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A Look Inside The Classroom: Teacher Satisfaction With Inclusion At The Secondary Level

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A LOOK INSIDE THE CLASSROOM: TEACHER SATISFACTION WITH INCLUSION AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

Inclusion is one type of service delivery model to consider when planning for the education of students with special needs. Research shows that teacher attitudes are a critical factor for the success or failure of inclusion therefore, it is important to identify factors which impact teacher satisfaction with inclusion. Much of the research has been focused at the elementary level with the secondary level not being studied as frequently. The purpose of this study was to investigate high school classrooms to determine the level of teacher satisfaction regarding inclusion as identified by general education English and Math teachers and special education teachers.

This study used a quantitative research design with data being collected by means of a survey to be completed by general education and special education teachers. By random selection, 10 high schools in the state of Indiana were identified to participate in the study. The survey consisted of 17 questions which took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Given an unexpectedly low return rate, the planned inferential analysis could not be executed. As a result, qualitative interviews of special education and general education teachers were conducted to help make sense of the descriptive findings from the survey. The interviews revealed a variety of themes helpful for informing both policy and practice.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Bill and Shirley Albright. They provided their children with many gifts such as compassion, strength, and endurance. Regretfully, my parents will not see me achieve this goal but their influence was instrumental with its completion.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Federal and state laws require that students with special needs be educated with their peers to the maximum extent appropriate. This is referred to as the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for students with special needs. Inclusion refers to students with special needs attending the general education classroom provided with the necessary supports and related services in order for the student to achieve success. Inclusion is one type of service delivery model to consider when planning for the education of students with special needs.

An accepting, positive classroom atmosphere, modeled by the teacher was found to be an effective variable in a successful inclusive classroom (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1994). Research suggests that if general education teachers have negative perceptions of including students with special needs in their classrooms, these students are unlikely to have a successful experience in that particular classroom (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Research also suggests that elementary teachers have a better attitude regarding inclusion than secondary teachers (Scruggs & Mastropieri). Special education teachers have a more positive attitude regarding inclusion than do their general education counterparts

(Luseno, 2001). This type of research data shows the importance of teacher attitudes regarding the success or failure in the inclusion model. However, little research exists dealing with inclusion at the secondary level (Schumaker & Deshler, 1988).

Having a historical perspective regarding special education provides insight into where educators have been and provides direction for the future. Special education was initiated in the public schools in 1975 for students with special needs. By the 1980s, two groups were advocating for changes in these services for students with special needs. This movement was referred to as the Regular Education Initiative (REI). This initiative found one group supporting the elimination of special education altogether while the other group was interested in merging general education and special education into one inclusive system. Braaten, Kauffman, Braaten, Polsgrove, and Nelson (1988) suggested the REI was misnamed due to the fact that special educators and not regular educators were actually responsible for this initiative which, in retrospect, could explain its lack of success.

The term inclusion is not found in any federal or state law. However, it is a highly debatable topic in the field of education. Recent laws have increased accountability for school administrators and teaching staff when instructing students, including those with disabilities, increased the access of the general education curriculum to students with special needs, mandated that schools maintain adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward state academic standards, and mandated that all students receive educational instruction by Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT).

The topic of inclusion has been highly debated for many years. McLeskey (2004) identified 50 of the most frequently quoted articles in the field of special education from

1960-1996. He found that 40% of these articles related to the topic of school reform, inclusion, and mainstreaming. These articles contributed valuable information to the field of special education. With the high frequency of these articles being quoted in the literature, this suggests the lack of consensus regarding inclusive practices for the past 50 years.

With the increased number of students with special needs receiving services in the regular classrooms, general education teachers find themselves in challenging teaching situations where they are responsible for the education of a diverse population of students. Students in these classrooms have a wide variety of diagnosed disabilities, behavioral issues, and mental health concerns. General education teachers express feelings of inadequacy due to lack of background knowledge or appropriate training in order to teach these students effectively (Luceno, 2002).

Special education teachers also find themselves making changes in their professional roles. They are losing their classrooms, being forced into general education classrooms where they have to negotiate their roles with general education teachers and learn a variety of curricula. Many times, the special education teacher becomes confused as to what their responsibilities actually are in this type of setting and feel that they are being viewed and utilized as instructional assistants or secretaries. With increased accountability and high stakes testing, the bar has been raised in relationship to expectations for student achievement and the ability of teachers to provide high quality instruction to all groups of students, which includes students with special needs. All of these issues have created a tremendous amount of controversy between administrators, general education and special education teachers.

There is a great deal of research in the area of inclusion at the elementary level. However, inclusion at the secondary level has not been studied as frequently. Inclusion at the secondary level has an increased number of barriers. They include students failing and dropping out of school, fragmented services, and limited willingness on the part of secondary staff to modify instructional practices (Schumaker & Deshler, 1988). Mastropieri and Scruggs (1994) identified higher level content knowledge, independent study skills, and pace of instruction as relevant factors which hinder inclusion at the secondary level. Additional stressors at the high school level are the high-stakes testing which ultimately determines whether or not students receive a high school diploma (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

Research is found both in support of inclusion practices and against it. The research supporting inclusion cites benefits both academically and socially for special needs students. However, research against inclusion notes lack of academic gains and lowered self-esteem for this same group of students (Daniel & King, 1997). Hocutt (1996) stated that research does not support inclusion for all students. Even though Hocutt did not support the concept of inclusion, he did suggest that improved instruction for students with special needs in necessary regardless of the setting- general education or special education.

When reviewing the literature, one will find characteristics which assist in creating a successful inclusion experience for students with special needs. Characteristics include administrative support, allocation of resources, and effective teaching skills (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1994). However, a major factor in the success or failure of inclusion is the attitudes of the general education teachers (Hannah & Pliner, 1983).

These teachers may agree with the idea of inclusion, but frequently, they may find that they lack the necessary knowledge and skills needed to be effective teachers in a classroom while including special needs students (Kochhar, West, & Taymans, 2000).

In order to improve educational services for students with special needs, educators need to evaluate the success of inclusion as a service delivery model. Research has suggested that general education teacher attitudes toward inclusion are a major factor in the success of inclusion (Hannah & Pliner, 1983). Therefore, investigating the level of satisfaction for all teachers at the secondary level will provide an increased understanding of factors which need to be addressed for increased student success in the classroom. This information will also identify target areas for professional development and in-service training which in turn will improve the success of inclusion programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to look closely into high school general education classrooms to determine the level of teacher satisfaction, regarding inclusion, as identified by general education English and Math teachers and special education teachers. Research suggests that teacher attitudes are a critical factor for the success or failure of inclusion. As such, it is important to identify factors which impact teacher satisfaction with inclusion. This information can be utilized by administrators in designing appropriate professional development opportunities and creating a learning environment in which teachers can develop a high degree of satisfaction or acceptance with the inclusion service delivery model for students with special needs.

As stated earlier, the term inclusion does not exist in federal law. The term which is used in federal and state mandates is least restrictive environment (LRE) which not

only supports the inclusion model but appears to require this model to be the first option when determining placement for students with disabilities. LRE is defined as:

> To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act [IDEIA], 2004, Sec. 612 (5)

Congress found during the restructuring of IDEIA 2004, that the education of students with disabilities could be made more effective by having high expectations and ensuring access to the general education curriculum. Research supports the type of instruction rather than the setting as the key to improved student achievement (Hocutt, 1996).

The enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) 2001 went even further in paving the way for inclusive settings for students with disabilities. This law differs from previous reauthorizations by its emphasis on accountability. Under the NCLB act, schools must maintain adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward achieving state academic standards, mandate annual assessments for all students, and require that students receive instruction by HQT (Students with Disabilities and Special Education Law, 2007).

Research Question

Is there a difference in the level of satisfaction with inclusion among high school special education teachers and general education English and math teachers with respect

to the following: type of special service delivery model being implemented and years of teaching experience?

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in level of satisfaction with inclusion among high school special education teachers and general education English and Math teachers with respect to type of special service delivery model being implemented and years of teaching experience.

Significance of the Study

The concept of inclusion is a controversial topic in the field of education. Bennett, Deluca, and Bruns (1997) found that teachers report a neutral or uncertain attitude toward the concept of inclusion. Ten years have passed since that study. This research identifies attitudes toward inclusion that have developed at the secondary level since that time. The empirical value of this study lies in its providing public school administrators with information from which effective professional development opportunities for teaching staff can be designed. Additionally, all factors which may lead to more satisfying experiences for teachers are identified. Research suggests that satisfaction with inclusion is less positive at the secondary level than at the elementary level (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). This study focuses on the level of satisfaction of inclusion at the secondary level.

Definition of Terms

Collaboration refers to educators interacting and consulting together to share instructional responsibility for a group of students. Collaboration is a popular concept being recommended as a way for schools to create effective programs. Brownell and

Walther-Thomas (2002) reported in an interview with Marilyn Friend that collaboration is needed to ensure schools are positive, supportive, and effective places for students to learn and teachers to teach. The increasingly diverse population of students in classrooms across the country creates tremendous pressure on all educators which makes collaboration a necessity; not a luxury. For success in a co-teaching classroom it is important for general education teachers and special education teachers to collaborate. Topics for collaboration regarding special needs students include; instructional expectations for students, instructional format and delivery, instructional and organizational routines, and discipline procedures to be implemented in their respective classrooms (Cook, 2004). It has been stated that we are smarter as a group than we are as individuals and this is the premise of collaboration. Collaboration is a process involving trust and creates a common goal of improving student learning.

Inclusion refers to one type of service delivery model. In this model, students with mild disabilities receive instruction in the general education classroom with accommodations, modifications and supports. Supports and supplemental services are brought to the student rather than moving the student to the services. Supports to the student with special needs and the general education teacher are provided by a consultative model by the special education staff who consults with the general education staff but does not work directly in the classroom, a special education instructional assistant and/or paraprofessional working in the general education classroom, or a special education teacher working in the general education classroom. Another option for students with special needs is to receive services in a pullout program where they receive instruction in a special education classroom.

A mild disability may be defined as a student who has been identified as having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Mild Cognitive Disability (CD), or some students who have been identified as having an Emotionally Disability (ED). A specific learning disability is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language that adversely affects the student's educational performance (IDEIA, 2004). A mild cognitive disability is demonstrated by significantly below average general functioning (two standard deviations below the mean) existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior (IDEIA). An emotional disability is a condition which adversely affects a student to a marked degree over a long period of time. This inability to learn or progress can not be explained by cognitive, sensory, or health factors. These behaviors are frequently manifested as inappropriate behaviors, an inability to build or maintain interpersonal relationships, or a mood of unhappiness or depression (IDEIA).

Satisfaction is "a fulfillment of a need or want, the quality or state of being satisfied, a source or means of enjoyment" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008). Job satisfaction could also be stated as the sense of fulfillment and pride felt by people who enjoy their work and perceive that they are doing it well.

Satisfaction is difficult to measure because it is an emotion that is totally up to each individual to measure. Berns (2005) describes satisfaction as a reaction when our brains are both challenged and experience uniqueness. Berns went on to describe the importance of keeping employees challenged while providing new opportunities to keep them interested in doing their job.

Satisfaction measures are an excellent way to determine the quality of the learning experience. For the purpose of this study, satisfaction is the level of acceptance of students with special needs in a classroom and a feeling of confidence that the inclusion model is an effective way of teaching in order to meet the needs of students.

A student with a disability refers to a student who has received an educational evaluation and found eligible for special education and related services. These students are also referred to a student with special needs (IDEIA, 2004).

Limitations

This study was limited to a small number of high school teachers in the state of Indiana. As such, this small sampling decreased the generalizability of the findings. This study was further limited by the fact that only high school teachers teaching in the areas of English and Math were included in the study. There were no reliability and validity measures completed since the survey was developed specifically for this study by the researcher.

Summary

Chapter 1 provides a discussion of inclusion and the challenges it creates for teachers and administrators in their attempts toward providing appropriate educational services for students with special needs. Key terms are also defined for clarification. General education staff is being required to teach diverse populations of students with inadequate pre and post service training. Special education teachers are being placed in classrooms with general education teachers with neither one having the appropriate skills to facilitate effective collaboration.

Inclusion has been a controversial type of service delivery model for the past 50 years. One can find an array of research both for and against the inclusion model. The results of some studies show improvement in social skills, academic skills or both while other studies fail to show improvement in either area. Some studies find the inclusive model detrimental to a students self esteem. After a review of the literature, it makes as much sense to take a total inclusionary approach as it does a total exclusionary approach in which services to students with special needs are provided (Smelter, Rasch, & Yudewitz, 1994).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of teacher satisfaction with inclusion as a service delivery model by identifying differences between general education teachers and special education teachers. Since teacher attitudes are critical factors for the success or failure of inclusion, it is important to identify factors related to these attitudes. This information will provide administrators insight into establishing the appropriate environment for teachers in which they can develop a level of satisfaction with inclusion for students with special needs. In addition, administrators will have a basis for developing appropriate professional in-service programs for teachers which will result in satisfaction towards inclusion while simultaneously providing students with special needs an appropriate learning environment.

The purpose of this chapter was to provide the reader with an understanding of the problem and state the purpose of this study. The research question was listed in addition to the null hypothesis. Chapter 2 provides a more detailed discussion of the history of inclusion, research supporting and refuting inclusion, teacher attitudes towards inclusion and factors which make for successful inclusion programs for both students and teachers.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Special Education, as we know it today, was initiated in our public schools with the passage of PL 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, in 1975. The purpose of this act was to assure that all handicapped children have available to them a free and appropriate public education which emphasized special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs, and to ensure that the rights of handicapped students and their parents or guardians be protected. Prior to this time, most states had at least one institution where children and adults were educated and lived the majority of their lives in this type of restrictive setting. Change came slowly but for this group of individuals however; change was due to a combination of advocacy and litigation.

Changes for students with special needs were shaped though litigation in state and federal courts. The following court cases are examples which have had a major impact upon the services for special needs students. One important case was *Board of Education v. Rowley*. In this case, parents of an eight year old student with profound hearing impairment did not agree with services provided by the school. The parents insisted that the tutoring and hearing aids provided by the school were not sufficient for their child even though she was performing better than average. The parents requested a sign-

language interpreter during academic classes. The Court ruled that the school was not required to provide the student with a sign interpreter. The ruling went on to state that the purpose of the individual educational plan was to ensure educational benefit to the child. *Board of Education v. Rowley* remains an important case and is still relied upon by state and federal courts today (Students with Disabilities and Special Education Law, 2008).

Another important case was *Oliver Brown et al. v. Board of Education.* This case combined 5 different cases known as the School Segregation cases during the 1950s. This case was important in shaping social change. The importance of this case prompted Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Students with Disabilities and Special Education Law, 2008).

In 2004, the passage of the revised federal law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), continued to mandate that students with disabilities be provided an appropriate education designed to meet their needs in the least restrictive environment. This act also required students with disabilities to be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with peers without disabilities.

Richard W. Riley, appointed Secretary of Education by the Clinton administration in 1993, stated that improving education in this country "moved to the top of the nation's domestic agenda and a national consensus formed around the need to raise standards for all children, increase accountability, close the achievement gap and reach clear national educational goals" (Riley, 2002, p. 700). The Goals 2000 Act in 1994 was based on high standards for all children and these accountability measures were put in place to improve the overall quality of education for all children. In addition to this act, the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) went even

further in eliminating a watered-down curriculum for poor children and increased accountability for students. These changes had a significant impact on the education of students with disabilities by providing equity and excellence for all students. The intent of these federal mandates was to commence the effort in narrowing the achievement gap.

When reviewing the literature, it can be noted that arguments support and criticize inclusion. Those supporting inclusion tend to focus on the benefits both academically and socially for students with special needs while they are striving to achieve higher standards and expectations. Those opposing inclusion argue that the individual needs of students are not met because the more able students experience boredom whereas special education students may experience frustration as they attempt to keep up with the average instructional pace (Daniel & King, 1997).

Dunn (1968) wrote one of the first articles to argue in favor of a less restrictive placement for students with special needs. Dunn's support was voiced in the 1960s when feelings regarding antisegregation were prevalent in society. The support for students in special education gaining access to the general education curriculum was begun in earnest.

History of Regular Education Initiative and Inclusion

As professionals, having a sense of history gives us a perspective of where we have come from and provides insight into the direction to head in the future. In order to provide increased clarity on this issue of inclusion; it is imperative that we review the history of special education. Wang and Walberg (1988) provided evidence that special education leadership was more interested in building an empire than effective teaching. The addition of more students lead to an increased number of teachers, programs, dollars,

and eventually power. Wang and Walberg also suggest that other views of special education can be summarized as a bleeding-heart mentality. Either way, the number of students in special education programs throughout this country has continued to soar. According to Skrtic (1987), special education's failure to mend itself is due partly to the organizational, physical, and psychological separation from the source of the problem-general education. In order for inclusive schools to become a reality, teachers and staff from special education and general education must work together to increase competence and confidence to teach the diverse populations in classrooms.

This may not be a simple task to achieve as we continue to review the history of inclusion. In the 1980s, the regular education initiative (REI) had a completely new way of looking at how general education and special education would be working together. Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) described two groups who were advocates for the REI. The first group consisted of those interested in students with learning disabilities, behavior disorders, and mild/moderate mental retardation while the second group was supporters of students with severe intellectual disabilities.

Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) described three main goals for the regular education initiative (REI) with the first being to merge general and special education into one inclusive system. The second goal was to drastically increase the number of students with disabilities into mainstream classes. Increasing academic achievement of students with mild and moderate disabilities as well as that of underachievers without disabilities was listed as the third goal of the REI leaders.

Tactics for restructuring the general education-special education relationship from the supports of REI consisted of waivers, modifications of the continuum of services, and

a reorganization of the mainstream classrooms. The waivers for restructuring allowed school districts increased flexibility in the use of special education resources (Wang & Reynolds, 1985). Modifications of the continuum of services consisted of merging the existing continuum of services or doing away with the continuum all together (Wang & Reynolds). Another solution concerning the continuum of services called for the elimination of the bottom of the continuum; the closing of residential and day schools. These students would then be moved into more self-contained classes in neighborhood schools (Reynolds, 1989). The final tactic included a reorganization of classrooms. The goal in this area was to provide students with disabilities a more academically and socially accepted setting.

Wang and Walberg (1988) stated that the REI goal was not to eliminate special education services but to create a different role for special educators. Wang and Walberg's recommendation was to move special education teachers into classrooms as co-teachers with general education staff where both groups would share in the responsibility of instruction. The special education teachers could lead in such matters as child study, working with parents, and offering individualized, highly intensive instruction to students who have not been progressing well (Reynolds, 1989).

Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) stated that the advocates of REI were pushing for cooperation between special and general education while the full inclusionists were advocating for the elimination of special education all together. The long term goal was to recognize the need for change and to provide more intensive services to improve the learning of all students.

Will (1986) suggests several problems with the special education system. The first two problems identified were fragmented services and lack of coordination of services between special education classes and the general education classroom. Another problem identified was the stigma the students suffered ranging from lowered self-esteem to poor attitudes regarding learning. The final problem identified was conflicts between parents and school regarding placement. Will proposed several solutions to these problems consisting of returning administrative control to the principals while increasing instructional time for students and developing a support system for teachers including in-service training and the implementation of new strategies.

After reviewing the literature regarding REI, Jenkins, Pious, and Jewell (1990) inferred five assumptions regarding the roles and responsibilities of elementary general education teachers and principals. The building principals would have the authority for distributing resources while the classroom teachers would have the responsibility for educating all students assigned to them. The general education teacher would monitor major instructional decisions for all students in their class, provide instruction that follows a normal developmental curriculum, manage instruction for diverse populations, and coordinate assistance for other staff such as remedial reading instructors, special educators, and psychologists.

Thousand and Villa (1991) objected to the recommendation made by Jenkins et al. (1990) that general education teachers should take on this Herculean position of educating all students in their classrooms. They felt that it was unrealistic to place one person, in the general education classroom, in charge of educating, making instructional

decisions, managing instruction and coordinating support services for such a tremendously heterogeneous groups of students.

Braaten et al. (1988) suggested that REI was misnamed. This was an initiative which was proposed by special educators not by general educators which could explain the lack of success. Those who supported REI hypothesized that through in-service training programs; general educators would develop positive attitudes towards inclusion and develop effective strategies to work with difficult to teach students. This effort would lead to all students being successful in general education classrooms. Advocates of REI may have failed to recognize the overwhelming effort needed to achieve this lofty goal.

The enactment of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act went even further in paving the way for inclusive settings for students with disabilities. This law differs from previous reauthorizations by its emphasis on accountability. Under NCLB, schools must maintain adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward achieving state academic standards, mandate annual assessments for all students, and require that students receive instruction by Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT) (Students with Disabilities and Special Education Law, 2007).

Additional federal laws have also been instrumental in providing services to people with disabilities. They include Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Section 504 emphasizes employment training and habilitation for individuals with disabilities. It contains an anti-discrimination provision that prohibits discrimination of individuals with disabilities. The ADA is another important federal statute which protects individuals with disabilities.

This act provides equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities of all ages in all locations including school, community, and employment.

Fundamentals of Inclusion

Position statements on inclusion have been categorized into six groups which consist of enthusiasm for full inclusion and elimination of the continuum of special education services, enthusiasm for the philosophy of inclusion but support for the continuum of services, reduction of the special education system in size, support for appropriate inclusion, concern that inclusion does not provide appropriate services for some groups of students with special needs, and concern about responsibilities of general education teachers and the effects of inclusion on all students (Hocutt, 1996).

McLeskey's article (2004) entitled *Classic Articles in Special Education: Articles That Shaped the Field, 1960-1996* identified 50 articles published in three respected special education journals, *Exceptional Children, The Journal of Special Education,* and *Remedial and Special Education.* These are the most frequently selected cited articles in the professional literature. An article by Dunn (1968) was identified as the most prominent and influential classic article in special education. Seven years after the publication of this article, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was enacted. The Dunn article is considered responsible for laying the groundwork for key concepts such as least restrictive environment (LRE). One of the main points of this article, *Special Education for the Mildly Retarded: Is Much of It Justifiable?* provided reasons for changing services for students with mild mental retardation as a result of the lack of demonstrated effectiveness of separate classes for these students. This started the

movement towards mainstreaming. Of the 50 articles identified by McLeskey as classics, 40% addressed the topic of school reform, mainstreaming, or inclusion.

When Dunn (1968) first questioned the use of special classes for students with mild disabilities, there were very few students being diagnosed as learning disabled (LD). The identification of students with LD has greatly increased in these past 20 years. If any group of students should be educated in the general education classroom, it should be the students with learning disabilities (Kolstad, Wilkinson, & Briggs, 1997). McLeskey and Pacchiano (1994) investigated data from the Annual Reports to Congress on the Implementation of P.L. 94-142 prepared by the U. S. Department of Education in all 50 states. Even with controlling for the increase in the identification of students with learning disabilities, the study found that students with learning disabilities being educated in separate classes almost doubled during the time period from 1983 to 1994. This suggests that little progress has been made including students with learning disabilities into general education classrooms.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 and its reauthorization in 2004 brought increased scrutiny regarding the LRE for students with disabilities. To the maximum extent appropriate, public schools are focused on providing students with special needs 1) access to the general education curriculum, 2) increased participate in statewide assessments and 3) held to increased accountability for the success or lack of success of students with special needs.

Although not studied as frequently, inclusion practices prove to be even more challenging at the secondary level. Major barriers exists that effect implementation of inclusion at the secondary level. The results are a) students failing and dropping out of

high school, b) fragmented services to students with special needs, and c) limited willingness on the part of general education staff to modify instructional practices and programs in order to meet the needs of students with special needs (Schumaker & Deshler, 1988).

Schumaker and Deshler (1988) described these barriers as gaps between skill level of the special needs students in the secondary classroom and the intensive instruction needed to overcome skill and strategy deficits. Structural changes which would lead to change would involve teachers moving from "teacher-centered instruction" to "student-centered instruction" (p. 37).

Areas of particular relevance for secondary inclusive classrooms include a) higher level content knowledge, b) independent study skills, and c) pace of instruction (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1994). It must also be noted that the additional stress of high-stakes testing which ultimately determines whether or not students receive a high school diploma, continues to complicate the issues at the secondary level. Another factor to consider at the secondary level is the attitudes of teachers. When asked, secondary teachers usually express a less positive attitude towards educational inclusion than do elementary teachers (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). It appears that teacher attitudes towards inclusion may be driven by the fact that teachers report the need for additional time for planning purposes. Frequently, this time is generally not available (Scruggs & Mastropieri). These less than positive attitudes represent an additional challenge at the secondary level.

In a multi-year study completed by Mastropieri and Scruggs (1994), seven characteristics were identified for the success of inclusive classrooms at both the

elementary and secondary levels. Administrative support and support from special education personnel were the first two variables discussed. The administrative support included both positive attitudes and allocation of resources to teachers when needed. It was necessary that all classrooms receive support from special services staff to assist with planning, instructional adaptations, co-teaching, and classroom assistance with paraprofessionals. An accepting, positive classroom atmosphere, which was modeled by the teacher, was found to be an effective variable in an inclusive classroom. An appropriate curriculum and effective general teaching skills was also considered as necessary for effective inclusion. Highly successful classrooms used peer assistance effectively which was helpful in supporting the needs of students. Peer mediation was an effective means for increasing opportunities to respond, providing effective learning models and offering additional explanations to facilitate higher level understanding. Disability-specific teaching skills are also a necessity in the inclusive classroom. The authors suggest that this is where the special education teacher can become a consultant for the general education teacher in order to assist in identifying effective instructional strategies for the students with special needs (Mastropieri & Scruggs).

Another study by Mastropieri and Scruggs (2001) identified important variables for successful inclusion practices at the secondary level. Those that proved most effective were peer mediation, co-teaching, and strategy instructions. Strategy instruction is a strategy designed to enable students to identify key information, depict how the information is organized, and apply that information. This strategy has frequently been shown effective in special education settings. However, the effects are less reliable in inclusive secondary settings. This may be explained by the complexity of the academic

content in secondary general education classes, class size, or the challenges to provide adequate duration and intensity of training.

Palmer, Wehmeyer, Gipson and Agran (2004) found that students with mental retardation at the middle school level when receiving instruction directed at self-determination (problem-solving, study planning) were able to achieve educationally relevant goals related to standards at or above expected levels. This would facilitate the participation of students with intellectual disabilities in the curriculum in the general education classroom.

Another study at the middle school level completed by Fox and Ysseldyke (1997) examined a full inclusion program. Although this proved to be an unsuccessful program, the authors identified a series of lessons which were learned. The recommendations for achieving a more positive outcome regarding inclusion included allocating sufficient resources to the process, providing staff with active leadership from people who are open to inclusion, convincing staff that inclusion is not just the responsibility of special education, establishing procedures where progress is evaluated and monitored on a regular basis, providing staff with necessary training, seeking to establish a shared vision by explaining the rationale for inclusion, actively promoting the social acceptance of included students, and involving parents in the process.

Smith and Smith (2000) identified factors which general education classroom teachers perceived as helpful or hindering the successful practice of inclusion. Factors identified included training, class load, support, and time. Training included pre-service training and in-service training. However, it also supported the need for teachers to

observe other teachers who are being successful in the inclusion process and meeting the diverse needs of students in these classrooms.

Class load referred to the number of students in the classroom and the ratio of special needs students to teacher. General education teachers perceived themselves more successful when class size ranged from 13-21 students with as few as 2-4 special needs students. General education teachers who perceived themselves as unsuccessful, had slightly larger class sizes, ranging from 18 to 21 students which included a larger number of special needs students (7-8). Other studies have recommended 6 or fewer students with disabilities are included in a general education inclusion classroom.

The general education teacher is unable to tackle inclusion alone. Support is necessary for general education teachers to feel successful and the teachers in this study reported that this assistance comes from other general education teachers, paraprofessionals, special education teachers, and administrators. The building administrator is one of the most important people for facilitation the inclusion process by the general tone and educational climate for a building and having the greatest impact on handling issues such as teacher time, schedules, and resources.

Time is a valuable factor for all teachers. Smith and Smith (2000) identified the time factor as a particularly important for inclusion classrooms. Cook (2004) states the need for collaboration time is to ensure that schools are positive, supportive, and effective places for students to learn and teachers to teach. The increasingly diverse population of students in classrooms across the country creates tremendous pressure on all educators which makes collaboration a necessity, not a luxury (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2002). For teachers to be successful in a collaborative or co-teaching classroom, it is

important that the teachers discuss topics such as instructional expectations for students, instructional format and delivery, instructional and organizational routines, and discipline procedures for the classroom (Cook).

Smith and Smith (2000) described in their study a distinction between "pro-inclusion" (p. 162) and "full inclusion" (p. 162). They described full inclusion as a school where students with disabilities are placed in the general education classroom to receive their educational instruction regardless of the type and severity of their disability. A pro-inclusive school was described as one in which inclusion was the preferred choice for students to the maximum extent appropriate. These terms reflect a significant difference in philosophy. The "full inclusion" school places every student in the general education classroom with limited other placement options. The school taking a pro-inclusive philosophy sees inclusion as the preferred choice. Students with special needs are placed in general education classrooms whenever possible and appropriate and this decision is determined on a case by case basis.

Hocutt (1996) stated that research does not support inclusion for all students with disabilities. However, he suggests that, when given adequate resources, some students with special needs can be successful in general education classrooms. This article suggested that efforts need to continue to improve instruction to students with disabilities regardless of whether the services are in the general education classroom or a special education classroom.

Research Supporting Inclusion

Research has suggested positive consequences have resulted from the inclusion process with benefits noted both academically and socially for students with special

needs. Educating these students in the general education classroom allows them access to the grade level curriculum while stressing higher standards and accountability on the part of teachers, administrators, and school systems.

Carlberg and Kavale (1980) found that students with mental retardation in pull out programs performed as well as those in general education classrooms. However; students with learning or behavioral problems showed only a modest academic advantage over those remaining in the general education classroom.

Manset and Semmel (1997) made comparisons between eight inclusion models at the elementary level for students with high incidence disabilities between the years 1984 and 1994. The conclusion in this study revealed that inclusive programs can be effective for some students, but not all students with special needs. This conclusion was consistent with findings by Waldron and McLeskey (1998).

Rea, McLaughlin, and Walther-Thomas (2002) compared two schools; one fully inclusive and one with more traditional pull-out programs. These results showed that students in the inclusive setting earned higher grades, achieved higher or comparable scores on standardized tests, committed no more behavioral infractions, and attended school more regularly.

Zigmond and Magiera (2002) suggest co-teaching as an effective inclusion model in producing comparable academic gains for students with special needs as resource room instruction or consultation with the general education teacher. Banerji and Dailey (1995), suggest no significant differences in reading, math, and language arts achievement between students with special needs placed in a general education classroom as compared to a pullout resource program.

In a study by Soukup, Wehmeyer, Bashinshi, and Bovaird (2007), students with intellectual and developmental disabilities were more likely to have access to the general education curriculum if they were educated in the general education classroom. They also found that instruction in special education classroom settings tended to focus more on goals related to each student's Individual Education Program (IEP) rather than the general education curriculum. There was not a high correlation between the IEP goals and the standards addressed in the general education curriculum.

Self-contained classrooms create a stigma for some students who have been identified as learning disabled (LD). This can be a difficult situation for students at the secondary level. This type of placement greatly reduces the opportunities a student has for social interaction with peers. None of the literature reviewed showed any evidence that self-contained classrooms were an appropriate placement for LD students (Kolstad et al., 1997). IDEIA is quite specific regarding the placement of students in the general education classroom to the maximum extent appropriate. There are also difficulties for this group of students when placement consists of pull-out programs. Transitions become difficult between the resource room and the general classroom for both teachers and students (Kolstad et al.). Many classroom teachers do not have the necessary knowledge for teaching students with learning disabilities effectively in the general education classroom (Vaughn & Schumm, 1994). Training teachers takes time and planning so that students with disabilities can be successful. Inclusion works best when it involves collaboration on team teaching (Vaughn & Schumm). Inclusion is on the horizon for many school corporations and teachers must prepare themselves for classrooms containing students with special needs (Kolstad et al.).

Kochhar et al. (2000) suggested from research that the benefits of inclusion for students with special needs include more appropriate social behavior because of higher expectations in the general education classroom, higher levels of achievement than in self-contained classrooms, a wide circle of support from classmates without disabilities, and improved ability of students and teachers to adapt to different teaching and learning styles. These authors also identified benefits for general education students in the inclusive settings. These benefits include an extra teacher or instructional assistant in the classroom to assist all students, increased acceptance of students with disabilities by their general education peers by facilitating an understanding of disabilities, and promoting a better understanding of similarities rather than differences in students.

Barriers to successful inclusion have been identified as organizational, attitudinal, and knowledge (Kochhar et al., 2000). The organizational barriers refer to how classes are taught, staffed, and managed. The National Education Association has made the recommendation that class size of no more than 28 students for an inclusive classroom and that no more than 25% of the students identified as special needs students. The attitudinal barriers refer especially to teacher attitudes towards students with special needs. The knowledge barrier refers to teachers agreeing with the general idea of inclusion but at the same time not feeling adequately prepared or trained to work in this type of setting.

Research Refuting Inclusion

In contrast, those opposed to inclusive practices cite research which does not support claims of academic gains or development of positive self-concepts of students with disabilities in the inclusive setting. Smelter et al. (1994) suggested that inclusionists

tend to use three main arguments to support their stance. First, all children learn best in general education classrooms. Smelter disagrees with this argument stating that this group of students learns better in small groups rather than general education classrooms. The second argument is the goal of social equity. Smelter's argument is that if learning is increased in the pull-out program, shouldn't that be the goal while the social goal takes a back seat? The third argument for inclusionists is that students with special needs have a constitutional right to be in the regular classroom. If this is true, then IDEIA is a violation of the student civil rights due to the fact that it permits alternative placements if it is found to be the least restrictive environment.

Holloway (2001) reviewed studies between the years 1986-1996 and found that there was not strong support for full inclusion. This study did however support the use of a combined model of inclusion and pull out for increased progress in the area of reading. Zigmond (2003) stated that research evidence on the relative efficacy of one special education service delivery model over another is scarce, methodologically flawed, and inconclusive. Sindelar and Deno (1978) found that resource rooms were more effective than general education classrooms in improving academic achievement of students with learning disabilities (LD). The same result was supported by a study by Leinhardt and Pallay (1982) for students identified as LD.

Vaughn and Elbaum (1996) found that 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade students with disabilities participating in inclusive classrooms were less liked by their peers and more frequently socially isolated. This social isolation from peers and teachers increased the chances of students leaving the school setting prior to graduation. Because of this information, it is important that parents and educators continue to address the issue of

social efficacy for students in making placements in self-contained as apposed to inclusive settings.

Daniel and King (1997) found lower self-esteem among students who were placed in inclusion classrooms and this included all students, not just the students with special needs. These results also indicate that this lower self-esteem may also produce a negative effect on the academic achievement of all students. Also noted in this study was a higher level of behavioral problems in the inclusive classroom which was related to boredom or frustration. It was suggested in this study that the intensive strategies implemented by the classroom teacher may distract the teacher's attention from classroom management strategies.

Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusion

A major factor in the success or failure of inclusion is the attitude of the general education teacher (Hannah & Pliner, 1983). Teachers were found to be more willing to include students with disabilities if little responsibility was required on their part (Gans, 1987; Houck & Rogers, 1994). According to Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996), teacher attitudes toward inclusion are less positive at the secondary level than at the elementary level. At the secondary level, in addition to concerns with teacher attitudes, there are also concerns with the pace of instruction.

Luseno (2001) found that at the secondary level, special education teachers had a better attitude toward inclusion and students with disabilities than their general education counterparts. However, both groups had negative attitudes toward educating these students in the general education classroom. General education teachers reported less willingness to work with students with behavioral disorders, cognitive disabilities, and

multiple disabilities in the general education classroom but more willing to work with students with mild disabilities. This study also found that general educators were less confident about their ability to make instructional accommodations for students with disabilities. It was also noted that general educators indicated a lack of appropriate instructional materials and had insufficient time to collaborate with other teachers. Both groups of teachers indicated that large teaching loads increased the difficulty in meeting the needs of all students especially those identified as special needs students. General education teachers also reported that they did not have adequate knowledge of IEP meetings and special education law. Both general and special educators reported that school systems and administrators needed to provide more assistance and support to secondary special and general educators working in inclusive classrooms.

Bennett et al. (1997) found that teachers reported neutral or uncertain attitudes toward the concept of inclusion. Lower scores were positively correlated with the more years of teaching experience. This suggests that the more experienced teachers were trained years before inclusion practices were integral parts of teacher preparation programs at the graduate or undergraduate levels. This study also found that teachers were less supportive of inclusion for all children than were the children's parents. According to Bennett's study, additional planning time for teachers appeared to be one of the most important strategies for improving the inclusion process.

Baker and Zigmond (1990) found that general education teachers' instructional methodology demonstrated little if any differentiation of instruction. While teachers appeared to care about their students, they were more interested in routine rather than addressing individual differences. This study also found little interactive instruction

between student and teacher during reading or math instruction. Because of this, observers found little spontaneity or enthusiasm among teachers or students. Special needs students, who were unable to conform, were unsuccessful in these classrooms. This study concluded that instructional changes were needed if an inclusion model was to be implemented in this school setting. Recommendations from this study include teachers need to increase the percentage of time spent teaching by using a variety of techniques, teaching activities need to be more interactive between teacher and students, teachers must learn to vary the size and composition of instructional groups, and in-service training would be needed to facilitate this change. Although this data is derived from a study with students in grades kindergarten through 5th grade, it is reasonable to conclude that much of this information could be applied to educators at the secondary level.

Research supports the finding that general education teacher expectations influence student achievement, behavior, and self-esteem in both positive and negative ways (Brophy & Good, 1974). Numerous studies have focused on whether or not teachers support inclusion philosophically. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) reviewed 28 studies and found that approximately two-thirds of general education teachers support inclusion. If the general education teacher has negative perceptions of having students with special needs in the general education classroom, then it is highly unlikely that these special needs students will have a successful experience in that particular classroom. For this reason, it is important to evaluate the perceptions of educators and administrators.

Lawrence-Brown (2002) presented a conceptual framework for understanding why educators might support or resist inclusion. She outlines this framework into two main categories: "Should I?" and "Can I?" The "Should I?" focused on the worthiness of

inclusion regarding the impact on students with and without disabilities and on the teachers themselves. The "Can I?" category focused on practical concerns such as how well prepared educators feel toward inclusion and the amount and quality of support available. Participants included 88 educators from two middle schools. Results indicated that most participants rated themselves as comfortable with inclusion. Seventy-five percent of the educators identified positive outcome for students while 25% expressed concerns with inclusion and identified self-contained placements more beneficial for this group of students. In the "Can I?" category participants identified administrative support, a collaborative team approach, direct support in the classroom, and support for other general education teachers and parent support as necessary. These perceptions also varied according to the type and severity of the disability, grade level, and subject area.

Administrators' Perception of Inclusion

Research suggests that administrator's attitudes toward students with special needs are extremely important due to their leadership roles in developing and supporting educational programs for successful inclusion programs (Ayers & Meyers, 1992; Gameros, 1995).

Administrators play a significant role in the success or failure of inclusion (Lazar, Stodden, & Sullivan, 1976). Principals report limited success in general education classrooms for students with cognitive disabilities but report a more optimistic view than teachers regarding the overall success of inclusion. Differing views between principals and teachers center on academic achievement and resources designated for inclusion.

Daane, Beirne-Smith, and Latham (2000) suggest that general education teachers and administrators recognize the social benefits of including students with special needs.

General education teachers express serious concerns regarding the academic success of students in the inclusive classrooms. This information is important for administrators in order to provide in-service trainings which relate to effective teaching strategies dealing with diversity in the classroom. This study also suggests that general education and special education teachers work cooperatively on IEP goals and team teaching but neither group of teachers feel comfortable collaborating together. This information indicates another area of training for the teaching staff.

Parents' Perception of Inclusion

Although special education programs should not be evaluated solely on one source of information, parents provide an important perspective. Parent feedback and input should be taken into consideration when evaluating special education programs. Parents tend to report positive attitudes regarding inclusion although some anxiety has been noted (Bennett et al., 1997; Green & Shinn, 1994). Daniel and King (1997) suggest that increased parental concern is noted when students are placed in inclusion settings rather than non-inclusion classrooms. Taylor (1994) suggests that general education is not only where the responsibility lies for educating students with learning disabilities, but also where they deserve to be educated. Brucker (1994) suggests moving to an inclusive model since little success has been identified with other program models.

Many studies have addressed the topic of inclusion from the perspective of parents of students with special needs. Few studies have included the perceptions of parents of general education students in these inclusive classrooms. Tichenor, Heins, and Piechura-Couture (1998) suggest that parents of students with special needs positive about the inclusion classroom. Parents describe their child as improving both

academically and socially. These same parents report they would like to see their child continue in an inclusion classroom setting. The parents of general education students also report benefits with the inclusion setting. These benefits include more hands-on learning experiences, additional staff in the classroom, increased educational experiences, challenging educational curricula, and an increased acceptance toward others. The majority of the general education parents report they would like to see their child continue to participate in an inclusive classroom setting.

Summary of Attitudes Toward Inclusion

General education teacher attitudes toward inclusion can be summarized by three factors identified by Larrivee and Cook (1979). These factors are academic concerns (the possible negative effects of inclusion on general academic progress), socio-emotional concerns (the negative aspects of segregating students with disabilities) and administrative and teacher concerns (issues about support, experience, and training necessary to work with students with disabilities).

In-service Training Data

A necessary ingredient for successful inclusion includes training and retraining of general education teachers (Johnson, 1987). Larrivee and Cook (1979) found that general education teachers' attitude toward inclusion becomes increasingly less positive with ascending grade level. These results suggest that secondary general education teachers represent the major target for in-service training. Changes in attitude are crucial if inclusion is to be embraced. It appears that elementary teachers already have a predisposition towards inclusion. This allows elementary in-service training to focus on

specific skills and strategies. On the other hand, the initial focus of in-service training at the secondary level may need to focus on the affective dimension.

Edwards, Carr, and Siegel (2006) suggest that teachers continue to teach the way they were taught. Teaching practices (teaching the whole group, reliance upon textbooks, rows of desks, question-answer formats) continue to be the norm despite changes in teacher education. Some teacher education programs teach differentiated instruction and other research-based approaches. This instruction often does not translate into the classroom. It is possible that new teachers find resistance to these approaches from practicing teachers during their student teaching experiences or their initial teaching positions. Sarason (1982) found that teacher culture was a force which impedes change. He noted the difficulty in moving away from the status quo must first come in beliefs and then in actions.

Research suggests the need to improve teacher preparation programs to prepare future teachers. Tomlinson (1999) suggests that general education teachers are not prepared to differentiate instruction in their teacher education programs. Renick (1996) found that the student teaching experience diminishes the student's preparation to differentiate instruction. Pressure is placed on the student teacher from the supervising teacher to conform to more traditional practices rather than implement differentiated instruction strategies. This results in little of the pre-service preparation actually reaching the classroom.

Edwards et al. (2006) suggests a discrepancy between general education teachers' beliefs and their actions. While general education teachers acknowledge the importance of meeting the needs of diverse learners in their classrooms, there was little action in the

classroom which shows strategies implemented to meet these student needs. New general education teachers come to a building in which a one-size-fits-all type of instruction is utilized and little support is given to them to make changes. Some general education teachers report they were encouraged by other general education teachers to keep all students together academically and teach to the middle.

Effective change will require both pre-service and in-service components. Tomlinson (1999) suggests that new general education teachers should work with master general education teachers who differentiate instruction effectively and provide clear models for these new teachers. Holloway (2000) recommends that general education and special education teacher training programs provide candidates with meaningful understanding of the elements of differentiated instruction (DI). Administrators must provide all teachers with encouragement, support and effective professional development for implementing differentiated instruction. Tomlinson cautions that this process should begin slowly with strategies gradually being added until a teacher's comfort level is achieved.

Snyder (1999) suggests that in order for inclusion programs to be successful, administrators need to take a more aggressive approach in preparing the general education teachers. This can be accomplished by providing continuing in-service training so that the needs of all students are met. The data from this study suggests that general education teachers need to complete more undergraduate and graduate course work in working with students with disabilities before entering the classroom. Fewer that 20% of the general education teachers surveyed in the study report they feel confident in working with students with special needs as compared to 67% of administrators who report that

they feel confident in working with this population of students. In examining this data, one would feel that it is important to provide general education teachers with additional supports since they are the ones directly implementing these strategies in the classroom.

Bunch and Finnegan (2000) suggest that general education teachers are inadequately prepared through pre-service and in-service trainings to provide appropriate inclusion services to students with special needs. This study also suggests that general education teachers report an increased workload due to the inclusion process and fear insufficient support. This fear was initiated by supports being pulled from their classroom such as resource personnel and concerns regarding legal issues and liability. This study suggests two types of administrative support. Direct support consists of providing resources, providing the responsibility for student discipline, placement, and authority. Direct support also includes awareness on the part of the administrator for additional planning time when dealing with students in their classrooms with special needs. Indirect support consisted of leadership, mentorship, and empathy. The general education teacher wants to know that the administrator will provide supportive comments during times of conflict.

Summary

Chapter 2 began with a brief historical background regarding special education, federal legislation, Regular Education Initiative (REI), and the pros and cons of inclusion. It is important to understand the history of special education order to provide insight into the future. Some studies suggest that inclusion provides improvement in the area of social skills with little improvement in academic areas. Other studies suggest improvements in academic areas. The overall conclusion suggests that there is not one perfect model for all

students with special needs. This chapter also suggests that inclusion has been a topic of debate for over 40 years and will continue to be debated among educators in the future.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to look closely into high school classrooms to determine the level of satisfaction towards inclusion as identified by general education English and Math teachers and special education teachers at the high school level. Since general education teacher attitudes are a critical factor for the success or failure of inclusion, it is important to identify factors which may be related to these attitudes. This information will provide administrators insight into establishing the appropriate environment for general education and special education teachers to feel satisfied with the inclusion service delivery model for students with special needs. This information will in turn provide students with special needs a successful inclusion experience. Principals and Central Office administrators will also benefit from this information as it will lead to improved professional development opportunities for staff. This chapter will describe the method and procedures used in this study.

Design of the Study

This study used a quantitative research design. Data was collected by means of a survey containing questions to be completed by high school special education and general education teachers. This study was limited to general education teachers who teach

English 9 or Algebra I in inclusion classrooms. All of the high school teachers chosen to participate in this study were randomly selected from the Indiana Department of Education website.

This study consisted of a well thought out design to elicit a high return rate with a somewhat small sample size. The goal was to survey a total of 30 general education and special education teachers across the state of Indiana. A high return rate was expected due to the personal contacts (phone contacts) made by the researcher with each teacher. Nevertheless, a low response rate occurred (40%). See Chapter 4 for further elaboration on this issue.

Research Question

Is there a difference in the level of satisfaction with inclusion among high school special education teachers and general education English and Math teachers with respect to the following: type of special services delivery model being implemented and years of teaching experience?

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in level of satisfaction with inclusion among high school special education teachers and general education English and Math teachers with respect to the following: type of special services delivery model being implemented and years of teaching experience.

Sample

For the purpose of this study, a random sample of high school special education and general education teachers currently teaching in inclusion classrooms were surveyed. The general education and special education teachers participating in this study were

restricted to those currently teaching in high school inclusion classrooms in the academic areas of English 9 and Algebra I in Indiana school corporations.

Data Collection

By random selection, 10 high schools in the state of Indiana were identified to participate in this study. The state was divided into four quadrants (Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast). Two high schools were identified from each quadrant plus two additional high schools were chosen from Marion County for a combined total of 10 schools selected to participate in this study. From these randomly selected schools, 10 general education teachers who taught in English 9 inclusion classrooms, 10 general education teachers who taught in Algebra I inclusion classrooms and 10 special education teachers who taught in either English 9 or Algebra I inclusion classrooms were selected.

The Indiana Department of Education website for the 2007-08 school year was used to identify the special education department chair from each school selected for participation in this study. Special Education Department Chairs were contacted by phone with a brief explanation of the study. They were asked to identify general education teachers currently teaching in English 9 and Algebra I inclusion classrooms. Once a verbal commitment was received, the teacher was given an option to participate by mail or email. Teachers participating by mail received a survey packet consisting of a cover letter, survey, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Those who chose to participate by email received the same cover letter and survey on-line. Two weeks after the initial packet was sent to the teachers, if no response was received, a follow-up reminder was sent.

Survey

Special education and general education teachers were asked to respond to a survey which consisted of 17 questions and took approximately 10 minutes to complete. Items on the first section were designed to identify information related to position (general education or special education teacher), type of service delivery model used in the classroom, and total number of years in the teaching profession. The second section consisted of 14 Likert-type questions (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) related to the level of teacher satisfaction with inclusion as a service delivery model for special education students. The questions were related to factors identified in the literature review as those most affecting the success of inclusion programs. The responses assisted in understanding the overall level of satisfaction with inclusion at the secondary level.

Items for the survey were developed by the researcher. The survey was initially administered to two special education teachers and two general education high school teachers. They were asked to complete the survey and provide feedback to the researcher. The survey was then reviewed by the researcher's committee members who also provided suggestions and revisions. Final revisions were made to the survey questions, thereby establishing face validity.

Data Analysis

SPSS software was used to complete the data analysis. The dependent variable (DV) was to be the level of teacher satisfaction with inclusion for students with mild disabilities. The planned independent variables (IV) included the teacher's position (special education or general education teacher), type of inclusion service delivery model,

and years of teaching experience. Initially, a Factorial Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was to be used to analyze the information collected from the surveys. However, due to the small sample size there was insufficient data to complete an ANOVA. Therefore, an alternative was used for the data analysis. Further elaboration of the revised approach to data analysis is provided in Chapter 4.

Summary

A major factor in the success or failure of inclusion is the attitude of the general education teacher (Hannah & Pliner, 1983). If general education teachers do not have positive attitudes regarding students with special needs in their classroom, these students will not have successful experiences in those classrooms. Therefore, it is important to look into the level of teacher satisfaction with inclusion as a service delivery model.

This chapter presented research questions for the purpose of this study which included gathering information from both general education and special education teachers in high school inclusion classrooms. A description of the sample was discussed as was the method of gathering this information. A description of how the data was analyzed was also addressed. The following chapter provides detailed information on the findings of this study.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a difference exists between general education and special education teachers with respect to the level of satisfaction with the inclusion of special education students in general education classrooms at the high school level. This study also investigated the relationship between the number of years of teaching experience and the type of service delivery model being used in the classroom and the satisfaction with inclusion.

The researcher randomly selected 10 high schools from the Indiana Department of Education website for the 2007-08 school year to participate in this study. The state was divided into four quadrants (Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast). Two high schools were identified from each quadrant with two additional high schools identified from Marion County. The goal of the study was to survey a total of 30 teachers (10 Algebra I general education teachers, 10 English, 9 general education teachers, and 10 special education teachers). Teachers were contacted by phone and asked to participate in the study by completing a brief survey which took approximately 10 minutes to complete. After a verbal commitment to participate, the respondents had their choice of participating by mail or email. A reminder notice was sent to each participant after a two

week period if no response was received. Table 4.1 shows the return rate of the 30 teachers who had agreed to participate. Twelve surveys were returned for a total of 40% participation. Seven respondents were special education teachers and five were general education teachers.

Table 4.1

Participants by Position

Teachers	*n*	%
General Education	5	41.7
Special Education	7	58.3

The design of this study was to randomly survey a total of 30 teachers. This well thought out plan consisted of a relatively small sample size but due to the design of the study it was expected to yield a high return rate. It was anticipated that by initially making personal contacts with teachers by phone, this would ensure high participation. During the phone conversations, good rapport was established by the examiner with the educators and all teachers reported high interest in participating in the study. Even with the strength of this design, a low response occurred. It is suggested by the examiner that the low return rate could be related to the timing of survey distribution. Teacher contacts were made after May 21st and surveys were sent to educators after that date. There were no responses to follow-up letters which were sent after the completion of the school year.

Due to the low number of returns, the data was unable to be analyzed using a Factorial ANOVA as initially planned. In order to maximize the value of the study, an

alternative course was pursued in which qualitative interviews were conducted with six teachers, three of whom were special education teachers and three of whom were general education teachers. These teachers were purposely selected from the southern half of Indiana to reflect not only positional diversity but also gender diversity. Both groups of teachers (general education and special education) consisted of one male and two female teachers. General education teachers ranged from 5 to 15 years of teaching experience while the experience of special education teachers ranged from 2 to 38 years. Teachers were identified by special education directors from the teachers' respective school corporations. Once identified, the teachers were contacted by email or phone to identify an interview time. The interviews were conducted by phone and lasted approximately one hour.

The interview questions were informed by descriptive analyses of the survey data and the survey consisted of two sections (see Appendix D). The first section listed three questions which addressed teacher position (general education math or English or special education teacher), type of service delivery model used in the classroom, and the total number of years in the teaching profession. The second section consisted of 14 questions which related to issues identified in the literature review as those with the greatest impact on inclusion programs. These questions had Likert-type response choices that included strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Descriptive Results

As noted earlier, the low response rate precluded the ability to do inferential analysis of the data. However, descriptive analysis of the data was done and used to inform the development of an interview protocol for the qualitative phase of the study.

The specific descriptives investigated included means, standard deviations, and range values of each of the 14 satisfaction with inclusion questions as well as sub-descriptive analyses of all 14 questions based upon position (special education teacher versus general education teacher) and experience (11-15 years vs. 17-33 years). Finally, the summative satisfaction score average, standard deviation, and range values for each of the two teacher groups was also calculated. These descriptives are presented in the following sections.

Satisfaction with Inclusion

Table 4.2 presents the overall means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum range values for each of the 14 survey items on satisfaction with inclusion. As can be seen in the data, the top three items in terms of satisfaction were question 7 (knowledge and comfort with using various teaching strategies in working with special needs students), question 3 (support from principal), and question 1 (belief that students with mild disabilities can be educated in the general education classroom). By contrast, all of the collaboration related questions were noticeably on the lower end of the satisfaction scale. In terms of the spread of the data, in the majority of the cases, the full scale options were utilized, suggesting a considerable range in satisfaction across most of the questions. The standard deviations in the majority of cases were also near one, additional evidence of considerable data spread when associated with a 4-point scale.

Table 4.2

Descriptive Results for Satisfaction with Inclusion

Survey Items	Mean	Range	*SD*
1. I believe that students with mild disabilities can be educated in the general education classroom.	3.25	1-4	.87
2. I believe that my current classroom has the appropriate class size and ratio of general education students to special education students.	2.90	2-4	.74
3. I receive an appropriate amount of support from my principal pertaining to students with special needs.	3.25	2-4	.75
4. I receive an appropriate amount of support from my co-teacher pertaining to students with special needs.	2.78	2-4	.67
5. I have access to an appropriate amount of material resources to meet the needs of students with special needs.	2.75	1-4	.75
6. I have the necessary skills to make accommodations and modifications for students with special needs.	3.0	1-4	.95
7. I am knowledgeable and comfortable using various teaching strategies in working with students with special needs.	3.33	1-4	.98
8. I believe I have received an appropriate amount of in-service training on the topic of inclusion.	2.91	1-4	.99
9. I believe the use of collaboration time to develop lesson plans is satisfactory.	2.18	1-3	.60
10. I believe the use of collaboration time to share student expectations is satisfactory.	2.27	1-4	.79
11. I believe the use of collaboration time to share grading responsibilities is satisfactory.	2.46	1-4	.82
12. I believe the use of collaboration time to develop team teaching or co-teaching lessons is satisfactory.	2.09	1-3	.54
13. I believe the use of collaboration time to share information on specific teaching methods/strategies is satisfactory.	2.27	1-3	.65
14. I believe the use of collaboration time to discuss discipline and classroom management is satisfactory.	2.54	1-4	.82

Table 4.3 presents the overall means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum range values on satisfaction with inclusion by teaching position (general education teacher and special education teacher).

Table 4.3

Satisfaction with Inclusion by Position

Teaching Position	Mean	Range	*SD*
General Education Teacher	2.8	1-4	.84
Special Education Teacher	2.3	1-4	1.10

The data reveals that general education teachers report higher satisfaction with inclusion than their special education counterparts. The range of the data across all rating levels suggested considerable satisfaction differences, however, inferring a useful course of inquiry via interviews to make sense of this finding. Furthermore, the standard deviations on a 4-point scale were again fairly high, additional evidence of considerable differences of opinion.

Table 4.4 presents the overall means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum range values on satisfaction with inclusion by the number of years of teaching experience.

The data reveals that teachers with more teaching experience (17-33 years) report a higher level of satisfaction with inclusion than teachers with less experience (11-15 years). Once again, the full range of selection levels was reflected in the data with fairly

high standard deviations as well. This finding also suggests the value of qualitative inquiry to explore the phenomenon in more depth.

Table 4.4

Satisfaction with Inclusion by Experience

Teaching Position	Mean	Range	*SD*
11-15 years	2.3	1-4	1.10
17-33 years	2.8	1-4	.84

As previously stated, the low response rate precluded the ability to do inferential analysis of the data. To summarize, the quantitative data from this study suggests that general education teachers with more years of teaching experience may have the highest satisfaction with inclusion of students with mild disabilities. This insight among others helps to inform the qualitative phase of the study that follows.

Qualitative Results

In order to understand the meaning of the data in greater depth, qualitative interviews with six teachers as noted earlier were conducted. The interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview protocol of nine questions that were in part drawn from the quantitative survey results and in part given the value of qualitative inquiry for understanding the root issues in much greater detain and context richness. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix D.

The approximately one-hour interviews were conducted by phone with each participant. Guided in approach by Creswell (1998), the interviewer took periodic, rather

than constant notes during the interview to ensure understanding and nuance of meaning with responses and not to become distracted by note taking. Furthermore, follow-up questions were also asked as they helped to understand a point or unique perspective offered by a participant. Immediately after the interview, however, the researcher made additional notes for about 10-15 minutes while the information was fresh on her mind and that also included possible theme linkages with other interviews.

Interview Themes

The interviews surfaced a variety of themes, both convergent and divergent. By convergent themes is meant those that seemed to be held commonly across all or most participants and/or that seemed to be a pattern for a teacher based on their position or level of experience. Divergent themes are those that seemed to be outliers or that did not fit easily into groupings or obvious theme categories across participants or obvious participant sub-sets.

Convergent themes. Both groups of teachers interviewed reported affirmatively that special education students with mild disabilities could be educated successfully in the general education classroom. General education teachers interviewed qualified this statement by stating that a general education classroom placement should be determined on an individual basis and not by a blanket type of placement according to their diagnosed disability (i.e. all students with learning disabilities in inclusion classrooms). Maria (pseudonym as are all the names that follow when referencing a study participant) captured this sentiment in this comment:

> I worry sometimes about labels. I have found over the years that once a student is given the label of a specific disability category, we tend to paint them all with the

same brush, in other words, all students with learning disabilities should be in an inclusion classroom with reduced assignments and tests read to them.

General education teachers also expressed concerns about extremely lower functioning students who would slow down the pace of instruction which could hinder the progress of general education students. For example, Tina spoke to this issue when she said, "lower functioning students have more challenges understanding information; therefore, their need for a slower pace of instruction increases."

Special education teachers on the other hand also reported affirmatively that special education students with mild disabilities can be successfully educated in the general education classroom. However, their comments were much more optimistic in nature. They made statements such as inclusion is "amazing" and "I'm a big fan of inclusion". Fred's comment on the subject is especially telling in its optimistic tone:

> We have high expectations for all of our students. We treat each special needs student as though we expect them to achieve in spite of their disability. Inclusion increases their confidence and makes them feel they can achieve the same as their general education peers.

Special education teachers seemed to agree with general education teachers that certain students would receive increased benefit by receiving instruction in a self-contained setting rather than the inclusion classroom. For instance, when asked how she felt about high disability students, Tina relayed, "there is a small group of students with significant cognitive delays that need more support than can be provided in an inclusion classroom". This was a qualified concern raised by a few of the other special education teachers as well.

Making accommodations in the general education classroom appears to be a task that both groups of teachers feel confident implementing. One would expect a special education teacher to be competent in this area but all general education teachers also reported confidence in making appropriate accommodations for these students. One general education teacher, Candace, did report that she had some concerns about students receiving too much assistance when tests are being read to the student in the resource room. She had this to say on the subject,

> I myself feel comfortable making accommodations for these students and feel I give them the support they need to be successful. However I have some concerns about students receiving too much help when they have tests read to them in the resource room.

Tom, another special education teacher, reported the importance of working closely with the general education teacher so that both teachers are in agreement with the accommodations being given to each student. By both teachers working together on this issue, future disagreements would be eliminated. Even though both groups of teachers reported confidence in making accommodations, both groups appeared more hesitant when it came to describing researched based strategies they implemented in their inclusion classroom in working with students with special needs. Candace's comments on this subject are particularly representative of sentiment on this matter:

> I provide my students with various strategies however I'm not really sure if they are truly researched based strategies. I use a variety of teaching strategies that I have found to be successful in the classroom for all students.

Most teachers reported that typical accommodations such as extended time and tests being read to students, are offered to all students in the classroom regardless of whether they are identified as special education or not. The teachers report that this reduces the frustration some students have about what is "fair". The concern of fairness and its implications for the classroom seemed to be of noted concern for study participants. More specifically, the study participants mentioned that anything that avoids labeling a student as special needs helps preserve their self-esteem and self-concept, important for learning. Teachers report that by providing accommodations in this manner, special education students do not feel "different", for example, when they have to leave the classroom to have a test read to them. When they see general education students seeking for this type of assistance as well, they are much more willing to accept the help as well.

Both groups of teachers reported that special education students have positive feelings about the general education classroom by referring to it as a "normal class". Teachers in the study also reported the benefit to all students of having two licensed teachers in the classroom. Active grouping was another positive factor discussed by both groups of teachers. This is where struggling students are paired up with academically stronger students. This type of grouping provides benefit to both students. The struggling student receives additional support from a peer and the stronger student is provided with more confidence through their work with the special needs student. All teachers report an improvement in student behavior in the general education classroom when grouping occurs. One special education teacher reported that she had a student in an inclusion class where behavior was quite appropriate. Later the same day, that student's behavior in a

self-contained classroom deteriorated considerably. It appeared from the teacher's perspective that having appropriate role models may improve student behavior in the inclusion classroom.

Both the special education and general education teachers interviewed reported a certain degree of satisfaction with inclusion; however they all agreed that special education teachers received the most satisfaction with inclusion. One quote that captures this sentiment comes from Fred:

> My sense is that special education teachers have the greatest sense of satisfaction with inclusion. Being in the general education classroom allows the special education teacher the opportunity to be a part of the school community and to have a greater impact on an increased number of students.

The general education teachers felt the special education teacher received more satisfaction because it increased their involvement with school activities and they were able to impact all students, not just special education students. The general education teachers also reported that the compatibility of the teachers was an extremely important factor in making inclusion successful for both teachers and students.

Special education teachers in the study reported satisfaction with inclusion due to the availability of two teachers in the classroom where additional eyes and hands provided benefit when teaching to diverse groups of students. One special education teacher, Tom, who had been in a self-contained classroom for several years reported losing perspective of what "normal" really looked like. By this he meant when teaching in a self-contained classroom, a teacher may not be raising the bar to challenge all

students in an appropriate manner. The general education environment is not able to be replicated in a self-contained classroom.

As a whole, both groups of teachers reported that class size may have some effect on teacher satisfaction with inclusion. However more importantly, they felt that it is the make up or the balance of the students in that classroom that is the most important consideration. One teacher reported that it was at times possible to observe a particular classroom, and be unaware that this was an inclusion classroom. Another classroom, which had fewer number of special education students, would be identified immediately as an inclusion classroom. This was due to the make up of the students' academic and behavioral needs rather than a specific class size number or ratio of general education to special education students.

Both special education and general education teachers reported that little in-service training is provided from their school district or special education cooperative. All report that they receive at best only one day a year to help them reflect upon and improve what they do in the arena of special education issues. One general education teacher noted that beneficial training would include topics on how students become eligible as special needs students and how services are determined for them. Most teachers in the study reported that "on the job training" provided the most effective way of learning how to deal with special education students in the general education classroom. Candace's comment on this subject is especially telling,

> I remember one in-service training where a speaker was brought in to share information on inclusion with our staff. However the best training I have

experienced up to this point was being thrown into the situation and figuring out on my own what to do.

One would predict that special education teachers had appropriate training regarding special education issues. However, general education teachers reported minimal special education training during their undergraduate work. Two of the special education teachers reported that their university training was prior to the evolution of inclusion and collaboration. General education teachers reported that one to two classes were required at the university level and these classes tended to focus on strategies for structuring the classroom rather than actual knowledge about various disabilities and appropriate teaching strategies. All general education teachers felt that additional course work at the college/university level would be beneficial to new teachers.

The final convergent theme identified through the interviews dealt with collaboration. Both groups of teachers reported limited collaboration time with their counterparts. Several teachers reported common planning time but that might be for only one semester during the school year. Several teachers reported that they use personal time before and after school two to three days per week to spend a brief amount of time in collaborative work. Teachers reported that even though they felt that their inclusion classroom was going well, additional collaboration time would make the process even more effective for teachers and students. Most teachers reported that the focus of any collaboration time is usually spent on lesson planning and/or discussions of specific students. The teachers all reported that they received limited training regarding strategies to assist them in working more effectively in a collaborative environment.

Divergent themes. As a group, special education teachers reported treating students with all types of disabilities in the same manner whereas the general education teachers discussed various challenges with specific disabilities. The general education teacher reported that students with emotional disabilities where the most challenging for them in the classroom. They were more likely to disrupt a classroom and alter the learning environment. One general education teacher reported that the special education teacher is the one who deals with the students with emotional issues because of her uncertainty in implementing effective methods to de-escalate students. Students with ADHD were also identified as a source of frustration in the classroom by general education teachers. One general education teacher, Fred, noted the challenges of teaching in a block 4 schedule where class periods are 90 minutes in length. These long class periods were challenging for many students but especially the student with ADHD. This type of schedule is also challenging for the teacher. Lesson preparation, in his mind, needed to be adjusted for this type of schedule. Students needed a variety of activities during the course of a class period in order to keep them on task. Fred did not feel that all teachers had the necessary skills to teach effectively in this type of schedule without in-service training dealing with specific teaching and behavior management strategies.

Another issue which was identified during the interview process was the difference between the general education and special education teachers' view of the support provided by the principal. It appeared from the interviews that special education teachers had more contact with the principal. General education teachers reported little involvement with the principal regarding special education students. As a group, general

education teachers reported that they rarely address special education issues with the principal and felt that these issues were not a high priority for most principals.

Special education teachers on the other hand reported appropriate support from the principal. This support was in the form of communicating on issues, involvement with both the teacher and the student, and participating in case conferences. Additional supports reported by these teachers included: listening to the teacher during periods of frustration without judging them, allowing and supporting new ideas and strategies, and providing overall moral support.

When comparing responses from the special education teacher with two years experience to the special education teacher with 38 years experience, a significant difference in perspective became apparent. The new teacher felt that the age of the teacher did make a difference with the success of inclusion whereas the more "seasoned" teacher did not see this as a significant factor. The less experienced teacher reported that older teachers tend to be more set in their ways and more challenging to work with. Older teachers may also view the special education teacher's role in the classroom in a different manner. New teachers are more willing to see the special education teacher as a second teacher in the classroom sharing all of the same responsibilities. The older teacher may see the role of the special education teacher as more of an assistant and not treat them as an equal participant in the education process in the classroom.

Summary

Chapter 4 provided an analysis of the research data obtained through a survey format. Given the low return rate, the survey results were only presented in descriptive format. However, the survey helped, in part, to inform a new qualitative component of

the study. The qualitative findings were presented following the quantitative ones. In the next chapter, the meanings of these results are discussed in terms of their implications for policy, for practice, and for future research.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This researcher has a personal interest regarding the topic of this study. As a special education teacher and administrator, the inclusion process is of utmost importance in meeting the needs of students with special needs by giving students access to the general education curriculum. Providing a hierarchy of services and placement options necessary to meet the needs of all students is at best, a challenge for all school corporations. Recent laws have increased accountability for school administrators and teaching staff when instructing all groups of students, including those with disabilities. These laws have also encouraged increased student access to the general education curriculum and mandated that schools maintain adequate yearly progress towards state standards.

With these new mandates and guidelines, more and more students are receiving services in general education classrooms. Consequently teachers find themselves in challenging classrooms teaching a diverse population of students. The role of the special education teacher has also undergone tremendous change and responsibilities. These new

challenges have created a tremendous amount of controversy between administrators, general education teachers, and special education teachers.

Much of the research regarding inclusion has focused around students and teachers at the elementary level. Inclusion at the secondary level has not been studied as frequently. However, students at this level present unique challenges and barriers. Some of these challenges include students failing and dropping out of school, a limited willingness on the part of secondary staff to modify instructional practices (Schumaker & Deshler, 1988), high level content knowledge, pace of instruction, and high-stakes testing which determines whether students receive a high school diploma (Scruggs & Mastorpieri, 1996).

This researcher became interested in a study by Bennett et al. (1997) which investigated attitudes towards inclusion at the elementary level. The results of this study found that teachers reported a less positive attitude towards the concept of inclusion than parents. This study also reported a need for collaboration and administrative support with teachers playing a key role in the success or lack thereof with inclusion. Investigating inclusion 10 years later appeared to be an interesting mission, particularly focusing on the secondary level.

Discussion of Study Results

As noted in the previous chapter, inadequate return rates did not afford inferential analysis as had been planned. Yet, the descriptive finding suggested some valuable lines of further inquiry which were pursued via in-depth interviews with a set of six special education and general education teachers to help understand the issues of inclusion in their greatest richness. At the core of these interviews was the desire to understand the

"why" issues, namely, why teachers might feel the way that they did on these 14 satisfaction with inclusion questions. The thematic findings identified suggest a richness of opportunity for informing policy and practice related to the challenges and opportunities of inclusion in secondary schools. Thus, a discussion and implications of these findings are presented in the following section.

Making Meaning from the Findings and Their Implications

Research suggests that teacher attitude towards inclusion becomes less positive with ascending grade level (Larrivee & Cook, 1979) and that general education and special education teachers have negative attitudes toward educating students with special needs in the general education classroom at the secondary level (Luseno, 2001). Bennett et al. (1997) found teachers to have a neutral or uncertain attitude toward the concept of inclusion. The quantitative section of this study suggests that general education teachers are at least as or possibly more satisfied with inclusion than special education teachers. The qualitative data from this study provides additional support for this finding. The data from the teacher interviews revealed that general education and special education teachers both feel that students with special needs can be educated in general education inclusion classroom. Special education teachers in this study made very positive statements regarding the inclusion setting. One teacher reported that he would be happy to teach in an inclusion classroom all six periods of the day. Another special education teacher reported that inclusion was "amazing". All general education teachers interviewed also reported support for these students in inclusion classroom, although perhaps not with quite as strong comments.

It is important that students with special needs have access to the general education curriculum due to the high stakes testing and graduation requirements. Soukup et al. (2007) found that students with disabilities were more likely to have access to the general education curriculum if they were educated in the general education classroom. This explains the important of students with special needs receiving instruction in the general education classroom. Research suggests that IEP goals are addressed more in self-contained classrooms and these goals may or may not support the academic standards the student should be working on. One general teacher in this study reported during the interview the importance of treating all students the same. They felt the only exception comes when students are working towards a certificate of completion rather than a diploma. This is because being on a certificate of completion track would allow students additional modifications of the curriculum without jeopardizing the curriculum for a diploma track.

Teachers interviewed in this study reported that students with special needs are challenged more in inclusion classrooms because they are being taught by mastery teachers in all high school subject areas. Special education teachers have not been trained as government, biology, or algebra teachers for instance. In the inclusion setting, the special needs students have access to the general education curriculum and are taught by a highly qualified teacher in that subject area which improves the overall quality of their education. This type of setting allows the students with special needs to feel more "normal" and do what their peers are doing. It gives these students a feeling of belonging to the school community. Teachers in such settings have particularly high expectations

for all students and treat students with special needs as though they "expect achievement in spite of the disability".

Teachers interviewed in this study also reported that student behavior improved when in the general education environment. They felt this was due to improved role models and having two teachers in the classroom. Previous research supports this opinion. Kochhar et al. (2000) suggested that one of the benefits of inclusion for students with disabilities included more appropriate social behaviors. This study described the reasons for this improvement in behavior being due to higher expectations in the general education classroom, higher levels of achievement than in self-contained classrooms, additional supports from classmates without disabilities, and additional staff in the classroom.

Even though teachers agreed that special needs student can be successful in a general education classroom, some reported a sense of concern with educating all students in the inclusion classroom. They reported that some students with lower cognitive ability struggle more with academic performance. They felt these students may have increased success in a self-contained classroom where instruction can be modified to their specific needs. Federal and state law requires a hierarchy of services for students with special needs just for this reason. Smelter et al. (1994) stated it best when he suggested that "educating every student with special needs in an inclusion classroom makes as much sense as saying students with special needs cannot be placed in a general education classroom" (p. 35).

Teachers interviewed in this study reported satisfaction with their ability to identify and implement appropriate accommodations for students with special needs.

Both general education and special education teachers found it helpful to provide accommodations to any student in the classroom who would benefit from the accommodation regardless of whether they were identified as special education. This is in contrast to what Luseno (2001) found in her study. Furthermore, although teachers reported confidence in making appropriate accommodations for students with special needs in this dissertation study, none of the interviewed teachers appeared confident in discussing specific research based teaching strategies for students with learning problems. This is an area that needs to be investigated further in order to continue improving services to all students in inclusion classrooms.

Pre-service training and in-service training appeared in the literature as very important for teachers in the success of meeting the needs of students with special needs. Bunch and Finnegan (2000) found that general education teachers were inadequately prepared to provide appropriate inclusion services to students with special needs. Teachers participating in the interviews suggested that they did not receive the appropriate training at the college/university level or in-service training from the school corporation. Several special education teachers received their college training prior to the beginning of inclusion or collaboration and since had received little in-service training from the school corporation. General education teachers reported that they had limited instruction in college which amounted to one or two classes. These classes did not focus on understanding various disabilities and appropriate strategies for these students; rather the focus was placed on structuring the classroom for effective teaching. Teachers described their best training was "on the job training". They learned how to work together with their educational counterparts by trial and error. All teachers agreed that

having a co-teacher who is compatible plays a major role in the success or failure of a co-teaching experience. One teacher described the relationship between the general education and special education teacher as a "marriage". When both teachers are compatible, the end result is effective instruction for all students. Another teacher reported that more time needed to be spent on teacher instruction if inclusion efforts were to be successful.

Teachers in this study also reported that they received minimal in-service training from their school corporation or special education cooperative. Most describe this training as one day a year and not on a yearly basis. Some teachers reported that they attended one day workshops out of district which were helpful in providing necessary information for successful instruction in an inclusion classroom. All teachers agreed that more training would be beneficial for teachers and other support staff. One teacher suggested training with peers who had been involved in successful inclusion programs in other corporations as an effective method for training staff.

Another important factor regarding the success of an inclusion program is the role of the administrator. Principal leadership roles are important in developing and supporting educational programs for success with inclusion and teaching in a classroom where there is a wide range of diversity. Research suggests that principals report a more optimistic view of inclusion than do teachers (Lazar et al., 1976). Principals also report positive statements both in the areas of behavior and academics. This differs with teachers. They report improvements in the social area but still express concerns in the area of academic performance. Because of this difference in perception, principals need to be attuned to what teachers are telling them regarding special education issues. This

information is important for principals so that appropriate in-service trainings can be developed to improve teacher satisfaction and to improve student achievement. The general education teachers participating in the interviews reported little communication with their principal regarding issues concerning special education. They reported that they rarely had conversations with the principal regarding issues about special needs students and felt that the principal did not have time for these types of discussions or felt that these issues were not of a high priority.

Contrary to what general education teachers reported, special education teachers reported principals to be very supportive. It is suggested by the researcher that this difference may be due to the fact that principals are dealing more exclusively with special education teachers regarding special education issues. Special education teachers report that the principal is supportive by listening to concerns, allowing for new ideas and strategies for working with special needs students, and providing moral support.

Class size has been listed as one of the barriers of inclusion as reported in the research. Kochhar et al. (2000), for example, based on their research recommends no more than 28 students in an inclusive classroom with no more than 25% being students with special needs. Both groups of teachers interviewed for this study reported that smaller class size would be beneficial for students. Their recommendation was a class size of 20-25 students with 1/4 to 1/3 being special education students. Teachers also expressed more of a concern for the types of students and that their academic and behavioral needs should be considered when deciding upon class size rather than adopting an artificial, "magic number" of students in a classroom.

Opportunities for Future Research

The quantitative design of this study was intended to elicit a high return rate of surveys from teachers. The survey itself was a well designed survey with questions based on issues identified in the literature to successfully assess a level of satisfaction toward inclusion from general education and special education teachers. Given the inability to do inferential analysis on the data, it is highly recommended that this study be replicated. However, it will be imperative that the researcher be aware of appropriate times during the school year where teachers would be more accessible and more willing to participate. It is also suggested that future research include a qualitative component to assist in fully understanding the issues of inclusion at the secondary level.

One of the most significant recommendations for future research would be to investigate the issue of collaboration at the high school level. The quantitative and qualitative results of this study find limited, if any, time devoted for general education and special education staff to collaborate in an effective manner. This lack of collaboration time could have a significant impact on inclusion programs and student success at the secondary level. The lack of collaboration can also affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Principals need to understand the potential impact of effective collaboration and work towards a solution to this problem. It would be beneficial for future research to investigate effective types of collaboration methods so that teachers use their limited time wisely. Scheduling options also need to be invested to provide teachers adequate time to collaboration.

It appears that teachers felt comfortable making accommodations in the inclusion classroom however there appears to be limited knowledge and implementation of

researched based strategies in working with students with special needs. Previous research and this study both identified a need in the area of in-service training for all teaching staff. Additional research would be beneficial to principals for providing the necessary skills and teaching strategies to continue improving the education of students with disabilities in the general education inclusion classroom.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form Attached to Each Questionnaire

My name is Rhonda Lawrence and I am a doctoral candidate at Indiana State University investigating the level of teacher satisfaction with inclusion at the secondary level for my dissertation. The purpose of the study is to inform the knowledge base around inclusion and the improvement of educational services to students with special needs. Your input is extremely important to this study and I am respectfully requesting your participation. The survey instrument enclosed will be used to collect data for this study. The instrument is short and should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete. Your name was randomly chosen to participate in this study based on information posted to the Indiana Department of Education website.

Your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if you do not participate. The confidential information that is being sought is being done in a specific manner with only minimal identifiers such that your specific data cannot be discerned. Neither your name nor any other identifying information is required on the survey form. By returning this survey, you are giving your informed consent as a participant volunteer in the study.

Please return the completed survey within 7 days either in the self-addressed stamp envelope or by returning the attachment by email. If you have any questions regarding the items on the survey or the purpose of the study, please feel free to contact me. My school number is 812-448-8036 and my home number is 812-443-2104. I can also be reached at the following email address: lawrencr@clay.k12.in.us. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Indiana State University, Office of Sponsored Programs, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or by e-mail at irb@indstate.edu.

Thank you in advance for your help and timely response to this survey. Your participation is important to the overall success of this project.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Lawrence
Enclosures

IRB Number: #8177 Approval: 5/21/08 Expiration Date: Exempt

APPENDIX B

Teacher Survey on Inclusion Satisfaction

Definition of Terms

Inclusion: *A service delivery model where students with mild disabilities receive educational instruction in the general education classroom with appropriate accommodations, modifications and supports.*

Mild Disabilities: *A student who has been identified as Learning Disabled (LD), Mildly Mentally Disabled (MiMD), or Emotionally Disabled (ED).*

Satisfaction: *Satisfaction is accepting students with special needs in your classroom and feeling confident that the inclusion model is an effective way of teaching in order to meet the needs of students.*

Collaboration: *Refers to educators interacting and consulting together to share instructional responsibility for a group of students.*

Please check the most appropriate answer for each question on the survey.

1. Check your current position and subject you teach.

   ____ General education teacher ____ English

   ____ Special education teacher ____ Math

2. How many total years have you been in the field of education? _____

3. Which statement best describes the inclusion model currently used in your classroom? (choose one response)

   ____ consultation from special services teacher (no direct services)

   ____ special education teacher working directly in the classroom

   ____ instructional assistant working directly in the classroom

   ____ classroom pull out program for remediation purposes

APPENDIX C

Teacher Satisfaction with Inclusion Survey

Please circle the number that best describes your opinion on the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I believe that students with mild disabilities can be educated in the general education classroom.	4	3	2	1
I believe that my current classroom has the appropriate class size and ratio of general education students to special education students.	4	3	2	1
I receive an appropriate amount of support from my principal pertaining to students with special needs.	4	3	2	1
I receive an appropriate amount of support from my co- teacher pertaining to students with special needs.	4	3	2	1
I have access to an appropriate amount of material resources to meet the needs of students with special needs.	4	3	2	1
I have the necessary skills to make accommodations and modifications for students with special needs.	4	3	2	1
I am knowledgeable and comfortable using various teaching strategies in working with students with special needs.	4	3	2	1
I believe I have received an appropriate amount of in-service training on the topic of inclusion.	4	3	2	1
I believe the use of collaboration time to develop lesson plans is satisfactory.	4	3	2	1
I believe the use of collaboration time to share student expectations is satisfactory.	4	3	2	1
I believe the use of collaboration time to share grading responsibilities is satisfactory.	4	3	2	1
I believe the use of collaboration time to develop team teaching or co-teaching lessons is satisfactory.	4	3	2	1

I believe the use of collaboration time to share information on specific teaching methods/strategies is satisfactory.	4	3	2	1
I believe the use of collaboration time to discuss discipline and classroom management is satisfactory.	4	3	2	1

Thank you for your participation in this study.

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

1. One of the questions I explored in the quantitative phase of my study was the degree to which teachers felt students with mild disabilities can be successful in the general education classroom. What do you think and as you reflect on this answer, what are the challenges and opportunities for their education (as well as the education of the other students) in the general education classroom?

2. Another question I explored in the quantitative phase of my study focused on the type of disability (i.e., learning disability, emotional handicap, ADHD) and how challenging it may be to educate students with each type in the general education classroom. What are your thoughts on the nuances of challenge associated with these three types? As you reflect, I would also be interested in knowing how familiar you are with teaching strategies associated with each type and what research-based teaching strategies you might find most helpful to you in these regards.

3. One piece of analysis I did for the quantitative phase of the study looked at general education teacher satisfaction as compared to special education teacher satisfaction with inclusion. What is your sense for if one or the other might be more satisfied and why? Are there any situationally specific factors that might affect their feelings of satisfaction? (If they don't bring it up, you can ask about experience and class size as well as other follow-ups specifically but they may raise some other good ideas too and you don't want to be leading early in the probe).

4. What would your recommendation be for an appropriate class size for an inclusion classroom and a ratio between special education students and other students? How might it differ at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels?

5. Pre-service and in-service training are often considered crucial for teachers for working with special education students. Can you reflect some on your college/university training as well as your in-service training as it regards the ways it has or has not been as effective as it might be for helping you be successful?

6. Reflect for a few minutes on the kinds of support you receive from your principal. What do feel are the right kinds of support that are needed to help you be successful?

7. In what ways do you collaborate with others to aid you in your work with special education students and what are the kinds of things that you collaborate/dialogue on? What are the facilitators and inhibitors to collaboration that you feel and/or observe?

8. One final topic explored in the quantitative part of the study was the issue of accommodations/modifications. Do you feel comfortable requesting them and/or how comfortable are you in knowing the kind(s) of ccommodations/modifications to request?

9. Is there anything else that we have not discussed on this topic for which you feel strongly?