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A Qualitative Exploration of Perceptions of Down Syndrome and Student Disabilities in a Suburban Midwest High School

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by

Gregory Wagener

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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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Abstract

The researcher explored the perceptions of typically-developing students, teachers, and parents of students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities at a suburban Midwestern High School. In exploring these perceptions of students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities, this study intended to explore how to increase effective inclusion of students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities in the general education setting, but more so, to explore the stigmas surrounding students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities in order to better understand the character of typically-developing students, teachers, and parents regarding students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities. To explore these perceptions, typically-developing students, teachers, and parents read and responded to a fictitious scenarios about either a "student with Down syndrome" or a "student with a disability" being excluded from an educational activity in class. Student respondents answered questions about their scenario regarding how they would work to include and advocate for the student in the educational activity. Teachers answered questions about how they expected their student to work to include and advocate for the student in the scenario. The researcher compared the responses of the participants who read the scenario about the "student with Down syndrome" to the responses of the participants who read the scenario about the "student with a disability." The researcher examined the responses to explore the differences in how the participants responded to two similar scenarios: one scenario was about a "student with Down syndrome," and the other about a "student with a disability." Overall, students responded that they would be more likely to include and advocate for the student with Down syndrome than the student with the disability.

Teachers responded that they expected their students would be more likely to include and advocate for the student with Down syndrome than the student with the disability. No parent responded to the scenarios. The research suggested perceptions of students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities can be improved through the increase of quality interactions with students in the general education setting.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background of the Study

Down syndrome is a particularly unique disability in that it can be easily identified by distinct facial features, body type, gait, and articulation. Since Down syndrome also has a component of mild intellectual disability, it is therefore one of the only intellectual disabilities that can be identified on sight, and the component of mild intellectual disability is readily associated with a person with Down syndrome. Disabilities can be categorized as either physical or intellectual, and people with disabilities often encounter stigmatization from the general, typically-developing population. Research provided evidence stating that a person with an intellectual disability encounters more stigmatization than persons with a physical disability, and those stigmatizations can lead to the person with a disability encountering barriers in access to education, beliefs about what that person can achieve academically, and general social exclusion (Andrade & Fukuda, 2016; Ferrara, Burns, & Mills, 2015; Nijs & Maes, 2014; Semrau, Evans-Lacko, Koschorke, Ashenafi, & Thornicroft, 2015).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers', typically-developing students', and parents' perceptions of student disabilities when presented with fictional scenarios of a student with a non-specific disability versus a student with a diagnosis of Down syndrome. Data collection included a teacher and typically-developing student/parent open-ended survey aligned with the High School Character Standards for Late High School students (Appendix A). A Midwestern High School's (pseudonym) reading intervention specialist (a non-evaluative, non-disciplinary

secondary staff member who collects data on students' reading skills and implements interventions for students who need support) was trained with NIH certification and sent the participants the data collection survey through Google forms via the research site's email. The researcher analyzed participant responses for themes aligned to each research question. The information from this study provided insights into the perceptions of typically-developing students, teachers, and parents of students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities in order to examine if inclusion has worked to change the stigmatization and presuppositions surrounding students with disabilities and specifically Down syndrome.

Rationale of the Study

Inclusion is a relatively new topic in modern public education. Prior to the 1950s, students with disabilities were segregated from schools to be educated in other environments, and the reasons for doing so were cited mostly to be for the benefit of typically-developing students and teachers, and not for the educational benefit of the student with disabilities (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014). It was not until Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 which ended racial segregation in public school that families of students with disabilities began their work to demand their own children be allowed to attend the same public schools as their typically-developing peers, citing the same civil rights arguments that lead to the Brown v. Board of Education decision. Between the years of 1971-1973, the two cases of Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Pennsylvania and Mills v. Board of Education created the legal precedent of the process of placing a student in a school, specifically the placement of a student with disabilities in an alternate school, as a right of due process for the student and their

families, and these cases also laid the groundwork for the concept of least restrictive environment for the students with disabilities (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Mills v. Board of Education, 1972; Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1972). The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA) was the first federal law to clearly outline the educational rights for students with disabilities. EAHCA later underwent two series of amendments to create the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1990, and subsequently the Individual with Disabilities Education Act Amendments in 1997, all of which further clarified special educational provisions such as inclusion and least restrictive environment, subsequently creating the model of inclusion seen today (Boroson, 2017; Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014). The researcher believes that one of the greatest needs for this study was to explore inclusion as it is known to be, especially considering that the current model is only now in its 20th year.

Since IDEA in 1997, research explored the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general setting, particularly in regards to the student's academic achievement in the inclusive setting. Such evidence included a gain in reading and math abilities for students in the elementary setting with learning disabilities in an inclusive setting (Powers, 2016) and improved adaptive behaviors and social skills for elementary students with disabilities in an inclusive setting (Hebbeler & Spiker, 2016). Furthermore, research also supported that for the students without disabilities in the elementary setting, no loss of academic achievement was seen (Evans, 2015; Petreñas, Puigdellívol, & Campdepadrós, 2013). Furthermore, research supported some social-emotional benefits for typically-developing elementary students being in an inclusive environment with

students with disabilities (Evans, 2015). In terms of the secondary setting, research on inclusion was predominately focused on studying inclusive best practices and effective implementation of effective inclusion models which garnered the best academic results for students with disabilities (Ford, 2013; Giangreco, 2017; Giangreco & Suter, 2015; Scanlon & Baker, 2012).

The gap in the current literature was two-fold: first, the majority of the research regarding students in the inclusive setting had been conducted at the elementary level; second, the research that had been conducted regarding inclusion at the secondary level focused primarily on the academic achievement of students with disabilities in inclusive settings. As this study explored the perceptions of teachers, parents, and students on the character development of typically developing students, it will add to the body of existing knowledge by exploring specific traits of social/emotional development of students without disabilities. Furthermore, this study explored a non-specific disability and the specific disability of Down syndrome, which narrows the spectrum of "student with disability" to a specific diagnosis. The researcher chose the diagnosis of Down syndrome for two reasons: first, the researcher has a daughter with Down syndrome and is personally invested in the educational process for people with Down syndrome. Second, Down syndrome is one of the more visibly identifiable disabilities, and with that identification may come certain stigmas and presuppositions about the person and their ability (Deakin, 2014). These stigmas are prevalent enough that termination rates in the United States for pregnancies with a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome was 67%, and close to 100% in some European countries (Quinones & Lajka, 2017). The researcher hoped that this project will help to deconstruct some of the mental models surrounding

students with Down syndrome in exploring the perceptions of typically developing

students, teachers, and parents have about students with disabilities, and specifically,

students with Down syndrome.

Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: How do typically-developing students perceive their

character when responding to a scenario of a student with Down syndrome?

Research Question 2: How do typically-developing students perceive their

character when responding to a scenario of a student with a non-specific disability?

Research Question 3: How do teachers perceive the character of typically-

developing students when responding to a scenario of typically-developing students

interacting with a student with Down syndrome?

Research Question 4: How do teachers perceive the character of typically-

developing students when responding to a scenario of typically-developing students

interacting with a student with a non-specific disability?

Research Question 5: How do the parents perceive the character of a typically-

developing students when responding to a scenario of typically-developing students

interacting with a student with Down syndrome?

Research Question 6: How do the parents perceive the character of a typically-

developing students when responding to a scenario of typically-developing students

interacting with a student with a non-specific disability?

Study Limitations

The study focused on exploring teachers', typically-developing students', and

parents' perceptions of student disability, and to also explore these perceptions of a

student with Down syndrome. As the study took place at a single high school in a single suburban school district, the population of students with disabilities that typically-developing students were exposed to was somewhat limited. As the term with a disability" can apply to a variety of disabilities, both physical and intellectual, it would be highly unlikely for every possible disability to be represented within a single high school. The typically-developing students may very well respond to the questionnaires based solely upon their interactions with the population of students with disabilities from this single high school. Furthermore, the majority of the typically-developing students at the late high-school level will by that time have been in the same cohort with the students with disabilities for most of their public education; in some cases, for their entire public education. These long-standing relationships may influence how a student responds to the survey questions. Conversely, a typically-developing student with little to no contact with a student with a disability, or only students with a limited type of disability, may be influenced as to how they respond to the survey as well.

As this study explored the perceptions of Down syndrome as a diagnosis, the researcher chose a study site where there was at least one student with Down syndrome enrolled at the school. Further, the students with Down syndrome were also in inclusive settings, thereby increasing the chance that typically-developing students would be able to interact with them; if the students with Down syndrome were to be enrolled in self-inclusive classrooms or other segregated settings, the opportunities that typically-developing students would have to interact with students with Down syndrome would be limited. In fact, most of the impressions students who responded to the survey about

students with Down syndrome could be limited solely to the knowledge that students with Down syndrome are isolated from typically developing students.

Ideally, multiple secondary schools with students with Down syndrome enrolled in inclusive classes would be included in the sample in order to gather as many responses as possible. At the time of the development of the study, the school district had only one student with Down syndrome at the secondary level enrolled in inclusive classes. In total, the school district had only 20 students with Down syndrome in an enrollment of approximately 17,000 students.

At the beginning of the research project, the researcher was employed as an assistant principal at the research site. This role had an evaluative aspect in relation to the teachers, as well as a disciplinary aspect for the researcher's students. It was also widely known at the research site that the researcher was a parent of a child with Down syndrome. In fact, the researcher was the only employee at the school who was a parent of a child with Down syndrome. Furthermore, it was widely known that the researcher was interested in disability studies and research surrounding students with Down syndrome. Since data collection for this study was through surveys distributed to students, teachers, and parents about their perceptions of students with Down syndrome, it was reasonable to assume that the students', teachers', and parents' responses to the survey may be impacted by their personal and professional connection to the researcher, especially considering the researcher's capacity as an assistant principal in the school.

Definition of Terms

Disability: the Americans with Disabilities Act (2019) website defines disability as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity" (para. 1).

Down syndrome: A genetic disorder caused when abnormal cell division results in an extra full or partial copy of chromosome 21 (Mayo Clinic, 2018).

Free and appropriate education: education in a regular classes with the use of related aids and services, or special education and related services in separate classrooms for portions of the day (Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973).

Inclusive setting: For the purposes of this study, a class with both typically-developing students and students with disabilities participating together.

Intellectual disability: intellectual disability involves impairments of general mental abilities that impact adaptive functioning in three domains, or areas (conceptual, social, or practical areas) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Late high school students: Midwestern high school students in the 11th and 12th grades (Appendix A).

Typically-developing student: For the purposes of this study, a student without a diagnosed disability.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of teachers', typically-developing students', and parents' perceptions of student disability when presented with fictional scenarios of a student with a non-specific disability versus a student with a diagnosis of Down syndrome. The perceptions of students with disabilities, especially

with intellectual disabilities, by the typically-developing community can impact the

students with disabilities' ability to be included in society, to access education, and to be

held to the same beliefs about accomplishments as their typically developing peers.

These topics were addressed in the next chapter within a review of the current literature.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Introduction

The inclusion of students with disabilities in the general educational setting required federal legislation in order to become a reality. As the modern American public school system took shape in the early 20th century, students with disabilities were denied access to the generalized educational setting of their peers for reasons such as the belief that students with disabilities could not benefit from a standard education, and that students with disabilities would be a distraction to their peers and teachers, and would thus inhibit the education of the students without disabilities, and students with disabilities were then remanded to institutions where little to no education was actually afforded (Dudley-Maring & Burns, 2014; Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996; Sauer & Jorgensen, 2016; Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998). After the landmark decision of Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954 which effectively ended the standard of "separate but equal" stemming from Plessy vs. Ferguson regarding African-Americans and their rights to equal access to education with their white counterparts, families of students with disabilities, as well as various national advocacy groups for students with disabilities, came together to advocate for the inclusion of students with disabilities began to demand the same educational access and opportunities for their students, which would lay the groundwork for future litigation in the 1970s (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954; Mills v. Board of Education, 1972; Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children [PARC] v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1972; Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896; Yell et al., 1998). After nearly 20 years of litigation, Congress enacted the Education for all Handicapped Children Act in 1975, thereby requiring public schools to provide students with

disabilities an education in the same school setting as their peer. The Education for all Handicapped Children Act later became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1990, to begin inclusion as we know it today. This purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of students with disabilities, specifically the condition of Down syndrome, by their secondary peers, in order to examine if inclusion has worked to change the stigmatization and presuppositions surrounding students with disabilities and specifically Down syndrome.

Organization of Literature Review

The literature review begins with an overview of the exclusion of students with disabilities from the generalized public education setting, and the history of the litigation necessary to ensure that students with disabilities could receive educational services commensurate with their non-disabled peers. The literature review continues by examining the stigmas surrounding persons with disabilities, both physical and intellectual, and connecting how these stigmas contributed to the educational exclusion experienced by students with disabilities, and how intellectual disabilities in particular have historically carried more stigmas than physical disabilities. The review continues with examining Down syndrome as a diagnosis, the effects the genetic condition has on a person's physical characteristics, as well as the potential intellectual disabilities that may occur because of the diagnosis. The literature review continues with an examination of forms and models of inclusion, as well as the potential outcomes of inclusion for students with disabilities as well as students without disabilities. The literature review concludes by examining gaps in current understanding, specifically exploring how, if any, previous stigmas or presuppositions have changed for students with disabilities and students with

Down syndrome have changed with the introduction of inclusion, specifically at the secondary level.

History of Exclusion of Students with Disabilities from the General Educational Setting

Inclusion for students with disabilities is a relatively new institution in public education. Inclusion "officially" came to be in 1975 through Public Law 94-172 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act), meaning inclusion has only existed in schools for little more than 40 years (Public Law 94-142, 1975). An understanding of the education of students with disabilities prior to 1975 is necessary for the entire context of special education and inclusion in modern public education, and why federal legislation was required in order to ensure the education of an entire group of people. Furthermore, examination of the evolution of inclusion in the United States offers insights into not just the jurisprudence surrounding decisions about special education, the appropriateness for students with disabilities, and the delivery of the services, but also the mindset of those involved in the education of students with disabilities; specifically, an understanding of inclusion offers insight as to why students with disabilities were previously excluded from the general educational settings of their peers.

The inclusion of students with disabilities in public school first began with another famous battle for inclusion: Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka. This historic case is probably best known as a hallmark event in the Civil Rights Movement, ending the segregation between White and minority students, specifically African-American students, stating a segregated education setting was inherently unequal (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954). However, Brown v. Board of Education had a secondary

effect of beginning to pave the way for the inclusion of students with disabilities
(Blankenship, Boon, & Fore, 2007; Boroson, 2017). In order to better understand the
significance of this court decision on inclusion, there must be a review of education for
students with disabilities prior to Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka.

Prior to Brown vs. Board of Education, students with disabilities received their
education not in the typical public school setting; students with disabilities were either
underserved in a public exclusive setting, or denied enrollment into public schools
altogether (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Martin et al., 1996; Yell et al., 1998).
Furthermore, students with disabilities who had been regularly attending public school
could be expelled from their public schools. Yell et al. (1998) cited a case from the state
Supreme Court of Massachusetts in 1893 where the court ruled a school could expel the
student for reasons ranging from a lack of academic success, inability to provide physical
self-care, and that the student "could not benefit from instruction" (Watson v. City of
Cambridge as cited in Yell et al., 1998, p. 220) as well as a second case in Wisconsin in
1919 in which the state Supreme Court upheld an expulsion because the student's
physical manifestations of his condition "nauseated the teachers and other students,
required too much teacher time, and negatively affected the school discipline and
progress" (Beattie v. Board of Education, 1919 as cited in Yell et al., 1998, p. 220). One
of the critical factors to schools deciding students with disabilities should be educated in
separate environments was the premise stating students with disabilities could not benefit
from a regular public education. Other noteworthy factors were whether the presence of
the student with disabilities in the public setting would have a detrimental effect on the
teachers and the learning of other students, namely students without disabilities (Dudley-

Marling & Burns, 2014; Martin et al., 1996; Sauer & Jorgensen, 2016; Yell et al., 1998).

Furthermore, there were even hints of the concerns of the presence of students with

disabilities and their inclusion in the general education setting during the litigation of

Brown v. Board of Education. Davis, the legal representative defending segregated

education in South Carolina, stated, "I think if the appellants . . . should prevail here . . . I

am unable to see why a state should have any further right to segregate its pupils . . . on

the ground of mental capacity" (Friedman, 1969, as cited in Kliewer, Biklen, & Kasa-

Hendrickson, 2006, p. 164).

Similar exclusions occurred across the United States, and most decisions revolved

around the opinion that students with disabilities were deemed "uneducable," and despite

the school's best efforts, a student with disabilities could not benefit from a public school

education (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Martin et al., 1996). Ironically, these

decisions to exclude students with disabilities from public education seemed to be in

direct conflict with laws held by all 50 states demanding compulsory education for the

students in their states (Yell et al., 1998). Nevertheless, state supreme courts continued to

uphold the expulsion of students with disabilities on the ground that students with

disabilities, who could not possibly benefit from a public education, did not have to

adhere to compulsory attendance laws set forth by the states (Dudley-Marling & Burns,

2014; Yell et al., 1998). In short, although states mandated that all children attend public

school from the ages of 6 to 18, the states could also determine whether or not a public

school education would benefit certain students, namely those with disabilities. If the

courts decided that certain students were "uneducable," literally meaning "unable to be

educated," then not only did the compulsory education mandate not apply to that student,

but also the student was forcibly removed from the public educational setting (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Martin et al., 1996).

Despite several states upholding expulsions for students with disabilities, families of students with disabilities continued to fight for the inclusion of their students in public schools. By the time of the late 1960s and into the early 1970s, several states began passing their own laws to begin inclusion of students with disabilities. These laws varied from state to state, and some states only allowed admittance into public schools, while others tried to provide supports for students and teachers (Yell et al., 1998). The first major decision for the inclusion of students with disabilities came from the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children vs. Pennsylvania in 1972, and this case determined that the students named in the case, specifically students with "mental retardation," should be educated "in a setting as close to the regular education classroom as possible (Blankenship et al., 2007, p. 3; PARC v. Pennsylvania, 1972). What made this decision ground-breaking is that the plaintiffs who brought the case based their arguments on the lack of due process when a student with disabilities is reassigned to another educational setting, and that the idea of a student with disabilities being uneducable had no factual foundation (PARC v. Pennsylvania, 1972). This demonstrates that as early as this 1972 case, the idea of addressing the mindset of educators and those working with students with disabilities was worth examining, specifically that there is no basis for any one administrator or school official to deem a student as uneducable or untrainable (Blankenship et al., 2007). After the PARC vs. Pennsylvania resolution, another similar class-action lawsuit was filed in the District of Columbia (Mills vs. Board of Education, 1972) based upon the due process concerns brought forth in PARC vs. Pennsylvania. The

result of this suit was the school board of the District of Columbia was to be held

responsible for providing the public education that was granted all students with

disabilities, and that exclusion from school without due process was unconstitutional

(Blankenship et al., 2007; Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Martin et al., 1996; Yell et al.,

1998). After these two cases, legal precedent was set, and the floodgates opened. In the

two years that followed, over half of the states heard cases similar to PARC vs.

Pennsylvania and Mills vs. Board of Education, and all results favored the plaintiffs (Yell

et al., 1998). These cases were the genesis for what we would see as modern-day

inclusion, as the courts determined that any public school setting was preferable to an

exclusive setting, and schools needed to work to make this so (Blankenship et al., 2007).

While all results did indeed favor the plaintiffs and inclusive education, a universal

concern arose time and again during the court proceedings: the schools lacked the

funding to make this new inclusive model possible (Yell et al., 1998).

The first major federal move for inclusion occurred in 1975 when Congress

passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), which laid the initial

groundwork for the inclusive system we know today. Besides being the first federal

action regarding students with disabilities and access to public education, the act

expanded the work of PARC vs. Pennsylvania, which addressed only students with

"mental retardation," to include all students with disabilities (Blankenship et al., 2007).

Furthermore, EAHCA provided the much-needed funding to public schools to begin the

inclusive programs and created the Individualized Education Program, or IEP

(Blankenship et al., 2007; Martin et al., 1996; Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014). Along

with the provisions for funding, the legislation also stated that students have the rights to

a free and appropriate education, education that takes place in the least restrictive

environment, and procedural due process. All of these provisions were arguments

brought forth by the plaintiffs in PARC vs. Pennsylvania and Mills vs. Board of

Education (Yell et al., 1998).

       EAHCA underwent several changes and amendments from 1975 to 1990 when

the bill was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and if

PARC vs. Pennsylvania began the current system of physical inclusion, then the changes

in EAHCA from 1975 to 1990 laid the groundwork for the debate around the current

practices of inclusion (Blankenship et al., 2007; Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014). Some

of the changes and amendments made for more person-first language (e.g. removing the

word "handicapped" and replacing with "student or child with a disability"), and IDEA

also formally introduced the idea of introduction of students with disabilities being

educated in the least restrictive environment (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014).

Furthermore, the intent of placing the student in the least restrictive environment was to

ensure that students with disabilities were receiving their education alongside their

typically developing peers to the best and most effective means possible (Blankenship et

al., 2007). There is no doubt that EAHCA and IDEA worked well in integrating students

with disabilities into the public school, or at the least the physical space of the public

schools. However, much like the unintended consequences of Brown vs. Board of

Education, IDEA may have unintentionally sparked a completely new debate regarding

inclusion, in not only the effectiveness and appropriateness of inclusion, but also even

simple topics such as what inclusion should look like in the classroom at a conceptual

level. (Fan, 2014; Sauer & Jorgensen, 2016; Yell et al., 1998).

An image posted on social media in 2017 by an inclusion advocacy group called "Think Inclusive" attempted to bring clarity to what inclusion currently looks like in modern classrooms:
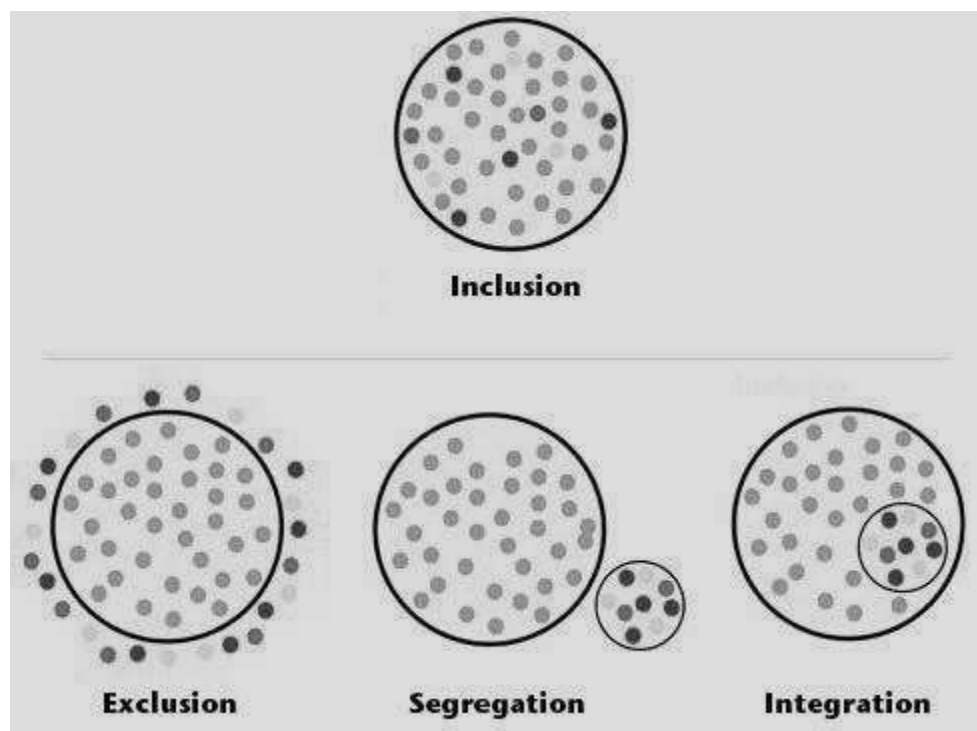
Figure 1. Inclusion, exclusion, segregation, and integration (Villegas, 2017).

Figure 1 attempted to illustrate the mental models surrounding the concept of inclusion as it should be implemented in modern educational settings, specifically in the inclusive circle, the variously-colored dots are homogenized into the general population. The fallout from Brown vs. Board of Education for students with disabilities mandated that schools must include students with disabilities in the generalized setting; however, the "inclusion" that occurred looked more like the "integration" image from Figure 1, and not the "inclusion" circle. In short, students with disabilities were integrated into generalized classrooms, not included. While IDEA mandated inclusion, it was integration that was put into practice.

While inclusion certainly became the legal mandate for students with disabilities, and students with disabilities were legally afforded access to education in the "least restrictive environment," since the inception of IDEA in 1975, the debate became what a "least restrictive environment" truly is and how it is implemented in the classroom (Jorgensen & Lambert, 2012; Sauer & Jorgensen, 2016). In short, as "separate but equal" became the sticking point in litigation for Plessy vs. Ferguson and Brown vs. Board of Education, "least restrictive environment" became the new sticking point in litigation surrounding IDEA.

The debate surrounding inclusion still comes back to the idea of what appropriate placement actually is when referring to terms such as "free and appropriate education." While IDEA was lauded as instrumental in improving access to public schools, most of the bill was focused on just that: access to public schools; very little was focused on results for the students with disabilities (Sauer & Jorgensen, 2016; West & Pirtle, 2014; Yell et al., 1998). Questions and court cases still arose regarding appropriateness, and while IDEA did away with the wholesale exclusion of students with disabilities, provisions still existed in the bill that allowed for a student with a disability to receive an alternate placement outside of the public school, with the school district being held financially responsible for the costs of such a placement (Blankenship et al., 2007; Sauer & Jorgensen, 2016). There were also arguments surrounding the use of the word "appropriate" in the context of a student's IEP, namely that the term "appropriate" leaves much open to interpretation regarding what a school should or should not do in order to achieve an appropriate education for a student with a disability (Fan, 2014; Sauer & Jorgensen, 2016). There are instances of families suing school districts for not providing

enough supports in the general education classroom, wherein the schools argued that sufficient and appropriate supports were in place, and the courts ruled in favor of the school as the student was receiving educational benefits (Blankenship et al., 2007; Fan, 2014). There are other, seemingly opposite cases, where families of students with disabilities were requesting alternate or residential placements, yet the school argued the general education setting was where the student was experiencing the most educational success (Blankenship et al., 2007). Litigation continually surrounded the interpretation of how "free and appropriate education" is provided to students with disabilities, and the only direct provision provided by IDEA is that qualifying students receive an Individualized Education Plan customized to the student's learning needs (Fan, 2014, Public Law 94-142). In both extremes, the idea of what is truly appropriate came into question, and as the families of students with disabilities fought for inclusion to help students with disabilities access schools, some practices did not work to include them in those schools. Furthermore, as education continues to evolve, and more choice is offered to students, inclusion may very well have to contend with new barriers. The emergence of more and more charter schools, for example, offer increased choice for many students and are extremely accessible for students without disabilities; however, most charter schools have very little (if any) oversight from state or local governances, and most charter schools do not enroll students with disabilities (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Naclerio, 2017).

Stigmas Associated with Persons with Disabilities

As previously stated, students with disabilities were excluded from the general educational setting due to the belief that they could not benefit from an education.

Further, their presence in a general educational classroom was considered an academic detriment to the other students in the class (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Martin et al., 1996; Sauer & Jorgensen, 2016; Yell et al., 1998). The belief from the educational community that students with disabilities could not benefit from an education in the generalized educational setting was a stigma generally applied to students with disabilities. Research supported how the stigmatization of persons with disabilities, and particular to this study, students with disabilities, interfered with a student's access to public education.

For the purposes of this study, disability is categorized as either physical or mental. The distinction between the two types of disability is important in that research supported that while both physical and intellectual disabilities carry a stigmatization, persons who have an intellectual disability rather than a physical disability are more often stigmatized and to a more negative degree than persons with a physical disability (Deakin, 2014; McManus, Feyes, & Saucier, 2010; Scior, 2011; Schalock, 2011; Wilson & Scior, 2013). Research showed that the stigmatization of persons with disabilities, specifically intellectual disabilities or mental illnesses and mental diagnoses, greatly inhibited the person with an intellectual disability access to social inclusion, education, and employment because of the belief of what the person with the disability was capable of contributing to society, capable of learning, and capable of doing, respectively (Andrade & Fukuda, 2016; Ferrara et al., 2015; Nijs & Maes, 2014; Semrau et al., 2015).

The diagnosis of an intellectual disability often comes with a significant negative perception of the person with the intellectual disability. As disabilities can vary from terms of definition and significance, it is necessary to clearly define "intellectual

disability" for the purposes of this study. Schalock (2011) defined intellectual disability as "a disability characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior and manifest during the developmental period" (p. 224). Schalock (2011) continued to elaborate and stated that the limitation intellectual functioning has typically been categorized as an IQ test score of two standard deviations below the mean, and that limitations in adaptive behavior are typically determined by low standardized measures in either "conceptual, social, or practical skills" (p. 226). Intellectual disabilities differ from specific learning disabilities in that specific learning disabilities are just that: learning disabilities specific to a learning concept. Intellectual disabilities affect the entire cognitive functioning of the person with the disability. What specific learning disabilities and intellectual disabilities do have in common is that oftentimes a physical marker or physical manifestation of the disability does not have to be present in the person with the disability. Simply stated, an intellectual disability is often more "severe" than a specific learning disability, but a person with either a specific learning disability or intellectual disability may not necessarily present themselves as such (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Intellectual disabilities historically carried a significant sigma with the diagnosis, more so than other disabilities (Deakin, 2014; Schalock, 2011; Scior, 2011). Scior (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 75 studies of persons with intellectual disabilities and the public attitudes and perceptions of persons with intellectual disabilities, and concluded that in general, public perception of persons with intellectual disabilities included the inability to cognitively function at a level commensurate with the general public (Scior, 2011). Scior (2011) also wrote that persons with intellectual disabilities are often one of

the most undesirable groups or social classes in a society. Concerning the reported

undesirable nature of persons with intellectual disabilities, access to educational and

social opportunities have been historically limited for those with the intellectual

disabilities, which compounded the person's ability to receive a quality education and

appropriate social interactions for the person with the intellectual disability (Deakin,

2014; Scior, 2011; Schalock, 2011). As access was limited to these resources, persons

with intellectual disabilities often missed quality opportunities for development,

especially during critically formative years (Deakin, 2014; Scior, 2011; Schalock, 2011).

Research also supported the concept that general society preferred minimal contact with

persons with intellectual disabilities, and that the quality of life for those without

intellectual disabilities and for those with intellectual disabilities is improved if the two

specific groups were segregated from one another (Anderson & Bigby, 2015; McManus,

Feyes, & Saucier, 2010; Siperstein, Parker, Bardon, & Widaman, 2007; Wilson & Scior,

2013). Research supported that persons without intellectual disabilities or diagnosis of

mental illness or impaired mental faculties often preferred community living

organizations or supported living facilities for persons with intellectual disabilities

(Anderson & Bigby, 2015; Andrade & Fukuda, 2016; Nijs & Maes, 2014). In short,

persons without intellectual disabilities preferred minimal contact with persons with

intellectual disabilities, and this minimized contact applied to the social, educational, and

employment settings.

　　　Research was conducted to explore the perceptions and stigmas of persons with

intellectual disabilities by persons without intellectual disabilities, and this research

hypothesized that if a person or group of people without intellectual disabilities were

afforded more opportunities to interact with persons with disabilities, then attitudes and perceptions of the persons with intellectual disabilities would improve. Further, the stigmas associated with a person with an intellectual disability would decrease (Andrade & Fukuda, 2016; Kauffman & Bader, 2013; McManus et al., 2010; Nijs & Maes, 2014; Scior, 2011). The research stated that increasing the frequency of contact with a person with intellectual disabilities did not improve perceptions of persons with disabilities, meaning that the more time a person without a disability spent in contact with a person with an intellectual disability did not change their perceptions of the person with the intellectual disability. Furthermore, stigmas of persons with intellectual disability can were lessened and perceptions of persons with intellectual disabilities were improved for those without disabilities when not the frequency of contact with persons with disabilities increased, but the quality of the contact and interactions between persons with intellectual disabilities and persons without intellectual disabilities increased (Andrade & Fukuda, 2016; McManus et al., 2010; Kauffman & Bader, 2013; Nijs & Maes, 2014; Scior, 2011). Also, stigmas of persons with intellectual disability decreased if the pre-existing knowledge of intellectual disabilities that persons without disabilities possess increased (Andrade & Fukuda, 2016; McManus et al., 2010; Kauffman & Bader, 2013; Nijs & Maes, 2014; Scior, 2011).

Down Syndrome as a Disability and Associated Stigmas

The researcher outlined the progression of inclusion in education from the early twentieth century until today. In the outline, the researcher focused very broadly on "students with disabilities." Clearly, the term "students with disabilities" covers a broad range of conditions or diagnoses, from specific learning disabilities in reading or math, to

general intellectual or developmental disabilities. Some disabilities may not be readily

apparent to the average observer, such as specific learning abilities, and some disabilities

may be more readily apparent, typically disabilities which affect the physicality of the

person with the disability. As previously stated, with disabilities can come a certain

amount of stigma for the person with the disability, and in terms of education, that stigma

can negatively affect the mindset of those who interact with that person, including

teachers and peers. A negatively affected mindset can lower expectations for the student,

thereby impacting the student's performance level in the class (Kaufman & Badar, 2013;

Kurth, Morningstar, & Kozleski, 2014; Shifrer, 2013).

For students with a disability that does not present itself in the student's physical

appearance, it is possible for the disability to never be noticed. It is also possible, for

instance, for a student with a specific learning disability in the area of mathematical

computation to never encounter any stigmatization or negative teacher and peer mindset

in a class where mathematical computation is not a learning goal, such as and Modern

and Classical Language class. Research conducted demonstrated that the more

"significant" the disability, specifically the broader the disability was in terms of its

impact on intellectual and cognitive development and ability, the lower the expectations

for the student, and the more resistant the teacher will be to be inclusive of the student

with disabilities (McGhie-Richmond, Irvine, Loreman, Cizman, & Lupart, 2013; Shifrer,

2013; Shifrer, Callahan, & Mueller, 2013).

A student with Down syndrome is likely to encounter the stigmas associated with

an intellectual disability, and thereby encounter the difficulties previously discussed.

While it is true that a person with Down syndrome can have an intellectual disability

associated with the condition of Down syndrome, the intellectual disability is often mild to moderate, and advocacy groups for people with Down syndrome preferred the condition a developmental delay and not necessarily an intellectual disability (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2016; Potier & Reeves, 2016). Down syndrome is one of the few diagnoses that has a very distinctive physical component to the condition, namely the almond-shaped eyes, smaller stature, distinctive ear shape and size, and overall facial structure, and it is because of this physical manifestation of the condition that a person with Down syndrome is easily identifiable (CDC, 2016). As there is a physical component to Down syndrome, and as there is an intellectual disability often accompanying the diagnosis, it is possible for someone to observe a person with Down syndrome and associate an intellectual disability to the person with Down syndrome (Deakin, 2014). In essence, Down syndrome is a rare case in which a person with a potential or assumed intellectual ability can be identified on sight.

An example of this assumption was found on the April 2017 issue of ASCD's *Educational Leadership.* This issue focused almost exclusively on inclusion, the history of inclusion, the progress of inclusion, and on serving students with a broad range of disabilities. An article published in the April 2017 edition of *Educational Leadership* titled "Expanding Opportunities for Students with Intellectual Disabilities" written by Giangreco published a picture of a young child with Down syndrome receiving peer support from an apparently typically-developing student on the first two pages of the article (Giangreco, 2017). Whether or not this was the intention of the author or of the publication company, ASCD, was not determined. However, it must be noted that an article on how to expand opportunities for students with disabilities prominently pictured

a student with Down syndrome, and the article focused on assisting students with an intellectual disability. Furthermore, the cover picture of the entire edition of the April 2017 publication of *Educational Leadership*, which was titled, "Differences not Disabilities," was that of another young student with Down syndrome.

A person with an intellectual disability does not necessarily have to have Down syndrome. However, the April 2017 edition of *Educational Leadership* provided a piece of anecdotal evidence regarding the mental model of a student with disabilities in general (the cover art), and intellectual disabilities in specific in the article "Expanding Opportunities for Students with Intellectual Disabilities" (Giangreco, 2017). In both cases, *Educational Weekly* pictured a student with Down syndrome as the student who was "different," and as the student with an intellectual disability. There are myriad disabilities and differences that a student can possess; however, the articles and publication pictured a student with Down syndrome, likely due to the obvious and easily recognizable physical characteristics of the disability. As it points to the mental model of the general public for those with Down syndrome, it can also complicate the perceptions of the public of people with Down syndrome. Again, as the intellectual disability for those with Down syndrome can also be considered mostly a developmental delay, the perception of the public is one that a person with Down syndrome has an intellectual disability (CDC, 2016; Enea-Drapeau, Carlier, & Huguet, 2012; Potier & Reeves, 2016). Considering the research performed on the public perceptions and attitude towards those with intellectual disabilities, the association of an intellectual disability with the diagnosis of Down syndrome can bring about the stigmas with an intellectual disability for a person with Down syndrome. CBS News broadcasted a story in August of 2017 titled, "What

kind of country do you want to live in?": Inside the country where Down syndrome is disappearing," and reported that Iceland is making strides to eliminate Down syndrome in their country through government-promoted prenatal screening. The prenatal-screenings leading to a positive diagnosis of Down syndrome also lead to termination of the pregnancies in almost 100% of the time (Quinones & Lajka, 2017). CBS also reported that in Iceland in the year 2017, only three babies with Down syndrome were born in the country, which had a population of approximately 330,000 (Quinones & Lajka, 2017). In interviewing an Icelandic hospital employee who counsels pregnant women, CBS reported the employee saying that in Iceland, health care professionals consider the abortion of a fetus with Down syndrome as the ending of something that may have had complications and a life of suffering (Quinones & Lajka, 2017). This story illustrated some of the stigmas and preconceptions an entire culture put upon people with Down syndrome, so much so that the live birth rate for babies with a pre-natal diagnosis of Down syndrome in Iceland is almost 0% (Quinones & Lajka, 2017).

Research supported the stigmatization and assumptions of competency of students with Down syndrome by their peers, and specific to people with Down syndrome. These stigmas and assumptions can impact a person with Down syndrome's inclusion and interaction in society. The social stigmatization range from "positive" assumptions about the person with Down syndrome's participation in society, such as a person with Down syndrome is more happy, friendly and outgoing, to "negative" assumptions of a person with Down syndrome, such as the person with Down syndrome being unable to interact with their peers appropriately (Enea-Drapeau et al., 2012; Marcone, Esposito, & Caputo, 2016; Schwab, Huber, & Gebhardt, 2015). Regardless as whether or not the stigma or

presupposition of the person with Down syndrome was categorized as "positive" or "negative," there are still stigmas and presuppositions of the societal capabilities or interactions with the person with Down syndrome made by a member of the general public. Research supported that the majority of the stigmas and presupposition of persons with Down syndrome are categorized as "negative," in that the general public have generally unfavorable views of a person with Down syndrome's ability to interact in society in a way that is commensurate with their peers (Enea-Drapeau et al., 2012; Marcone et al., 2016; Schwab, Huber et al., 2015). As the researcher stated earlier, Down syndrome is distinct in that it is a genetic condition that is readily associated with intellectual disability, and identified by unique physical characteristics. Enea-Drapeau et al. (2012) wrote that "Down syndrome is the most frequent genetic disorder associated with intellectual disability" and that

> because this chromosomal disorder is associated with various health problems (e.g. hypotonia, congenital heart defects, gastrointestinal diseases) and distinctive physical stigma (e.g. round face, epicanthal fold, oblique lid axis, flat nasal bridge), persons with T21 are likely to be stigmatized by other people. (p. 2)

Enea-Drapeau et al. (2012) also wrote "this is a critical issue, because stigmatization is one of the greatest obstacles to the successful integration and development of people with intellectual disabilities" (p. 2). Enea-Drapeau et al. highlighted the stigmatization of physical disabilities, the stigmatization of intellectual disabilities, connected the two types of disabilities, and illustrated how these stigmas make the integration of a person with Down syndrome especially complicated, as a person with Down syndrome is most

likely to be stigmatized for intellectual disabilities based on the physical characteristics of their genetic condition.

Educational competency stigmas and presuppositions occurred for students with Down syndrome as well, and these stigmas and competencies impact the student's interactions with both teachers and peers in the educational setting. Research showed that students with Down syndrome are more likely to be thought of by educator as less competent or capable of achieving academically, and due to this thinking, are less likely to be integrated into the general educational setting (Marcone et al., 2016; Schwab, Huber et al., 2015). The peers of a student with Down syndrome had more negative presuppositions about a student with Down syndrome in their class, and these thoughts and beliefs led to the student with Down syndrome being more socially excluded from his or her peers, and being less likely to be integrated into group projects or work with their peers, specifically because of the beliefs that the students hold about the student with Down syndrome being able to contribute to the group (Marcone et al., 2016; Schwab, Huber et al., 2015). Research has also showed that because students with disabilities are more likely to experience social exclusion from their peers, students with disabilities are also more likely to experience feelings of loneliness, isolation, and have fewer friends (Marcone et al., 2016; Schwab, Gebhardt, Krammer, & Gasteiger-Klicpera, 2015; Schwab, Huber et al., 2015).

Studies indicated that stigmas and presuppositions of the capabilities of persons with Down syndrome are not easily changed, and changing these stigmas and presuppositions is critical for the person with Down syndrome to experience full inclusion social integration, especially in the educational setting. As the researcher earlier

stated regarding interactions with persons with intellectual disabilities, stigmas and presuppositions surrounding persons with intellectual disabilities have not diminished through more frequent contact with persons with disabilities, but through more meaningful interactions with persons with disabilities (Andrade & Fukuda, 2016; McManus et al., 2010; Nijs & Maes, 2014; Scior, 2011). Similar results occurred for students with Down syndrome, specifically that it was the quality of the interactions with persons with Down syndrome, and not the frequency of contact or interactions with persons with Down syndrome that were most effective in removing the stigmas surrounding persons with Down syndrome and improving beliefs about persons with Down syndrome (Dolva, Hemmingsson, Gustavsson, & Borell, 2010; Marcone et al., 2016; Schwab, Gebhardt et al., 2015; Schwab, Huber et al., 2015). Research also demonstrated that in terms of persons with Down syndrome, the more background knowledge people had regarding persons with Down syndrome and general knowledge of the genetic disorder itself led to more favorable interactions and positive beliefs about persons with Down syndrome. This is a distinction from other interactions with persons with intellectual disabilities, specifically that the number of interactions with persons with disabilities did not change the perceptions of those without disabilities after interactions with the person with disabilities (Dolva et al., 2010; Schwab, Gebhardt, et al., 2015).

A person with Down syndrome faces stigmatization unlike persons with other disabilities. Due to the distinct physical characteristics caused by the genetic disorder which make Down syndrome easily and readily identifiable, and coupled with the common knowledge held by the public that Down syndrome often carries with it a mild

to moderate intellectual disability, a person with Down syndrome can face the stigmatization, social isolation, and exclusion that befall a person with an intellectual disability. Research supported that a person with Down syndrome is at risk of experiencing the stigmatization, social isolation, and exclusion in a way no other person with a disability might purely because of the ability to identify the person with Down syndrome on sight, and when the person with Down syndrome experiences this stigmatization, social isolation, and exclusion, the person is being denied access to the inclusion and socialization that often supported personal, social, and academic growth and development for the person with Down syndrome. At the very least, the opportunity for positive interactions with a person without a disability to have with a person with Down syndrome is missed, and research stated that quality interactions with people with disabilities, especially for people with Down syndrome, is critical to changing the mindset, presuppositions, and stigmatizations surrounding people with Down syndrome (Dolva et al., 2010; Enea-Drapeau et al., 2012; Marcone et al., 2016; Schwab, Gebhardt et al., 2015; Schwab, Huber et al., 2015). In such cases, the cycle of stigmatization, social isolation, and exclusion, which leads to a lack of interaction for the person with Down syndrome and people without disabilities, becomes self-perpetuating in that the more the person with Down syndrome is excluded, isolated, and stigmatized, the less opportunity that person has to have quality interactions with a person without disabilities, thereby decreasing the opportunity for a person without a disability to change their mindsets, presuppositions, and stigmatizations.

Justifications for Inclusion, the Implementation of Inclusion, and Barriers to Inclusion

IDEA's use of the phrase "free and appropriate education" left much to be interpreted as to how "appropriate" is defined, and during the course of determining what "appropriate" education is, the term "inclusion" entered the lexicon of special education. Much like the jurisprudence surrounding inclusion has evolved, so too does the idea of what effective inclusion in the school actually looks like. And, the majority of the arguments surround how disability is defined, how inclusion is defined, and what the student and the student's families hope to achieve from inclusive practices (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014). As the laws continue to change and to redefine inclusive structures, educators and administrators, as well as students and their families, must continue to define and examine what inclusive practices look like and what are the most effective implementations of those practices.

Even with the passing of The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) in 1975, inclusion still did not have the form that we see today in modern classrooms. EAHCA addressed broadly the ideas of free and appropriate education, as well as education for students with disabilities to occur in the least restrictive environment, but when we think of inclusion in the secondary classroom, such strategies or educational practices were simply not addressed (Public Law 94-142, 1975). Actually, inclusive practices are simply not addressed in EAHCA, or its subsequent amendments and changes that came during the creation of IDEA in 1990 and its amendments in 1997. Since the federal law and its subsequent amendments are not what truly guide inclusion in the classroom, meaning there is no "clear" direction to what inclusion is, there is

debate in education as to what inclusion looks like, what its goals are, how inclusion is implemented, and the appropriate implementation of inclusion (Fan, 2014; Sauer & Jorgensen, 2016). Much like the history of special education, there are several facets of the practice of special education that require understanding as to discuss the implementation of inclusion.

The first issue to address is what inclusion is, beyond the simple mandate put forth by EAHCA, and what it looks like when put into effect. One of the difficulties when defining inclusion is getting a clear definition of what inclusion is. Again, nowhere in IDEA is the word "inclusion" ever used; IDEA only states that students with disabilities are granted a "free and appropriate education" (Public Law 94-142, 1975). The definitions of inclusion can range from a statistical analysis of the percentage of time a student spends in the regular education room versus the special education setting, to a more philosophical and ethical approach citing that all students have the right to participate in all aspects of their society with their peers (Boroson, 2017; Villa & Thousand, 2003). Regardless of the aspect of inclusion that educators are addressing, the consensus seems to be that inclusion means "schools are accountable for all students with disabilities making progress in the general education curriculum" (Jorgensen & Lambert, 2012, p. 23).

Very broadly, inclusion in the classroom occurs when students with disabilities are physically present in the classroom with their typically developing peers and receiving the same access to instruction, facilities, and resources parallel to what students without disabilities receive (Boroson, 2017). At its core, this simplistic approach and idea of inclusion, is simply one stating that students with disabilities have the right to be

included in all aspects of society, and legal protections afforded to all members of society (Jorgensen & Lambert, 2012).   This view of inclusion links back to the original legal battles surrounding inclusion, especially concerning the rights of students with special needs and their right to due process concerning education (Public Law 94-142, 1975). While this view of inclusion does not necessarily address specific academic needs of students with special needs, this view of inclusion at the very least notices that all students have the right to at least be present with one another in the general education setting. Specifically separating students according to perceived need deprives students with disabilities to societal inclusion, which in many cases, is a critical, early intervention for intellectual development (Giangreco, 2017; Hebbeler & Spiker, 2016; Kurth, Lyon, & Shogren, 2015).

Research conducted on implementations of inclusion which provided the most social and academic gains for students with disabilities supported that the most effective implementations of inclusion were ones that centered around strong teacher and student relationships with the student families that have a strong sense of investment in their student's education and socio-emotional development (Francis, Gross, Blue-Banning, Haines, & Turnbull, 2016; Garrote, Dessemontet, & Opitz, 2017). Further research also supported that effective classroom inclusion included one of peer intervention and support for students with disabilities, in that typically-developing students engaged with students with disabilities to offer academic support, tutoring, and academic assistance (Carter et al., 2015; Garrote, 2017; Garrote et al., 2017). Research also noted that in cases where peer supports were in place for students with disabilities in class, the students with disabilities experienced an increase in number of social interactions with

their peers as compared to students with disabilities who received on adult supports. Research further supported that an effective way for students to increase their social skills is to increase their amount of interactions they have with their peers (Garrote, 2017; Garrote et al., 2017).

The reasons or justifications for inclusion can be understood with the discussion of the models of inclusion and what inclusion looks like in an educational environment. One consideration for the inclusion of students with disabilities with their peers is one of a perspective of social justice, specifically that inclusion itself is justified because all students, regardless of perceived or projected academic ability should be allowed to, at the very least, participate in all activities commensurate with their peers (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Hedge & MacKenzie, 2012). This model of inclusion primarily considers the need for all students, regardless of ability or other demographic factors, to be in a setting with their peers in order for proper, age-appropriate socialization to occur. Research supported the inclusion for students with disabilities in a generalized setting by supporting the student with a disability's sense of belonging, reducing their sense of loneliness and isolation, and their ability to participate in social activities at an age-appropriate and meaningful level (Boer, Pijl, Post, & Minnaert, 2013; Koller, Pousesard, & Rummens, 2018; Pantić & Florian, 2015). Considerations for the inclusion of students with disabilities in terms of social justice also included the preponderance of students of color, or racial and ethnic minorities being diagnosed with disabilities at a rate higher than their non-minority peers, which hearkens back to Brown v. Board of Education, the genesis of the special education movement (Boroson, 2017; Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Hedge & MacKenzie, 2012). Inclusion for students with disabilities does have its

academic benefits and outcomes for students with disabilities, and there are advocates for inclusion because of these factors. With this in mind, there are proponents of inclusion for students with disabilities that advocate for inclusion solely from the perspective of social justice and social inclusion, specifically that if for no other reason, students with disabilities should be included in the same setting as their typical peers because the students with disabilities have the right to be in the same setting as their peers, even if no academic benefits or gains are to be met. Furthermore, the more a student with a disability is included in a generalized setting, the more opportunities typically-developing students have to interact with students with disabilities which can improve relationships for students with disabilities and further decrease their chances of being isolated or self-reporting feelings of isolation (Boer et al., 2013; Koller et al., 2018; Krull, Wilbert, & Hennemann, 2018; Pantić & Florian, 2015).

Inclusion has been shown to develop when educators make specific strides to increase the participation of students with disabilities in the classroom procedures, activities, and learning. Often times, students with disabilities, while present in the classroom, do not participate fully or at least to the extent that their peers (Kurth et al., 2015; Jorgensen & Lambert, 2012). Furthermore, teachers of students with disabilities, while eager to include students with disabilities, often find themselves wondering what the student with disabilities will gain from the class, which in turn can challenge their ability to include the student (Jorgensen & Lambert, 2012). In order for inclusion to be effective, especially in terms of teachers and their acceptance of students with disabilities, educators benefit from training and cooperation with special educators in inclusive practices. Additionally, when teachers and co-teachers cultivate a sense of shared

ownership of the success of all students, strong partnerships and effective inclusion

became when the special education was delivered in various forms (e.g., co-teaching,

consulting, supportive models, and paraprofessionals in the class). The more practice the

teachers had in implementing inclusive practice, the more effective the inclusion

(Boroson, 2017; Navarro, Zervas, Gesa, & Sampson, 2016; Petreñas et al., 2013). Again,

effectiveness in this case as defined by how much time a student with a disability

remained in the general education setting in this case is seen through the lens of how

teachers view the students with disabilities. One of the critical components to inclusion

is the educator's view of the students with special needs, and that the effectiveness of the

inclusion can be based upon how the teacher views those students with special needs.

Regardless, the overall conclusion is that students with special needs benefit from

inclusion, and that teachers become more proficient with inclusion the more they practice

it (Navarro et al., 2016).

Even with the development of inclusion in the classroom, barriers for inclusion

remain. Many of these barriers are very similar to the earlier ones to inclusion 50 years

ago. These include concerns for the interaction between students with disabilities and

students without disabilities, the degrees of academic outcomes for students with

disabilities, and the possible behaviors exhibited in the classroom by the students with

disabilities which may interrupt the learning of the students in the inclusive setting.

Research showed that adult educators, prior to specific training as to how to properly

develop, implement, and improve inclusion for their classes, possessed feelings of

reluctance towards practicing inclusion, and this reluctance was tied to uncertainties as to

how to properly adapt and implement curriculum for students with disabilities, how to

manage possible behaviors concerns from the students with disabilities, and how to properly introduce and integrate the students with disabilities to the students without disabilities, especially if the students without disabilities are coming in contact with or having their first experience with a student with a disability within that teacher's inclusive setting (Boer et al., 2013; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Koller et al., 2018; Tsakiridou & Polyzopoulou, 2014). Research also supported the idea that a primary indicator as to how receptive and educator is to implementing inclusion is tied to the educator's perceptions of students with disabilities (Hamaidi, Homidi, & Reyes, 2012; Lindsay, Proulx, Thomson, & Scott, 2013; Mackey, 2014; Obiakor, Harris, Mutua, Rotatori & Algozzine, 2012). Research reported that educators, especially at the early childhood and elementary level, desired more education and training to implement inclusion properly. Educators did have positive attitudes toward students with disabilities and the positive attitudes and desires to implement inclusion effectively, and this desire to implement inclusion, coupled with training and support for the implementation of inclusion, only further improved the teacher's willingness to be inclusive and practice inclusion effectively (Boer et al., 2013; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Hamaidi et al., 2012; Koller et al., 2018; Lindsay et al., 2013; Mackey, 2014; Obiakor et al., 2012; Tsakiridou & Polyzopoulou, 2014). In short, research suggested the implementation of inclusion is a self-perpetuating cycle: an educator needs to have positive attitudes about inclusion in order to be receptive to practicing inclusion. If an educator had positive attitudes about practicing inclusion, that educator may be more receptive to receiving training and supports for implementing inclusion, specifically through curriculum adaptation for students with disabilities, how to manage behavioral challenges, and how

to integrate the students with a disability into the whole-class setting. The more positive interactions an educator has with students with disabilities, and the more positive interactions anyone, student or teacher, had with a student or with a person with a disability, improves attitudes that person has about persons with disabilities, which in turn increases the likelihood for more interactions with people or students with disabilities in the future.

Outcomes of Inclusion

The mandate for inclusion began as a call for students with disabilities to be allowed the same access to the educational setting as their non-disabled peers. As previously stated by the researcher, the exclusion of students with disabilities was instituted because educators and legislators did not believe that students with disabilities could make meaningful educational gains from the traditional school setting, and that the presence of students with disabilities in the general educational setting was a distraction, both to teachers trying to teach, and to teachers trying to learn. It has now been over 40 years since mandatory inclusion has been in place, and research has investigated what the outcomes are for students with disabilities when they receive their education in an inclusive setting, keeping in mind the original reasons for exclusion for the students with disabilities.

In discussing the outcomes of inclusion, the relevant themes regarding inclusion and the practice of inclusion are the mindset of teachers involved in the inclusive practice, and how learners of various levels, regardless of whether or not they have a disability, are affected. The mindset of the educators involved in practicing inclusion is critical for two reasons. First, it was the mindset of teachers that, in the early 20th

century, was in part responsible for the exclusion of students with disabilities from public schools (Armstrong, 2017; Boroson, 2017; Giangreco, 2017; Yell et al., 1998). Second, the mindset of the teacher regarding inclusion is either one of bringing a student's educational deficits to a "normal" level in regards to their peers, or one of that believes student with disabilities should be in an generalized educational setting whether or not their academic performance levels can be interpreted as "normal" (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014). Both teacher mindsets look at inclusion as necessary for the student with disabilities, but the first wants to address academic deficiency and focus on the quality of education required to eliminate the deficiencies, and the second wants to address the social responsibility of education for including all students in an inclusive social setting (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Giangreco, 2017; Jorgensen & Lambert, 2012; Shifrer et al., 2013). Furthermore, research supported that some educators who practice inclusion with the priority focus being one of social inclusion, will help students with disabilities see growth in academic gains as they are in a social environment with their peers and are exposed to appropriate peer-level academic modeling as well as peer-level supports much like students without disabilities experience in their own daily schooling (Burke & Sass, 2013; Cameron & Cook, 2013; Hudson, Browder, & Jimenez, 2014; Schwab, Hessels, Gebhardt, Krammer & Gasteiger-Klicpera, 2015). Both viewpoints believe in inclusion as a right for the student with disability; one is more focused on academic goals, and the other focuses on social rights. This is critical because the practice of inclusion will differ if the educator ascribes to one or another of these views.

When examining the outcomes of inclusion, research cannot be limited solely to the outcomes for students with disabilities. The effect on the performance of students

without disabilities in an inclusive setting is worth examination, especially from a

historical perspective as well as the perspective of inclusive education today. Much like

the idea of teacher mindset, the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities was a

contributing factor to the exclusion of students with disabilities in the early twentieth

century. This is seen in court cases that affirmed administrators who stated that typically

developing students would not be able to appropriately receive their education while in a

class with a student with disabilities, and modern research concluded that certain negative

effects are still persistent in the classroom for students without disabilities in an inclusive

setting. (Gottfried, 2013; Gottfried & Harven, 2015; Yell et al., 1998). Research also

suggested typically developing students do not suffer academically when they are in an

inclusive setting with students with disabilities, and the inclusive setting is for learners of

all ability levels, not only students diagnosed with a disability (Dessemontet & Bless,

2013; Ferri, 2015; Grzegorz, Smogorzewska, & Karwowski, 2017; McDonnell et al.,

2003; Powers, 2016; Schwab, Hessels et al., 2015; Sharpe, York, & Knight, 1994; Staub

& Peck, 1995;). Grzegorz et al. (2017) also wrote in their meta-analysis of studies that

examined the academic achievement of students without disabilities when they are in an

inclusive setting that not only do students without disabilities see no adverse effects to

their own academic progress, but also students without disabilities being in an inclusive

setting demonstrated beneficial effects to their academic growth and achievement.

Furthermore, research suggested that there may be certain social-emotional gains made

by typical students when they are in an inclusive setting (Bennett & Gallagher, 2013;

Evans, 2015; Staub & Peck, 1995). In short, current research does not support one of the

earlier reasons or justifications for the exclusion of students with disabilities, specifically

the potential detrimental effect that the inclusion of students with disabilities would have on their non-disabled peers, and furthermore, there is now evidence to support the exact opposite of this previous belief.

Research conducted which examined students with disabilities academic outcomes in an inclusive setting showed that students with disabilities make greater academic growth when in an inclusive setting versus students with disabilities who are in a non-inclusive setting, most specifically in a self-contained setting that is one only of students with disabilities.   Research supported that students with disabilities showed increases in the academic areas of reading, literacy, and language abilities, and mathematics (Choi, Meisenheimer, McCart & Sailor, 2017; Cosier, Causton-Theoharis, & Theoharis, 2013; Dessemontet & Bless, 2013; Dessemontet, Bless, & Morin, 2011; Hudson, Browder, & Wood, 2013; Schwab, Gebhardt et al., 2015). This research also revealed that factors within the inclusive setting that also had the most effect on the academic achievement of the students with disabilities included the mindset of the teachers of the inclusive setting, specifically their belief in the efficacy and effectiveness of inclusion, teachers attitudes and beliefs toward students with disabilities and their potential to achieve academically. The amount of time students in the inclusive setting received their services and education in a generalized setting versus receiving services in a non-generalized setting, and to what degree students received support on their academics from their peers within the inclusive setting also impacted the achievement of students. (Choi et al., 2017; Cosier et al., 2013; Dessemontet & Bless, 2013; Dessemontet et al., 2011; Hudson et al., 2013; Schwab, Gebhardt et al., 2015). While there are indeed several factors that influence the effectiveness inclusion played in the academic

achievement of students with disabilities, research still supported that students with disabilities made the most academic gains, specifically in the areas of reading, literacy, and mathematics, when they received instruction in the inclusive setting.

That being said, some still believe that inclusion may not be the best option for all students with disabilities. Research suggested inclusion may not always be the best fit for students with certain disabilities, and the best strides in both academic and social growth are often made in a specialized setting with a focus on quality educational strategies and environments (Gottfried, 2013; Gottfried & Harven, 2015; Hocutt, 1996). Furthermore, there is an entire field of special educators who have undergone extensive training tailored to work with students with disabilities, and it is their training and expertise in the field of special education that can most benefit students with disabilities, and the education field cannot ignore the skill set special educators possess for educating students with disabilities (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Giangreco, 2017; Greenway, McCollow, Hudson, Peck, & Davis, 2013; West & Pirtle, 2014). Such viewpoints do not necessarily state that inclusion is ineffective for all students with disabilities, but that there are varying degrees of disabilities, some of which require more specialization in their approach to supporting students and helping them make academic and social gains.

Since various strides have been made regarding inclusion, its practices, and the effects inclusion has on both typical students and students with disabilities, there are question as to why students continue to be categorized, or if educators should stop calling inclusion "inclusion," and simply teach all students in a generalized setting all at all times. Some educators and researchers would argue that the idea of an intellectual "disability" is inherently flawed, since educators could look at a body of "typical"

students and see a wide range of intellectual capabilities within that group itself, much

like we do now when educators compare the abilities of students with disabilities to their

peers (Armstrong, 2017; Ferri, 2015; Giangreco, 2017; Stainback & Stainback, 1984).

The argument continued stating doing so only further exacerbates the dichotomy between

these groups of students, and can negatively affect the mindset of the educators who work

with students regarding what they believe students with disabilities are capable of

achieving (Stainback & Stainback, 1984).

Research conducted demonstrated an educator's mindset as one of the most

important factors for the implementation of inclusion (Cameron & Cook, 2013;

Greenway et al., 2013; Hebbeler & Spiker, 2016; McGhie-Richmond, Irvine, Loreman,

Cizman, & Lupart, 2013; West & Pirtle, 2014). Specifically, research indicated that the

more an educator believes that a student with a disability can achieve, the more likely the

student will achieve. The achievement may not necessarily be at a level commensurate

with the student's non-disabled peers; however the student with disabilities can indeed

achieve as measured by growth in academics or social-emotional standards, and growth

in these areas has been seen as most effective when the student is in an environment with

the student's typically-developing peers, and not necessarily with other students with

disabilities (Burke & Sass, 2013; Evans, 2015; Hudson et al., 2014; Nijs & Maes, 2014;

Rubies-Davis & Rosenthal, 2016). Teachers trained in effective intervention strategies

are also important in the effectiveness inclusion, and research conducted supports the

idea that when educators, both general educators and special educators are effective

trained in inclusive best practices, the largest gains are observed in the students with

disabilities (Burke & Sass, 2013; Evans, 2015; Hudson et al., 2014; Rubies-Davis &

Rosenthal, 2016). Furthermore, research conducted demonstrated that one of the most effective ways to increase a positive mindset for educators regarding students with disabilities and the student's ability to be successful is quality training. Quality training not only provided teachers with the skill set necessary to effectively implement inclusion, but also it provided teachers with more of a growth-mindset regarding beliefs of whether or not a student with a disability could be successful (Blum, Gutierrez, & Peck, 2015; Burke & Sass, 2013; Evans, 2015; Ferguson & Nusbaum, 2012; Hudson et al., 2014; Rubies-Davis & Rosenthal, 2016). This mirrors earlier portions of the literature review that the successful implementation of inclusion is a self-perpetuating cycle, in that the more an educator receives training and support as to how to properly implement inclusion, the more likely that educator is to have a positive mindset about students with disabilities, which in turn effects that educator's ability to successfully implement inclusion

The persistence of stigmas and mindsets that do not imagine a student with a disability as capable continue to exist in education. Research suggested that much like a teacher's positive mindset toward a student with a disability can positively affect performance and gains in a class, so too can a negative mindset affect a student with disabilities and the student's performance, and this is often seen in the stigmas associated with the label of a disability. Even in light of the strides made for inclusive and least restrictive environment, and the research conducted which demonstrated gains for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting, students who entered a classroom with a diagnosis of a disability, learning or otherwise, are often stigmatized by the teacher, and this stigmatization has had negative effects on student achievement (Kaufman & Badar,

2013; Kurth et al., 2014; Shifrer, 2013). Furthermore, the stigmas associated with disabilities compounded the lack of progress for students with disabilities. As stated before, a teacher mindset which believes a student with a disability is not capable of achieving directly impacted the student's ability to achieve, and furthermore, such a mindset also impacted a student's placement in in educational environment. Specifically, even in light of EAHCA and the mandated least restrictive environment, students with disabilities continued to be placed in environments interpreted to be more restrictive than necessary, and in doing so, removed the student from an inclusive environment (Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, 2013; Kurth et al., 2014). Other disproportionalities observed for students with disabilities include the students' limited access to appropriate course or curriculum offered to members of their peer group, which, especially in terms of secondary students with disabilities, have not adequately prepared students for subsequent levels of studies, or have not adequately prepared the student for adult life beyond the secondary setting (Kurth et al., 2014; Powers, 2016; Shifrer et al., 2013). The research stated the effects of the stigmatization for students with disabilities impaired the students' ability to access age-level appropriate, preparatory curricula, negatively impacted the teacher mindset regarding the student and the student's ability to achieve, and continued to segregate the students into restrictive environments in ways that appeared to be contrary to the mandates outlined in EAHCA regarding the appropriate placement. Furthermore, such disproportionality has been observed as recently as a report put forth from a report for the Council for Exceptional Children in 2013 (Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, 2013).

Gaps in Current Understanding

Current research regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in the educational setting was conducted mostly at the elementary level. Most of this research also focused primarily on academic outcomes for students with disabilities, and while there is research that examined the social outcomes for students with disabilities in the inclusive setting, these results were primarily connected to studies which focused on academic outcomes. Few studies exist that focus solely on the social outcomes of students with disabilities. Furthermore, in the literature focused on the study of the effects or the outcomes of inclusion, very little research focused on the outcomes for students without disabilities in the inclusive setting. What research does exist focused on academic outcomes for students without disabilities with little focus on social outcomes of the inclusive setting.

In the studies conducted for students with disabilities in the inclusive setting, the term "student with disability" or "student with educational need (SEN)" were often used as the description for the students in the study. Disability can come in many forms for students, ranging from physical, mental, or specific learning, yet few studies narrowed the focus to a specific disability or diagnosis. While the results from research surrounding students with disabilities offered insight to generalized best practices for inclusion and outcomes, few studies were focused on specific disabilities, and even fewer studies explored typically-developing people's perceptions of students with disabilities. The rationale for needing a better understanding of how typically-developing people perceive students with disabilities is that the research cited in this chapter explained how a typically-developing person's perceptions of students with disabilities influenced their

social interactions with students with disabilities, their expectations of their academic achievements, and to what extent students with disabilities experience social inclusion with their peers in the class.

The focus of this study looked specifically at Down syndrome as the diagnosis of disability at the secondary level, and explored typically-developing students', teachers, and parents perceptions of the student with Down syndrome. This study was constructed to gain a better understanding of these perceptions, and Down syndrome was the diagnosis chosen. This is because of the stigmas associated with Down syndrome, specifically the associated intellectual disability, and as Down syndrome is a diagnosis that can be identified in a person due to specific physical characteristics, a person with Down syndrome is more likely to experience social exclusions and fewer social interactions because of the disability, as well as lower expectations for academic achievement because of the associated intellectual disability.

Summary

The diagnosis of an intellectual disability can often carry with it a stigma from the typically-developing population of the inability to perform or succeed at a level commensurate with the person with a disability's peers (Kaufman & Badar, 2013; Kurth et al., 2014; Shifrer, 2013). While certain physical disabilities can be easily identifiable by the general public, physical disabilities have not historically carried the same stigma as intellectual disabilities, and the stigmas associated with intellectual disabilities have led to a loss of access to social and educational opportunities (Deakin, 2014; Scior, 2011; Schalock, 2011). In the case of a person with Down syndrome, a typically-developing person has ability to identify an intellectual disability based on the physical traits of the

person with Down syndrome; this condition is unique because the stigmas of an

intellectual disability can be associated with this person completely on sight. The study

sought to investigate the perceptions of typically-developing students, teachers, and

parents' perceptions of Down syndrome and students with disabilities in a suburban

Midwestern high school. Chapter Three outlined the methodology used to complete this

study.

Chapter Three: Research Method and Design

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers', typically-developing students', and parents' perceptions of character development when presented with fictional scenarios of a student with a non-specific disability versus a student with a diagnosis of Down syndrome. Data collection included a teacher and typically-developing student/parent open-ended survey aligned with the High School's Character Standards for Late High School students (See Appendix A). As this study focused on exploring perceptions typically-developing students, teachers and parents have regarding students with disabilities and students with Down syndrome, there was no quantifiable data to obtain about such perceptions. The goal of this research was for participants to examine their own beliefs and mental constructs about persons with disabilities, and specifically, persons with Down syndrome. The surveys presented a fictitious scenario about either a student with a disability or a student with Down syndrome in an educational environment who is being excluded both actively and passively from the educational activity.   The participants were then asked to answer questions about how they would respond to that situation and the student if they were present in that educational situation; in the case of the parents, the survey asked them how they would expect their child to respond if they were in the scenario. This data collection relied solely upon these surveys distributed to typically-developing students, teachers, and parents at the research site. A High School reading intervention specialist ("Michelle" for the purposes of this study), a non-evaluative, non-disciplinary secondary staff member who collects data on students' reading skills and implements interventions for

students who need support, was trained with NIH certification (see Appendix B) and sent

the participants the data collection survey through Google forms via the High School's

Google email accounts. The researcher analyzed participant responses for themes aligned

to each research question. The information from this study provided insights into the

mental models surrounding Down syndrome as a diagnosis versus other student disability

diagnoses.

Surveys

Once the researcher obtained permission from the Institutional Review Board of

the study university and permission from the research site, 200 typically-developing

students were randomly selected from the research site with the researcher expecting 40-

50 surveys to be returned. Two-hundred students with a minimum range of 40-50 was

chosen in order to gather as a much qualitative data as possible in order to analyze themes

and compare those themes to the parent and teacher groups (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun,

2015). The random selection came from the research site's student data management

system, Infinite Campus, and the only criteria for the selection was that the selected

students did not have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). For the purpose of this

study, a "typically-developing" student was defined as any student without an IEP plan.

The researcher made a request to the district's data management to use Infinite Campus

to generate a report which removed students with an IEP from the report, and randomly

select 200 names from the remaining students, and to provide the researcher with each

student's high school email address in order to send the students instructions as to how to

volunteer for the research and give consent. Michelle volunteered to work with the

researcher and assist by delivering and collecting research consent forms, and to send

participants the appropriate links to the online scenarios and surveys. Once the students

were selected, instructions (see Appendix E) to participate in the study were emailed to

each student's school email account. In the email, the students were instructed to go to

Michelle and receive consent forms for their parents or guardians to complete in order to

participate in the research.

      The researcher obtained the names of 10 random teachers from the school's

student information system staffing information, Infinite Campus, and the researcher

expected 10 surveys to be returned in order to gain sufficient information to analyze and

compare themes across participant groups (Fraenkel et al., 2015). The researcher made a

request to the district's data management to use Infinite Campus to generate a report

which randomly selected 10 teachers from the research site's teacher roster, and to

provide the researcher with those teacher's district email address in order to send each

teacher instructions as to how to volunteer for the research and give consent. Michelle

sent the teachers an invitation to participate in the research, as well as the adult consent

form to participate in the research. The adults selected to be invited to participate in the

research could give their consent to participate electronically (see Appendix D).

Likewise, the researcher also obtained 50 random parents from the school's student

information system, and the researcher expected 15-20 surveys to be returned in order to

gain sufficient information to analyze and compare themes across participant groups.

The researcher made a request to the district's data management to use Infinite Campus

to generate a report which removed parents who had a student with an IEP enrolled at the

high school from the report. Then, the researcher randomly selected 50 names from the

remaining parents, and subsequently used those parents' primary email address in order

to send the parents instructions as to how to volunteer for the research and give consent.

Michelle sent the parents an invitation to participate in research to the email address

listed in the school's student information system, as well as the adult consent form to

participate in the research (see Appendix C).

Upon receipt of completed consent forms from the participating students' parents,

teachers, parents, the participants were sent a link to their email address to either a

fictional scenario describing a classroom activity in which a "student with a disability"

(see Appendices F, H, and J) is excluded both actively and passively from the educational

activity, or a fictional scenario describing a classroom activity in which a "student with a

Down syndrome" (see Appendices G, I, and K) is excluded both actively and passively

from the educational activity; these fictitious scenarios were developed with the

assistance of the researcher's doctoral chairperson. Michelle alternated which scenario a

participant was sent as the consent forms were submitted by students; the first participant

from each selected group (typically-developing students, teachers, parents) to submit the

consent form was sent the link to the scenario about "the student with a disability," the

second participant to submit the consent form was sent the link to the scenario about "the

student with Down syndrome," etc. Both scenarios were exactly the same in terms of the

fictitious educational situation within the classroom; the only differences in the scenarios

was that one scenario labeled the excluded student "Terry" as having a disability, and one

scenario labeled the excluded student "Pat" as having Down syndrome; these names were

chosen for gender neutrality.

After reading the scenarios, the participant answered questions regarding the

scenarios, and the questions were aligned to the High School's Character Standards for

Late High School students (see Appendix A). The responses were aligned to the

Character Standards in that the six short-answer questions regarding the scenario were

phrased in direct alignment to the standards. For example, the second short-answer

question about how likely students would be to have a positive attitude about Pat/Terry in

the group is written from the Late High School Character Standard 1A.5b, "Evaluate how

to expressing more positive attitudes influences others." All questions were aligned to

these character standards in this fashion (see Appendix A). The participants first

responded to questions on a 1-5 Likert scale, with "1" being "Not likely at all" to "5"

being "Very likely," and then responded to short-answer questions. Teachers responded

to scenarios worded in a manner applicable to a classroom scenario (see Appendices F

and G), parents responded to surveys worded in a way that asked them to reflect on how

they believed their student would respond (see Appendices H and I), and students

responded to scenarios worded in such a way that asked them to say how they personally

would respond to the situation described (see Appendices J and K).

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How do typically-developing students perceive their

character when responding to a scenario of a student with Down syndrome?

Research Question 2: How do typically-developing students perceive their

character when responding to a scenario of a student with a non-specific disability?

Research Question 3: How do teachers perceive the character of typically-

developing students when responding to a scenario of typically developing students

interacting with a student with Down syndrome?

Research Question 4: How do teachers perceive the character of typically-developing students when responding to a scenario of typically developing students interacting with a non-specific disability?

Research Question 5: How do the parents perceive the character of typically-developing students when responding to a scenario of typically developing students interacting with a student with Down syndrome?

Research Question 6: How do the parents perceive the character of typically-developing students when responding to a scenario of typically developing students interacting with a student with a non-specific disability?

Limitations

The study focused on exploring teachers', typically-developing students', and parents' perceptions of student disability, and to also explore these perceptions of a student with Down syndrome. As the study took place at a single high school in a single suburban school district, the population of students with disabilities is limited as the researcher is only surveying one school. Because the population of students with disabilities is limited, the different types of disabilities present within the high school is therefore also limited. As the term "student with a disability" can apply to a variety of disabilities, both physical and intellectual, it would be highly unlikely for every possible disability to be represented within a single high school. The typically-developing students may have responded to the questionnaires based solely upon their interactions with the population of students with disabilities from this single high school. Furthermore, the majority of the typically-developing students at the late high-school level by that time have been in the same cohort with the students with disabilities for

most of their public education; in some cases, for their entire public education. These long-standing relationships may have influenced how a student responded to the survey questions. Conversely, a typically-developing student with little to no contact with a student with a disability, or only students with a limited type of disability, may influence how they responded to the survey as well.

As this study explored the perceptions of Down syndrome as a diagnosis, the researcher chose a study site where there was at least one student with Down syndrome enrolled at the school. Also, the students with Down syndrome would also be in inclusive settings, thereby increasing the chance that typically-developing students would be able to interact with students with Down syndrome; if the students with Down syndrome were to be enrolled in self-inclusive classrooms or other segregated settings, the opportunities that typically-developing students would have to interact with students with Down syndrome would be limited. In fact, most of the impressions students who responded to the survey about students with Down syndrome could have been limited solely to the knowledge that students with Down syndrome are isolated from typically developing students.

Ideally, multiple secondary schools with students with Down syndrome enrolled in inclusive classes would be included in the sample in order to gather as many responses as possible. At the time of the development of the study, the school district had only one student with Down syndrome at the secondary level enrolled in inclusive classes. In total, the school district had only 20 students with Down syndrome in an enrollment of approximately 17,000 students.

At the beginning of the research project, the researcher was employed as an assistant principal at the research site. This role had an evaluative aspect in relation to the teachers, as well as a disciplinary aspect for students that the researcher worked with. It was also widely known at the research site that the researcher was a parent of a child with Down syndrome; in fact, the researcher was the only employee at the school who was a parent of a child with Down syndrome. Furthermore, it was widely known that the researcher was interested in disability studies and research surrounding students with Down syndrome. Since data collection for this study was through surveys distributed to students, teachers, and parents about their perceptions of students with Down syndrome, it was reasonable to assume that the students', teachers', and parents' responses to the survey may be impacted by their personal and professional connection to the researcher, especially considering the researcher's capacity as an assistant principal in the school.

Summary

The researcher explored the perceptions of typically-developing student's, parents' and teachers' perceptions of disabilities and Down syndrome. As this study explored personal perceptions, a qualitative method was used in order to gather data. The researcher used fictitious scenarios and response questions to gather data from the volunteering participants. The researcher examined the results for recurring themes and patterns aligned to the school district's Character Standards for Late High School students. The next chapter explained the results obtained from this qualitative study.

Chapter Four: Analysis

Overview

Typically-developing students, parents, and teachers who volunteered to participate in the study responded to one of two fictitious scenarios describing either a student with a disability or a student with Down syndrome not being included in an educational experience in the classroom (see Appendices F, G, H, I, J, and K). Four students responded to the scenario about "Pat," the student with Down syndrome, and seven students responded to the scenario about "Terry," the student with a disability. Four teachers responded to the scenario about "Pat," the student with Down syndrome, and three teachers responded to the scenario about "Terry," the student with a disability. No parent responded to the scenario about "Pat," the student with Down syndrome, and one parent responded to the scenario about "Terry," the student with a disability. Typically-developing students, parents, and teachers then responded to the fictitious scenarios with questions aligned to the school's Character Development Standards (see Appendix A). After the participants submitted their responses to the scenarios, the researcher examined the responses for alignment to the school district's Character Standards for Late High School Students (see Appendix A). These standards were chosen as the metric so the researcher did not have personal bias as to what character attributes typically-developing students, teachers, and parents should demonstrate in response to the scenarios, as well as these standards were the character standards the school district implemented as traits they want their students to demonstrate. All responses were examined to uncover common themes from the participants as aligned to the school district's Character Standards in order to explore the perceptions of typically-developing

students', teachers' and parents' perceptions of students with disabilities and Down syndrome as a specific diagnosis.

Research Question 1

How do typically-developing students perceive their character when responding to a scenario of a student with Down syndrome?

Typically-developing students overall responded that they would make attempts to ensure that the student with Down syndrome ("Pat") was included in the academic activity. When asked how likely typically-developing students would be to encourage the group to include Pat in the academic activity, 50% of students responded "likely," and 50% responded "very likely." Fifty percent of the typically-developing student respondents replied that they would "very likely" have a positive attitude about Pat being in their group, 25% said they would "likely" have a positive attitude, and 25% responded neutrally. In ensuring that Pat felt like they were a welcome member of the group, 75% of student respondents replied that they would be "very likely" to ensure he felt welcome, and 25% replied that they would be "likely" to ensure they felt welcome. Seventy-five of student respondents also said they would be "very likely" to ask Pat's thoughts or opinions about the work, and 25% said they would be "likely," and again, the respondents responded with the same results when asked if they would ensure Pat was part of the group's presentation to the whole class.

Overall, the typically-developing student respondents were at least "likely," and in most cases, "very likely" to make Pat part of their group and part of the work. The only noticeable difference in the themes of the responses was the attitude toward having Pat in the group, specifically, 25% of the respondents answered that they would have a

"neutral" attitude to Pat being part of the group; the question regarding student attitudes toward Pat being included in the group was the only question to garner any "neutral" response of any of the Likert-scale questions. To generalize the responses of the typically-developing students, the respondents would work to ensure that Pat felt welcomed and included in the group work, they would work to ensure Pat was able to make meaningful contributions, and they would work to help Pat have the opportunity to display his abilities to the class as a whole, specifically in being part of the presentation. In short, these respondents would be very likely to practice inclusion for Pat in part of this educational experience.

One of the short-answer questions asked the respondents to think of other ways they could advocate for Pat. Responses included including Pat like they would any other student, specifically in having Pat work to their strengths like any other student:

> I would say something along the lines of, "guys, just because Pat has Down syndrome doesn't mean he won't contribute to our group in a meaningful way. We all have different strengths, and we won't know what Pat's strengths are unless we include him."

Another respondent wrote, 'Ask him to join the group you are in. And treat him like everyone else," and one respondent wrote, '[S]electing parts of the project that she liked for her to do.' The recurring theme from these respondents was that they believed the best way to advocate for Pat was to make sure he was treated like any other member of the group, and that Pat was allowed to work to his strengths and be able to display those strengths to the class. One student did respond that the best way to advocate for Pat would be to tell the group, "I would say something like come on guys he needs a group

and having another person would be good." This response, while not focused on looking at Pat's strengths and including him for the sake of Pat being in at least a group, viewed advocacy for Pat as at least making sure he was included in a group, even going so far as to help the group to understand that Pat's inclusion would benefit the group as a whole.

The typically-developing student respondents were also asked how they could be respectful of Pat while in the group, and responses again focused on treating Pat like they would any other member of the group. Responses included, "Treat him like a person because he is. Give him tasks and ask him what he wants to do and let him choose," and "I don't think it has to be that complicated. I would respect Pat the same way I respect my other peers. Just because Pat has Down syndrome doesn't mean he deserves to be treated any differently than anyone else." Students also responded that being respectful to Pat included aspects of the work itself, and Pat's contribution to the work, specifically, "don't be rude, don't disrupt, don't disclude/ignore" and "make sure to ask him questions directly and ask for his opinion." In terms of being respectful to Pat, while these portions of these responses appeared to focus on what Pat would do in the group, what work he could accomplish with them (e.g. "give him tasks," "don't disrupt"), the majority of the responses focused on treating Pat no differently than any other member of the group simply because he is a student with Down syndrome, with one respondent even going so far as to say that it does not have to be "complicated."

Finally, the typically-developing students responded to questions asking how they could display empathy for Pat, and much like showing respect for Pat, the responses focused on treating Pat like they would treat any other students. One student's response

in particular addressed the question of empathy by addressing Pat's possible emotions of being excluded, and associating those emotions to their own:

> Personally, I have ADHD and Diabetes, and I'm abnormally short. I wouldn't want people to treat me differently because of these differences that I can't control, so why should I treat Pat differently because he has Down syndrome? I'm sure Pat's feelings were hurt when no one included him in a group, and mine would be too. So I would make sure to treat Pat the way I would want other people to treat me.

In the above response, this student was able to predict Pat's possible feelings and connect them to their own response, specifically in connecting herself as a person with a disability to Pat as a person with a disability, and in realizing that as she would not want to be treated differently for her disability, neither would she treat Pat differently. In this specific response, this student connected with Pat as both having disabilities, and was therefore able to put themselves in Pat's position.

Research Question 2

  How do typically-developing students perceive their character when responding to a scenario of a student with a non-specific disability?

  In responding to the fictitious scenario about a student with a disability being excluded from the learning activity in the class, typically-developing students responded much differently than the typically-developing students who responded to the scenario about a student with Down syndrome. When asked how likely they would be to encourage the group to include the "student with a disability" (Terry), 14.3% of the student respondents replied as "very likely," 57.1% replied as "likely," and 28.6% replied

neutrally. In responding to how likely they would be to have a positive attitude about the student with a disability being a part of their group, 14.3% of the respondents replied "very likely," 71.4% replied "likely," and 14.3% replied neutrally. Student respondents also indicated that 33.3% would be very likely to ensure that Terry felt like he was a welcome member of a group, 50% said they would be "likely", and 16.7% would be "unlikely" to ensure Terry felt he was a welcome member of a group. Approximately, 16.7% of respondents replied that they would be "very likely" to ensure that Terry was included in the work in a meaningful way, 16.7% replied that they would be "likely" to do so, 50% replied neutrally, and 16.7% replied that they it would be "unlikely" that they would ensure Terry was included in a meaningful way. When asked how likely they would be ask Terry's thoughts or opinions about the work, 14.3% responded as "very likely," 28.6% responded as "likely," 42.9% responded neutrally, and 14.3% responded as "unlikely." Finally, in responding to how likely the student would be to ensure that Terry was part of the group's presentation, 42.9% responded as "very likely," 28.6% responded as "likely," 14.3% responded neutrally, and 14.3% responded as "unlikely."

In general, most of the student respondents replied as "very likely" or "likely" to ensure that Terry was included in the educational activity; however, there were portions of the student respondents that replied neutrally to ensuring inclusion, and even a portion of students responded "unlikely" to ensure Terry's inclusion. This is not to say that this percentage of respondents who answered as "unlikely" would take active steps to exclude Terry, but they did respond that they would be unlikely to ensure Terry's inclusion, which can be interpreted as the respondents not taking any steps to include Terry. In essence, it can be interpreted from these responses that when working with a "student

with a disability," these typically-developing students, while not actively excluding

Terry, do not necessarily feel compelled to take action to include Terry.

Reponses to the short answer questions regarding how else the typically-

developing students could advocate for Terry included an apparent theme of ensuring that

Terry received academic support for the activity and that Terry understood the material of

the activity. Responses included thoughts such as, "We can make sure to engage with

him and make sure he understand everything so that we know he's benefitting from the

activity. We can also be sure to ask him if he needs help" and "Always ask what Terry

thinks or feels about something, ask the teacher that could be next to hom [sic]." These

answers indicated that Terry's understanding would have to be routinely checked, and

even that Terry would need one-on-one assistance from the teacher in the room.

Responses regarding advocacy also surrounded the idea of making sure Terry was

included in a group, and that his inclusion would possible need to be justified to other

members of the group:

> Be s [sic] friend and let them in your team, the others are being bullying and
>
> should see that terry has just as much to say as them. Express your sadness in the
>
> actions of your peers and be Terry's friend. Terry is like everyone else and
>
> shouldn't be thought of anything alien. Ask terry [sic] to join off the bat.

This student respondent saw advocacy as not only including Terry, but also predicted that

justifying Terry's membership in the group would likely be necessary. The scenario did

include that no group allowed Terry to join, so this respondent's answer included

expressing her sadness to the group, and advocating for Terry by supporting him as a

fellow student to the others. In short, this advocacy did not focus on the academics, but in supporting Terry social-emotionally.

For the second short answer questions about how students could be respectful of Terry, a prominent theme again was making sure Terry had academic support during the work, including providing Terry work and requesting the teacher help the group in supporting Terry. In fact, one respondent remarked, "Ask his teacher to help with us understanding what terry likes or not." This respondent assumed that the group will need assistance from an adult to "understand" Terry, whether this means Terry's communication or his ability; again, the only information this respondent had about Terry is that he has "a disability." Another respondent remarked that they may have to be selective with what task Terry is given to complete:

> We can make sure he has a role that will allow him to contribute in a helpful way, while still making sure that it's something he's capable of completing, and offering our help, but only if he needs it, and making sure to ask and norm jist [sic] take over his job.

For this question, respecting the "student with a disability" included ensuring the student had work to complete at a level commensurate with the student's abilities, specifically making sure that the work was something he was "capable" of completing.

Other responses to ensure Terry was respected included phrases such as, "we could invite him to sit with us," "by not making fun of him," and to "be on our best behavior." While the first response is one of taking action for the benefit of Terry, reaching out to him and inviting him to participate, the following two answers are mostly focused on actions to not take, specifically not making fun of him, and to avoid

misbehaving. These respondents see respecting a "student with a disability," at least in part, as avoiding certain behaviors without necessarily mentioning specific actions to take.

For the final short-answer question, typically-developing students were asked to respond regarding other ways they could display empathy for Terry. The majority of the respondents' answers focused on the need to learn from Terry about his disability and to take time to better understand his disability before passing judgment. One respondent specifically mentioned correcting the other members of the group for their original exclusion of Terry, stating "Express disgust to the reactions of your classemates [sic]. Make them know that what they're doing is quite discriminatory." Another respondent stated that connecting to terry's [sic] experience is what displaying empathy for Terry is, writing "Understand that people that time to understand things and if everyone could think of an [sic] time you felt like that then you can understand Terry a little more." Again, the majority of the responses focused on learning about Terry was the best way to display empathy for him, with two other respondents focusing on advocating for Terry because of their ability to identify and associate with his possible feelings of being excluded.

Research Question 3

How do teachers perceive the character of typically-developing students when responding to a scenario of typically developing students interacting with a student with Down syndrome?

In responding to how teachers believe their students would respond to including a student with Down syndrome (Pat) in their groups, overall teachers believe the majority

of their students would be welcoming of Pat to the groups, but were mixed as to whether Terry would be included in the group in a meaningful way. Fifty percent of teachers responded as "very likely" and 50% responded as "likely" when asked how likely their students would be to encourage their group to include Pat; however, teachers were split 50% "very likely" and 50% neutrally in responding to the questions regarding how likely students would be to have a positive attitude about Pat being in their group, how likely they believe students would be to ensure Pat felt welcome, and how likely students would be to include Pat in the work in a meaningful way. Furthermore, while 50% of teachers replied that they believe students would be very likely to ask Pat's thoughts or opinions about the group work, 25% responded neutrally, and 25% responded "unlikely." Seventy-five percent of teachers did reply that they believe students would be very likely to include Pat in the presentation, and 25% replied that students would be likely to include Terry in the presentation.

When asked other ways their students could advocate for Pat, the responses focused on inclusion in the group and having Pat use one of his strengths during the group work. One teacher noted how the structure of the class would allow for Pat to be immediately included:

> They could have him do something he is strong in. For example if he was a good artist he could be in charge of a picture for the assignment. In my class I focus on specific roles for students in groups so Pat would have a role. He could be the recorder or the time keeper, or quality assurance.

This teacher in particular mentioned the inclusion of Pat, but mostly because the natural structure of the class leans toward inclusion. While the teacher does mention Pat

working toward their strength in the work, Pat would not necessarily be included on the fact that Pat has Down syndrome, but Pat would be included merely by the fact that the class structure makes it so.

The second short-answer question had teachers respond with strategies students in their classes could use to be respectful of Pat. The responses to this question centered around giving Pat opportunities to share his thoughts and give input on the work like they would expect any student to do for any other student. Overall, teachers responded that students being respectful of Pat focused on Pat being treated on equal terms with his classmates. Teachers believed that typically-developing students demonstrate respect to Pat by treating them as they would any other typically-developing student.

When asked what other ways their students could display empathy to Pat, responses included defending Pat to other students when necessary, as well as modeling empathy to students in the hopes that they too would be empathetic:

Empathy is a hard thing to force upon students. It really is showing empathy yourself as a teacher and then hoping your students follow because of the example you set for them. In Pat's case I would pair him up with an empathetic student who would be willing to welcome Pat into their group. I think when the students already have predefined groups and Pat was asking to join this puts the groups in an awkward position where an empathetic student might feel unsafe to speak up against their peers. However, if a partnership is already predefined then they might be more welcoming.

This specific teacher noted that empathy is not a trait that comes easily, nor can a student be forced to be empathetic. Interestingly, the teacher mentioned pairing Pat with an

empathetic student in hopes that this student would be able to personally advocate for Pat to the group, but realized that in doing so may put the student in an awkward position, thereby displaying empathy for the student the teacher hopes will be empathetic to Pat. The teacher did mention the only way to motivate students to be empathetic is to practice empathy, and this response indicated the teacher can indeed be empathetic.

The final short answer question asked teachers to reply with other ways students in non-inclusive classes have advocated for students like Pat; however, the responses did not garner any information different than other short-answer questions. Overall, teachers believed that their students would be welcoming of Pat and include him to present materials, but there were a number of neutral responses to questions regarding the amount of work the group would allow Pat to do, and the degree of input Pat would be given in the work itself.

Research Question 4

How do teachers perceive the character of typically-developing students when responding to a scenario of typically developing students interacting with a student with a non-specific disability?

Much like Research Questions 1 and 2, teachers who received the scenario of a student with a disability responded very differently when compared to the teachers who responded to the scenario with a student with Down syndrome. For the questions which asked how likely their students would be to encourage their group to include the student with a disability (Terry), and how likely would their students be to have a positive attitude about Terry being in their group, 66.7% of the respondents replied neutrally, and 33.3% responded as "unlikely." All teacher respondents also replied neutrally as to how

likely their students would be to ensure that Terry felt welcome in the group. When

asked how likely their student would be to ensure that Terry was included in the work in

a meaningful way, again 66.7% replied neutrally, and 33.3% replied as "unlikely." One-

hundred percent of the respondents also replied neutrally regarding how likely students

would be to ask Terry's thoughts about the work. The only question regarding Terry that

received a response of "likely" was the final short answer question asking how likely

students would be to ensure Terry was part of the group's presentation; for this question,

33% responded "likely," 33% responded neutrally, and 33% responded "unlikely."

In terms of how their students could also advocate for Terry, teacher responses

focused on Terry's participation in the work, but one response in particular focused on

the community of the classroom as a whole. Responses included phrases such as, "Ask

Terry his opinion, ask Terry what job he would like to do in the presentation," and "Ask

Terry what he would like to work on . . . Perhaps he would feel more comfortable writing

or drawing or something for the group." These responses focused on what kind of

productivity he would bring to the group, thereby looking at advocacy for Terry as

allowing him to work or ensuring that Terry is allowed to produce something on behalf of

the group. One teacher's response focused on looking at the entire class as a singular

learning community, and the best way to advocate for Terry, or any other member of the

class through the community dynamic:

> My answer for all of the questions is the same. Kids can't be expected to advocate
>
> for any student if the kids don't know one another which is why it is essential to
>
> establish and foster a sense of community from the word "Go." In a perfect class

dynamic, kids wouldn't have to 'advocate' for anyone because they see each others

[sic] as equal.

An interesting sentiment in this response was the teacher's belief that advocacy would

not be necessary if there is a strong sense of community established early on. This

teacher saw advocacy as something that needs to be used to mitigate exclusion of

students. In short, the perspective on advocacy from this response was that advocacy is

necessary as a reactive measure to student exclusion, and needs to be used only in

situations where there is a possibility of students being excluded.

There were only a few short responses to the question asking other ways the

teachers' students could be respectful of Terry, and the responses were exclusive about

inviting Terry to the group. While the teachers responded earlier neutrally or unlikely

that they believed their students would invite Terry to join, they clearly still believed that

including Terry to be part of the presentation was the best way for the students to be

respectful of Terry. There were also few responses to the short answer question about

how students could be empathetic of Terry; the responses were, "Invite him to join the

group, find something Terry is good at and let him do it" and "Listen to what he has to

say." As the scenario described Terry as being initially excluded, teachers believed the

best way for other students to be empathic of Terry, that is, to connect with him on an

emotional level, would be to invite him to the group. Teachers recognized that typically-

developing students would be able to associated being excluded, like Terry was, and to

therefore include him because they can relate to the emotional impact of being excluded.

Finally, when teachers were asked other ways their students have advocated for

students like Terry in the past, again responses were few and repeated mostly what was

asked in the previous questions. Teachers replied that their students have asked the opinions of the work from the student with a disability, created special jobs for the student to complete, exercised patience and encouraged others to be patient. Teachers did not mention any other ways their students have advocated for students with disabilities other than what was previously asked of them in the survey questions.

Overall, when given the scenario about the "student with a disability" versus "a student with Down syndrome," teachers did not think their students would be very likely to be as inclusive, engaging, or display advocacy for the "student with a disability" as they would a "student with Down syndrome." In fact, only one question received a response of ""likely" versus every question regarding the "student with Down syndrome" receiving a "very likely" response. Furthermore, teachers' responses to the short-answer questions addressed the emotional component of exclusion and working to connect Pat to another student who could be emotionally capable of advocating for Pat in the class, whereas for the scenario about Terry, teachers focused primarily on making sure Terry had work to do for the class.

Research Question 5

How do the parents perceive the character of a typically-developing student when responding to a scenario of typically developing students interacting with a student with Down syndrome?

The parent participants submitted the fewest responses for all of the participant groups. Only one parent volunteered to participate in the study and therefore was given the scenario regarding the student with a disability. No parent responded to the scenario regarding the student with Down syndrome.

The researcher speculated that the primary factor to no parent responding to the scenario regarding the student with Down syndrome was survey fatigue. The High School uses Google forms to gather information from its parents and stakeholders on multiple occasions throughout the school year, including demographic information, graduation information, field trip sign ups, sporting event sign ups, and more. The researcher's use of Google forms to gather data was likely another survey on top of several other surveys for parents, and since this survey was an optional one, the researcher speculated that this survey likely went unanswered.

Research Question 6

How do the parents perceive the character of a typically-developing student when responding to a scenario of typically developing students interacting with a student with a non-specific disability?

Only one parent responded to the scenario regarding the student with a disability. The parent responded that they believe their student would be likely to encourage the group to include the student with the disability (Terry), would be likely to have a positive attitude about Terry being in the group, and would be likely to ensure that Terry felt like he was a welcome member of the group. The parent did respond neutrally as to how likely their student would be to ensure Terry was included in the work in a meaningful way. The parent responded that they believed their child would be likely to ask Terry's thoughts or opinions about the group work, but responded neutrally to the question regarding how likely their child would be to ensure that Terry had a part of the group's presentation. The parent did not respond to any of the short-answer questions.

| Short-answer response comparisons for Research Questions 1 & 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| Very Unlikely | | Unlikely | | Neutral | | Likely | | Very Likely | |
Pat	Terry	Pat	Terry	Pat	Terry	Pat	Terry	Pat	Terry
Likely to encourage group to include student									
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	50%	57.1%	50%	14.3%
Likely to have positive attitude about student being in group									
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25%	0.0%	25%	71.4%	50%	14.3%
Likely to ensure student felt welcome in group									
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	14.3%	25%	50%	75%	33.3%
Likely to endure Terry was included in meaningful way									
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	50%	50%	16.7%	50%	16.7%
Likely to ask student's thoughts or opinions about work									
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	42.9%	25%	28.6%	75%	14.3%
Likely to ensure student was part of group's presentation									
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	14.3%	25%	28.6%	75%	42.9%

Figure 2. Short-answer response comparisons for Research Questions 1 & 2.

Figure 2 compares the short-answer responses of the students who received and responded to the scenario involving "Pat," the fictitious student with Down syndrome, and "Terry," the fictitious student with a disability. Both groups of students had high amounts of responses of "very likely" or "likely" for the questions regarding encouraging other group members to include wither Pat or Terry, as well as ensuring Pat or Terry had a part of the group's presentation. Also, 71.4% students who responded to the scenario regarding Terry responded as "likely" to having a positive attitude about Terry being in the group. These three questions were aligned to the High School's Character Competency Standard II (see Appendix A); as this standard focuses on interpersonal skills and building positive relationships. The respondents to these scenarios see themselves as likely and very likely to build positive relationships with either Pat or Terry; however, for the students who responded to the scenario regarding Terry, several participants responded as "neutral" or "unlikely" to ensure that Terry felt welcome, was included in the work meaningfully, or was asked about their thoughts or opinions about

the work. These questions were based on Character Standards focused on using forms of communication to interact effectively with one another, and recognizing personal qualities (see Appendix A). The respondents to these questions in the situation about Terry were unlikely to take actions that are aligned to these standards, but as stated before, were likely to try to build a positive relationship with Terry. When compared to the situation regarding Pat, student respondents were likely or very likely to both build a positive relationship with Pat as well as identify Pat's strengths and personal qualities to ensure he was a part of the group work in a meaningful way.

Short-answer response comparisons for Research Questions 1 & 3									
	Very Unlikely		Unlikely		Neutral		Likely		Very Likely	
	Students:	Teachers:	Students:	Teachers:	Students:	Teachers:	Students:	Teachers:	Students:	Teachers:
Likely to encourage group to include Pat	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Likely to have positive attitude about Pat being in group	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25%	50%	25%	0%	50%	50%
Likely to ensure Pat felt welcome in group	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50%	25%	0%	75%	50%
Likely to endure Pat was included in meaningful way	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50%	50%	0%	50%	50%
Likely to ask Pat's thoughts or opinions about work	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25%	0.0%	25%	25%	0%	75%	50%
Likely to ensure Pat was part of group's presentation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25%	25%	75%	75%

Figure 3. Short-answer response comparisons for Research Questions 1 & 3.

Figure 3 compares the responses of students and teachers who responded to the scenario regarding only "Pat," the student with Down syndrome. As in Figure 2, students who responded to Pat's scenario responded that they would attempt to build a positive relationship with Pat and include him in the work in a meaningful way as aligned to the Character Standards IIA and IIB (see Appendix A). The teachers were asked to respond to the scenario with how they believe their students would act in the scenario, and similar

to student responses, teachers believed the students would attempt to build positive

relationships with Pat. The distinct difference in the responses between students and

teachers was that the students responded that they would be likely or very likely to ensure

that Pat felt welcome, was included meaningfully, and that Pat's thoughts and opinions

were solicited for the work, but teachers responded neutrally that their students ensure

that Pat felt welcome, was included meaningfully, and that the group asked Pat's

thoughts and opinions about the work. From Figure 3, students perceived themselves as

both building positive relationships with Pat and including Pat in the group work by

recognizing Pat's skills and effectively communicating and interacting with Pat. The

teachers responded very neutrally about their students' likeliness to include Pat in the

group work by recognizing his skills and effectively communicating and interacting with

Pat. These results suggested that students perceive themselves very likely to build

relationships with Pat and truly include Pat in the work, recognize his personal qualities,

and interact effectively with Pat. However, teachers perceived their students as likely to

build positive relationships with Pat, but teachers were neutral on whether or not their

students were likely to include Pat in the work, recognize his personal qualities, and

interact effectively with Pat.

Short-answer response comparisons for Research Questions 3 & 4									
	Very Unlikely		Unlikely		Neutral		Likely		Very Likely	
	Pat:	Terry:	Pat:	Terry:	Pat:	Terry:	Pat:	Terry:	Pat:	Terry:
Likely to encourage group to include the student	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	**33.3%**	0.0%	**66.7%**	**50%**	0.0%	**50%**	0.0%
Likely to have positive attitude about the student being in group	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	**33.3%**	50%	**66.7%**	0.0%	0.0%	**50%**	0.0%
Likely to ensure the student felt welcome in group	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	**50%**	0.0%
Likely to endure the student was included in meaningful way	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	**33.3%**	50%	**66.7%**	0.0%	0.0%	**50%**	0.0%
Likely to ask the student's thoughts or opinions about work	0.0%	0.0%	**25%**	0.0%	25%	**100%**	0.0%	0.0%	**50%**	0.0%
Likely to ensure the student was part of group's presentation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	**33.3%**	0.0%	**33.3%**	**25%**	**33.3%**	**75%**	0.0%

Figure 4. Short-answer response comparisons for Research Questions 3 & 4.

Figure 4 examines the teacher responses for the scenarios involving "Pat," the student with Down syndrome, and "Terry," the student with a disability. The teachers were asked how they believe their students would respond to these two students in their respective scenarios. The starkest difference in the teacher responses between the two scenarios was that teachers responded that they believe their students would be "very likely" to include Pat in the work, recognize Pat's personal qualities, and interact effectively with Pat, but overall, teachers were neutral as to how their students would include Terry in the work, recognize Terry's personal qualities, and interact effectively with Terry. Furthermore, some teacher respondents believed their students would be "unlikely" to interact with Terry, have a positive attitude about Terry's participation, or include Terry in the work in a meaningful way. In fact, no teacher responded as "very likely" for any question regarding Terry, and the only question that received a response of "likely" was the question about ensuring Terry had a part in the participation (33.3%). While both teacher group respondents had a higher percentage of "neutral" responses as

compared to student responses (see Figure 2), teachers who responded to the scenario about Terry replied with far more "unlikely" responses than the teachers who responded to the scenario about Pat. Overall, teachers who responded to the scenario about Pat believed their students to be more likely to include Pat in the work, recognize Pat's personal qualities, and interact effectively with Pat than the teachers who responded to the scenario about Terry.

Short-answer response comparisons for Research Questions 2 & 4									
Very Unlikely		Unlikely		Neutral		Likely		Very Likely	
Students:	Teachers:	Students:	Teachers:	Students:	Teachers:	Students:	Teachers:	Students:	Teachers:
Likely to encourage group to include the student 0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	28.6%	66.7%	57.1%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%
Likely to have positive attitude about the student being in group 0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	71.4%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%
Likely to ensure the student felt welcome in group 0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	14.3%	66.7%	50%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%
Likely to endure the student was included in meaningful way 0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	33.3%	50%	66.7%	16.7%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%
Likely to ask the student's thoughts or opinions about work 0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	42.9%	100%	28.6%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%
Likely to ensure the student was part of group's presentation 0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	33.3%	14.3%	33.3%	28.6%	33.3%	42.9%	0.0%

Figure 5. Short-answer response comparisons for Research Questions 2 & 4.

Figure 5 compares the student and teacher short-answer responses to the scenario about "Terry," the student with a disability. Much like the comparison of Research Questions 1 & 3, which compared the responses of students and teachers who responded to the scenario of Pat (see Figure 3), students believed themselves more likely to interact positively with Terry, include him in the group work in such a way that accentuated his strengths, and interact effectively with other members of the group than the teachers believed the students would be (see Figure 5). Also, teachers responded with the highest rate of "neutral" and "unlikely" to the questions about the student's likelihood to involve

Terry in the work, the presentation, and Terry's overall comfort level in the group work more than student responses indicated. In fact, 100% of the teacher responses were "neutral" when asked if they believe their students would ask Terry's thoughts or opinions on the work; a total of 44.9% of student responses indicated that they would be "likely" or "very likely" to include Terry. Not only was this a stark contrast between student and teacher responses to this question, but it is worth noting that no other question on any survey in any respondent group received a score of 100%. Overall, much like the student and teacher responses to the scenario involving Pat (see Figure 3), students believed themselves more likely to include Terry, interact with him positively, and communicate effectively as aligned with the High School's Character Standards IIA and IIB (see Appendix A).

Summary

When comparing the student responses to the scenario about the student with Down syndrome (Pat) to the student "with a disability" (Terry), students responded that they would be more likely to include Pat than Terry in the group activity in every question asked. In fact, no student responded with "unlikely" or "very unlikely" for any question in Pat's scenario, whereas students responded with "unlikely" in several questions in Terry's scenario. The only detail that differed between the two scenarios was that the scenario involving Pat specifically described him as having Down syndrome, while the scenario involving Terry on described him as having "a disability." Furthermore, in the short answer questions, students' responses focused more on being able to connect with Pat on an emotional level, and being able to display empathy for Pat more than in the responses for Terry. While both groups of student responses discussed

including both Terry and Pat in the work and finding areas of the group work that would

be able to display Terry's and Pat's strengths, there were more responses for the scenario

about Pat that focused on the students connecting with Pat emotionally and empathizing

with Pat than there were for Terry. As discussed in Chapter Two, students with

intellectual disabilities are more likely to experience exclusion; however, the responses

from the students showed that they were more likely to include Pat than they would Terry

in the educational activity despite the fact that Pat was clearly described as having Down

syndrome which would also include a mild to moderate intellectual disability. In the case

of Terry, they are only described as a "student with a disability," and it is therefore

possible that any student respondent to this scenario could speculate as to the type and

severity of Terry's disability, and respondents could very well have envisioned Terry's

disability to be an intellectual one of a scope for more severe than Pat's. For the purposes

of this research, Terry's diagnosis was kept intentionally vague. A conclusion that can be

drawn from this could be that in terms of working with students with disabilities, more

specificity about the disability and what that disability entails may lead to a better

understanding of the student, and therefore a greater opportunities to serve and support

students based on their individual situations.

   The teachers' responses mirrored the student responses in that teachers believed

their students would be more likely to include Pat in the educational scenarios than they

would Terry. The majority of the teacher respondents replied that they believed their

students would be more likely to include Pat and be an advocate for him than they would

Terry. Much like student respondents, teachers replied in the short answer questions that

they believed students would support Pat in ways other than simply making sure Pat had

work to do within the group, such as making sure other typically-developing members of

the group were understanding of Pat, and finding student advocated to work with Pat.

Teachers who responded to the scenarios of Terry responded that they believed their

students would be likely to make sure Terry was included in the group work, but there

was little mentioned of advocating or supporting Terry on an emotional level. When

comparing student and teacher responses to the scenario involving Terry, 100% of the

teachers believed their students would not ask Terry's thoughts or opinions about the

work (see Figure 5). This creates an interesting connection to the teachers' ideas of

advocating for Terry as they responded that the best way to advocate for Terry was to

ensure he was integrated into the group. As teachers believe students would not ask for

his thoughts or opinions on the work, then teachers believe they can advocate for Terry

be ensuring their student include Terry. Much like the student respondents, the fact that

teachers had the information that Pat was a student with Down syndrome versus Terry

simply having a "disability" seemed to make for responses that suggested the students

would be more likely to support and advocate for Terry. This again suggests that the

more information the teachers had regarding the specific diagnosis meant that teachers

believed their students would be likely to support Pat despite the mild to moderate

intellectual disability that is associated with the diagnosis of Down syndrome.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Reflection, and Recommendations

Overview

The researcher explored students', teachers', and parents' perceptions of students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities by presenting participants with fictitious scenarios about a student with Down syndrome and a student with a disability being excluded from an educational activity. Students were asked to respond to these scenarios about how they would act in this situation where a student was being excluded from the activity; in the case of the teacher and parent scenarios, the respondents were asked how they perceive their own students responding to the scenario. The questions asked of the respondents were aligned to the research site's High School Character Standards because at its core, this research project was designed to explore how these respondents perceived themselves and their own character, and how the adults perceived their students and their students character when faced with a situation where a student with a disability is being actively excluded from the learning community. Overall, student responses indicated that students perceived themselves as more likely to include and advocate for the student with Down syndrome than the student with a non-specific disability. Teacher responses also indicated that they perceived students more likely to include and advocate for the student with Down syndrome than the student with the non-specific disability. When comparing student and teacher responses, students perceived themselves more likely to include and advocate for the student with Down syndrome than teachers believed, and students perceived themselves as more likely to include and advocate for the student with a non-specific disability than the teachers believed.

Student Responses to "Pat," the Student with Down Syndrome

Students who responded to the scenario regarding Pat perceived themselves as overall likely to ensure Pat was included in the group work, that Pat found opportunities to work to his strengths, as well as advocate for Pat in ways such as speaking to other members of the group in order to help them understand why Pat should be included in the group work. Many of the student short-answer responses included how Pat should be treated like any other member of the group, and that Pat should not be identified solely as a person with Down syndrome. Overall, the majority of students perceived themselves as likely to look past Pat's diagnosis and include him in the activity as they would any other student.

Research indicated that students with Down syndrome are likely to face exclusion from social and educational activities due to the association of an intellectual disability that is associated with Down syndrome, and this intellectual disability is identifiable due to the distinct physical characteristics of a person with Down syndrome (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016; Deakin, 2014; Potier & Reeves, 2016). Despite this research, student respondents to the scenario involving Pat that they would be very likely to include Pat in the group work and presentation to the whole class. The question that rises from this data is why students responded as 'likely' to include and advocate for Pat when research indicated that persons with Down syndrome are likely not to be induced or advocated for as much as their typically-developing peers (Andrade & Fukuda, 2016; Ferrara et al., 2015; Nijs & Maes, 2014; Semrau et al., 2015). It is possible that students responded that they were likely to include and advocate for Pat because Pat was identified as a student with Down syndrome, and because this diagnosis

was explicit in the scenario, the students who responded to this scenario envisioned Pat as a student who needed assistance with the work, or that Pat was a student that needed advocacy because Pat could not self-advocate. Research supported the idea that persons with intellectual disabilities are often seen by the general public as less capable than their peers at learning, and this belief may have led the students to respond that they would be likely to include Pat in the activity (Andrade & Fukuda, 2016; Ferrara et al., 2015; Nijs & Maes, 2014; Semrau et al., 2015). Students may have seen Pat as a student who in fact needed help from the group, or as a student who was incapable of advocating for himself to be included in the group, and because of this, students responded that they would be likely to advocate for Pat on Pat's behalf. Regardless, research has supported the idea that a student with Down syndrome is often likely to be excluded by their peers because of their peers' beliefs of what a student with Down syndrome is capable of; however, the students who responded to this scenario responded as likely to include Pat despite the diagnosis of Down syndrome (Marcone et al., 2016; Schwab, Huber et al., 2015).

Student Responses to "Terry," the Student with a Non-Specific Disability

In general, students who responded to the scenario involving Terry were mostly 'neutral'-to-'unlikely' to ensure Terry was included in the group work or to advocate for Terry. While there were some short-answer responses that some students would be 'likely' to include Terry, the majority of the student respondents did not have a strong 'likely' response that they would include or advocate for Terry. In written responses, students did indicate that they would help the group find work for Terry to complete, but there were not many responses indicating that students felt compelled to advocate for

Terry or defend his membership in the group to other group members like students who responded to the scenario involving Pat.

As Terry was described as a "student with a disability," this could have led to the respondents thinking that Terry was a student with any number of conditions or disabilities; Terry could be a student who utilized a wheelchair, or Terry could have had a more discreet disability such as ADD/ADHD, one that would not have been known unless Terry specifically disclosed his disability. Unlike the situation regarding Pat, there was no other information available to the respondents other than Terry had a disability; each individual respondent was free to envision Terry's condition, what Terry looked like physically, or how Terry possibly interacted with his peers. As research stated persons with disabilities are more likely to experience stigmatization, and persons with intellectual disabilities are more likely to experience these stigmatizations, which lead to exclusion (Deakin, 2014; McManus et al., 2010; Scior, 2011; Schalock, 2011; Wilson & Scior, 2013). Research also supported that persons without certain disabilities would prefer to minimize their contact with persons with intellectual disabilities, and if the students were indeed imagining Pat having an intellectual disability, this may have led to the overall reluctance to include Terry (Anderson & Bigby, 2015; McManus, Feyes, & Saucier, 2010; Siperstein et al., 2007; Wilson & Scior, 2013). Looking at these student responses to the scenario regarding Terry through the lens of these research findings, the respondents who received Terry's scenario could have imagined Terry having a severe intellectual disability which may have contributed to the neutral to unlikely responses from the students. The purposefully vague diagnosis of "student with a disability" may

have been detrimental to Terry as there was no other specific information to inform the reader of Terry's situation.

Teacher Responses to "Pat," the Student with Down Syndrome

When looking at teachers' responses to Pat, they believe their students would be 'likely' to invite Pat to the group and give Pat an opportunity to present with the group, but not as likely to actually include Pat in the work or listen to Pat's opinions and input. Basically teacher respondents were confident that their students would take actions that showed the students and their peers that they were being inviting and inclusive of Pat, but when it came time for the group to come together and work, the teachers were not as confident in their responses that the students would do so. Many teachers responded neutrally that their students would include Pat in the work, ask for Pat's input, and there were even teachers that responded 'unlikely' that their students would have positive attitudes about Pat being in the group at all. When asked how their students could advocate for Pat, most teachers' responses pointed to the idea that advocacy for Pat was making sure Pat had work to do in the group.

Research indicated that a teacher's academic achievement expectations for students with Down syndrome are strongly associated with the student's inclusion in a group and the student's success, and that a student with Down syndrome's peers beliefs about the abilities of the student with Down syndrome can also lead to the exclusion of the student with Down syndrome from educational and social activities (Marcone et al., 2016; Schwab et al., 2015). The question the teachers were asked was whether or not they believed their students would be inclusive of Pat, and not necessarily how the teachers would work to ensure Pat's inclusion. In short answer responses, teachers did

not indicate any specific ways they believed their students could advocate for Pat or show empathy for him other than the teacher looking for volunteers to "buddy up" with Pat. Interestingly enough, research supported that it is not necessarily the amount of interactions that typically-developing students have with students with Down syndrome that work to counteract stigmas associated with the condition, rather the quality of interactions that typically-developing students have with students with Down syndrome that are most effective at counteracting stigmatizations (Andrade & Fukuda, 2016; McManus et al., 2010; Nijs & Maes, 2014; Scior, 2011). That being said, the more teachers can encourage or facilitate positive and meaningful interactions between their typically-developing students and students with Down syndrome can possibly work to counteract negative stigmatizations. The more teachers can facilitate these interactions, the more opportunities typically-developing students have to interact with students with Down syndrome, and the more opportunities to have positive and meaningful interactions with students with Down syndrome.

Teacher Responses to "Terry," the Student with a Non-Specific Disability

Much like student responses, teachers believed their students would be 'neutral' to 'unlikely' to include Terry in the group activity or find meaningful work for Terry to do once in the group. Most of the teachers written responses to short-answer questions involved working with the typically-developing students to encourage them to "be patient" with Terry, and even to create special jobs for Terry to do. The idea of "finding special jobs" for Terry to complete is an interesting point and worth further examination to uncover what teachers mean by "special jobs" for Terry. Are teachers envisioning creating tasks for Terry other than what was originally designed for the lesson, or perhaps

supplementing the original lesson design with portions of the activity modified for Terry's skills and abilities? Regardless, the simple fact that Terry is described as "a student with a disability" led some teacher respondents to think that portions of the lesson or activity may have to be specially designed for a "student with a disability" to complete with no knowledge of what the disability may entail. As stated when discussing student responses to the scenario regarding Terry, Terry could be a student who utilizes a wheelchair, or perhaps had a non-intellectual disability, but this was intentionally non-specific. Regardless, the teacher responses gravitated to Terry's disability necessitating some kind of modification for Terry to complete the work.

Research stated that and educator's belief in the potential academic achievement of a student with a disability can affect the student's ability to achieve, and while that achievement may not be a the same level as the student's typically-developing peers, the achievement is at a level greater than what the student with a disability could experience in a non-inclusive setting (Burke & Sass, 2013; Evans, 2015; Hudson et al., 2014; Nijs & Maes, 2014; Rubies-Davis & Rosenthal, 2016). In the case of Terry, teachers do not necessarily look to exclude Terry from the activity, but they do not necessarily believe students would be likely to include Terry on their own. Again, teachers' responses indicate that advocacy and inclusion for Terry included strategies such as finding Terry "special jobs" for him to complete, which may also offer insight as to what teachers' expect Terry's or other students with disabilities' academic achievement to be.

Comparing Student Responses to the Scenario Regarding "Pat" and Student

Responses to the Scenario Regarding "Terry"

Overall, students responded as more likely to be inclusive of Pat than they were Terry, and the only distinct difference between the two scenarios was that Pat was given the specific diagnosis of Down syndrome. As stated in Chapter Two, a diagnosis of Down syndrome can come with a litany of presuppositions and stigmatizations of the person with Down syndrome, including the person's inability to associate with peers appropriately, their inability to contribute meaningfully to a group in an educational setting, and intellectual disability (Enea-Drapeau et al., 2012; Marcone et al., 2016; Marcone, Esposito, & Caputo, 2016; Schwab et al., 2015; Schwab, Gebhardt et al., 2015; Schwab, Huber et al., 2015). Despite this, students indicated that they would be more likely to include Pat rather than Terry, which is especially interesting as the scenario described group work, and again, research indicated a stigmatization against persons with Down syndrome and their ability to interact appropriately with peers and contribute meaningfully to a group (Enea-Drapeau et al., 2012; Marcone et al., 2016; Schwab, Gebhardt et al., 2015; Schwab, Hessels et al., 2015; Schwab, Huber et al., 2015).

As the only difference between the two scenarios was the specificity of Pat's disability and Terry's was not, perhaps the reason for students responding more favorable to Pat than Terry is that the students who responded to the scenario involving Pat are fully aware of what inviting a student with Down syndrome to their group would entail, versus the students who invited Terry to their group. As Terry's condition was completely non-specific, students who responded to Terry's situation could not possibly know what inviting Terry to the group would do to the group dynamic or what it could

mean for the overall achievement and productivity of the group. As research stated persons with intellectual disabilities are more likely to experience exclusion than persons with other forms of disabilities. It is quite possible that students who responded to the situation regarding Terry saw Terry as intellectually disabled, and possibly severely, which may have led to students being less likely to include Terry as compared to students who responded to the scenario with Pat (Deakin, 2014; Scior, 2011; Schalock, 2011).

In the case of Pat's scenario, there are some "positive" stigmas associated with Down syndrome, some of which include persons with Down syndrome being exceptional friendly and outgoing and having am overall happy disposition (Enea-Drapeau et al., 2012; Marcone et al., 2016; Schwab, Huber et al., 2015). Students who responded to Pat's scenario may have been influence by these presuppositions and despite the possible negative suppositions about Pat being in the group, students who responded to Pat's situation may have been influenced by the positive presuppositions which led them to respond favorably to Pat. Since nothing was known about Terry and Terry's "disability," there was no room for students who responded to the scenario to have any specific knowledge of what Terry could bring to the group, unlike the scenario regarding Pat. Even though the condition of Down syndrome comes with certain stigmas regarding an individual's ability, there are also stigmas associated with the condition that could be seen as favorable to typically-developing persons who interact with persons with Down syndrome.

There is also the possibility that students who received the scenario regarding Pat had a mindset of lower academic expectations for Pat because of the Down syndrome, and students believed that Pat would need as much assistance as they could afford him.

Students may have been especially welcoming of Pat because they believed Pat would be unable to complete the work by himself, and Pat would need support and advocacy in order to achieve academically. Furthermore, as Pat has Down syndrome, Pat has a very visible disability, and students may have responded positively to Pat in order to be visible advocates themselves for a person with a disability. In the modern era of inclusion for all students of various abilities, it is reasonable to conclude that a student would not want to been viewed by a teacher or peers of being exclusive of another student with a known disability, particularly a highly visible disability such as Down syndrome.

Comparing Student and Teacher Responses to the Scenario Regarding "Pat"

While both teacher and students responded as more likely to be inclusive and supportive of Pat more than those who responded to the scenario regarding Terry, students believed they would be more inclusive and supportive of Pat than the teachers believed the students would be. In fact, the differences between the two groups are relatively large. All student responses to the short answer questions were either "very likely" or "likely," while the majority of the teacher responses were "neutral," and even a small number of "unlikely" responses. The question that arises from these results is why teachers believe their students would be less likely to be inclusive and supportive of a student with Down syndrome when students believe that they would be supportive and inclusive of a student with Down syndrome.

As discussed in Chapter Two, mandatory inclusion has only been in public schools since 1975, and the current model of inclusion, the model put forth when EAHCA became IDEA, has only been in existence since 1990 (Public Law 94-142, 1975, EAHCA). It was not until 1990 that the idea of least –restrictive environment came into

effect, meaning that even from 1975-1990, students with disabilities may not have been included in the general education setting. In 2017, the U.S. Department of Education found the average age of an American public school educator was 42 years (Loewus, 2017). Using this statistic, today's average American teacher was in high school from approximately 1991 to 1995, only 1 to 5 years after EAHCA became IDEA, introducing the most recent models of inclusion. For today's average teacher, their own exposure to students with disabilities when they were students themselves is likely to be quite limited. It is safe to assume that many of today's average American teachers were not educated in a setting where they interacted with students with disabilities, or any significant disability. As outlined in Chapter Two, a typically-developing person's ideas or mindset about the abilities of persons with disabilities can be greatly influenced by interactions they have with persons with disabilities, as well as high-quality interactions with person with disabilities (Andrade & Fukuda, 2016; McManus et al., 2010; Kauffman & Bader, 2013; Nijs & Maes, 2014; Scior, 2011). If today's modern American teachers were only in high school at the advent of modern inclusion, it is very likely they had few interactions with students with disabilities, and likely not many high-quality interactions with students with disabilities. In short, it is reasonable to see that today's modern American teacher may not believe students to be inclusive or supportive of a student like Pat as they may not have had opportunities to build meaningful relationships with students like Pat when they themselves were of high-school age.

Today's average American public high school student has known nothing but an environment of inclusion. Since 1990, inclusion has been in practice for almost 30 years, so today's typically-developing high school student is more likely to have had

opportunities to have quality interactions with students with disabilities, and have even had the chance to experience his or her entire public education with a cohort of students with disabilities, affording typically-developing students the opportunity to build relationships over time with students with disabilities. The fact that modern American public high school students have been educated in an environment where inclusion was mandated, and today's modern American high school educator was at the end of their public education just as modern inclusion began could be a factor in the differences between the two groups' responses.

Comparing Teacher Responses to the Scenario Regarding "Pat" and Teacher Responses to the Scenario Regarding "Terry"

Much like when comparing the student responses to Pat and Terry, there is a significant difference in teacher responses to Pat and Terry in that teachers believed their students would be far less likely to include and advocate for Pat than they would Terry. There were far more 'unlikely' responses for the scenario involving Terry than for the scenario involving Pat. In fact, for the scenario regarding Pat, teachers believed their students would be 'unlikely' only for the questions about whether or not they believed students would ask Pat's opinions about the work, whereas for the scenario involving Terry, teachers believed their student would be 'unlikely' to encourage other group members to invite Terry, to have a positive attitude about Terry being involved, to ensure Terry was included in a meaningful way, and to ensure Terry was part of the presentation. Furthermore, in the short-answer questions, the teachers responded in greater detail about ways their students could advocate for Pat, and spoke more to making sure Pat's emotional needs were considered than the scenario regarding Terry, and also

included responses about making sure Pat has work that highlighted his strengths as compared to the scenario involving Terry where teachers mentioned creating "special jobs" for Terry to complete.

Clearly, teachers believe their students would be far more inclusive of Pat than Terry. Much like students responses, this could be because of the knowledge of Pat's disability. Again, as Pat's condition of Down syndrome is revealed in the scenario, the teachers could be associating the "positive" stigmas of Down syndrome to Pat, and also believe their students would have these stigmas in mind, and therefore be more willing to include Pat in the work (Enea-Drapeau et al., 2012; Marcone et al., 2016; Schwab, Huber et al., 2015). Teachers may also assume that their students would not want to be viewed as being exclusive of a student with a visible disability, and therefore responded that their students would be more likely to be inclusive of Pat than Terry. It is also possible that teachers believe that their students viewed Pat as needing a large amount of assistance because of Pat's Down syndrome, and would therefore be inclusive of Pat because of this.

In terms of Terry, it appears the non-specificity of the disability again contributed to teachers responding more 'unlikely' than the scenario involving Pat. Again, there is no information that would state whether Terry had a visible component to the disability, or if the disability was physical or intellectual in nature. It is fair to assume that since the scenario stated that Terry "was a student with a disability" and that Terry was being excluded, teachers would assume that there was some component of the disability that visibly identified Terry as having a disability and would lead to Terry's exclusion. Again, there was no knowledge of what that component might be. Research stated that

persons with intellectual disabilities are far more likely to experience social exclusion than persons with physical disabilities, and in comparing the two groups of responses, teachers believe students would be more likely to exclude the "student with a disability" than the student with Down syndrome, so it is likely that teachers envision Terry having an intellectual disability in some way (Deakin, 2014; Scior, 2011; Schalock, 2011; McManus et al., 2010; Wilson & Scior, 2013). In any case, much like the student responses, teachers believed their students would be far more likely to be inclusive of Pat than Terry, and the only difference in the two scenarios is the knowledge that Pat has Down syndrome and Terry has a "disability."

Comparing Student and Teacher Responses to the Scenario Regarding "Terry"

Both teachers and student responded as more "unlikely" to be inclusive of Terry as they would be of Pat, and like in previous comparisons, teachers believed their students would be even less likely to include Terry than student responses indicated. Students responded as 'very likely' and 'likely' on the Likert scale questions for Terry, and while the response rate was lower for Terry than for Pat, no teacher responded as 'very likely' for any question regarding Terry, and only 33.3% of teachers responded as 'likely' for a questions regarding Terry, specifically as to how likely their students would be in ensure Terry had a part of the presentation. Both student and teacher short-answer responses included finding work for Terry to do, but there was little mention of making sure Terry's emotional needs or concerns were met by the group as compared to responses about Pat, as students and teachers both mentioned being advocates for Pat to other group members should the need arise.

As in previous comparisons, it would seem that the vagueness of Terry's disability lead to the responses being highly 'neutral' and 'unlikely.' Both teachers and students were free to envision whatever disability or condition of Terry's that came to mind upon reading that Terry had "a disability" and was being excluded by other groups. The scenario did not say that Terry was being excluded because of the disability only that Terry had a disability and was currently excluded from a group. In these scenarios, Terry could have theoretically been a student with ADHD or a specific learning disability in an area such as math; however, the responses to the scenario indicated that the groups of respondents envisioned Terry as having an intellectual disability of some degree based on the reluctance of the students and teachers to include Terry, and as persons with intellectual disabilities are more likely to be seen by their typically-developing peers as unable to contribute to things like group projects, which then increases their chances of being excluded (Andrade & Fukuda, 2016; Ferrara et al., 2015; Nijs & Maes, 2014; Semrau et al., 2015).

Recommendations for the Program

The researcher has recommendations for the research site, specifically regarding inclusion, inclusive practices, and how to promote high-quality interactions between typically-developing students and students with Down syndrome or students with disabilities in general. The responses from the scenarios highlighted some areas that the research site could improve upon regarding how inclusion is implemented in classrooms, as well as mindsets regarding students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities in general. Furthermore, responses in the scenarios regarding how to best advocate for Pat and Terry indicate that the research site may benefit from a better

understanding of what advocacy for students with disabilities truly entails. Finally, as the research site currently has classes in place that provide opportunities for high-quality interactions between typically-developing students and students with disabilities, it may be beneficial to extend that current program to include a variety of classes as the current program is limited to only two electives.

The starkest difference between the responses of the two scenarios can be attributed to the fact that the respondents clearly knew that Pat had Down syndrome. As Down syndrome is a well-known condition, the respondents to the scenario likely had a clear understanding of what Pat may or may not have been able to contribute to the group as well as what supports Pat may need for the group. As Terry was only described as a "student with a disability," there was far more ambiguity for this scenario, therefore respondents may have been unsure as to what Terry could contribute to the group and what supports Terry would need. For practical, real-world applications at the research site, it would appear that the more specific knowledge and understanding both typically-developing students and teachers have regarding a student and their disability, the more likely that student with a disability would be to experience meaningful inclusion. Of course, this is not without difficulties. Because of the Federal Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), clearly a teacher would not be able to disclose a student's disability to other members of the class. A teacher would likely have knowledge of a student's disability through an IEP, as well as knowledge and information as how best to support that student, but that teacher could not disclose that information to other students in the class. For this project, participants naturally knew more about Pat than they did Terry because of the clarity of Pat's disability, therefore, participants were likely more

knowledgeable of how to support Pat. The research site could look into how to better equip their teachers to inform and educate their typically-developing students about including students with disabilities in their daily work through universal practices, and how teachers can better work with professionals who specialize in working with students with Down syndrome and disabilities in order to better implement inclusion. While FERPA certainly precludes specifics about a student's disability from being disclosed to classmates, further education and implementation of universal best practices can certainly be introduced to the classroom setting.

Overall, the mindset about students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities presents the greatest hurdle to effective inclusion. The more the research site can do to change the mindset their typically-developing students and parents have regarding students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities, the more likely that effective inclusion will take place in the classroom, and the more likely students would be to attempt to include students with disabilities. The most effective way the research site could change the mindset of their typically-developing students have about students with disabilities is to increase the number of high-quality interactions typically developing students have with students with disabilities.

Currently, the research site has two classes in their schedule that pair typically-developing senior-level students with students with disabilities (e.g. Autism, intellectual disabilities, Down syndrome) in either a physical education class or a Family and Consumer Science class specifically constructed to that the typically-developing senior is paired with a student with a disability to support the student in class. These typically-developing students work with the students with disabilities for a full semester and have

opportunities to have quality interactions with these students and build meaningful relationships. These classes could serve as models for other subject areas and grade levels throughout the school, and the research site could explore implementing classes such as these throughout the schedule. Benefits to expanding these classes across the schedule include affording more students, both typically-developing and students with disabilities, opportunities to have meaningful interactions with each other, as well as having the students with disabilities being included in a broader scope than what is currently implemented. In the current model that the research site implements, there are only two individual sections of the physical education class and Family and Consumer Science class in the schedule, and these two classes are rather separate from the rest of the sections of their particular subject area due to the specialization of the class. For example, if a section of English 1 was built in this model, with a typically-developing senior that would work with a student with a disability in that class throughout the semester, then the student with a disability would be included in a general-education setting with peer support from a senior, and other typically-developing members of the class would have the opportunity to interact meaningfully with students with disabilities, build relationships with students with disabilities, and observe inclusion of and advocacy for a student with a disability by a peer, all of which can lead to the rethinking of negative stigmas of students with disabilities.

Recommendations for Future Research

For future research, the study should focus on examining why typically-developing students, teachers, and parents believed themselves or their students to be more or less likely to include students with disabilities in their academic activities. This

study currently focused on whether or not respondents would or would not be inclusive of a student with Down syndrome or a student with a disability, but did not explore why respondents answered the way they did. Further explorations should be made into the motivations of the respondents, exploration of the mindset of typically-developing students, teachers, and parents concerning their perceptions of the abilities of students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities.

This study focused on exploring the perceptions that typically-developing students, teachers, and parents have of students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities. The study should continue beyond exploring the perceptions into exploring the experiences, which lead to the perceptions of students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities. As research stated, quality experiences with persons with disabilities can lead to breakdown of stigmas associated with persons with disabilities, therefore qualifying experiences that respondents have with persons with disabilities and comparing those experiences with responses to the surveys may lend insight as to why participants respond to the scenarios accordingly.

Other studies should be conducted where specific disabilities are integrated into the fictitious scenarios presented to participant groups. As discussed earlier, the lack of specificity regarding Terry and Terry's disability may very well have influences the responses to his scenarios. Studies should be conducted to varying degrees of the inclusion of specific disability diagnoses in fictitious scenarios, and to compare those results to scenarios such as Terry's where the diagnosis is intentionally vague. There may be benefit in further studying how perceptions of persons with disabilities change

when participants are presented with more information regarding the student, the disability, and what may be associated with disability.

As teachers and students have a direct influence on the inclusion or exclusion of students with disabilities, and that influence further impacts the student's opportunities to grow, learn, and develop, studies should continue to explore the motivations behind mindsets for typically-developing students, teachers, and parents toward students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities, including what typically-developing students, teachers, and parents would need in order to improve perceptions they have about students with Down syndrome and students with disabilities.

Conclusion

In the modern age of inclusion, students of varying abilities are having more and more opportunities to interact with each other, learn together, learn from each other, and grow and develop in an inclusive environment. What modern educators, students, and families need to be aware of is that our modern inclusive model is still relatively new, and the students this model is designed to serve need the same level of advocacy, respect, and faith in their abilities from their teachers and peers as any other student in the classroom.

Shifting traditional mental models is not any easy thing to do, and it is especially difficult to shift our mental models concerning people. This is especially complicated when the general public is asked to shift their mental models about members of society that have long been excluded, thought poorly of, and have had to endure laws that purposely kept them segregated from their peers. The first step for anyone to shift why they think is to better understand their own mental processes, and the joint effort of

researchers and educators can work together to create a better future educational

environment for all learners, and become truly inclusive of students of varying abilities.

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Appendix A

Parkway Character Standards

Character Competency 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.

SELF-MANAGEMENT — Managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals.

SELF-AWARENESS — Recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and limitations.

Why this competency is important: Several key sets of skills and attitudes provide a strong foundation for achieving school and life success. One involves knowing your emotions, how to manage them, and ways to express them constructively. This enables one to handle stress, control impulses, and motivate oneself to *persevere* in overcoming obstacles to goal achievement. A related set of skills involves accurately assessing your abilities and interests, building strengths, and making effective use of family, school, and community resources. Finally, it is critical for students to be able to establish and monitor their progress toward achieving academic and personal goals.

Character Standard I	Early Childhood (EC)	Early Elementary (EE)	Late Elementary (LE)	Middle (M)	Early H.S. (EHS)	Late H.S. (LHS)
A. Identify and manage one's emotions and behavior.	IA.1a. Express feelings through appropriate gestures, actions and language.	IA.1a. Recognize and accurately label emotions and how they are linked to behavior.	IA.2a. Describe a range of emotions and the situations that cause them.	IA.3a. Analyze factors that create stress or motivate successful performance.	IA.4a. Analyze how thoughts and emotions affect decision making and responsible behavior.	IA.5a. Evaluate how expressing one's emotions in different situations affects others.
	IA.1b. Emerging control of impulsive behavior.	IA.1b. Demonstrate control of impulsive behavior.	IA.2b. Describe and demonstrate ways to express emotions in a socially acceptable manner.	IA.3b. Apply strategies to manage stress and to motivate successful performance.	IA.4b. Generate ways to develop more positive attitudes.	IA.5b. Evaluate how expressing more positive attitudes influences others.

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Character Standards

Character Competency 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.

Character Standard 1	Early Childhood (EC)	Early Elementary (EE)	Late Elementary (LE)	Middle (M)	Early H.S. (EHS)	Late H.S. (LHS)
B. Recognize personal qualities and external supports.	1B.1a. Develop personal preferences, expresses needs and wants, likes and dislikes.	1B.1a. Identify one's likes and dislikes, needs and desires, strengths and challenges.	1B.2a. Describe personal skills and interests that one wants to develop.	1B.3a. Analyze how personal qualities influence choices and success.	1B.4a. Set priorities in building on strengths and identifying areas for improvement.	1B.5a. Implement a plan to build on a need, strength, meet a need, or address a challenge.
	1B.1b. Shows curiosity. Expresses interest in people.	1B.1b. Identify family, peer, school, and community strengths.	1B.2b. Explain how family members, peers, school personnel, and community members can support school success and responsible behavior.	1B.3b. Analyze how making use of school and community supports and opportunities can contribute to school and life success.	1B.4b. Analyze how positive adult role models and support systems contribute to school and life success.	1B.5b. Evaluate how developing interests and filling useful roles support school and life success.
C. Demonstrate skills related to achieving personal and academic goals.	1C.1a. Shows curiosity. Shows interest in learning new things and trying new experiences.	1C.1a. Describe why school is important in helping students achieve personal goals.	1C.2a. Describe the steps in setting and working toward goal achievement.	1C.3a. Set a short-term goal and make a plan for achieving it.	1C.4a. Identify strategies to make use of resources and overcome obstacles to achieve goals.	1C.5a. Set a post-secondary goal with action steps, timeframes, and criteria for evaluating achievement.
	1C.1b. Takes initiative and begins to make choices.	1C.1b. Identify goals for academic success and classroom behavior.	1C.2b. Monitor progress on achieving a short-term personal goal.	1C.3b. Analyze why one achieved or did not achieve a goal.	1C.4b. Apply strategies to overcome obstacles to goal achievement.	1C.5b. Monitor progress toward achieving a goal, and evaluate one's performance against criteria.

Parkway Character Standards

Character Competency II: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.		Why this competency is important: Building and maintaining positive relationships with others are central to success in school and life and require the ability to *recognize the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others,* including those different from one's own. In addition, establishing positive peer, family, and work relationships requires skills in cooperating, communicating respectfully, and constructively resolving conflicts with others.				

Character Standard II	Early Childhood (EC)	Early Elementary (EE)	Late Elementary (LE)	Middle (M)	Early H.S. (EHS)	Late H.S. (LHS)
A: Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others.	IIA.1a. Begins to examine a situation from another person's perspective.	IIA.1a. Recognize that others may experience situations differently from oneself.	IIA.2a. Identify verbal, physical, and situational cues that indicate how others may feel.	IIA.3a. Predict others' feelings and perspectives in a variety of situations.	IIA.4a. Analyze similarities and differences between one's own and others' perspectives.	IIA.5a. Demonstrate how to express understanding of those who hold different opinions.
	IIA.1b. Listens while others are speaking. Respects the personal space of others.	IIA.1b. Use listening skills to identify the feelings and perspectives of others.	IIA.2b. Describe the expressed feelings and perspectives of others.	IIA.3b. Analyze how one's behavior may affect others.	IIA.4b. Use conversation skills to understand others' feelings and perspectives.	IIA.5b. Demonstrate ways to express empathy for others.
B: Recognize individual and group similarities and differences.	IIB.1a. Knowledge of Others. Respects similarities and differences among people.	IIB.1a. Describe the ways that people are similar and different.	IIB.2a. Identify differences among and contributions of various social and cultural groups.	IIB.3a. Explain how individual, social, and cultural differences may increase vulnerability to bullying and identify ways to address it.	IIB.4a. Analyze the origins and negative effects of stereotyping and prejudice.	IIB.5a. Evaluate strategies for being respectful of others and opposing stereotyping and prejudice.
		IIB.1b. Describe positive qualities in others.	IIB.2b. Demonstrate how to work effectively with those who are different from oneself.	IIB.3b. Analyze the effects of taking action to oppose bullying based on individual and group differences.	IIB.4b. Demonstrate respect for individuals from different social and cultural groups.	IIB.5b. Evaluate how advocacy for the rights of others contributes to the common good.

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Parkway School District, Adapted from Illinois State Social Emotional Learning Standards – 6/4/14

Parkway Character Standards

Character Competency II: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.

Character Standard II	Early Childhood (EC)	Early Elementary (EE)	Late Elementary (LE)	Middle (M)	Early H.S. (EHS)	Late H.S. (LHS)
C: Use all forms of communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.	IIC.1a. Developing knowledge of others. Works cooperatively with children and adults.	IIC.2a. Identify ways to work and play well with others.	IIC.3a. Describe approaches for making and keeping friends.	IIC.3a. Analyze ways to establish positive relationships with others.	IIC.4a. Evaluate the effects of requesting support from and providing support to others.	IIC.5a. Evaluate the application of communication and social skills in daily interactions with peers, teachers, and families.
	IIC.1b. Participates successfully as a member of a group. Plays and participates cooperatively with others.	IIC.2b. Demonstrate appropriate social and classroom behavior.	IIC.2b. Analyze ways to work effectively in groups.	IIC.3b. Demonstrate cooperation and teamwork to promote group effectiveness.	IIC.4b. Evaluate one's contribution in groups as a member and leader.	IIC.5b. Plan, implement, and evaluate participation in a group project.
D. Demonstrate an Ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.		IID.1a. Recognizes problems and conflicts commonly experienced by peers. *	IID.2a. Describe causes and consequences of conflicts.	IID.3a. Evaluate strategies for preventing and resolving interpersonal problems.	IID.4a. Analyze how listening and talking accurately help in resolving conflicts.	IID.5a. Evaluate the effects of using negotiation skills to reach win-win solutions.
	IID.1b. Resolves conflicts with others with adult assistant. Attempts to solve problems without adult help	IID.1b. Identify approaches to resolving conflicts with adult conflicts constructively.	IID.2b. Apply constructive approaches in resolving conflicts.	IID.3b. Define unhealthy peer pressure and evaluate strategies for resisting it.	IID.4b. Analyze how conflict-resolution skills contribute to work within a group.	IID.5b. Evaluate current conflict-resolution skills and plan how to improve them.

Character Standards

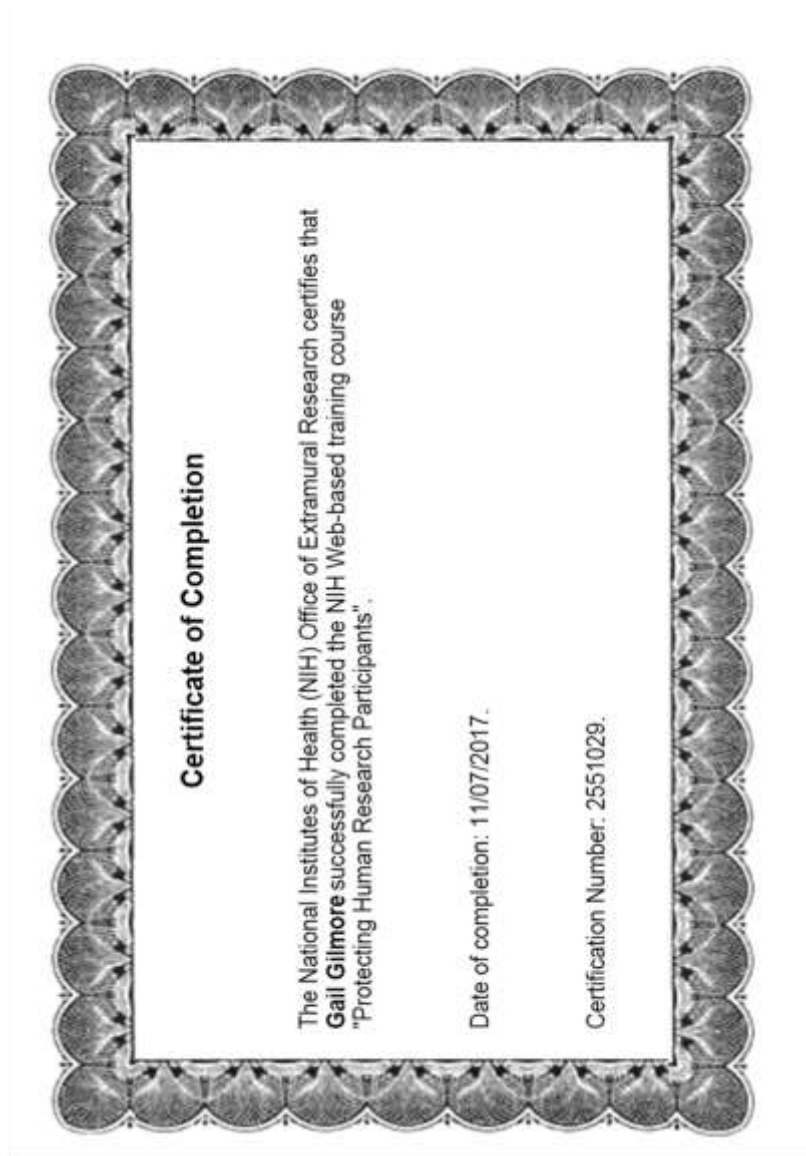| Character Competency III: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.	RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING	Why this competency is important: Promoting one's own health, avoiding risky behaviors, dealing honestly and fairly with others, and contributing to the good of one's classroom, school, family, community, and environment are essential to citizenship in a democratic society. Achieving these outcomes requires an ability to make decisions and *solve problems* on the basis of accurately defining the decisions to be made, generating alternative solutions, anticipating the consequences of each, and evaluating and learning from one's decision making.					
Character Standard III	**Early Childhood (EC)**	**Early Elementary (EE)**	**Late Elementary (LE)**	**Middle (M)**	**Early H.S. (EHS)**	**Late H.S. (LHS)**
A: Consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions.	IIIA.1a. Begins to examine situation from another's perspective. Expresses empathy.	IIIA.1a. Explain why unprovoked acts that hurt others are wrong.	IIIA.2a. Demonstrate the ability to respect the rights of self and others.	IIIA.3a. Evaluate how honesty, respect, fairness, and compassion enable one to take the needs of others into account when making decisions.	IIIA.4a. Demonstrate personal responsibility in making ethical decisions.	IIIA.5a. Apply ethical reasoning to evaluate societal practices.
	IIIA.1b. Begins to consider others wants and needs.	IIIA.1b. Identify social norms and safety considerations that guide behavior.	IIIA.2b. Demonstrate knowledge of how social norms affect decision making and behavior.	IIIA.3b. Analyze the reasons for school and societal rules.	IIIA.4b. Evaluate how social norms and the expectations of authority influence personal decisions and actions.	IIIA.5b. Examine how the norms of different societies and cultures influence their members' decisions and behaviors.

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Character Competency III: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

Parkway Character Standards

Character Standard III	Early Childhood (EC)	Early Elementary (EE)	Late Elementary (LE)	Middle (M)	Early H.S. (EHS)	Late H.S. (LHS)
B: Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.		IIIB.1a. Identify a range of decisions that students make at school.	IIIB.2a. Identify and apply the steps of systematic decision making.	IIIB.3a. Analyze how decision-making skills improve study habits and academic performance.	IIIB.4a. Evaluate personal abilities to gather information, generate alternatives, and anticipate the consequences of decisions.	IIIB.5a. Analyze how present decision making affects college and career choices.
	IIIB.1b. Knowledge of others, respects the rights of others, listens, takes turns, follows rules and respects personal space.	IIIB.1b. Make positive choices when interacting with classmates.	IIIB.2b. Generate alternative solutions and evaluate their consequences for a range of academic and social situations.	IIIB.3b. Evaluate strategies for resisting pressures to engage in unsafe or unethical activities.	IIIB.4b. Apply decision-making skills to establish responsible social and work relationships.	IIIB.5b. Evaluate how responsible decision making affects interpersonal and group relationships.
C. Contribute to the well-being of one's school and community.	IIIC.1a. Participates successfully as a member of a group.	IIIC.1a. Identify and perform roles that contribute to one's classroom.	IIIC.2a. Identify and perform roles that contribute to the school community.	IIIC.3a. Evaluate one's participation in efforts to address an identified school need.	IIIC.4a. Plan, implement, and evaluate one's participation in activities and organizations that improve school climate.	IIIC.5a. Work cooperatively with others to plan, implement, and evaluate a project to meet an identified school need.
	IIIC.1b. Identifies self as a member of a group, refers to family and classroom community.	IIIC.1b. Identify and perform roles that contribute to one's family.	IIIC.2b. Identify and perform roles that contribute to one's local community.	IIIC.3b. Evaluate one's participation in efforts to address an identified need in one's local community.	IIIC.4b. Plan, implement, and evaluate one's participation in a group effort to contribute to one's local community.	IIIC.5b. Work cooperatively with others to plan, implement, and evaluate a project that addresses an identified need in the broader community.

Parkway School District, Adapted from Illinois State Social Emotional Learning Standards— 6/4/14

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Gail Gilmore** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 11/07/2017.

Certification Number: 2551029.

Appendix B

Appendix C

Informational Email and Consent Form for Parents of Typically-Developing

Students

"Dear _____ Guardian,

A staff member at _____ will be conducting research this year at North High, and the researcher needs your help. The research project is an exploration of students', teachers', and parents' perceptions about character development of students. The researcher needs to survey teachers in order to gather data about this project. You are a parent of a student in Parkway North, and the researcher will like you to participate in the study, and to gather data from both you. The data would be gathered from an online survey which is expected to take 15-20 minutes each to complete.

If you would be willing to participate, please find attached to this email a document titled "Adult Consent Form." If you could fill out the form and return it to this email address, we would be greatly appreciated. Once you have given your consent to participate, a staff member will be in contact to schedule the interview with you, and the survey will be sent to your email near the end of the semester.

Thank you so much for your assistance with this research project. We truly believe that what we learn during this project will help all of our students learn.

Regards,

Greg Wagener

Coordinator of Student Discipline, _____ School District

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form

A qualitative exploration of perceptions of Down syndrome and student

disabilities in a suburban Midwest high school

Before reading this consent for, please know:

- Your decision to participate is your choice
- You will have time to think about the study
- You will be able to withdraw from this study at any time
- You are free to ask questions about the study at any time

After reading this consent form, we hope that you will know:

- Why we are conducting this study
- What you will be required to do
- What are the possible risks and benefits of the study
- What alternatives are available, if the study involves treatment or therapy
- What to do if you have questions or concerns during the study

---

Basic information about this study:

- We are interested in learning about students', teachers', and parents' perceptions of Down syndrome and student disabilities.   .
- You will participate in a brief interview and complete an email survey.
- Risks of participation include a loss of time to complete the interview and survey

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form-Adult

A qualitative exploration of perceptions of Down syndrome and student

disabilities in a suburban Midwest high school

You are asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Greg Wagener under the guidance of Dr. Robyne Elder at Lindenwood University. Being in a research study is voluntary, and you are free to stop at any time. Before you choose to participate, you are free to discuss this research study with family, friends, or a physician. Do not feel like you must join this study until all of your questions or concerns are answered. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form.

Why is this research being conducted?
We are doing this study to learn about the character development of students. We will be asking about 45 to 70 other people to answer these questions.

What am I being asked to do?
Participants will be asked to be interviewed near the end of the semester about their perceptions of students' character development. Participants will also be emailed a survey with five open-ended questions to answer and send back to the research team.

How long will I be in this study?

You will be in this study for one semester.

Who is supporting this study?

There is no outside funding provided for this research.

What are the risks of this study?

- Privacy and Confidentiality**:**

    We will not be collecting any information that will identify you.

We will be collecting data from you using the internet. We take every reasonable effort to maintain security. Survey responses will be kept on a secure Google Drive folder. It is always possible that information during this research study may be captured and used by others not associated with this study.

What are the benefits of this study?

You will receive no direct benefits for completing this survey. We hope what we learn may benefit other people in the future.

What if I do not choose to participate in this research?

It is always your choice to participate in this study. You may withdraw at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions or perform tasks that make you uncomfortable. If you decided to withdraw, you will not receive any penalty or loss of benefits. If you would like to withdraw from a study, please use the contact information found at the end of this form.

What if new information becomes available about the study?

During the course of this study, we may find information that could be important to you and your decision to participate in this research. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

How will you keep my information private?

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data are: members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, representatives of state or federal agencies.

How can I withdraw from this study?

Notify the research immediately if you would like to withdraw from this research study.

Who can I contact with questions or concerns?

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board Director, Michael Leary, at (636) 949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu. You can contact the researcher, Greg Wagener

directly at 314-415-5003 or gmw871@lindenwood.edu. You may also contact Dr. Robyn Elder at relder@lindenwood.edu

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____
_____
Participant's Signature   **Date**

_____
Participant's Printed Name

_____
_____
Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee   **Date**

_____
Investigator or Designee Printed Name

Appendix D

Informational Email and Consent Form for Teachers

"Dear <Teacher's Name>,

A staff member at _____ will be conducting research this year at North High, and the researcher needs your help. The research project is an exploration of students', teachers', and parents' perceptions about character development of students. The researcher needs to survey teachers in order to gather data about this project. You are a teacher in _____ North, and the researcher will like you to participate in the study, and to gather data from both you and your class. The data would be gathered from an online survey which is expected to take 15-20 minutes each to complete.

If you would be willing to participate, please find attached to this email a document titled "Adult Consent Form." If you could fill out the form and return it to this email address, we would be greatly appreciated. Once you have given your consent to participate, a staff member will be in contact to schedule the interview with you, and the survey will be sent to your email near the end of the semester.

Thank you so much for your assistance with this research project. We truly believe that what we learn during this project will help all of our students learn.

Regards,

Greg Wagener

Coordinator of Student Discipline, _____ School District

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form

A qualitative exploration of perceptions of Down syndrome and student

disabilities in a suburban Midwest high school

Before reading this consent for, please know:

- Your decision to participate is your choice
- You will have time to think about the study
- You will be able to withdraw from this study at any time
- You are free to ask questions about the study at any time

After reading this consent form, we hope that you will know:

- Why we are conducting this study
- What you will be required to do
- What are the possible risks and benefits of the study
- What alternatives are available, if the study involves treatment or therapy
- What to do if you have questions or concerns during the study

---

Basic information about this study:

- We are interested in learning about students', teachers', and parents' perceptions of Down syndrome and student disabilities.   .
- You will participate in a brief interview and complete an email survey.
- Risks of participation include a loss of time to complete the interview and survey

---

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form-Adult

A qualitative exploration of perceptions of Down syndrome and student disabilities in a suburban Midwest high school

You are asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Greg Wagener under the guidance of Dr. Robyne Elder at Lindenwood University. Being in a research study is voluntary, and you are free to stop at any time. Before you choose to participate, you are free to discuss this research study with family, friends, or a physician. Do not feel like you must join this study until all of your questions or concerns are answered. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form.

Why is this research being conducted?
We are doing this study to learn about the character development of students. We will be asking about 45 to 70 other people to answer these questions.

What am I being asked to do?
Participants will be asked to be interviewed near the end of the semester about their perceptions of students' character development. Participants will also be emailed a survey with five open-ended questions to answer and send back to the research team.

How long will I be in this study?

You will be in this study for one semester.

Who is supporting this study?

There is no outside funding provided for this research.

What are the risks of this study?

- Privacy and Confidentiality**:**

     We will not be collecting any information that will identify you.

     We will be collecting data from you using the internet. We take every reasonable effort to maintain security. Survey responses will be kept on a secure Google Drive folder. It is always possible that information during

this research study may be captured and used by others not associated with this study.

What are the benefits of this study?

You will receive no direct benefits for completing this survey. We hope what we learn may benefit other people in the future.

What if I do not choose to participate in this research?

It is always your choice to participate in this study. You may withdraw at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions or perform tasks that make you uncomfortable. If you decided to withdraw, you will not receive any penalty or loss of benefits. If you would like to withdraw from a study, please use the contact information found at the end of this form.

What if new information becomes available about the study?

During the course of this study, we may find information that could be important to you and your decision to participate in this research. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

How will you keep my information private?

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data are: members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, representatives of state or federal agencies.

How can I withdraw from this study?

Notify the research immediately if you would like to withdraw from this research study.

Who can I contact with questions or concerns?

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board Director, Michael Leary, at (636) 949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu. You can contact the researcher, Greg Wagener directly at 314-415-5003 or gmw871@lindenwood.edu. You may also contact Dr. Robyn Elder at relder@lindenwood.edu

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____
_____
Participant's Signature   **Date**

_____
Participant's Printed Name

_____
_____
Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee   **Date**

_____
Investigator or Designee Printed Name

Appendix E

Informational Email, Guardian Consent Form, and Minor Assent Form for

Students

"Dear North High Student,

A staff member at _____ Schools will be conducting research this year at North High, and the researcher needs your help. The research project is an exploration of students', teachers', and parents' perceptions about character development of students. The researcher needs to survey the students in order to gather data about this project. You have been randomly selected, and the researcher will like you to participate in the study, and to gather data from you. The data would be gathered from an online survey which is expected to take 15-20 minutes each to complete.

The researcher will need permission from your guardian for you to participate, and attached to this email is a form for you and your guardian to fill it out if you choose to participate. If you do, simply fill out and sign the form, and email it back to this email address. You can also print out a copy and return it to the main office at North High

Thank you so much for your assistance with this research project. We truly believe that what we learn during this project will help all of our students learn.

Regards,

Greg Wagener

Coordinator of Student Discipline, _____ School District

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form

A qualitative exploration of perceptions of Down syndrome and student
disabilities in a suburban Midwest high school

***Note: "You" in this form refers to the minor participant. If an activity or
requirement refers to the parent or guardian consenting on behalf of the
minor, this will be clearly indicated.***

Before reading this consent form, please know:
- Your decision to participate is your choice
- You will have time to think about the study
- You will be able to withdraw from this study at any time
- You are free to ask questions about the study at any time

After reading this consent form, we hope that you will know:
- Why we are conducting this study
- What you will be required to do
- What are the possible risks and benefits of the study
- What alternatives are available, if the study involves treatment or therapy
- What to do if you have questions or concerns during the study

---

Basic information about this study:

We are interested in learning about students', teachers', and parents' perceptions of

Down syndrome and student disabilities.

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form

A qualitative exploration of perceptions of Down syndrome and student disabilities in a suburban Midwest high school

You are asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Greg Wagener under the guidance of Dr. Robyne Elder at Lindenwood University. Being in a research study is voluntary, and you are free to stop at any time. Before you choose to participate, you are free to discuss this research study with family, friends, or a physician. Do not feel like you must join this study until all of your questions or concerns are answered. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form.

Why is this research being conducted?
We are doing this study to learn about the character development of students. We will be asking about 45 to 70 other people to answer these questions.

What am I being asked to do?
Participants will be asked to be interviewed near the end of the semester about their perceptions of students' character development. Participants will also be emailed a survey with five open-ended questions to answer and send back to the research team.

How long will I be in this study?
You will be in this study for one semester.

Who is supporting this study?
There is no outside funding provided for this research.

What are the risks of this study?
- Privacy and Confidentiality**:**
We will not be collecting any information that will identify you.
We will be collecting data from you using the internet. We take every reasonable effort to maintain security. Survey responses will be kept on a secure Google Drive folder. It is always possible that information during this research study may be captured and used by others not associated with this study.

What are the benefits of this study?
You will receive no direct benefits for completing this survey. We hope what we learn may benefit other people in the future.

What if I do not choose to participate in this research?
It is always your choice to participate in this study. You may withdraw at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions or perform tasks that make you uncomfortable. If you decided to withdraw, you will not receive any penalty or loss of benefits. If you would like to withdraw from a study, please use the contact information found at the end of this form.

What if new information becomes available about the study?
During the course of this study, we may find information that could be important to you and your decision to participate in this research. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

How will you keep my information private?
We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data are: members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, representatives of state or federal agencies.

How can I withdraw from this study?
Notify the research team immediately if you would like to withdraw from this research study.

Who can I contact with questions or concerns?
If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board Director, Michael Leary, at (636) 949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu. You can contact the researcher, Greg Wagener directly at 314-415-5003 or gmw871@lindenwood.edu. You may also contact Dr. Robyne Elder at relder@lindenwood.edu

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____

_____
Parent or Legally Authorized Representative's   Date
Signature

_____
Parent or Legally Authorized Representative's
Printed Name

_____

_____
Signature of Principle Investigator or Designee   Date

_____
Investigator or Designee Printed Name

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Assent Form (Minor)

What is research?

We are going to do a research study. A research study is when a researcher or doctor collects information to learn more about something. During this research study, we are going to learn more about how students develop character when they are in a class with students with special needs. After we tell you more about this study, we would like to ask you about being part of it.

We also will be asking about 175 to 200 other people to be part of this study.

What will you ask me to do?

If you choose to be part of this study, you will be asked to be interviewed near the end of the semester about your perceptions of student character development. You will also be emailed a survey with six open-ended questions to answer and send back to the research team.

This study is going to last one semester, and then it will be over.

Will I be harmed during this study?
No.
Will I benefit from being in this study?
You will not get anything special if you decide to be part of this study. We hope what we learn will help other children.

Do I have to be in this research?

No, you do not. If you do not want to be in this research study, just tell us. You can also tell us later if you do not want to be part of it anymore. No one will be mad at you and you can to us at any time if you are nervous.

What if I have questions?

You can ask us questions right now about the research study. You can ask questions later if you want to. You can also talk to someone else about the study if you want to. And you can change your mind at any time. Being in this research study is up to you.

If you want to be in this research study, just tell us. Or, you can sign your name in the blank below. We will give you a copy of this form to keep.

_____
_____
Minor Participant's Signature   **Date**
_____
Minor Participant's Printed Name

_____
_____
Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee   **Date**

_____
Investigator or Designee Printed Name

Appendix F

Scenario of a student with a non-specific disability and Response Questions for

Teachers

The following scenario and questions was sent to all volunteering participant secondary

teachers in the study. The survey will be sent to the volunteering participants via Gmail

to be completed through Google Forms. The scenario is a fictional, and after reading the

questions, the respondents will be asked to answer 6 questions on a 5-point Likert scale

(1 being "Not likely at all," and 5 being "Very likely), and respond to four short-answer

open-ended questions :

"Thank you for participating in this survey today. You have been randomly selected for

this study which explores teachers', typically-developing students', and parents'

perceptions of Down syndrome and student disabilities. Since you have volunteered for

this survey, you may end and submit the survey at any time, or choose to decline to

answer any question. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete."

Research Scenario

Please read the following scenario and answer the questions below. Your answers are
completely anonymous and in no way can the researcher connect your responses to you.
There is a class with a student with a disability; for the purpose of this scenario, the
student's name is Terry. During the class, the teacher asks students to form small groups
to work on a project, and for all members of each group to be ready to cooperatively
present their work to the whole class at the end of the work time. Almost every student
quickly joins a group, except for Terry. When Terry realizes that no one will join him and
form a group, he begins to ask other groups if he can join. No group allows Terry to join
them. The groups' responses to Terry's request range from politely saying "No, thanks" to
not even acknowledging that Terry is talking to them, and simply waiting for him to
move along. When the teacher sees this, the teacher asks a group to allow Terry to join.
The members of the group seem very reluctant to let him join, but they do at your
request. The group completes the group work cooperatively, but no member of the group
asks Terry to participate in a meaningful way. At certain points in the work, there are
differing opinions about the work from group members, but at no point does anyone ask
Terry his opinion. Very simply, Terry sits on the outside of the group circle and mostly

watches the group work together. At the end of the activity, the group cooperatively presents their work to the whole class, except Terry was given no role in the presentation. At the end of the presentation, all students return to their seats.

On a scale of 1-5, 1 being "Not likely at all" and 5 being "Very likely," please read and answer the following questions.

Likert scale questions:

- How likely would students in your class encourage their group to include Terry in a group?

- How likely would students in your class have a positive attitude about Terry being in their group?

- How likely would students in your class ensure that Terry felt like he was a welcome member of their group?

- How likely would students in your class ensure that Terry was included in the work in a meaningful way?

- How likely would students in your class ask Terry's opinions or thoughts about the group work?

- How likely would students in your class ensure Terry had a part of the group's presentation?

Short-answer open-ended questions:

- If applicable, what are ways students in your class have advocated for students like Terry in the past?

- If applicable, what are some other strategies students in your class have used to be respectful of students like Terry in the past?

- If applicable, what are some other ways students in your class have displayed empathy for students like Terry in the past?

- If applicable, what are ways students in your class have advocated for students like Terry in the past?

Appendix G

Scenario of a student with Down syndrome and Response Questions for Teachers

The following scenario and questions will be sent to all volunteering participant

secondary teachers in the study. The survey will be sent to the volunteering participants

via Gmail to be completed through Google Forms. The scenario is a fictional, and after

reading the questions, the respondents will be asked to answer 6 questions on a 5-point

Likert scale (1 being "Not likely at all," and 5 being "Very likely), and respond to three

short-answer open-ended questions:

"Thank you for participating in this survey today. You have been randomly selected to

participate in this study which explores teachers', typically-developing students', and

parents' perceptions Down syndrome and student disabilities. Since you have

volunteered for this survey, you may end and submit the survey at any time, or choose to

decline to answer any question. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to

complete."

Research Scenario

Please read the following scenario and answer the questions below. Your answers are
completely anonymous and in no way can the researcher connect your responses to you.
There is a class with a student with Down syndrome; for the purpose of this scenario, the
student's name is Pat. During the class, the teacher asks students to form small groups to
work on a project, and for all members of each group to be ready to cooperatively present
their work to the whole class at the end of the work time. Almost every student quickly
joins a group, except for Pat. When Pat realizes that no one will join him and form a
group, he begins to ask other groups if he can join. No group allows Pat to join them. The
groups' responses to Pat's request range from politely saying "No, thanks" to not even
acknowledging that Pat is talking to them, and simply waiting for him to move along.
When the teacher sees this, the teacher asks a group to allow Pat to join. The members of
the group seem very reluctant to let him join, but they do at your request. The group
completes the group work cooperatively, but no member of the group asks Pat to
participate in a meaningful way. At certain points in the work, there are differing
opinions about the work from group members, but at no point does anyone ask Pat his
opinion. Very simply, Pat sits on the outside of the group circle and mostly watches the

group work together. At the end of the activity, the group cooperatively presents their work to the whole class, except Pat was given no role in the presentation. At the end of the presentation, all students return to their seats.

On a scale of 1-5, 1 being "Not likely at all" and 5 being "Very likely," please read and answer the following questions.

Likert scale questions:

- How likely would students in your class encourage their group to include Pat in a group?

- How likely would students in your class have a positive attitude about Pat being in their group?

- How likely would students in your class ensure that Pat felt like he was a welcome member of their group?

- How likely would students in your class ensure that Pat was included in the work in a meaningful way?

- How likely would students in your class ask Pat's opinions or thoughts about the group work?

- How likely would students in your class ensure Pat had a part of the group's presentation?

Short-answer open-ended questions:

- If applicable, what are ways students in your class have advocated for students like Pat in the past?

- If applicable, what are some other strategies students in your class have used to be respectful of students like Pat in the past?

- If applicable, what are some other ways students in your class have displayed empathy for students like Pat in the past?

- If applicable, what are ways students in your class have advocated for students like Pat in the past?

Appendix H

Scenario of a student with a non-specific disability and Response Questions for

Parents

The following scenario and questions will be sent to all volunteering participant

secondary teachers in the study. The survey will be sent to the volunteering participants

via Gmail to be completed through Google Forms. The scenario is a fictional, and after

reading the questions, the respondents will be asked to answer 6 questions on a 5-point

Likert scale (1 being "Not likely at all," and 5 being "Very likely), and respond to three

short-answer open-ended questions:

"Thank you for participating in this survey today. You have been randomly selected to

participate in this study which explores teachers', typically-developing students', and

parents' perceptions of Down syndrome and student disabilities. Since you have

volunteered for this survey, you may end and submit the survey at any time, or choose to

decline to answer any question. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to

complete."

Research Scenario

Please read the following scenario and answer the questions below. Your answers are
completely anonymous and in no way can the researcher connect your responses to you.
Your child comes home from school, and you ask about his/her day. Your child replies
with the following story: your child says that s/he has a class with a student with a
disability; for the purpose of this scenario, the student's name is Terry. Your child says
that during class today, the teacher asked students to form small groups to work on a
project, and for all members of each group to be ready to cooperatively present their work
to the whole class at the end of the work time. Almost every student quickly joined a
group, except for Terry. When Terry realized that no one will join him and form a group,
he asked other groups if he could join. No group allowed Terry to join them, including
members of your child's group. The groups' responses to Terry's request ranged from
politely saying "No, thanks" to not even acknowledging that Terry was talking to them,
and they simply waited for him to move along. When the teacher saw this, he asked your
group to allow Terry to join. Other members of your child's group seemed very reluctant

to let him join, but they did so at the teacher's request. Your child's group completed the group work cooperatively, but no member of your child's group asked Terry to participate in a meaningful way. At certain points in the work, there were differing opinions about the work from group members, but at no point did anyone ask Terry his opinion. Very simply, Terry sat on the outside of the group circle and mostly watched the group work together. At the end of the activity, your child's group cooperatively presented their work to the whole class, except Terry was given no role in the presentation. At the end of the presentation, all students returned to their seats.

On a scale of 1-5, 1 being "Not likely at all" and 5 being "Very likely," please read and answer the following questions.

- How likely would your child encourage their group to include Terry in the group?

- How likely would your child have a positive attitude about Terry being in his/her group?

- How likely would your child ensure that Terry felt like he was a welcome member of their group?

- How likely would your child ensure that Terry was included in the work in a meaningful way?

- How likely would your child ask Terry's opinions or thoughts about the group work?

- How likely would your child ensure that Terry had a part of the group's presentation?

Short-answer open-ended questions:

- For the scenario above, what are some other ways your child could advocate for Terry?

- For the scenario above, what are some other strategies your child could use to be respectful of Terry?

- For the scenario above, what are some other ways your child class could display empathy for Terry?

Appendix I

Scenario of a student with Down syndrome and Response Questions for Parents

The following scenario and questions will be sent to all volunteering participant secondary teachers in the study. The survey will be sent to the volunteering participants via Gmail to be completed through Google Forms. The scenario is a fictional, and after reading the questions, the respondents will be asked to answer 6 questions on a 5-point Likert scale (1 being "Not likely at all," and 5 being "Very likely), and respond to three short-answer open-ended questions:

"Thank you for participating in this survey today. You have been randomly selected to participate in this study which explores teachers', typically-developing students', and perceptions of Down syndrome and student disabilities. Since you have volunteered for this survey, you may end and submit the survey at any time, or choose to decline to answer any question. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete."

Research Scenario

Please read the following scenario and answer the questions below. Your answers are completely anonymous and in no way can the researcher connect your responses to you. Your child comes home from school, and you ask about his/her day. Your child replies with the following story: your child says that s/he has a class with a student with Down syndrome; for the purpose of this scenario, the student's name is Pat. Your child says that during class today, the teacher asked students to form small groups to work on a project, and for all members of each group to be ready to cooperatively present their work to the whole class at the end of the work time. Almost every student quickly joined a group, except for Pat. When Pat realized that no one will join him and form a group, he asked other groups if he could join. No group allowed Pat to join them, including members of your child's group. The groups' responses to Pat's request ranged from politely saying "No, thanks" to not even acknowledging that Pat was talking to them, and they simply waited for him to move along. When the teacher saw this, he asked your group to allow Pat to join. Other members of your child's group seemed very reluctant to let him join, but they did so at the teacher's request. Your child's group completed the group work cooperatively, but no member of your child's group asked Pat to participate in a meaningful way. At certain points in the work, there were differing opinions about the

work from group members, but at no point did anyone ask Pat his opinion. Very simply, Pat sat on the outside of the group circle and mostly watched the group work together. At the end of the activity, your child's group cooperatively presented their work to the whole class, except Pat was given no role in the presentation. At the end of the presentation, all students returned to their seats.

On a scale of 1-5, 1 being "Not likely at all" and 5 being "Very likely," please read and answer the following questions.

- How likely would your child encourage their group to include Pat in the group?

- How likely would your child have a positive attitude about Pat being in his/her group?

- How likely would your child ensure that Pat felt like he was a welcome member of their group?

- How likely would your child ensure that Pat was included in the work in a meaningful way?

- How likely would your child ask Pat's opinions or thoughts about the group work?

- How likely would your child ensure that Pat had a part of the group's presentation?

Short-answer open-ended questions:

- For the scenario above, what are some other ways your child could advocate for Pat?

- For the scenario above, what are some other strategies your child could use to be respectful of Pat?

- For the scenario above, what are some other ways your child class could display empathy for Pat?

Appendix J

Scenario of a student with a non-specific disability and Questions for Students

The following scenario and questions will be sent to all volunteering participant

secondary teachers in the study. The survey will be sent to the volunteering participants

via Gmail to be completed through Google Forms. The scenario is a fictional, and after

reading the questions, the respondents will be asked to answer 6 questions on a 5-point

Likert scale (1 being "Not likely at all," and 5 being "Very likely), and respond to three

short-answer open-ended questions:

"Thank you for participating in this survey today. You have been randomly selected to

participate in this study which explores teachers', typically-developing students', and

parents' perceptions of Down syndrome and student disabilities. Since you have

volunteered for this survey, you may end and submit the survey at any time, or choose to

decline to answer any question. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to

complete."

Research Scenario

Please read the following scenario and answer the questions below. Your answers are
completely anonymous and in no way can the researcher connect your responses to you.
You are in a class with a student with a disability; for the purpose of this scenario, the
student's name is Terry. During class, a teacher asks students to form small groups to
work on a project, and for all members of each group to be ready to cooperatively present
their work to the whole class at the end of the work time. Almost every student quickly
joins a group, except for Terry. When Terry realizes that no one will join him and form a
group, he begins to ask other groups if he can join. No group allows Terry to join them,
including members of your group. The groups' responses to Terry's request range from
politely saying "No, thanks" to not even acknowledging that Terry is talking to them, and
simply waiting for him to move along. When the teacher sees this, he asks your group to
allow Terry to join. Other members of your group seem very reluctant to let him join, but
they do at the teacher's request. Your group completes the group work cooperatively, but
no member of your group asks Terry to participate in a meaningful way. At certain points
in the work, there are differing opinions about the work from group members, but at no
point does anyone ask Terry his opinion. Very simply, Terry sits on the outside of the

group circle and mostly watches the group work together. At the end of the activity, your group cooperatively presents their work to the whole class, except Terry was given no role in the presentation. At the end of the presentation, all students return to their seats. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being "Not likely at all" and 5 being "Very likely," please read and answer the following questions.

- How likely would you encourage your group to include Terry in your group?

- How likely would you have a positive attitude about Terry being in your group?

- How likely would you ensure that Terry felt like he was a welcome member of the group?

- How likely would you ensure that Terry was included in the work in a meaningful way?

- How likely would you ask Terry's opinions or thoughts about the group work?

- How likely would you ensure Terry had a part of the group's presentation?

Short-answer open-ended questions:

- For the scenario above, what are some other ways you or others could advocate for Terry?

- For the scenario above, what are some other strategies you or others could use to be respectful of Terry?

- For the scenario above, what are some other ways you or others could display empathy for Terry?

Appendix K

Scenario of a student with a non-specific disability and Questions for Students

The following scenario and questions will be sent to all volunteering participant

secondary teachers in the study. The survey will be sent to the volunteering participants

via Gmail to be completed through Google Forms. The scenario is a fictional, and after

reading the questions, the respondents will be asked to answer 6 questions on a 5-point

Likert scale (1 being "Not likely at all," and 5 being "Very likely), and respond to three

short-answer open-ended questions:

"Thank you for participating in this survey today. You have been randomly selected to

participate in this study which explores teachers', typically-developing students', and

parents' perceptions of Down syndrome and student disabilities. Since you have

volunteered for this survey, you may end and submit the survey at any time, or choose to

decline to answer any question. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to

complete."

Research Scenario

Please read the following scenario and answer the questions below. Your answers are
completely anonymous and in no way can the researcher connect your responses to you.
You are in a class with a student with Down syndrome; for the purpose of this scenario,
the student's name is Pat. During class, a teacher asks students to form small groups to
work on a project, and for all members of each group to be ready to cooperatively present
their work to the whole class at the end of the work time. Almost every student quickly
joins a group, except for Pat. When Pat realizes that no one will join him and form a
group, he begins to ask other groups if he can join. No group allows Pat to join them,
including members of your group. The groups' responses to Pat 's request range from
politely saying "No, thanks" to not even acknowledging that Pat is talking to them, and
simply waiting for him to move along. When the teacher sees this, he asks your group to
allow Pat to join. Other members of your group seem very reluctant to let him join, but
they do at the teacher's request. Your group completes the group work cooperatively, but
no member of your group asks Pat to participate in a meaningful way. At certain points in
the work, there are differing opinions about the work from group members, but at no
point does anyone ask Pat his opinion. Very simply, Pat sits on the outside of the group

circle and mostly watches the group work together. At the end of the activity, your group cooperatively presents their work to the whole class, except Pat was given no role in the presentation. At the end of the presentation, all students return to their seats.
On a scale of 1-5, 1 being "Not likely at all" and 5 being "Very likely," please read and answer the following questions.

- How likely would you encourage your group to include Pat in your group?

- How likely would you have a positive attitude about Pat being in your group?

- How likely would you ensure that Pat felt like he was a welcome member of the group?

- How likely would you ensure that Pat was included in the work in a meaningful way?

- How likely would you ask Pat's opinions or thoughts about the group work?

- How likely would you ensure Pat had a part of the group's presentation?

Short-answer open-ended questions:

- For the scenario above, what are some other ways you or others could advocate for Pat?

- For the scenario above, what are some other strategies you or others could use to be respectful of Pat?

- For the scenario above, what are some other ways you or others could display empathy for Pat?

Appendix K

Scenario of a student with Down syndrome and Questions for Students

The following scenario and questions will be sent to all volunteering participant

secondary teachers in the study. The survey will be sent to the volunteering participants

via Gmail to be completed through Google Forms. The scenario is a fictional, and after

reading the questions, the respondents will be asked to answer 6 questions on a 5-point

Likert scale (1 being "Not likely at all," and 5 being "Very likely), and respond to three

short-answer open-ended questions:

"Thank you for participating in this survey today. You have been randomly selected to

participate in this study which explores teachers', typically-developing students', and

parents' perceptions of Down syndrome and student disabilities. Since you have

volunteered for this survey, you may end and submit the survey at any time, or choose to

decline to answer any question. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to

complete."

Research Scenario

Please read the following scenario and answer the questions below. Your answers are
completely anonymous and in no way can the researcher connect your responses to you.
You are in a class with a student with Down syndrome; for the purpose of this scenario,
the student's name is Pat. During class, a teacher asks students to form small groups to
work on a project, and for all members of each group to be ready to cooperatively present
their work to the whole class at the end of the work time. Almost every student quickly
joins a group, except for Pat. When Pat realizes that no one will join him and form a
group, he begins to ask other groups if he can join. No group allows Pat to join them,
including members of your group. The groups' responses to Pat 's request range from
politely saying "No, thanks" to not even acknowledging that Pat is talking to them, and
simply waiting for him to move along. When the teacher sees this, he asks your group to
allow Pat to join. Other members of your group seem very reluctant to let him join, but
they do at the teacher's request. Your group completes the group work cooperatively, but
no member of your group asks Pat to participate in a meaningful way. At certain points in
the work, there are differing opinions about the work from group members, but at no
point does anyone ask Pat his opinion. Very simply, Pat sits on the outside of the group

circle and mostly watches the group work together. At the end of the activity, your group cooperatively presents their work to the whole class, except Pat was given no role in the presentation. At the end of the presentation, all students return to their seats.

On a scale of 1-5, 1 being "Not likely at all" and 5 being "Very likely," please read and answer the following questions.

- How likely would you encourage your group to include Pat in your group?

- How likely would you have a positive attitude about Pat being in your group?

- How likely would you ensure that Pat felt like he was a welcome member of the group?

- How likely would you ensure that Pat was included in the work in a meaningful way?

- How likely would you ask Pat's opinions or thoughts about the group work?

- How likely would you ensure Pat had a part of the group's presentation?

Short-answer open-ended questions:

- For the scenario above, what are some other ways you or others could advocate for Pat?

- For the scenario above, what are some other strategies you or others could use to be respectful of Pat?

- For the scenario above, what are some other ways you or others could display empathy for Pat?

Vitae

Colleges and Universities

Lindenwood University Doctoral Program, St. Charles, Missouri'

August 2016-Present; expected graduation December 2019

Dissertation Title: A qualitative exploration of character education and inclusion in a

suburban Midwest high school

Lindenwood University, Graduate School, St. Charles, Missouri

January 2009 - August 2010

Degree awarded: Educational Specialist in Educational Administration

University of Missouri- St. Louis, Graduate School, St. Louis, Missouri

January 2005 - August 2007

Degree awarded: Master of Arts in English

University of Missouri- St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri

Degree awarded: Bachelor of Arts in English

Teaching and Administrative History

Parkway School District

Coordinator of Student Discipline and Alternative Programs, 2018-Present

Assistant Principal, Parkway North High School, 2012-2018

English Teacher, Parkway North High, 2003-2012