than any other student in the class. Their work should be completed in a timely fashion and not destroy the timeline of curriculum (50-year-old female; 23 years in teaching).
3. I'm not sure if it's as effective as it could be. We only have the inclusion teacher and aides on some days—not all. In addition, some of the modifications really take the teeth out of the lessons. I suppose that's an IEP issue, however, not an inclusion matter. I do find the inclusion setting to involve a lot of juggling, waiting of extra work for a few students—to the

detriment of the majority at times (37-year-old female; 9 years in teaching).

4. Although it works beautifully for many children, there still needs to be a "continuum of service." There also has to be a district commitment of resources (aide and planning time) for inclusion to work. Unfortunately, this is not always available. Not every student benefits from a mainstream public setting (54-year-old female; 25 years in teaching).
5. It works great if well-managed program exists (31-year-old female; 9 years in teaching).
6. With the right combination of teachers. . . it totally works!! I absolutely love what I do! I'm dually certified in special education and science. It has provided me with a wide array of teaching styles (31-year-old female; 4 years in teaching).
7. I feel that we, as a school district, lump all the students no matter what their handicap in the inclusion classes. This setting is not for everyone. There should still be a spectrum of classes (self-contained) to help the student who struggles in the inclusion class. The special education teacher in the inclusion classes helps the special education student to be more focused, organized, and successful. This aspect of inclusion is very beneficial to the program (44-year-old female; 20 years in teaching).

8. If the school district provided us with aides, who in my case do math, inclusion would work, but many aides and special education teachers, when they are in the classroom, could actually help the students and simply not become another student—it would work. But the special education students have been conditioned to rely on their special education teachers to not only walk them through each and every problem, provide them with pencils and calculators, write down their homework for them and, in way too many instances, give them answers, that these children cannot function in the classroom alone and will not even try. Obviously, my feelings on this subject are very strong (44-year-old female; 9 years in teaching).
9. It works best when you have cooperative teachers and scheduling that allows you to spend more time in the inclusion setting. Some students are not suited for inclusion and should not be placed in that setting regardless, especially at the middle and high school level (33-year-old female; 8 years in teaching).
10. It can work if there is a strong special education teaching doing his/her job well (37-year-old female; 14 years in teaching).
11. Teaching students with mild to moderate learning disabilities in an inclusive setting seems to be the most successful academically. This means content and standards are not as affected or drastically modified. This doesn't mean that students with other types of disabilities will not benefit, but I believe

these types of students get more socially than academically because the work is modified to the point where they can achieve a good modified grade. An example of this would be a student with mild to moderate LD getting a 75 to 80 in a subject (perfectly ok) or modifying so much that the same student gets a 95 to 100 (35-year-old female; 12 years in teaching).

12. I agree that students of all kinds should be included in a regular classroom setting, but not at the expense of the other students. In my past experience, those students with behavior problems created situations, which hindered the other students from learning (57-year-old female; 22 years in teaching).

13. Often, I find it distracting/difficult to teach in an inclusion setting. Many times I find myself slowing down the pace for the sake of those with LD's at the expense of those students who are capable of moving on. I find it challenging to keep the capable students motivated while addressing the needs of others. I often find myself looking at the following comparison: If you put an average student in a class full of advanced or accelerated students, that average student often will rise to the occasion and be very successful. However, take that same average student and put them in a class of weak students, and that student will find it difficult to work up to their ability and succeed. What a dilemma (37-year-old female; 3 years in teaching).

14. You need to have the training and support in order for the students to succeed (25-year-old female; 3 years in teaching).
15. I would appreciate more training (39-year-old female; 4 years in teaching).
16. With the right support and with only certain students, inclusion is beneficial to children with disabilities (56-year-old female; 26 years in teaching).
17. I enjoy working with the students, but I have a hard time trying to team-teach. Not my favorite thing (24-year-old male; 1 year in teaching).
18. As a special education teacher, I feel that inclusion is valuable. However, there needs to be more education as to how this program should run (33-year-old male; 8 years in teaching).
19. Not enough training or back-up teachers and aides (55-year-old male; 32 years in teaching).
20. All new teachers coming out of college today should be certified in both regular and special education. By making every teacher a special education teacher and by keeping classes very small, it eliminates scheduling problems or pairing a special education teacher with several regular education teachers (40-year-old male; 10 years in teaching).
21. For foreign language learning, inclusiveness is not the better route. Placing them in their own unique class is the effective way (32-year-old male; 8 years in teaching).

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