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Inclusive Special and General Education Secondary Teachers' Attitudes towards the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in the General Education Setting

by

Barbara Portwood

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Inclusive Special and General Education Secondary Teachers' Attitudes towards the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in the General Education Setting

by

Barbara Portwood

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

Dr. John D. Long, Dissertation Chair	12.8.17 Date
Dr. Charles Brazeale, Committee Member	12-8-17 Date
Dr. Sherrie Wisdom, Committee Member	12/08/2017 Date

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.

Full Legal Name: Barbara Portwood

Signature: Barbara Portwood Date: December 8, 2017

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Abstract

The passage of The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2002), formerly known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, sparked a significant rise in the number of students with disabilities receiving their instruction in the inclusive setting. While previous legislation mandated that students with disabilities be included in standardized testing, NCLB called for closing the achievement gap between students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. Research indicated the success of students with disabilities in the general educational setting was influenced by teacher attitude. This qualitative study addressed secondary general and special education teacher attitudes and beliefs surrounding the practice of inclusion. It focused on comparing data on teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general educational setting. Forty secondary teachers of varying ages, education, and with a range of five to 32 years of experience, from several school districts around metropolitan Saint Louis participated in this study. An electronic survey and semi- structured interviews were employed to query the teachers' attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general educational setting and the perceived barriers. The results indicated that teachers' attitudes were generally positive toward the ideology of inclusion; however, when asked to express their views about the practice of inclusion in open-ended survey questions, results indicated less than positive views toward the practice of inclusion for all students. The most noteworthy factors associated with the negative attitudes was the lack of administrative support, and lack of training. Results also indicated that special education teachers' attitudes towards inclusion were significantly more positive than those of general education teachers. The analysis of data revealed there was not a significant correlation between teachers' attitudes of inclusion in regards to their type of certification, degree level, and years of experience.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Education changed drastically over the century previous to this writing, to address the needs of our changing society (Byrnes, Kiger, & Manning, 1996, 1997; Friend & Pope, 2005). Yet, veteran educators remembered firsthand the years of isolation and variance shown towards students with disabilities, whose unique needs went unnoticed in public education. The academic setting was far from equitable, because many schools did not allow students with disabilities to attend school or completely separated special needs students from the general education population. Historically, separate self-contained classrooms, state institutions, in-home services, and restricted access to academic and social activities were commonplace for the community of students with disabilities. Contrariwise, non-disabled students did not have these barriers and were educated in regular classrooms with increasing access to their learning environment (Yell, 2006). A distinctive view of this held by Foreman, Arthur-Kelly, Pascoe, and King (2004) was that a rather segregated view of education spanned the nation with unequal opportunities and limitations for students with disabilities both moderate and profound.

In the late 1960s however, as communities of educators, parents, policymakers, and state and federal agencies, as well as other constituents, formulated new educational theories to enact systemic changes designed to meet special education needs and the needs of the educational system, as a whole. Educators and legislators united to create new programs, legislative mandates, and laws designed to protect the rights of students with disabilities and provide for advancement of services (Bélanger & Gougeon, 2009). The introduction of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA) affected millions of lives, reforming the public education systems' fragmented special education program, which previously provided less than desirable educational settings and services for students with disabilities.

With the goal of equal civil rights for all students in public schools, the new law provided two clear mandates. The first of these was that special education and general education students would be educated in the same classrooms. The second was that related services that provided additional supports were to be available to students with disabilities (Yell, 2006).

Specifically, these provisions were further covered under what was called the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142, 1975), protecting individuals under the Equal Protection Clause from discriminatory, non-inclusive practices against civil rights afforded by the Fourteenth Amendment. Public Law 94-142 (1975) was the federal funding agent for states across the nation, and primarily the most plentiful source of funds used to provide for educational services in public schools. It required that all students receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) with part and full day options available to families of students with disabilities, along with a continuum of services to help meet their needs.

Notably, one dimension of these changes in the law was to consider that not all students with disabilities, due to their Individualized Education Plan (IEP), would be able to be educated in the general education setting (Bélanger & Gougeon, 2009). The IEP was a legal document that identified the supports, services, and placement a student required, based upon his or her disability and the goals and objectives established for a student with a disability (Yell 2006). "This requirement is met by providing personalized instruction and support services to permit the child to benefit educationally from the instruction" (Bateman, 2008, p.74).

The new ideology that students with disabilities deserved to be educated with their peers overshadowed the archaic belief systems that allowed educators to separate students with learning, behavioral, and developmental differences from non-disabled students (Heward, 2013). For students with disabilities who typically received their education separate from their non-handicapped peers this now included the concept of inclusion. Inclusion was a process that allowed both disabled and non-disabled students to receive instruction in the same classroom with a special and general education teacher. This new practice resulted in general education teachers being presented with the charge of educating students with disabilities in the general education setting. According to Voltz, Sims, and Nelson (2008), approximately 82% of public school teachers taught in the inclusive setting (p 27)

Inclusion prompted the need for a wide array of teaching methods such as: differentiated instruction, positive behavioral supports, and universal design for learning. Services from special education teachers, related services

providers, and general education teachers were necessary educational delivery strategies used to educate students (Friend, 2011).

Varying thought processes on how to educate students with disabilities using the inclusion services delivery included both support and opposition. Advocates believed that inclusion was beneficial and fostered collaboration among special education and general education teachers, while providing students with disabilities and their non-handicapped peers the opportunity to (a) develop friendships (Estell, Jones, Pearl, & Van Acker, 2009; Litvack, Ritchie, & Shore, 2011); (b) acquire social skills (Lamport, Graves, & Ward, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978); (c) develop behavioral skills (Murawski & Hughes, 2009); and (d) develop additional academic skills though collaboration (Meadan & Monda-Amaya, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978) and social awareness (Mastropieri, Scruggs, & Berkley, 2007). Conversely, Orr (2009) identified some of the difficulties and barriers associated with implementing inclusion, such as the general education teachers' negative disposition about sharing their classrooms with other educators and the changes needed on their part, training needs for staff, and the lack of support from administration. Nevertheless, looking beyond the dissonance, the future needs of students with disabilities to be successful deemed inclusion to be an essential educational practice towards helping them become non-disabled (National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1995, p. 99). With the escalation of students with disabilities being included it was crucial that educational leaders understood the factors that affected secondary general and special education teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

Most importantly, the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensured that students with disabilities were provided placement in a least restrictive environment (LRE). IDEA did not make a direct reference to the term 'inclusion;' however, IDEA mandated that school districts follow the guidelines of LRE. The term LRE mandated public agency must ensure that:

> (i) To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are non-disabled and; (ii) Special classes,

> separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with use of supplemental aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 2004, sec. 615(a)(5), (300.114 (a) (2) (i) (ii)).

Therefore, whenever possible, students must be educated with their non-disabled peers in a general education setting (Kochhar, West, & Tayman, 2000). Heward (2013) added to the commentary on this topic, pointing out that the law and reauthorized version of IDEA now called Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA, 2004) encompassed the fact that a general education setting was possible when "the child can make satisfactory educational progress" (Heward, 2013, p. 71).

According to the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE, 2006), the number of students with disabilities educated in the inclusive setting had escalated, the graduation rate had increased, while the dropout rate was steadily declining. Many perceived that the passing of new laws had a positive effect on these statistical changes in educational outcomes towards the betterment of special education practices.

However, with IDEA's (2004) lack of a clear definition of inclusion, much was left to the imagination; nonetheless, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) directive that all students take standardized, high stakes tests, also made the inclusion service model a viable option. To meet the demands of that Act, the educational setting needed to change, thereby educating students with disabilities with non-disabled students together in the same classroom. This offered another option to meeting the rigorous educational testing standards (Buford & Casey, 2012). Previously, some student's IEPs excluded them from taking mandatory state assessments or they took an alternative test. Alternative assessments were less comprehensive and based upon skill levels using state standards with accommodations and modifications, rather than having to meet state standards alone. The reality of NCLB compelled educators to consider the need for students with disabilities to be instructed in the same manner as their non-disabled peers if they were to be included in high stakes assessments.

Federal law had not defined the inclusion classroom as of this writing, but it was mandatory and was inevitable. Researchers defined inclusion differently, and had uncovered many factors relative to the benefits and drawbacks of inclusion, the same as other educational practices. For instance, the need for specially trained teachers and support personnel needed in inclusive classroom setting was different from the traditional classroom setting (Stout, 2007). Thus, the lack of a universal definition caused these factors to become increasingly confusing because of the vague use of terminology, as related to inclusion. This confusion was widespread, making it difficult for educational leaders to converse and decide on best practices for students in the inclusive setting. Schools were free to determine what inclusion looked like in their buildings, even down to the individual class setting. Mullings (2011), in a qualitative phenomenological study, surveyed 36 elementary school teachers and administrators to investigate their perceptions towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. In that study, the first interview question investigated the participants' definition of inclusion. The findings indicated that understanding the participants' definition of inclusion was significant when studying the differences in perceptions and attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting.

Additionally, Dymond, Renzaglia, Gilson, and Slagor (2007) found that general and special education teachers often differed as to the definition of inclusion. As a result, the difference in teacher attitudes could significantly affect the delivery of services to students with disabilities. General education teachers may define inclusion as receiving the same curriculum and materials as students without disabilities in a general education setting with support from a special education teacher. In contrast the special education teachers may define inclusion as access to a modified curriculum and materials adapted to the student's accommodation and modifications, as provided by the students' IEPs.

Whereas inclusion may look different across school districts and individual classrooms, the basic premise was the same: the incorporation of all students, including those with severe disabilities, into the general education setting (Ryndak, Jackson, & Billingsley, 2000). According to Hines (2001), "Inclusion is not about any consistent rule, but about what seems to be the fair thing to do for students with disabilities in the classroom" (p. 2). Inclusion in the

general education setting may have many positive effects, as well as drawbacks, for the special education student, all contingent upon the conduciveness of the learning environment.

A successful policy and plan for inclusion must be in place prior to the placement of a student in the general education setting. Special education and general education teachers must accept and understand relevant policies and plans for students with disabilities and be willing to put them into practice. Shade and Stewart (2001) cited positive teacher attitude as one of the leading issues influencing the successful implementation of any inclusive program. The teacher had to support the policy and implement it fully for inclusion to be successful. "Teachers' acceptance of the policy of inclusion is likely to affect their commitment to implementing it" (Bradshaw & Mundia, 2006, p. 35)

If teachers involved in the inclusive program did not subscribe to the program wholeheartedly, this adversely affected the implementation of the inclusive class. Further, it greatly affected the outcomes of academic success and social integration for students with disabilities. In the short-term, students with disabilities could have their educational needs met in an inclusive classroom, and many of them were willing to put forth the effort and try if properly motivated and willingly accepted within their learning environment. In the long-term, the possibility of one day becoming non-disabled demonstrated how independent and productive these students can become in a supportive environment.

Existing literature indicated that positive and negative teacher attitudes concerning inclusion existed. Numerous studies revealed that teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward inclusion substantially influenced the learning environment of students with special needs and the non-disabled (Biddle, 2006; Downing, 1997; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001). Positive teacher attitudes and perceptions toward inclusion extended students greater educational opportunities within the inclusive setting on a social, academic, cultural, and structural context working with their peers and meeting their IEP goals - propelling success (Wade, Welch, & Jensen, 1994).

Buford and Casey (2012) performed a study that examined the preparedness of teachers and their attitudes regarding inclusion. This study was also noteworthy in identifying the fact that most teachers wanted to participate in inclusion and believed the inclusion model was credible in helping all students. While addressing the usefulness of

inclusive practices with a holistic view of all perspectives on this educationally charged topic, Buford and Casey's (2012) study revealed benefits seen by students with and without special needs. Logan et al. (1995) were credited in their study for compiling a wide-ranging list of positive attributes seen while incorporating inclusion in schools. Students with special needs experienced noticeable academic, social, and cultural gains such as: "(a) greater opportunity to develop friendships, (b) peer role models for academic and behavior skills, (c) increased access to the general curriculum, and (d) higher expectations of performance." (p. 43). Prior to inclusion, these kinds of observations were not an anticipated outcome for students with disabilities, but in this study, the collaboration of teachers in the inclusion delivery model helped these students become more independent and academically capable in their educational environment.

Students without disabilities similarly showed the following corresponding benefits:

> (a) ability to establish diverse meaningful friendships, (b) increased respect for individuals with different needs, (c) acquire skills for living in a diverse community, and (d) increased levels of self-esteem as compared to their peers not included. (Logan et al., 1995, p. 44)

In a straightforward and practical sense, one could notice how some of these observations identified amongst the students could overlap and be noticed in each group. Students were unique, but researchers identified different levels of academic and social difficulties in students with disabilities (Buford & Casey, 2012).

Current and past research indicated that negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general educational setting existed. Teachers with negative attitudes towards a student's ability to learn were likely to influence how the student felt about the learning experience. These negative attitudes could further influence the way the teacher interacted towards the student in other situations. Literature as of this writing suggested that whether the negative behavior was intentional, or not, it provided a substandard level of teaching when the teacher doubted the capacity of the student to learn (Dusek, 1975). Likewise, research revealed that special education teachers often were

biased towards students who were perceived to lack the ability to learn at the same rate as their peers or when their handicapping condition prohibited them from learning in the traditional way. According to Dusek (1975),

> Teacher bias fell into three categories: (a) experimenter bias effects in psychological research (e.g., Dusek, 1975), (b) tutoring situations involving teachers (e.g., Beez, 1970), and (c) teacher biases and the effects in the elementary class or other classroom situations (e.g., Al-Saigh,1981; Anastasiow,1975; Ashmore, 1975; Azzahrani, 1986; Dusek et al., 1973). (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968, p. 86)

Research indicated significant reasons existed why teachers were biased towards students with special learning needs, and could be linked to infrequent use of effective accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities in the inclusive setting and behavior problems. When negative attitudes towards inclusion were present, non-disabled students were not afforded the opportunity to work productively alongside their peers with disabilities. A study by Hammond and Ingalls (2003) revealed that many teachers had negative attitudes towards inclusion for the following reasons: "(1) lack of commitment from administration, (2) disparity about the benefits of inclusion, (3) lack of collaboration and support, (4) teacher self-efficacy, and (5) lack of training to teach students with disabilities" (p.27). This was synonymous with some of Orr's (2009) findings on barriers to inclusion. Buford and Casey (2012) provided some of the same findings, as well, noting that teachers felt their effectiveness was compromised by these concerns. Other factors considered, but found to have no contributing effect on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with disabilities were the level of education for a teacher, the grade level taught, and the number of years teaching a particular subject, given the data received by Buford and Casey (2012).

Adding to the conversation, the Wade, Welch, and Jensen's (1994) study recognized that inclusion generated teacher collaboration, which stretched the spectrum with concerns about their individual roles or philosophies of teaching, as well as maintaining autonomy in their classrooms affected teacher attitudes. Overall, these studies and the results of the Hammond and Ingalls (2003) study indicated that the majority of teachers agreed that inclusion is advantageous. However, Hammond and Ingalls (2003) found that when negative attitudes existed, inclusion became

just a physical placement for students with disabilities, and it did not advance their educational growth and development as learners. Biddle (2006) linked negative attitudes toward inclusion to less frequent use of effective classroom accommodations for students with disabilities in the inclusive setting. The presence of negative teacher attitudes often denied non-disabled students the opportunity to work productively with their disabled peers in the inclusive setting (Biddle, 2006).

In summary, these studies acknowledged that teacher attitudes had an impact on how the inclusionary process was perceived. Educational opportunities available to students with disabilities needed to be as equitable as possible if students were expected to make gains and achieve at the same levels as their non-disabled peers. It was crucial that educators and lawmakers alike be cognizant of the needs of students with disabilities, the needs of the staff that served these students, and most importantly recognize the factors that affected teachers' attitudes towards inclusion; and to provide for the best possible outcomes upon the implementation of much needed programs and legislative amendments and alterations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain how secondary general and special education teachers' attitudes affected the inclusion practices and environments of students with disabilities in the general education setting; to determine possible contributing sources for these negative and positive attitudes, which affected the inclusive setting. Past research examining the attitudes of secondary teachers towards inclusion of students with disabilities was lacking compared to studies addressing elementary and middle school teachers. According to a 1996 analysis, Scruggs and Mastropieri discovered that the preponderance of research examining the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion mainly investigated elementary or middle school teachers. This outcome confirmed the need to examine the attitudes of teachers at the secondary level. Then-current research data additionally indicated a need to explore the effects of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion practices in the education of all students. In their article, "Effects of Educational Background and Experience on Teacher Views of Inclusion," Taylor, Smiley, and Ramasamy (2003) characterized full

inclusion as, "The provision of appropriate educational services to all students in regular classes attended by non-disabled students of the same chronological age in their neighborhood school, including students with severe disabilities" (p. 3). Additionally, researchers, Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxen, Cabello, and Spagna (2004) referenced Ferguson's (1996) position on inclusion, "The intention is to alter education for all students, benefiting not only students with disabilities but also those without disabilities" (p. 104). Rea and Connell (2005) further indicated that collaborative teaching was one of the major growing provisions of services that teachers of students with disabilities provided by working together to educate students in the general education setting. The purpose herein was to examine and compare secondary general and special education teachers' attitudes towards educating students with disabilities in the general education setting; to ascertain if those attitudes were impacted by special attributes, such as gender, teaching experience, subject area, and type of disability, special education coursework, and the number of students with disabilities in their classes. An additional goal was to investigate the relationship between the ideology of the practice of inclusion and the actual inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education setting. Specifically, the goal was to discover what, if any, factors influenced secondary general and special education teachers' attitudes towards educating students with disabilities in the inclusive setting.

This study may add to the existing knowledge base regarding the attitudes, perceptions, and concerns of teachers towards inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. Hopefully, school districts and pre-service teacher education programs will utilize the information to devise relevant professional development and teacher preparation programs.

Significance of the Study

As school districts responded to federal initiatives to educate students with disabilities in the LRE, the number of students in the general education setting multiplied (Grskovic & Trzcinka, 2011). Secondary general education teachers were the principal providers of instruction for students with disabilities. According to Swanson (2008), 79% of high school students with disabilities were in general education classes most of the day, and 55% spent more than

80% of the school day in the inclusive setting (p.4). Therefore, it was imperative that educational decision makers had a distinct understanding of the factors impacting teacher attitudes toward the practice of inclusion. Hunt and Hunt (2000) maintained that attitudinal barriers "are more inhibiting and cause additional challenges for people with disabilities" (p. 270). Moreover, it was important to study the attitudes of teachers as "attitudes and actions employed by teachers ultimately can make a positive difference on the lives of their students" (Gourneau, 2005, p. 1). The current study sought to provide information regarding secondary general and special education teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities and to determine possible contributing aspects for these positive and negative attitudes. According to an analysis by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) the majority of research examining the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion primarily investigated teachers on the elementary and middle school levels. As of this writing, research examining the attitudes of secondary general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities was limited, compared to studies concentrating on elementary and middle school teachers. This outcome validated the foremost need to examine the attitudes of teachers on the secondary level towards the practice of inclusion. Research theories indicated that teacher attitude provided the foundation for behaviors in the classroom. This study may assist in filling the gap in the research then-currently available on the attitudes of secondary general and special education teachers towards inclusive education and may further assist education leaders and policy-makers in making informed decisions regarding support for teachers in the inclusive settings.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

RQ 1: What are the attitudes of general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

RQ 2: What are the attitudes of special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

RQ 3: What are attitudes of special and general education teachers in relationship to the nature and type of disability?

RQ 4: What are the issues contributing to teachers' positive and negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

RQ 5: Do secondary special and general classroom teachers perceive they have the needed resources and support in inclusive classrooms?

RQ 6: To what extent do secondary special and general classroom teachers collaborate in the inclusive classroom?

RQ 7: Do secondary special and general classroom teachers perceive themselves knowledgeable about: (i) strategies needed for teaching students with disabilities; (ii) characteristics of students with disabilities; (iii) special education law; (iv) collaborative strategies; (v) the individualized education program; and (vi) behavior management strategies?

RQ 8: What are the areas of need of secondary special and general educators working in the inclusive classroom?

Definition of Key Terms

The following definitions of key terms, based on the literature in the field of special education, were provided to prevent ambiguity. As stated by Roberts (2004), "This section of the dissertation provides the definition for the terms used that do not have a commonly known meaning or that have the possibility of being misunderstood" (p. 139). For the purpose of this study, the following key terms were defined:

Attitude: An individual's disposition that influences how he or she will positively or negatively respond to an object, person, institution, or any aspect of one's life (Morin, Rivard, Crocker, Boursier, & Caron, 2013).

Collaborative Teaching*:* An approach to teaching in which two teachers take responsibility for planning, teaching, and monitoring the achievement of all the students in the classroom. A delivery of services option that provided special education or related services to students with disabilities or other special needs, while they remained in general education classes (Friend & Cook, 2010, p. 109).

Free and Appropriate Public Education: Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, schools were required to provide a free appropriate public education to children with learning disabilities and other educational disabilities in public schools (Free Appropriate Public Education, 2012).

General Education*:* General education was the educational environment for typically developing students; it was often referred to as regular education (Gately & Gately, 2001).

General Education Curriculum: The general education curriculum was what typical students were taught in public schools at each grade level (Browder & Spooner, 2006).

General Education Teacher: A general education teacher was an educator who completed the requirements for licensure in the area of general education. A general education teacher provided instruction in one or more subject areas to students with and without disabilities (Atkins, 2009, p. 4).

Inclusion: Placement for students with disabilities to be educated in the least restrictive environment. Students with disabilities were educated in the general education classroom setting and spent most or all of their time with their non-disabled peers (Mauro, 2009).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: A federal law that required public schools to provide a free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities. This law was established to guarantee that students with disabilities from ages three through 21 received instruction that met their specific needs in a least restrictive environment. A reaffirmation of PL 94-142 passed in 2004 (USDOE, 2007).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act: A federal law (IDEIA) that reauthorized its predecessor, formally known as IDEA, was revised to include specific language to provide special education and related services for students with disabilities, invoke collaboration between parents and school systems regarding IEP meetings, and allow for non-English speaking and other students with particular needs access to special education services (IDEA, 2004).

Individualized Education Program: Legal document mandated by IDEA that defined the individualized objectives of a student with disabilities. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) included the criteria under which the students qualified for Special Education Services, the services the IEP team determined the school would provide; annual goals and accommodations needed to assist the student's learning (Public Law 94-142, 1975).

Learning Disability: The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE, 2002) defined learning disabilities (LDs) as a disorder in "the basic psychological processes involved in spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculation" (p. 1).

Least Restrictive Environment*:* School districts were required to educate students with disabilities in regular classrooms with their nondisabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled, as much as was possible. The least restrictive environment (LRE) was the educational setting that maximized a child's ability to receive maximum educational benefits while participating in a regular educational environment as much as possible (U. S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2002).

Mainstreaming: Mainstreaming was used to refer to the selective placement of students who had disabilities in one or more 'general' education classes. Proponents of mainstreaming assumed that a student must 'earn' his or her opportunity to be placed in general classes by demonstrating an ability to 'keep up' with the work assigned by the general classroom teacher (Gut, Oswald, Leal, Frederiksen, & Gustafson, 2003).

No Child Left Behind: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was changed to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) focused on accountability by data collection and implementation of adherence to standards set forth by the federal government. These standards were tied to financial inducements. NCLB included more choices for parents in the form of student help, school choice, and charter definitions for adequate yearly progress, graduation rates, and acceptable student achievement levels. NCLB focused

on scientifically based research from fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, and neuroscience, and especially from research in educational settings (USDOE, 2012).

Self-Efficacy Theory*:* A theory founded on the construct of self-efficacy, an expectation that a person held regarding their personal capability to accomplish a particular task or goal (Walsh, 2003, p. 65).

Special Education: As defined by IDEA (1997), "Specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability, including physical education and of no cost to the parents" (p. 12).

Special Education Teacher: A teacher who completed the requirements for licensure in the area(s) of special education. A special education teacher provided specialized instruction to students who had an IEP. These specialized services could be provided in the regular classroom, special education classroom, or a combination of the two (Atkins, 2009, p. 5).

Students with Disabilities: Children with intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific LDs; and who, by reason thereof, needed special education and related services (IDEA, 2012, part C, sec. 632).

Limitations

To reduce the risk of problems that could influence the results of this study, weaknesses and limitations of the study were identified (Creswell, 2007). The current qualitative phenomenological study of general and special education teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities included the following limitations: (1) Only teachers from the Saint Louis area were sampled for the study, limiting the generalization to a specific geographic area; (2) secondary teachers only were targeted for this study; no other grade levels area was targeted; (3) qualitative information only was gathered for this study even though quantitative information could have added knowledge to the results; (4) interview and survey results were limited by the participant accuracy in self-reporting; and (5) limitations of this study include the bias of the researcher.

As cited by Creswell (2005), qualitative researchers "conduct the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner" (p. 39). The current study was susceptible to researcher bias because the researcher was a special education teacher and the objective of the current study was to ascertain the attitudes of teachers involved in the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting.

Delimitations

This qualitative phenomenological study of teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general educational setting included delimitations. According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), delimitations are self-imposed boundaries established by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the research study. This study included the following delimitations:

1) The participants for this research study was delimitated to secondary general and special education teachers, grades nine through twelve around metropolitan Saint Louis. No other groups of teachers were included
2) The timeframe for the research study was delimitated to a period of data collection that occurred from March, 2016 to April, 2016.
3) The study was delimitated to the use of an online survey instrument and semi-structured interviews for data collection.
4) The study was delimitated to one geographical area of the Midwest
5) Principal, students, parents, and other staff members were not included as part of the participants considered for the current study.

Researcher Bias

The researcher approached this study from the perspective of a high school cross-category special education teacher, with experiences in the separate, self-contained, resource, and inclusive settings. The researcher's role in the general education class setting was to support students with disabilities and as an additional support for the general education teacher. During the years as a collaborative teacher, the researcher became interested in the attitudes of

teachers involved in the inclusive setting. The researcher's collaborative teaching experiences had a significant impact and influenced the research questions and purpose of the current study.

Summary

Research provided insightful consideration into how teacher attitudes affected the integration of the foremost educational settings, referred to as inclusion. When it was determined that placement of students with disabilities should be in the inclusion setting to better meet their academic, social, and functional needs, teachers had to revolutionize their traditional delivery systems to provide needed services to these students. Inclusion was in addition to a continuum of services options that existed to meet the LRE for students with disabilities. The literature indicated that the impact on student performance was affected in both positive and negative ways; not discounting the fact that the law took precedence and required the practice of inclusion.

It was vital that teachers came to terms with their new roles in the educational setting, and with the changes it provoked in their knowledge, training, autonomy, and teaching styles. It was further important that their comfort levels did not interfere with the academic excellence they were to deliver in their classrooms. Wiggins and Damore (2006) deemed it equally important that teachers were cooperative communicators, along with incorporating a positive attitude. Using comparative and contrasting information revealed illustrations of multiple benefits to students with disabilities, which were not available prior to the inception of inclusion. In general, teachers maintained a positive attitude toward inclusion, but many would like additional support to implement this practice into their classrooms.

Subsequently, educators realized that for some students with disabilities inclusion into the general education setting was not always an accepting environment. These students were not always benefiting, academically or socially, within the inclusive setting. The implications of this study involved developing an understanding of the attitudes of secondary high school teachers involved in the inclusive setting. The findings of this study offered the potential for improving inclusionary outcomes for students with disabilities but it was also possible that the results could affect the preparation of pre-service general and special education teachers. This study examined the attitudes of special and

general education teachers' attitudes towards the practice of the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education classroom setting. Individual factors included gender, special education training, and number of years teaching, grade levels, and content areas. The researcher invited teachers from various high schools around the metropolitan Saint Louis area to participate in this study. Using qualitative methodology, this study addressed the gap in then-current literature relative to the attitudes of teachers toward inclusive education at the secondary level. Previous research focused primarily on the attitudes of elementary and middle school teachers.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the issues of inclusion and why the researcher chose to conduct this study. Chapter Two, a review of past and then-current literature enabled insight into the attitudes of secondary general education and special education teachers towards students with disabilities in the general education setting. In the first section, a working definition of inclusion is provided for this study, followed by a historical overview of inclusion. Legal issues also are addressed, along with the benefits of inclusion.

The methodology utilized in the study is presented in Chapter Three, which provides a discussion of the research methods utilized for this study and presents the research questions under investigation. Chapter Three additionally provides a description of the research design, subject selection, methods of data collection, analysis, and limitations. Chapter Four presents the analyses and results. Lastly, Chapter Five includes a discussion of the limitations and strengths of the current study, the research findings, suggestions for future research, and conclusions.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

The attitudes of teachers towards teaching (Davis, 1995; Grossman, Onkol, & Sands, 2007; Mohapatra, Rose, Woods, & Lake, 2001) was investigated and given substantial attention during the four decades preceding this research. The attitude of teachers regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities was one of the most researched topics. The reason for the focus on this research topic was because research had proven teachers' attitudes were key factors in successful educational outcomes (Gottlieb, 1975). It was notable to emphasize the focus had increased due to the influx of students with disabilities into the general educational setting (Gottlieb, 1975; Jones, Jamieson, Moulin, & Tower, 1984; Jones, 1974; Moore & Fiine, 1978; Overline, 1977; Panda & Bartel,1972; Phelps, 1965; Schofield, 1978).

The purpose of this review of literature was to provide an overview of literature germane to the present study. This synthesis of literature focused on the attitudes of secondary general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities, and what contributing factors influenced these attitudes. Creswell (2007) cited the literature review as a source that provided direction for the research problem and the position the researcher takes while developing the study. Considerable research was studied on this topic and the factors that impacted teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

Chapter Two explores the theoretical framework and the past and then-current literature relating to the attitudes of general and special education teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. This section addresses the following areas related to inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting: (a) background history of special education, (b) brief history of inclusion, (c) laws concerning inclusion, (d) factors that influenced the attitudes of general education and special education teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities, and (e) the pros and cons of inclusion. Previous and then-current research relative to the attitudes of general and special education teachers towards inclusion was reviewed. In conclusion, a summary has been provided as an overview of the information contained in this chapter.

Theoretical Construct

Several theories of learning provided the framework for the current study. Social constructionists viewed behavior as learned based on experiences. Worthy of consideration were scholars Berger and Luckmanns' (1991) research, knowledge, and findings about the social construct of a person's reality and how this construct helped shape the attitudes about knowledge accepted as 'real.' Praised for their work on social construction reality during the course of their study of sociology, Berger and Luckmann (1991) succinctly applied their argument toward necessary inter-relational communications, "contending that the sociology of knowledge must concern itself with whatever passes for 'knowledge' in a society, regardless of the ultimate validity or invalidity (by whatever criteria) of such 'knowledge'" (p. 15).

Berger and Luckmann (1991) stated:

> The reality of everyday life further presents itself to me as an intersubjective world, a world that I share with others. This intersubjectivity sharply differentiates everyday life from other realities of which I am conscious. I am alone in the world of my dreams, but I know that the world of everyday life is as real to others as it is to myself. Indeed, I cannot exist in everyday life without continually interacting and communicating with others. (p. 37)

Social cognitive theory was a learning theory introduced by Bandura (1977, 1986, 1997) that provided a framework for understanding, predicting, and changing human behavior. Social cognitive theory attempted to explain how individual's thoughts, beliefs, feelings and interactions - not necessarily direct - with their environment affected how they behaved. This implied that the stimulus of social forces in the internal and external realms of one's environment influenced the factors associated with behavior, actions, and growth. Consequently, Bandura's social cognitive theory supported the idea of self-efficacy in human beings.

Bandura (1977, 1986, 1997) identified the social element involved when children watched other children perform a task or do something in general. Children, through this generalized indirect observation, would most often

model behaviors they had seen and thereby learned. Through this form of observational learning, attitudes could be formed and altered based upon what they experienced. Modeling and observation were key considerations in the social cognitive theory when trying to ascertain whether an individuals' behavior was a direct result of environment. He concluded that as human beings, no one person should be left to his or her own devices to learn, and much of what individuals learned was from observing others.

Individuals formed their own belief systems by synthesizing what they learned through direct or symbolic modeling. Therefore, the cognitive process involved during the interactions and observation of others could significantly impact one's behavior and eventually lead to repeating the behavior and the formation of new behaviors and actions. The influence others had on an individual would have been positive or negative. Pairing the concept of the social cognitive theory with the attitudes of teachers, it was important to consider that cognitive, behavior and environmental influences yielded the attitudinal outcomes of people (Bandura 1977; 1986). Through further study, Bandura (1997) observed that an individual's display of confidence while striving towards achieving goals in challenging social experiences demonstrated self-efficacy.

Providing a foregoing view of this self-efficacy topic, essentially led to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). Interchangeably referred to as the Fishbein Model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), this was a view of the ways attitudes could be influenced. TRA maintained that an individual's attitudes and intentions were the most immediate factors influencing behavior. Social norms and attitudes toward inclusion were, in essence, behavioral acts that affected the individual attitudes of the person(s) observing the act. Acclimatization to these acts proposed that teachers in general education classroom settings, who expressed positive attitudes towards the inception of inclusive classrooms, might increase their appreciation for students with exceptionalities and begin overseeing more exceptional children (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Urton, Wilbert, and Hennemann (2014) conducted a multilevel study of 48 primary schools in Germany revealing evidence "that a sense of self-efficacy and personal experience" showed positive attitudes about inclusion for

students with disabilities (p. 152). Urton et al. (2014) stated, Germany's educational reform mandated through the "ratification of the UN convention" was not different from that of the United States; students with exceptionalities would receive inclusion placement options (p. 155). According to collected data in this study, Germany, the second lowest European state in terms of using the inclusion model, showed a rise in the number of students served, with a "18.4% increase in 2008, and grew roughly to 28.2% in 2013" (Urton, Wilbert, & Hennemann, 2014, p 155). One can only imagine what these numbers would look like another five years from the time of this writing.

A major question in this study sparked two additional considerations and became productive research. With one aspect regarding inclusion and self-efficacy being of particular interest, the question was, was there a relationship between teaching staff and principals' attitudes' towards "inclusion, efficacy and the mainstreaming experience? Mainstreaming was a part-day academic placement in the inclusive educational setting for students with disabilities. Considerations made for determining attitudes towards inclusion were whether "remedial education" was preferred or "social integration" accepted schools (Urton et al., 2014, p. 155. Differentiations in the data were from a collection of staff at different schools (Urton et al., 2014). Teachers were more prone to self-efficacy with their attitudes towards social integration of students with disabilities; a definite benefit (Urton et al., 2014).

The instrumental tool for collecting data in Urton et al.'s (2014) study was a questionnaire that went out to 314 teachers and 48 principals yielding results from 261 teachers responded to the questions on inclusion. Responses from 265 teachers to questions on self-efficacy and the mainstreaming experience were received, while 35 principals responded to all questions (p. 155). An 83% response rate was a good sample size in groups this size; it was not realistic to receive all of the questionnaires back. The outcomes determined that principals preferred remedial education in inclusion and demonstrated more self-efficacy, with no remarkable differences in social integration. Although it was not a major difference, 48% of teachers and 32% of principals declared positive attitudes toward the mainstreaming experience, continual acceptance and growth is needed from school leaders in this study. Urton et al. (2014, pp. 156-157.). Literature researched by Urton et al. (2014) prior to performing this study pointed out that school

leaders practicing self-efficacy obtained a much more positive reaction when addressing the dynamics of self-efficacy with teaching staff.

The Urton et al. (2014) study was unique in the authors' views of inclusion, as the focus shifted from dispelling discrimination to considering inclusion as the catalyst of social integration and increasing diversity in school classrooms. Student backgrounds, socio economic status, age, or race were not the primary factors as attitudes of teachers towards inclusion germinated. Challenges presented to administrators and teachers in the school environment would be to change their methods and attitudes towards these forward movements to increase diversity in education. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) were credited by Urton et al. (2014) for recognizing that successful implementation of inclusion was contingent upon school staff and principals humanizing the effort with a positive attitude. This approach built courage and self-confidence while reducing the anxiety teachers may experience in working with children with disabilities for the first time. Thus, inventive strategies in teacher preparation programs were needed, as practitioners continued to face difficulties with diversity increasing, and trying to understand students with dissimilar backgrounds all in the same classroom (Zion & Sobel, n.d.).

Inclusive classrooms were attained through incorporating innovation into the "school's organizational structure" realizing that "basic attitudes and feelings of efficacy play a significant role" (Dupoux, Wolman, & Estrada, 2005, p. 56). Others might have an affinity for understanding their sense of displacement and lack of expertise in ensuring that students' needs were met like those of non-disabled students. Urton et al. (2014) markedly pointed out that individual and common experiences of self-efficacy were resourceful triumphs on which to draw as the group took on this new approach to educating students with disabilities.

Attitudinal Theory

In addition to Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, the theoretical framework for this study was also supported by research studies conducted by Eagly and Chaiken (1993), as well as Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). "Attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor"

(Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). As affirmed by Alvidrez and Weinstein (1999), Brophy (1983), Jussim (1991), Jussim and Eccles (1992), Jussim and Harber (2005), Love and Kruger (2005), the teacher's attitude directly impacted student academic and social performance in the classroom.

Research literature indicated lack of teacher faith in student capacity to learn yielded a lack of attention to the student and their academic programming. Attitude influenced how individuals behaved and was a significant concept relative to inclusion. "Because attitudes are hypothetical constructs that are not directly observable, researchers infer a person's attitude based on observable behaviors that the individual performs" (Jaccard & Blanton, 2005, p. 127). Numerous definitions of attitude existed in research literature; however, Zimbardo & Leippe (1991) defined attitude as "an evaluative disposition toward some object." (p. 31). Yet, another definition supported by Eagly and Chaiken (1993) maintained, "attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (p. 1).

Additionally, as discussed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), "A person's attitude toward any object is a function of his beliefs about the object and the implicit evaluative responses associated with those beliefs" (p. 29). Likewise, Robbins and Judge (2011) suggested attitudes were the result of perceptions – what people perceived reality to be, instead of reality itself (p.70). Perceptions were shaped by a variety of factors, that possibly included "perceiver characteristics, stimulus characteristics, and the situation, context, or interaction within which these take place" (Garvar, 1989, p. 465). Prior experiences, motivations, values, needs, and goals played a part in influencing attitudes toward a person, an object, or an event. A review of literature indicated teachers' perceptions were a significant factor in the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. The perceptions teachers possessed about their responsibilities towards students with disabilities may have affected their treatment of these students in their classes. (Coats, 2002; Robbins-Etlen, 2007).

The theory of attitude explained why people acted and reacted to objects, situations, or people. "Although definitions of attitude have varied somewhat across time, if one inspects how scholars have operationalized the concept

of attitude across the field's history, evaluative aspects have always played a prominent role" (Albarracin, Johnson, & Zanna, 2005, p. 4).

Adding to the conversation, Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) maintained that three major components of attitude existed. These components consisted of cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. The cognitive domain was related to an individual's thoughts and perceptions regarding the attitude object. The affective domain related to positive or negative emotions or feelings associated with the attitude. "Evaluative responses of the affective type consist of feelings, moods, emotions, and sympathetic nervous system activity that people experience in relation to attitude objects" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 11). The behavioral domain related to actions that an individual took in regard to a specific attitude.

Early research indicated the three components of attitude were associated with one another. "If a person's attitude is supported by favorable cognitive content, then it is likely to be supported by favorable affective and behavioral tendencies" (Petty, Fabrigar, & Wegener, 2003, p. 754). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) suggested that when a person formed beliefs about an object, action, or event, he or she "automatically and simultaneously acquires an attitude toward that object, action or event" (p. 216). Attitude formation was an important subject. According to Eagly & Chaiken (1993), attitudes were inherent as they were shaped at later stages of development. Many different theories existed that determined how attitudes were formed. Attitudes cannot be clearly measured or observed; consequently, "attitude measurement depends on attitudes being revealed in overt responses, either verbal or nonverbal" (Krosnick, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2005, p. 22). For this reason, survey instruments were often the tool utilized to measure attitude. Teacher attitude impacted student performance within the classroom; therefore, it was necessary to examine teacher attitude relative to the inclusion of students with disabilities. "A person's attitude toward a particular attitude object may influence his or her behavior toward this object" (Bohner & Wanke, 2002, p. 13). In their research study, Downing, Eichinger, and Williams (1997) reported the most frequently mentioned barrier to inclusion was the negative attitude of the teachers. As delineated by a special education teacher participating in the research study, "I think a lot of

times people have perceptions that it's (inclusion) going to be a real problem and it ends up not being that. Lots of times fear is greater than the reality" (Downing, Eichinger, & Williams, 1997, p. 135). Researchers cited teachers' attitudes as having the potential to affect the academic achievement of all students. A study by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) explored teacher attitude as it related to the performance of non-handicapped students. This study concluded that students' intellectual development was overall a response to teacher expectations and how the expectations were communicated.

The study involved giving teachers deceptive information about the learning potential of students in first through sixth grades in an elementary school in the San Francisco, California, area. It was explained to teachers that selected students had been tested and on the threshold of a period of rapid intellectual growth. However, in reality the students had been randomly selected. During the end of the investigational period, some of the test group students', and particularly those in first and second grades, performance on IQ tests was superior to the scores of other students of similar capability and superior to what would have been expected of the test students with intervention (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968, p. 1).

The research of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) delineated teacher attitude and behavior as a contributory factor linked to student achievement. The study further supported the concept of teacher attitude affecting the achievement of students with disabilities, as well as their non-handicapped peers within the classroom setting. "From their first years in school, students are able to perceive differences in teacher expectations for their own performance and that of their peers" (Gottfredson, Marciniak, Birdseye & Gottfredson, 1995, p. 156). If the attitude of the teacher affected the academic performance of non-handicapped students, then what were the consequences for students with disabilities? (Gottfredson et al., 1995)

Consequently, Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997), Eagly and Chaiken's (1993), as well as Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theories and other research studies supported the framework for this study as individuals chose to develop attitudes thoughts, feelings, interactions and beliefs about a situation based upon their experiences.

Application of the Theory

The purpose of this study was to ascertain how secondary general and special education teachers' attitudes affected the inclusion practices and environment of students with disabilities in the general education setting; and further to determine possible contributing sources for these negative and positive attitudes, which affect the inclusive setting. Several theories provided the framework for this study and may provide a foundation for understanding the contributing factors associated with teacher attitude towards the practice of inclusion. Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory provided a framework for understanding, predicting, and changing human behavior. Bandura's (1977) theory additionally supported the idea of self-efficacy. Providing a foregoing view of self-efficacy, led to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). Interchangeably referred to as the Fishbein Model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), this theory was a view of the ways attitudes could be influenced. TRA maintained that an individual's attitudes and intentions were the most immediate factors influencing behavior. "At the most general level, then, we learn to like (or have favorable attitudes toward) objects we associate with 'good' things, and we acquire unfavorable feelings toward objects we associate with 'bad' things" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975 p. 217). In research many different theories existed that determined how attitudes were formed. In addition to Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory and TRA the theoretical framework for this study was similarly supported by research studies conducted by Eagly and Chaiken (1993).

According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993) attitudes were inherent and shaped at later stages of development. Accordingly, Bandura's (1977), Eagly and Chaiken's (1993), as well as Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theories supported the framework for this study as individuals chose to develop attitudes thoughts, feelings, interactions and beliefs about a situation based upon their experiences. The aforementioned theories were beneficial in interpreting the results of this study.

Defining Inclusion

The concept of inclusion was often cited as difficult to define and was generally left to the interpretation of individual schools and teachers (Bondurant, 2004; "What is Inclusion?" 2002). As mentioned in Chapter One, the

practice of inclusion lacked a universal definition however, "successful inclusion is defined, at least in part, by the ability of teachers to expand the border of the circle of tolerance and make a broader range of behavior ordinary in their classrooms" (McLeskey & Waldon, 2002, p. 67). Moreover, Webster (2012) described inclusion as the method of educating students with disabilities with non-disabled students in the general education setting (as cited in Inclusion, 2012). Similarly, inclusion was characterized by McCray and McHatton (2011) as "students with disabilities receiving some or all of their instruction in the general education setting as appropriate to meet students' academic and social needs" (p. 137).

The basic definition of inclusive education contended that students with disabilities were educated in their home schools with their peers and received special education instruction, as described in their IEP within the framework of the general education curriculum and general class activities (Halvorsen & Neary, 2001).

The National Institute for Urban School Improvement (2010) defined inclusion as an effort to ensure that students with disabilities achieved high standards and succeeded as learners, while attending school along with their non-disabled peers. Mushoriwa (2001) identified inclusion as a concept that granted students with disabilities the right to become full participants and members of their neighborhoods. Researchers, Hammond and Ingalls (2003), viewed inclusion as an attempt to establish collaborative, supportive, and fostering communities of learners, based on providing students with disabilities the accommodations and services needed to achieve. King (2003) stated inclusion was giving all students, regardless of their disabilities, the right to become members of the school community. In the Hwang and Evans (2011) study, researchers characterized inclusion as all students, regardless of weaknesses or strengths, were included or a part of the student body.

Inherently, the success of inclusive practices depended fundamentally on a clear, consistent definition. A study piloted by Baker and Zigmond (1995) explored the "common thread running through the models of inclusion and the significant differences" (p. 164). In their study, four themes were employed to differentiate among five states. The themes consisted of the context of the school, versions of inclusion, role of the special education teacher, and the

experiences of the students with disabilities. This was almost symbolic with the overall goal of what inclusive classrooms were supposed to bring to the educational setting; but, without the basis for what inclusion really should look like. Baker and Zigmond (1995) summarized that "inclusion had different meanings for different people" (p.176). Baker and Zigmond (1995) further implied that "a national policy on inclusion will be no more than rhetoric until more common understandings are reached" (p.176).

Due to the vast number of different definitions of inclusion and implementation, much confusion arose and teachers developed a variance of attitudes toward the practice of inclusive education. It appeared that this disparity caused an uneven formation of trial and error versus professional teaching in the classroom, derived in part from the lack of training on inclusion. The variances in the definitions of inclusion were not problematic in and of themselves. However, it became problematic when dialogue among educators was based on the false assumptions of a common meaning of the term. As educators' discussions increased, disparities in meaning escalated. Discrepancies in the definitions were indicative of the confusion regarding inclusion and potentially may have led to the misinterpretations of findings from research studies. This was crucial to understand, because numerous studies that represented educational programs evaluated them as successful or unsuccessful based on dissimilar definitions and service delivery models. Given that the term was not unilateral, the multiple forms of what inclusion should resemble took center stage. Inclusion had been interpreted differently from school to school, but the basic premise remained the same; inclusion was the incorporation of students with disabilities, into the general education environment (Ryndak et al., 2000).

Models of Inclusion

Placement for students with disabilities differed depending on the educational setting in which they attended and possibly represented a spectrum of teaching arrangements, student placements, and IEP implementation (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010). There were two modes of inclusion, full and partial; both types, according to Giangreco (2007), provided students with disabilities equal opportunity to be educated in the same environment as their general education peers.

Full Inclusion

Full inclusion according to the Council for Exceptional Children (2011) occurred when students with disabilities received instruction solely in the general education setting with their same-aged peers Additional support was provided by special education teachers in the general education setting. This required teacher collaboration on the part of both teachers to design and implement appropriate instructional strategies to meet the needs of the student based on IEP goals and accommodations (Fuchs, 2009).

Partial Inclusion

Partial inclusion as described by Friend (2008) occurred when students received instruction in both the general education and the resource setting, which was a self-contained classroom where students with disabilities received instruction from the special education teacher. The Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education (1996) defined partial inclusion as the inclusion of students who receive special education and related services outside the regular classroom for at least 21% to 60% of the school day. This may include students in resource classes with part-time instruction in regular classes (p. 1).

Historical Background

The enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), commonly referred to as Public Law 94-142 (1975) guaranteed students with disabilities the right to be educated alongside their peers in the LRE for the first time. Previous to this writing, students with disabilities were denied equal access to a free public education (Yell, 2006); however, the passage of Public Law 94-142 (1975) launched a wave of reform that concentrated on educating students with disabilities in the general education setting and providing students with appropriate accommodations and support services (Yell, 2006). Public Law 94-142 (1975) was sanctioned "a year later following the Controller General report to Congress that 60 percent of the nation's disabled children were not receiving appropriate schooling" (Irmsher, 1995, p. 1) According to Irmsher (1995), millions of children were totally excluded from school, while others were receiving an education that was not appropriate for their disabilities. Prior to the mid-1970s and the enactment of Public

Law 94-142 (1975), only large school districts offered opportunities for students with disabilities. When special education services were offered, the students were relegated to classrooms in the basement, storage rooms, or down near the boiler room, out of the way and out of sight (Inclusion, 2012). Throughout the 1950s and 1960s segregated classrooms were the chosen educational approach for students with disabilities. A powerful movement away from segregated education began (Reddy, 1999) and the practice of separate but equal ended in the United States with the landmark 1954 case, *Brown v. Board of Education* of Topeka Kansas (as cited in Birnbaum, 2006).

Brown v. Board of Education directly addressed the constitutional rights of racial minorities; however, the precedents set in this case laid the foundation for obtaining equal opportunities for students with disabilities (Turnbull, 1993, as cited in Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998). This case terminated the practice of segregation of African-American students. It was ruled by the courts that African-American students were denied their constitutional rights under the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution (as cited in Birnbaum, 2006). This revolutionary case ended legal segregation in school and the impact on special education was tremendous. No longer would the exclusion of any group be permissible under law. Although this case was largely remembered as a historical effort that ended legal segregation in schools for African-Americans, the civil rights movement advanced the rights of nearly all oppressed minority groups.

Margret A. Winzer (1998) conveyed:

> The fervent egalitarianism and humanism of the 1960s created a wholly new climate for exceptionality. The deprived and oppressed, and those who saw themselves that way, became more militant, and the civil rights movement brought decisive action to improve the lot of blacks, of Chicanos, of women, and of the disabled." (p.376)

This case further opened the door for advocates of students with disabilities. Strong parental advocacy groups paved the way and the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision ultimately led to shifts in school policies related to the rights of

students with disabilities (Yell et al., 1998). Deemed as the first law to guarantee civil rights to persons with disabilities, Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act, 29 (1973) specified:

> No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of their disability, be excluded from the participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal funding or under any program or activity conducted by any federal agency. (United States Code 29 U.SC. § 794)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act additionally provided protections for students with disabilities in pre-school through high school and also for students attending post-secondary institutions. Itkonen (2007) cited amendments to IDEA, NCLB, and their subsequent reauthorizations as the movement that removed special education from the realm of civil rights to education law.

Consequential factors, according to researchers Bartlett, Weisenstein, and Etscheidt (2002), furthered the progression of education for students with disabilities These factors encompassed: (a) standardized intelligence tests and other forms of reliable educational assessments; (b) development of current professional fields such as, speech pathology, psychiatry and educational psychology; (c) medical understanding and treatment of diseases once thought mysterious were improved; and (d) technological advances in important need areas such as public transportation, braces and artificial limbs, electronic communication aids assisted in addressing related issues (Bartlett et al., 2002, p. 242).

Accordingly, the onset of the implementation and development of many programs and services for students with disabilities saturated the legislature. The Captioned Films Acts of 1958 (Public Law 85-905) provided for the training of special education teachers (Public Law 85-926) and the Teachers of the Deaf Act of 1961 (Public Law 87-276) provided instruction for hearing impaired students. Public Law 88-164 further expanded programs to include training for all categories of disabilities. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Public Law 89-10) was enacted as well in 1965, due to compelling parental advocacy for their children with disabilities. This act further provided financial assistance to states to assist with the education of students with disabilities.

In light of the controversy over the *Brown v. Board of Education* of Topeka trial, the legendary Public Law 94-142 (1975) themed as the Bill of Rights for children with disabilities and their families was amended several times to incorporate additional rights for the disabled to circumvent this magnitude of litigation in the future (Project IDEAL in Action, 2013). Unfortunately, these changes came after the two district-court level cases that set primacy in the standing law during the 1970s.

Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was a 1972 case involving a claim against due process in the denial of children with mental disabilities who had not reached the mental age of five years old. The belief was held that even these students could be assisted with training and education from an academic program, but the State of Pennsylvania continued to deny the children access to a public education. Ultimately, Judge Masterson ruled that the presiding law was unconstitutional and mandated the State of Pennsylvania to provide services to this category of students with disabilities as the parties agreed to a settlement in a U.S. District Court.

Mills v. Board of Education, District of Columbia (1972), was another high profile case of 1972 that set precedents in the abiding law. This case was more about schools providing a free education despite the cost. A private citizen named Peter Mills, along with seven other families litigated the rights of their children, who had behavior problems, being allowed to remain in school. Mills' son was put out of school because the school felt that his needs were too extensive. The judge ruled that schools have to educate students with allocated state funds received, regardless to costs (Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia, 1972).

Cases involving unfair practices, discrimination and other violations, as well as some frivolous claims inundated the legal system with support from parents and advocate groups demanding rights for the disabled on the success of its predecessor, *Brown v. Board of Education* of Topeka (Li, 2013). Imperative were the decisions of these judges, and so was the need for expanded laws to be reexamined and reformed to preclude arbitrary discrimination. *Brown v, Board of Education* served as a reminder to society - especially leaders – worldwide, leading to the development of Public

Law101-476, referred to as the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990. In an effort to capture all types of situations and children and broaden the span of services, a previous amendment, in 1986, to Public Law 99-457 provided services for infants and toddlers to help families of children with disabilities from birth to two years old.

Public Law 101-476, although not referenced as much as Public Law 94-142 (1975), provided a comprehensive and all-embracing record of the educational rights of persons with disabilities in a 49-page text comprised of 10 legal titles. Public Law 105-17 amended in 1997, Public Law 108-446 amended in 2004 and IDEIA amended in 2004 followed with more alterations. While Public Law 94-142 (1975) covered provisions for the following "six components: (1) a free appropriate public education (FAPE), (2) the least restrictive environment (LRE), (3) an individual education program (IEP), (4) procedural due process, (5) nondiscriminatory assessment, and (6) parental participation" (Alexander & Alexander, 2015, p. 491). Public Law 101-476 addressed specific requirements, additional disabilities, expansions to services and a name change in this new amendment.

Evaluating the revisions in the scope of the special education topic, Public Law 101-476 primarily declared: (1) the named of this law would be changed to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, (2) each IEP would include a transition service plan no later than the students' 16th birthday; conversely, the age for transition planning was later changed by another amendment to 14, (3) expanded related services, now "social work and rehabilitation counseling" will be provided, (4) "identification of autism and traumatic brain injury "- new "disability categories" were added (Project IDEAL in Action, 2013, n.p.). Hence, this was the public law from whence IDEA originated, which was actually significant in shaping school systems and increasing opportunities for the disabled with targeted resources.

Statistics surfaced related to the timely addition of one of the two new disability classifications. Specifically, autism was termed "autism spectrum disorder" and became one of the most highly recognized disabilities in America, with a prevalence of "1 in 45 children ages 3 through 17" being diagnosed as reported in a survey from the National Health Statistics November 2015 report (2015, p. 2). One assumption was that this number might be inflated due to undiagnosed children. Beforehand, the government reported one in 68, using data obtained from the Center for Disease

Control (CDC). The United States was not alone in dealing with this epidemic; comparatively, China was also reporting millions diagnosed with autism (Autism Speaks, 2015). Beginning with the General Provisions containing legal definitions in Title 1, and continuing throughout, the document of Public Law 101-476 were essential and integral considerations where legislation and clarity were needed in regards to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and their families.

Senator Williams, the author of the EAHCA (Public Law 94-142, 1975) maintained:

> We must recognize our responsibility to provide education for all children with disabilities that meet their unique needs. The denial of the right to education and to equal opportunity within this nation for handicapped children whether it be outright exclusion from school, the failure to provide an education which meets the needs of a single handicapped child, or the refusal to recognize the handicapped child's right to grow is a travesty of justice and a denial of equal protection under the law. (Williams, Congressional Record, 1974, p. 15272)

This act, later re-titled The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 instituted two legal concepts based upon the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, FAPE for students with disabilities and mandated the development and implementation of the Individual Education Plan (IEP). This enactment also established the concept of the LRE, which mandated that services for students with disabilities be provided in the LRE to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Although the LRE provided a continuum of placement options, including more restrictive environments, the majority of students with disabilities were included in the general education setting (Hargrove, 2000). The foremost objective of LRE was on the needs of the individual student; the objective necessitated a continuum of services and not a continuum of placement (Hewitt, 1999). IDEA consequently created a system of policies, guidelines, and checks and balances to guarantee appropriate education in the least-restrictive setting for students who were entitled to special education services (Yell & Katsiyannis, 2004). Revisions to IDEA in 1997, signed by President William Clinton, mandated statements of annual goals and benchmarks to determine the progress of students with disabilities.

IDEA was once more reauthorized in 2004 and introduced further accountability requirements for school districts. According to Stader (2007), these accountability requirements related to serving students with disabilities included:

a) Safety and discipline of students with disabilities
b) Improved collaboration between the school and home
c) Decreased misdiagnosing and dropout rates among minority students with disabilities
d) Protection of the rights of students with disabilities, and
e) Reduction of paperwork. (p. 185).

The NCLB Act, signed into law by President George Bush in 2002, compelled school districts to disaggregate achievement data for students with disabilities for the first time and become accountable for the progress of this group of students. Further this act mandated that students with disabilities were no longer exempt from high stakes standardized testing creating the need for students with disabilities to be exposed to the general education curriculum now more than previously (Allbritten, Mainzer, & Ziegler, 2004). As reported by McLaughlin (2010), this act mandated states articulate how they would close the achievement gap and ensure that all students attained proficiency.

Despite legal provisions provided under IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, student placement, as of this writing, continued to be one of the most controversial and commonly litigated issues. Yell and Katsiyannis (2004) cited the placement issue recognized as the most frequently litigated as IDEA requirement that students with disabilities be provided a FAPE in the LRE. FAPE insured that school districts provided a free education appropriate for the needs of student with disabilities. The LRE mandated that students with disabilities received their education in the general education setting to the maximum extent appropriate; or, when the general education setting was not appropriate, in a setting with the least amount of segregation from a student's nondisabled peers (Yell & Katsiyannis, 2004, p. 29). With the onset of litigation and due process proceedings, pressure was placed on school districts around the country to place students with disabilities in regular classrooms with non-disabled students for full or partial inclusion (Inclusion, 2012).

Litigations and Inclusion

In an analysis of reports to the USDOE (2006) little changed in the span of 12 years relative to the placement of students with disabilities. This disregard for the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) brought on the onset of the first full inclusion lawsuit. In 1989, the 5th Circuit Court heard the case against the Board of Education of El Paso Independent School District, to determine if the school district was in compliance when deciding the placement of Daniel, a student with Down syndrome.

The decision was based on a two question test to determine if the school district was in compliance with inclusion laws. The questions utilized were: (1) Can education in the regular classroom, with the use of supplementary aids and services, be achieved satisfactorily for a particular student? (1a) Has the school taken sufficient steps to accommodate the student in the regular classroom with the use of supplementary aids and services and modifications? (1b) Will the student receive educational benefit from the regular education? (1c) What will be the effect of the student's presence in the regular education classroom on the education of the other students? (2) If the student is to be removed from a regular education classroom and placed in a more restrictive setting has the student been mainstreamed to the maximum extent appropriate? (*Daniel R.R. v. State Board of Education,* 874 F.2d 1048-49).

These two questions sought to answer whether the general classroom could provide the accommodations and services needed and if the student had been included to the fullest extent feasible. It was found by the court using the two question test (later named the Daniel R.R. Test) that even with all conceivable accommodations and services, Daniel could not perform successfully in the general educational setting. This case set the precedent for future cases and, at the time of this writing, most courts apply the Roncker or Daniel R.R. Tests when deciding cases involving student placement (Kraft, 2002).

Many courts, at the time of this writing, continued to refer to the Daniel R.R. Test, as cited in the following court cases: *Oberti v. Board of Education* (3rd Cir. 1993); *Sacramento City School District v. Rachel Holland* (9th Cir. 1994); *L. B., and J. B., on behalf of K. B., v. Nebo School District, Nebo Board of Education, et. al.* (10th Cir. 2004);

and T. W., by and through his parents, *Madeline McCullough and Michael Wilson, v. Unified School District No. 259*, Wichita, Kansas (10th Cir. 2005). While the LRE was mandated by law, schools were inconsistent with their implementation. Over the course of the years, parents of students with disabilities filed lawsuits in federal courts to obtain the rights guaranteed to their children by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (as cited in Lipton, 1994). There were a number of court cases that influenced how students with disabilities were educated in public schools. Some of the most significant court cases involving students in special education were as follows:

- *Jose P. v. Ambach*: This federal class action decision guaranteed the rights of students with disabilities to be referred, evaluated, and placed in a timely manner into appropriate educational programs (Fafard, Hanlon, & Bryson, 1986).
- *Lora v. Board of Education of the City of New York*: Petitioned to deal with nonbiased referral, assessment, and placement practices of minority students with emotional disturbances (Wood, Johnson, & Jenkins, 1986).
- *Larry P. v. Riles* was based on the disproportionate placement of Black children in special education classes for the Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR) based on Intelligence Tests (Prasse & Reschly, 1986). It was ruled by a federal judge in the state of California that the tests were racially and culturally biased and did not take into account the cultural and background experiences of these children**.**
- *Board v. Rowley*: Recognized as the first major special education case; the Supreme Court ruling stated that federal law compelled school districts to provide students with disabilities the same educational opportunities as their non-disabled peers. This ruling provided clarification of the term "appropriate" (Goldstein, Gee, & Daniel, 1995, p. 1028)
- *Frederick L. v. Thomas*: This ruling guaranteed students with learning disabilities the right to a FAPE until age 21 (Tillery & Carfioli, 1986).

- *Luke S. and Hans, S. v. Nix et al.*: This ruling considered system-wide changes that impacted the assessment of students with disabilities. It reduced the wait time for evaluation and referral and appropriate placement in the classroom (Taylor, Tucker, & Galagan, 1986).

Benefits and Challenges of Inclusion

In their review of literature, Salend and Duhaney (1999) concluded that academic achievement for elementary and secondary students was unchanged or excelled in the inclusive setting for non-disabled students. It was further found by Walter-Thomas, Bryant, and Land (1996) in their three-year study using the collaborative teaching model with elementary students with disabilities and low achieving regular education students that both experienced gains in socialization and self-esteem, in relationship to their skills and achievements. Self-esteem for students with disabilities was greater than before, because they were attending classes in the general education setting as opposed to the special education setting (Ritter, Michel, & Irby, 1999). It was suggested in another study that gains were realized by general education students in the areas of understanding, acceptance, and growth in social cognition when they were educated in the inclusive setting (Carter, Sisco, Brown, Brickham, & Al-Khabbaz, 2008). These findings were further confirmed by the parents of non-handicapped students (Kochhar et al., 2000). More recent research revealed numerous benefits for students with disabilities included into the general education setting for the majority of the school day (Blackorby et al., 2005, p, 535). Research of 11,000 students conducted by Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhie-Richmond (2009) found that students with disabilities included in the general education class setting had higher achievement test scores, better attendance, and functioned closer to grade level than their peers who were self-contained.

Additionally, to conduct their study, Peetsma et al. (2001) paired elementary students with disabilities educated in separate classes to their counterparts educated in the inclusion setting over a four-year period in the Netherlands. The results indicated the students educated in the inclusive setting achieved more academic success than their counterparts educated in the separate classes.

Similar results were noted by researchers, Daniel and King (1997) when tracking third and fifth grade students with disabilities who increased their reading scores. In another study exploring the relationship between inclusion rates and performance levels of disabled fourth and eighth graders on standardized state assessments and the graduation rates, Luster and Durett (2003) found a positive correlation existed between the aforementioned factors. Consistent with findings in other studies, school personnel in several counties in the state of Florida reported that non-disabled middle school students who participated in the inclusive setting in elementary school scored higher on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (Barnitt, 2002).

It was further noted by Barnitt (2002) that non-disabled students and students with disabilities exposed to the inclusive setting showed gains in the areas of self-esteem, behavior, attendance, academic achievement, and test scores. In addition, student gains in self-esteem, desirable behavior, attendance, grades, and test scores were noted for students with and without disabilities in inclusive classrooms (Barnitt, 2002). As a result, Barnitt (2002) found that students were better prepared to transition to the next level after being a part of the inclusive setting. For example, Ryndak, Alper, Ward, Storch, and Wilson Montgomery (2010) investigated postsecondary outcomes for two individuals with disabilities who received services across educational settings. Their findings indicated the student educated within the general education setting appeared to have better postsecondary outcomes in the community, as compared to the student who was educated in a self-contained special education setting.

Adversaries of inclusion cited three issues when discussing the effect of inclusion on non-disabled students as reduced teacher/student relationships, diminished academic performance, and acquiring negative behaviors learned from students with disabilities. Staub and Peck (1995) in their quasi-experimental design found these three issues cited by opponents of inclusion were not realized. In spite of claims that inclusion was beneficial to all students, Litvack, Ritchie, and Shore (2011) discovered that high-achieving, non-disabled students believed that inclusionary practices negatively impacted their academic performance, because frequently the behavior of the students with disabilities was objectionable. Researchers Katz and Porath (2012) discovered that non-handicapped students were similarly

concerned; but; unlike Litvack et al. (2011) these study participants were concerned about their academic progress when given collaborative assignments with learning disabled peers. Katz and Porath (2012) further discovered that students with disabilities possessed less than positive feelings toward additional support staff in the general education classroom, because it interfered with their interactions with non-disabled peers. The presence of support staff in the general education class setting was identified as a source of teasing of students with disabilities by peers. According to Combs, Elliot, and Whipple (2010) students with disabilities were likely to suffer from low self-esteem and as a result may become disruptive in the classroom. Combs et al. (2010) indicated this could be interpreted as a negative attitude toward the inclusionary process. Additionally, Fletcher (2010), in his research revealed that kindergarten students with emotional disabilities resulted in a 10% decrease in non-disabled peers reading and math scores by the start of first grade. Fuchs (2009) further suggested barriers to inclusion included idealistic responsibilities and expectations of the general education teacher. Adding to the dissonance, Idol (2006) cited barriers to inclusion as (a) lack of special education knowledge, (b) lack of administrative support, and (c) lack of collaboration amongst general and special education teachers. Lack of training was additionally identified as a barrier to the inclusionary process by numerous researchers (Allison, 2011; Cipkin & Rizza, 2010; Fuchs, 2009; Glazzard, 2011).

Teacher Attitudes, Expectations, and Perceptions

The attitude of teachers towards students with disabilities became one of the most commonly researched topics and was given a vast amount of attention during the four decades previous to this writing (Davis, 1995; Grossman et al., 2007; Mohapatra et al., 2001). The rationale for this focus, as cited by Gottlieb (1975) existed because teacher attitudes played a key factor in successful educational outcomes for all students.

Concurring researchers (DeSimone & Parmar, 2006; Elliott, 2008; Kim, 2011; Philpott et al., 2010; Stanovich & Jordan, 2002) maintained the success of students with disabilities in the general education setting was reliant on the attitude of the teacher. Similarly, Santoli, Sachs, Romey, & McClurg (2008) cited teacher attitudes as a critical factor to the successful inclusion of students with disabilities. Santoli et al. (2008) suggested teacher attitude influenced

classroom practices and ultimately impacted student achievement. They further determined, "It would seem that, in the absence of positive beliefs about student achievement, teachers are going through empty motions in making modifications for special education students" (2008, para. 19). Researchers (Park & Chitiyo, 2011; Philpott et al., 2010; Poulou, 2007) additionally suggested teacher attitudes effected classroom practices and teacher interactions with students with disabilities. When general education teachers acknowledged the setting as one of the major barriers to inclusion, rather than the students' disability; they tended to engage in direct interaction with the student, as opposed to teachers who saw the disability as the barrier.

Awareness of teacher attitude towards inclusion increased in the decades previous to this writing, due to the escalated number of students with disabilities educated in the general education class settings (Gottlieb, 1975; Jones et al., 1984; Jones, 1974; Moore & Fiine, 1978; Overline, 1977; Panda & Bartel,1972; Phelps, 1965; Schofield, 1978).

A review of then-current and past literature indicated that teacher attitudes and perceptions varied widely on the subject of inclusion. Since the enactment of the EAHCA (Public Law 94-142, 1975), many opinions and attitudes about what was the appropriate environment for students with disabilities had emerged. Previous studies of teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting yielded contradictory results. Although some researchers reported ambiguous and even negative attitudes towards inclusion on the part of general education teachers (Hammond, & Ingalls, 2003), most accounts (Avramadis, et al., 2000, Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1998, D'Alonzo, Gordano, & Vanleeuwen, 1997, Daane, Bierne-Smith, & Latham 2000, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1996, Smith & Smith, 2000, and Vidovich & Lombard, 1998) indicated positive teacher attitudes, accompanied by the belief in the ideology of inclusion.

Yet, another study by Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevins (1996) using the Heterogeneous Education Teacher Survey and the Regular Education Initiative Teacher Survey-Revised, reported that 78.8% of 578 general education teachers in the United States showed positive attitudes towards inclusion (p.36.) According to Jones, Thorn, Chow, Thompson, and Wilde (2002), positive attitudes toward inclusion were on the rise as inclusionary practices were

incorporated in many school districts around the country. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) reported, "Professionals' attitudes may act to facilitate or constrain the implementation of policies the success of innovative and challenging programs must surely depend upon the cooperation and commitment of those most directly involved" (p. 278). Voltz, Brazil, and Ford (2001) cited an important component of inclusion as everyone sharing the responsibility of meeting and supporting the needs of all students. The outcome would be collaboration between special education and general education teachers to guarantee the opportunity for success of all students in the general education setting.

According to research by Good and Brophy (1997), it had long been recognized that teacher attitudes could have lasting consequences; particularly in the case of classroom teachers who held negative attitudes towards students with disabilities (as cited in Campbell, Gilmore, & Cuskelly, 2003). Good and Brophy (1972) found that like teacher expectations, teachers' attitudes may affect teacher-student interactions and serve as self-fulfilling prophecies. It was further discovered that teachers' attitudes towards individual students influenced the teachers' behaviors and may influence the teachers 'perceptions of the students' abilities (Good & Brophy, 1972; Jackson, Silberman, & Wolfson, 1969; Jenkins, B., 1972).

Research characterizing teacher expectations, attitudes, and perceptions could provide valuable data about the influence of inclusion on their instructional behavior (Hull, 2005). Shade and Stewart (2001) indicated in their study that one of the main factors influencing the successful implementation of any inclusive policy was the positive attitudes of teachers. According to the researcher in another study, teachers' attitudes played a vital role in the success of any program in education, especially the practice of inclusion (Jobe, Rust, & Brissie, 1996). Since general and special education teachers were the service providers for teaching students with special needs in the inclusive setting, their attitudes towards educating students with special needs was a contributing factor to the success or failure of these students. According to Jobe, Rust, and Brissie (1996) few studies were conducted to judge how teachers genuinely felt towards the subject of inclusion.

The attitudes and opinions of general education teachers toward inclusive practices may influence school learning environments and equal learning opportunities for students with disabilities (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). The vast majority of research on teacher attitudes indicated that many general education teachers philosophically supported inclusion, but many had concerns about their inherent ability to implement these programs successfully (Beull, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, & Scheer, 1999; Van Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2000). According to previous studies, general education teachers felt they were inadequately prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom (Cook et al., 1991). As a result, general education teachers were less likely to be supporters of inclusion.

Correspondingly, Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, and Scheer (1999), found teacher attitudes and self-efficacy impacted the students with disabilities in the inclusive class setting. The goal of their research was to investigate factors that impacted the teacher's ability to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the inclusive class setting. The study focused on secondary teacher attitudes and beliefs associated with successfully educating disabled students, training needs, and adapting materials. The instrument utilized was designed and developed by a Southwestern State's Exceptional Students' Team and Department of Education. The instrument comprised of a 25-item Likert-type scale and included open ended questions. The questions addressed confidence working with students with disabilities in the inclusive class setting and also teacher training needs relative to inclusive education. Participants included 4% of the state's elementary and secondary general educators and 6% of the state's special educators rendering a total of 289 participants (Buell et al., 1999, p 149).

The returned surveys generated a 53% response rate. Approximately 27% of the surveys were discarded because of the participants' failure to indicate if they were general or special education teachers. The response rate breakdown indicated a 70% participation for general education teachers with a 50% response rate, and 30% participation with 82% response rate for special education teachers (Buell et al.1999 p. 149). It was further revealed that general education teachers averaged 15 years' experience as compared to the average of 13 years for special

education teachers (Buell et al.1999 p. 149). This study found that special education teachers tended have longer working relationships with younger students. The state's statistics indicated that this finding was consistent with state numbers. It was revealed that 25% of the teachers at the elementary level were special education while only 17% at the secondary level were special education teachers (Buell et al.1999 p. 149). There was population over representation due to the large percentage of special education teachers participating in the study. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed in order to obtain information to address the differences in responses from both groups relating to their attitudes towards inclusion (Buell et al.1999 p. 149). The topic of training general education teachers to work in inclusionary settings was additionally addressed in this study. The survey incorporated questions concerning successful experience working with students with disabilities, understanding the concept of inclusion, the ability to motivate and work with difficult students. Data relative to teacher self-efficacy indicated that the variables of understanding the concept of inclusion and the ability to work with difficult students accounted for inconsistency. Special education teachers rated their ability to motivate and understand students with disabilities higher than the ratings of the general education teachers.

However, general education teachers indicated they had the ability to effectively teach in the inclusive setting (Buell et al.1999 p. 149). To test for training needed in the inclusive classroom, a multivariate analysis of variance was done to compare responses from general and special education teachers. The findings indicated a significant difference in the communicated training needs of special and general education teachers. Univariate analysis revealed that general education teachers needed training in program modification, assessments, behavior management, and curriculum design. Buell et al. (1999) study tested teacher attitudes and self-efficacy associated to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting.

The purpose of the Buell et al. (1999) study was to investigate factors that impacted the teacher's ability to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the inclusive class setting, explore the attitudes and feelings of efficacy of general and special education teachers and to identify the training needed to be successful in the inclusive setting. This

study, along with Soodak and Podell (1993), supported the findings that general education teachers' lack of self-efficacy in their ability to teach students with disabilities could impact the students' academic outcomes. Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory was applied to this study. Bandura's theory addressed self-efficacy and its relationship to attitudes through different beliefs and actions. It was additionally revealed through this study that teachers' sense of efficacy was influenced by personal needs that were contextual. Limitations to this study included the over-representation of special education teachers and the attitudes of the participants pertained only to this group of participants in one geographical region.

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) conducted a research synthesis of empirical studies concerning the attitudes of educators toward inclusion. The synthesis of literature spanned over a period of more than 30 years of research on teacher attitudes and the inclusion construct. According to the researchers, the intent of the synthesis was to provide important information about where the field of education was headed in respect to the educational policy. The data, which focused on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, included 10,560 teachers from all geographical locations (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996).

These educators in Scruggs and Mastropieri's (1996) study were surveyed to gather their attitudes about relevant topics relating to inclusion. Topics covered common issues such as adequacy of training, adequacy of resources, and support. The participants totaled 1,173 special education teachers and 6,459 general education teachers (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996, p. 60). Return rates for the surveys ranged from 48% to 95% with a mean average of 72% and a standard deviation of 16% for the 11 survey reports used to generate this data (p. 61). Reliability of the instrument used revealed between .52 and .92 for a mean of .79 and a standard deviation of .12. The reliability was based on the reports (p. 61). The findings from the study revealed that 10,560 teachers were surveyed through 28 different survey reports (p. 60). The wide variety in surveys, procedures, time and geographical locations surveyed apparently had no negative effect on responses for the different items. Overall, 65% of the teachers surveyed, indicated

support for the practice of inclusion. Factors such as location date of study, or experience did not impact the percentages significantly (p. 67)

An overwhelming minority of teachers believed that disabled students would be too disruptive for the general classroom and would demand too much attention, thereby taking away from the other (non-special needs) students. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) further noted that after 30 years, teacher attitudes toward inclusion had changed very little. Overall, they concluded that many educators viewed inclusion as a valuable and beneficial practice. Limitations and drawbacks of this research included (a) self-reported data as opposed to actual observable procedures (b) elementary and secondary contradiction on several survey questions, but the contradiction was overlooked in the results.

Likewise, the Villa et al. (1996) study assessed the perceptions of 680 teachers and administrators related to practice of full inclusion for students with disabilities. This group of study participants all had experience working with students with disabilities in the inclusive setting. The study examined the relationship between general and special education teacher's attitude towards inclusion; the relationship between the background and experience of general education teachers and administrators and their attitudes toward inclusion; and the relationship between background and experience of special education teachers and administrators and their attitudes toward inclusion. The entire staff of 32 schools was surveyed using a true/false survey instrument (Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevins, 1996). The survey instrument addressed two factors, the impact of diverse education on students and the enabling of systems changes by diverse education. The statistical analysis revealed that there were significant differences in perceptions between general and special education teachers. The within-group variability was insignificant. The results further indicated that both general education and special education teachers believed that "educating students with disabilities in general education classrooms results in positive changes in teachers' attitudes and job responsibilities" (Villa et al., p. 36). The results of this study yielded contradictory results from Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, and Lesar (1991) whose previous research of 381 special and general education teachers assessed perceptions and opinions surrounding the regular

education initiative. Results indicated both general and special education teachers favored the pullout special education service delivery model. Additional findings revealed that both general education and special education teachers believed that "educating students with disabilities in general education classrooms results in positive changes in teachers' attitudes" (Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991, p.18). It was also noted that the inclusionary experience provided teachers the opportunity to acquire new skills necessary to implement inclusion, resulting in a more positive attitude.

Results indicated general educators associated their attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities with how much administrative support was given, how much time was allotted for collaborating, and their personal experience with students with severe and profound disabilities. Special educators associated attitudes toward teaching students with special needs in the general education classroom by the amount of collaboration with general educators and by the amount of support from administrators (Semmel et al., 1991). Limitations of this study were indicative of other surveys that elicited true-false responses, contextual information was not obtainable. As a result, the researchers recommended follow-up qualitative studies.

Subsequently, another study conducted by Olson, Chalmers, and Hoover (1997) explored how inclusion was related to the attitudes of the general education teacher. The participants in the study included ten general education teachers that taught on both the elementary and secondary levels in a rural area of a metropolitan district. These groups of teachers were nominated by principals and special education teachers to participate in the study. They were nominated because they were successful in establishing inclusive classrooms. Five of the participants taught on the elementary level and the remaining five taught on the secondary level. Nine participants were female and had been teaching an average of 12 years (Olson, Chalmers, & Hoover, 1997). The participants were interviewed using open ended questions. The interviews were analyzed for emerging themes. The resulting seven themes were provided to the participants for validation with a follow up questionnaire. The participants were in 100% agreement with the seven themes (Olson et al., 1997). The results indicated teachers with successful inclusion experiences displayed the

following traits: tolerance; reflective, flexible personalities; accepted responsibility for students; positive relationships with the special education teachers; modified expectations; interpersonal warmth; and acceptance. The participants also revealed that insufficient time was available for collaboration and thought that inclusion was not an appropriate setting for all students (Olson et al., 1997). The limitation of this study included small sample size and limitation to one geographical area.

Additional literature reviewed indicated that some teachers possessed negative attitudes towards the practice of inclusion. Sources of this negativity towards students with disabilities involved in inclusive education varied. After Orr (2009) conducted a study with preservice special education teachers, it was revealed that general education teachers appeared to exhibit more negative attitudes towards students requiring modified instruction; but, the most negative attitudes appeared to be toward students with certain disabilities, such as behavioral and emotional disorders. The pre service teachers indicated general education teachers were more positive about including students with language deficits and physical disabilities. Moreover, it was discovered the general education teachers expected the special education teachers to be liable for students with disabilities in the inclusive class setting (Orr, 2009). Likewise, Cassady (2011) indicated that general education teachers held negative attitudes toward students with behavioral and emotional disabilities, as well as students with autism. Thus, Niesyn (2009) suggested that general education teachers were unqualified to teach students with behavioral or emotional disabilities; unlike special education teachers who trained to handle these types of students. The general education teachers' training concentrated on working with students across the content domains. Conversely, it was found that the teachers were more responsive to teaching students with autism than teaching students with behavioral and emotional disabilities (Cassady, 2011).

De Boer, Piji, and Minnaert (2011) found in their study that teachers held negative beliefs or were undecided about the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. Also revealed were the following variables related to the negative or undecided attitudes: training, years of experience, type of disability, lack of confidence teacher held in teaching students with disabilities and the rejection of these students in their classrooms.

Numerous researchers indicated that attitudes of middle and high school teachers were less positive towards the practice of inclusion than that of elementary teachers (DeSimone & Parmar, 2006; Lopes, Monteiro, Sil, Rutherford, & Quinn, 2004; Smith, 2000). Smith (2000) hypothesized that these negative attitudes may be in part due to the large amount of material that middle and high school teachers were required to cover.

According to Lopes, Monteiro, Sil, Rutherford, and Quinn (2004) general education teachers in grades five thru nine reported the lowest efficacy in teaching students with disabilities. It was indicated that these teachers believed the inclusion of these students interfered with the learning of their non-disabled peers. DeSimone and Parmar (2006) argued that these groups of teachers did not have the same opportunities to develop relationships with their students as elementary teachers because of the amount of time spent in class. Overall, support for inclusion correlated with the degree of inclusion implementation and the severity of students' disability. Another relevant finding in the research concluded that one-fourth to one-third of educators surveyed agreed they had sufficient time, training, and resources to have successful inclusion programs. Some of the respondents tended to change their attitudes after receiving training to teach in the inclusive classroom setting. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) indicated that educators should be cautious of these findings because, as with any research, studies pertaining to inclusion and teacher attitude maybe inconsistent.

In their quasi-experimental study, researchers Van Reusen, Shoho, and Barker (2000) examined background factors affecting the attitudes of secondary teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities. The factors studied included (a) years of experience, (b) professional responsibility, (c) gender, (d) teacher training preparation, (e) special education training, and (f) content area taught (p. 86). The participants included 125 teachers from a suburban high school located in San Antonio, Texas. In this study data collection included a two-part survey used to measure teacher attitude towards inclusion. The survey consisted of a 20-item, 4-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' that assessed teachers' attitude towards inclusion. The scale measured teacher attitude over four areas: (a) training working with special needs populations, (b) school climate, (c) subject/teacher effectiveness, and (d) social adjustment (Van Reusen et al., 2000, p. 88). Survey results revealed an insignificant correlation related to

the amount of special education training and teacher attitudes. However, a significant difference was observed between teachers who reported special education training and those that reported minimal or no special education training. Teachers with the most special education training revealed positive attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities into the inclusive setting. Van Reusen et al. (2000) found that more than 54% of teachers surveyed reported negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into their classes. This study underscores the importance of adequate special education training for teachers working with students with disabilities into the inclusive setting.

Idol (2006) further suggested successful inclusion consisted of several factors with attitudes, teacher training and collaboration being the most significant. Phillips, Alfred, Brulli, and Shank (1990) cited that when teachers were trained, had administrative support, and lower class sizes, attitudes tended to be positive. It was generally accepted that positive teacher attitudes contributed to the success of mainstreaming of exceptional students in the school (Duquette & O'Reilly, 1988).

Idol (2006) found that teachers of elementary students with disabilities attitudes' regarding inclusion varied from willing to accept and try to complete acceptance. Most educators supported students with disabilities because of the overall positive attitude toward students with disabilities. General educators were more likely to have a positive attitude toward inclusion if they were acquainted with an individual who had a disability (Parasuram, 2006). Special educators were more concerned about students with disabilities receiving all their services and supports in a general education classroom (Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001).

Global Perspective

"It has been argued that a global perspective on disability issues is needed to avoid assuming that developments in one country are the norm in the other" (Barton & Tomilinson, 1984, p. 56). The practice of inclusion had become an international movement, thus, the attitudes of teachers in other parts of the world were important to examine because their attitudes offered insight into how inclusionary practices have been viewed across cultures. Hwang and Evans (2011) conducted a study of 33 Korean general education teachers to investigate their attitudes towards inclusion (p.

136). The results indicated 41% of the participants had positive attitudes towards inclusion, although 55% percent indicated they would be reluctant to teach in the inclusive setting (Hwang and Evans, 2011, p. 136). Additionally, 78.85% of the participants believed that students with disabilities would be better served in special education classrooms (p. 137). According to Hwang and Evans (2011), these results indicated a disconnect between the theory and practice of inclusive education. Correspondingly, Glazzard's (2011) research conducted in England revealed similar results. Teachers' perspectives towards inclusion were surveyed and the results indicated that attitudinal barriers hindered the successful implementation of inclusion. The results further indicated if teachers were not fully committed to the practice of inclusive education, then inclusion would not be successful.

In a study conducted in Italy, researchers Zambelli and Bonni (2004) examined 23 middle school general education teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The results revealed that the participants seemed to be divided on their views towards inclusion. Some participants, with and without inclusive teaching experience, held negative views towards inclusive education, and indicated that students with disabilities should be educated in special schools. Other participants however, with and without experience in the inclusive setting, were in favor of inclusive education and maintained that all students, regardless of their disability, should be educated in the general education setting.

Factors Influencing Attitudes

As early as the 1950s researchers began studying the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education setting. In their review of literature related to teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education, Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden (2000) found that generally teachers held positive attitudes; however, other researchers indicated that negative teachers' attitudes may be influenced by their beliefs regarding the effects inclusion will have on their skills and time (Avaramidis et al., 2000). Moreover, in their study Elhoweris and Alsheikh (2004) using the Q-methodology generated a three factors solution. Attitudes of the participants were represented by the following three factors:

- Legalism: placed importance on the fairness of inclusion and viewed as a legal

issue beneficial for all students.

- Environmentalism: the belief that the general education classroom environment could meet the needs of all students.
- Conservatism: Inclusion viewed as an inappropriate approach for academic and social success for all students. Conservatism further believed that "the responsibility of educating a child with a disability in general education classes has adversarial effects on the education of non-handicapped students; and "children with mental retardation could not receive an appropriate education in the general education classroom." (Elhoweris & Alsheikh (2004, p. 6)

The results of the study indicated general education teachers were more supportive of the practice of inclusion on the legalism and environmentalism levels.

Researchers further indicated several factors determined to be associated with teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general educational setting. These factors included (a) experience teaching students with disabilities, (b) the nature and severity of the disability, (c) professional development and training (d) support services (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Conversely, researchers Stephens and Braun (1980) found an insignificant correlation between experience working with students with disabilities and teacher attitude towards inclusion. Other studies maintained that teachers with experience possessed the most negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general educational setting (Forlin, 1995; Forlin, Douglas, & Hattie, 1996).

Gender. Several researchers noted that gender did not play a significant role in the relationship between teachers' attitudes and gender (Aramids et al., 2000; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Results from a study of 93 general education teachers in Pennsylvania indicated attitude toward inclusion did not vary significantly between female and male teachers (Barnes, 2008). Correspondingly, Van Reusen et al. (2000) conducted a study of the attitudes towards

inclusion of 125 general and special education teachers in a suburban Texas high school. The results indicated that gender difference was not a significant factor in the teachers' attitudes.

However, other studies noted that female teachers were inclined to have more positive attitudes toward the practice of inclusion and have higher expectations than male teachers (Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001). Likewise, the results of research by Walpole (2008) reported female teachers held more favorable attitudes than male teachers toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in both elementary and secondary schools (p. 49). It was also found that elementary teachers were reported to have more favorable attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities than secondary teachers (p. 60). Similarly, De Boer et al. (2011) noted in a review of literature that female teachers had more positive attitude relative to inclusion than their male counterparts. Reports from Jobe et al. (1996) determined that male teachers were more at ease in the inclusive setting. In contrast, researchers Pearman, Huang, Barnhart, and Mellblom (1992) found male teachers were significantly more negative towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the inclusive setting than their female counterparts (p. 179).

Age, experience, and qualifications. Several studies focused on the relationship between the female teachers' age, experience and qualifications found that older, more experienced teachers appeared to have more negative attitudes toward inclusion than their younger counterparts (Cornoldi et al., 1998; Lampropoulou & Padelliadu, 1997). It was found that younger teachers foster more accepting attitudes toward inclusionary practices (Cornoldi et al., 1998; Harvey, 1985). It was further found that older teachers viewed inclusion as an intrusion by support staff. MacFarlane and Woolfson (2012) studied 111 general teachers to determine their attitudes towards students diagnosed with social, emotional, and behavioral disabilities. Their study revealed that experience predicted the teachers' beliefs and willingness to work with those students. Results indicated that teachers with more experience teaching students with social, emotional, and behavioral disabilities possessed unfavorable attitudes and were less willing to work with those students than their colleagues with less experience (MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2012). Boyle, Topping, and Jinal-Snape (2012) asserted probationary or first year teachers were more positive towards inclusion than their more experienced

counterparts. They added that after the first year, there was not a significant difference between attitudes towards inclusion and experience. There was a significant difference in attitude for the first-year teachers and every other stage of experience; however, the difference in any other stage of experience was minimal. Boyle et al. (2012) proposed the reason for this may be that the teachers may not be participating in inclusion to the same degree as the probationary teacher gains more experience. It was furthermore suggested that the effects of teaching possibly changed their attitudes after the teachers acquired more experience. In addition, Avradmidis and Kalvya (as cited in Sharma, Moore, & Sonawane, 2009) determined that teachers demonstrated more positive attitudes towards inclusion when they taught students with disabilities, than teachers with limited experience.

Scholars agreed that the level of education did not have an impact on the teachers' attitudes toward inclusionary practices (Heiman, 2001; Kuester, 2000). Conversely, another study conducted by Stoler (1992) indicated the higher the level of education held by the teacher, the less positive were attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities.

Teachers' attitudes towards the practice of inclusion, according to several researchers (Cook, 2002; Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996), was directly related to the type of disability and the amount of inclusion to be implemented. Sharma, Moore, and Sonawane (2009) found that pre-service teachers possessed small amounts of interactions and ongoing contact with individuals with disabilities. This absence of interaction resulted in lack of knowledge and may foster the notion that teachers were willing to accommodate students with disabilities; but believed that those students could not succeed in the general education setting (Santoli, Sachs, Romey, & McClurg, 2008). Teachers' attitudes appeared more positive towards the inclusion of students with LDs than towards the inclusion of students with severe disabilities (Kim, 2011).

Although research revealed support for the inclusion of students with disabilities, teachers' attitudes towards inclusion differed according to their training and experience. Several studies revealed that teachers with experience working with students with disabilities possessed more favorable attitudes towards inclusion than teachers with little or

no experience (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Cook, Tankersley, Cook, & Landrum, 2000; Leyser, Kapperman, & Keller, 1994; Minke, Bear, Deemer, & Griffin, 1996). Furthermore, Cook, Tankersley, Cook, and Landrum (2000) found that teachers with seven years or more experience in the inclusive setting believed they could meet the needs of students with disabilities, while teachers with less experience in the inclusive setting held less confidence. In contrast other researchers found that experience with students with disabilities did not automatically lead to positive attitudes towards the concept of inclusion. (Center & Ward, 1987; Stephens & Braun, 1980).

According to Woodcock (2013), teacher attitudes rarely changed over the span of the teacher's career. Consequently, Woodcock (2013) maintained that preparing teachers for inclusion was of the upmost importance. In his study to compare the attitudes of pre- service and experienced teachers towards students with specific LDs, Woodcock (2013) confirmed, "There were no differences in attitudes according to experience with students with specific learning disabilities" (p.12).

Summary

The review of literature in this chapter included studies of the attitudes of special and general educators towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general educational setting, as well as the contributing factors that directly impacted the attitudes of these teachers. These factors played a major role in the attitudes of some teachers and ultimately the academic success for students with disabilities. Comparisons were made between special and general education attitudes with differing results in the attitudes of some teachers and ultimately the academic success for students with disabilities. Teacher attitudes towards inclusion differed from fully supportive to undeniably unreceptive. A multiplicity of factors affected teacher attitudes toward inclusion: such as preservice preparation, expectations for teachers, extent of support from administrators and peers and the lack of or amount of professional development received on inclusive education.

Expectations for the teachers involved in inclusive education were varied; special education teachers must be cognizant of the IEP goals for students with disabilities, provide accommodations, implement instructional

modifications and keep abreast of the legality linked with special education. The general education teachers must establish a welcoming classroom conducive to learning, make adaptations to the curriculum, and collaborate with special education teachers. An effective inclusionary practice had both benefits and barriers. Benefits of inclusion included opportunities for students with disabilities to improve academically and behaviorally, socialize with non-disabled peers, and collaboration between general and special education teachers to provide the best inclusionary experience. Barriers to inclusion included negative teacher attitude, lack of effective collaboration between the general and special education teachers, inadequate teacher preparation, lack of experience, and lack support for teachers.

Inclusion was the full acceptance of all students and led to a sense of belonging within the classroom community. Inclusive education provided benefits for all students and school personnel and served as an exemplar for an inclusive society; one in which students with disabilities did not have to prove their ability and readiness to be included. Successful inclusion required a shift in attitudes and beliefs of teachers and all school personnel and parents such that all involved truly believed that students with disabilities can succeed in the general education environment. Teacher attitude sets the stage for success in the inclusion environment. When the policies set forth were implemented appropriately, and time was given for collaboration, there were no limits to the amount of success that could be reached within inclusionary settings. Inclusion offered an opportunity for general education students and special education students alike the chance to have positive self-esteem and self-efficacy, as well as the teacher.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to ascertain how secondary general and special education teachers' attitudes affected the inclusion practices and environments of students with disabilities in the general education setting. The study investigated secondary general and special education teachers to determine if there was a difference in attitudes in relation to teacher certification, gender, experience, subjects taught, past inclusionary experience, personal experience with disabled individuals, coursework related to special education, hours of professional development, and training related to inclusion. This study additionally investigated possible contributing aspects for these positive and negative attitudes which may affect the inclusionary practice. Golmic & Hansen (2012) cited the attitude of the general education teacher as one of the most significant factors in the academic success of students with disabilities in the inclusive setting. The degree to which general education and special education teachers were prepared to work in inclusive settings determined the ultimate success of inclusive programs (Treder, Morse, W., & Ferron, 2000; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998; and Baker & Zigmond, 1995). The purpose herein of this qualitative study was to ascertain how secondary general and special education teachers' attitudes affected the inclusion practices and environment of students with disabilities in the general education population. Additionally, the purpose was to investigate the relationship between the ideology of the practice of inclusion and the actual inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classes. The researcher expected several variations in the way inclusion would be perceived and accepted amongst special and general education teachers. Chapter Three describes the subject selection, setting, the survey used, the interview, data collection, and data analysis procedures used to conduct this qualitative study.

Qualitative Methods

A qualitative research methodology was utilized within this study to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and beliefs regarding inclusion (Merriam, 2009). Four characteristics, as noted by Merriam (2009), were identified to assist in the understanding of the characteristics of qualitative research. The characteristics

consisted of focus on the process, understanding, and meaning. Secondly, the researcher was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; this process was inductive. Lastly, the product was descriptive (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research according to Eisner (1991) was interpretive and included the ability to explain why something was happening, as well as the meaning of the experience for individuals involved in the situation. Additionally, voice, or expressive language, was discernable in text. The participants' words became part of the data in the researcher's search for understanding.

A phenomenological methodology was selected because, as articulated by Giorgi (2012), "Phenomenology wants to understand how phenomena present themselves to consciousness and the elucidation of this process is a descriptive task" (p. 6).

The data for this study was collected both by interviews and electronically via *Survey Monkey* and then analyzed. The summary of Chapter Three briefly discusses the limitations relevant to the methodology of this study. Validity and research integrity concerns are also discussed.

The following research questions were developed to investigate the attitudes of secondary general education and special education teachers towards inclusion.

Research Questions

RQ 1: What are the attitudes of general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

RQ 2: What are the attitudes of special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

RQ 3: What are attitudes of special and general education teachers in relationship to the nature and type of disability?

RQ 4: What are the issues contributing to teachers' positive and negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

RQ 5: Do secondary special and general classroom teachers perceive they have the needed resources and support in inclusive classrooms?

RQ 6: To what extent do secondary special and general classroom teachers collaborate in the inclusive classroom?

RQ 7: Do secondary special and general classroom teachers perceive themselves knowledgeable about: (i) strategies needed for teaching students with disabilities; (ii) characteristics of students with disabilities; (iii) special education law; (iv) collaborative strategies; (v) the individualized education program; and (vi) behavior management strategies?

RQ 8: What are the areas of need of secondary special and general educators working in the inclusive classroom?

Research Design

This qualitative research study design included semi-structured, individual interviews and survey research as the primary methods of data collection. Participants in the study were selected based on purposeful sampling, in addition to snowball sampling, to identify potential participants. The researcher utilized Creswell's (2007) suggestion to use memos to organize thoughts, questions, and reactions regarding the data and emergent themes. Additionally, Patton (2002) stated the purpose of qualitative interviews was to discover what was "in and on someone else's mind" and "allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (pp. 340-341). As noted by Rubin and Rubin (2005), qualitative interviews were conversations in which a researcher gently guided a conversational partner in an extended discussion. "The researcher elicits depth and detail about the research by reviewing answers given by the interviewee during the discussion because in qualitative interviews each conversation is unique, as researchers matched their questions to what each interviewee knew and was willing to share" (p. 4). One-on-one interviews were selected for this study in order to observe the participants. These semi-structured interviews involved open ended questions that allowed for "individual perspectives and experiences to emerge" (Patton, 1990, p. 283). As consistent with interviews, it was important to verify inconsistency that may have been present amongst the participants in their recollections of verifiable information

and their perceptions of the processes. Dexter (1970) suggested that one approach to detect distortions was by comparing the respondent's versions.

The following procedures were performed to support data credibility. In order to determine if distortions were present, the participants were probed to clarify and reconcile facts provided by other participants; additionally, cross tabulations of the statements were checked for verifiable differences. When differences were observed, information was interpreted and documented. Most of the interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed upon site; but, several were conducted by phone. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed, as described in Appendix A. Utilizing this method possibly increased the accuracy of information or possibly hindered the accuracy of information, because participants may not have been totally honest or excluded significant information. Selecting this methodology provided a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation using the participants' experiences more than could have been revealed through surveys only.

In addition to the interviews, surveys (Appendix B) were utilized to investigate general and special education teacher attitudes towards including students with disabilities in the general education setting. This research format was utilized to describe the participants' perceptions about specific factors (Locke, Silverman, & Spriduso, 2010). Additionally, this method was selected because of the three major characteristics of surveys. According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012) surveys collected information from groups of people in order to describe some aspects of the population, such as attitudes, beliefs, or opinions, of which that group was a part; surveys collected information through questions of which the answers became the data the researcher analyzed; and surveys collected information from a sample (p. 393). For the current study, the aspiration was to survey general and special education teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting.

Subject Recruitment and Description

Participants. The population for this study was secondary general and special education teachers who taught in the inclusive setting in public high schools around the metropolitan St. Louis area. The participants in this study were

then drawn from this overall population. The participants in this study all taught grades nine through 12. The sample consisted of 21 general education teachers and 19 special education teachers. All participants were licensed teachers, certified as either general education or special education. The special education teachers all had experience teaching in the inclusive setting and the modified or resource program. The general education teachers had experience in the following inclusive class areas: communication arts, social studies, mathematics, science, and elective courses. All content areas were provided the opportunity to participate in this study.

Recruitment. Participants in this qualitative study included a total of 40 secondary general and special education teachers from school districts around metropolitan Saint Louis. With the exception of one teacher who taught in a very affluent suburban district, all were from school districts with similar demographics to Saint Louis Public Schools. The selection of the participants was based on the following criteria: (a) Past or presently teaching in the inclusive setting (b) Secondary teachers; (c) five or more years of experience; (d) gender balance; and (e) racial/ethnicity of teacher's balance. The participants were selected that best met the above eligibility criteria for the current study. Hence, each teacher chosen for the study had five years or more experience teaching in the inclusive setting, and several had been teaching as many as 15 to 30 years. Participants for this study were initially recruited using a convenience sampling method followed by snowball or network sampling (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). The snowball strategy was a form of purposeful sampling in qualitative research that "typically proceeds after a study begins and occurs when the researcher asks participants to recommend other individuals that fit the criteria to the study" (Creswell, 2005, p. 206). Additionally, Atkinson and Flint (2001) defined snowball recruitment as "identifying respondents who are then used to refer researchers on to other respondents" (page 1), and this type of sampling was appropriate for qualitative studies when interviews were utilized. This sampling methodology involved contacting past and then-current colleagues who met the criteria for participation. The purpose of the study was explained, and they were invited to participate. After the researcher conducted interviews with the initial participants, they were asked to forward recruitment information to other potential participants. Potential participants from the snowball sampling

method were invited to an informational meeting, based on their availability. In this approach "by asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases" (Patton, 2002, p. 237).

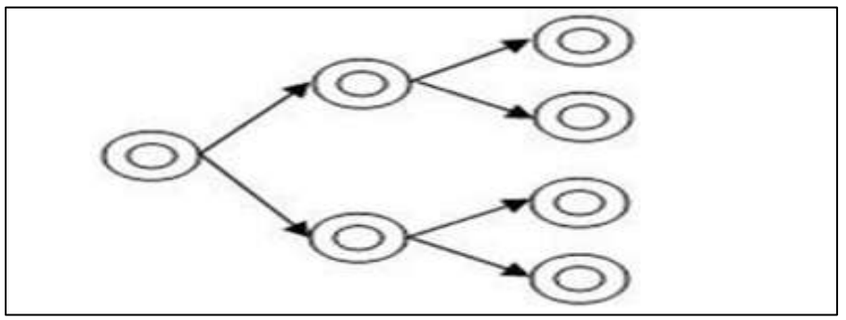

Figure 1. Exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling.

Location and Setting

The participants for this study were recruited from public secondary schools in and around the metropolitan St. Louis area. Participants came from a variety of school districts; therefore, procedures were in place to ensure the interview location for each participant was a mutually agreed upon site and was convenient, private, and somewhat familiar, so that participant felt comfortable and secure (Seidman, 2013).

Instrumentation

This basic qualitative study design included surveys and semi-structured, individual interviews as the primary methods of data collection (Appendices F & G). The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to study the attitudes and perceptions of general and special education teachers relating to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. Additionally, the researcher utilized memos during the process to organize thoughts, questions, and personal reactions regarding the interview data and emergent themes (Creswell, 2007). According to Patton (2002), the purpose of qualitative interview was to discover what was "in and on someone else's mind" and "allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (p. 340-341). According to Rubin and Rubin (2005) qualitative interviews were conversations in which a researcher gently guided a conversational partner in an extended discussion.

Data Collection

Qualitative research sought to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and views of the participants involved (Merriam, 1998). For the purpose of this study, the purposeful selection process included selected secondary general and special education teachers who were able to provide useful data pertaining to the intent of this study. Secondary general and special education teachers were purposefully selected, using the snowball technique, to provide useful information for addressing the research questions. The research design consisted of a total of 16 individual, semi-structured interviews with secondary general and special education teachers from around the metropolitan Saint Louis area. Data collection consisted of interviews and online surveys.

Semi Structured Interviews. One-on-one interviews were selected for this study in order to observe the participants during conversations about the study topic. Prior to the interviews, introductions were exchanged and the purpose of the study was reviewed. The study requirements and protocol were also discussed with each participant. The interviews focused on the participant's background, teaching philosophy, and thoughts towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. Most of the interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed upon site; however, a few were conducted by phone. The participants were asked to sign the Informed Consent Form (Appendix D), which contained an explanation of the research study and permission to record the interview. Each participant was apprised that their responses were confidential and they would receive a copy of the transcribed interview for review; prior to publication of the study. The interviews were one-on-one; therefore, no other individuals were present. Prior to the beginning of the interview, the participant was given a copy of the questions to review. The participants all appeared to be calm, relaxed, and cooperative during the interviews. The interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and downloaded into a Microsoft Word document. Utilizing this method possibly increased the accuracy of information or possibly hindered the accuracy of information, because participants may have been hesitant to talk straightforwardly or may have omitted some key information. Copies of the transcripts were provided to participants to

change or add to their statements prior to final analysis. None of the participants responded to the offer to amend their answers, so no further action was deemed necessary.

The semi-structured interviews involved open-ended questions that allowed for "individual perspectives and experiences to emerge" (Patton, 1990, p. 283). Open-ended questions were utilized during the interview process, to afford participants the opportunity to express any frustration and strong opinions (Tolor, 1985). Throughout the interviews the questions were posed just as written to synchronize the process with all participants. Periodically, probing questions were asked to allow the participant to expound on a point, to determine if the information given was consistent with the other interviews, or to obtain more details. All interview questions were posed as listed using the interview protocol (Appendix F). With interviews, it was important to verify inconsistency that may be present among the participants in their memory of verifiable information and their perceptions of the processes. Dexter (1970) suggested that one method to identify distortion was by comparing the interview responses.

The following procedures were performed to support data credibility. In order to determine if distortions were present the participants were probed to clarify and reconcile facts provided by other participants. Also cross-tabulation of the statements were checked for verifiable differences. When differences were observed, information was carefully interpreted and documented. Selecting this methodology provided a greater understanding of the phenomenon being investigated using the participants' experiences more than could have been revealed through surveys only.

Questionnaire/Survey. In addition, surveys were utilized to investigate general and special education teacher attitudes towards including students with disabilities in the general education setting. This research format was utilized to describe the participants' perceptions about specific factors (Locke et al., 2010). According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012) surveys collected information from groups of people in order to describe some aspects of the population, such as opinions, attitudes, or beliefs, of which that group was a part; surveys collected information through questions - the answers became the data the researcher analyzes; and surveys collected information from a sample. An online

questionnaire/survey was selected because the anonymity allowed the respondents to answer questions honestly and provided unambiguous responses. Walonick (1993) asserted:

> [Questionnaires,] unlike other research methods, the respondent is not interrupted by the research instrument. Written questionnaires reduce interviewer bias because there is uniform question presentation. Unlike in person interviewing, there are no verbal or visual clues to influence a respondent to answer in a particular way. (p. 1)

Additionally, Walonick (1993) maintained:

> Questionnaires are familiar to most people. Nearly everyone has had some experience completing questionnaires and they generally do not make people apprehensive. They are less intrusive than telephone or face-to-face surveys. When respondents receive a questionnaire in the mail, they are free to complete it on their own time-table. (p. 1)

In this study, teachers were able to express their opinions without bias or pressure. The questionnaire was created to ascertain the attitudes and perceptions of general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education setting.

The questionnaire for this study was field-tested on general and special education teachers, and Lindenwood University students to ensure reliability. After Institutional Review Board approval, a field study was conducted prior to the beginning of the main study. The purpose of the field test was to determine whether the length of the survey was appropriate, assess the clarity of the questions, and identify potential problems following the directions for completing the survey. The survey and interview questions were field-tested on teachers with experience working in the public school inclusive setting. Three former colleagues, two general and one special education teacher who were also former Lindenwood University classmates, were ask to review survey and interview questions. The questionnaire was then uploaded to *Survey Monkey* and was available for a period of four weeks. The interview instrument was emailed for their review. The field study participants did not make any recommendations for modifications and indicated that the

constructs of teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities were sufficiently covered through both instruments. Feedback from the field study was not included in the data collected for the main study.

Before accessing the questionnaire, participants were informed that participation in this study was completely voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the study at any stage, and advised that at any time during the process they could decline to answer any question(s). Participants were additionally informed that all information provided would remain confidential and was only reported as group data with no identifying information. Participants were not instructed to provide any information that would reveal their identity and individual participation was not included as part of any permanent records. Data were collected anonymously using *Survey Monkey* and access to the data were only available to the researcher. All data were kept in a secure location and only those directly involved with the research had access.

Data Analysis

Surveys. The survey analysis process consisted of three phases; the first phase was data collection through the online teacher survey via *Survey Monkey*, an electronic instrument for collecting and analyzing data. The next phase began with a general overview of the teachers' responses. As participants completed the surveys, the researcher read through each survey and responses were exported into a Word document. After the survey responses were compiled, the researcher looked across the data, which was coded for demographics and characteristics. In the last phase, the special education teachers' responses, and then the general education teachers' responses, were examined for additional relevant data and coded in a similar manner. To ensure that the coding was consistent, the researcher looked across the data from each group and referred back to the initial coding decisions, made during the first phase of survey analysis. Teachers were then asked to participate in the interview phase of the study.

Interviews. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed within 24 hours into a Microsoft Word document for analysis. The data were analyzed using transcription and coding methods. During and immediately following the interviews, the researcher wrote reflective memos to record feelings and potential preconceived notions

reflected in each of the interviews. These memos were retained as an integral part of the data collection and analysis. After transcriptions were completed, the transcripts were read several times. Creswell (2012) suggested that multiple readings of transcriptions aided the researcher in developing a greater understanding of the data. While reading through the transcriptions, annotations were made noting information that was relevant or stood out. Phrases that were repeated were highlighted to note their significance. Similar findings were included in a chart under a title documenting their resemblance.

The next phase consisted of coding the data. The data were hand coded, and a technique of coding based on phrases, statements, and key words was developed. Creswell (2012) maintained that analyzing data by hand could be a cumbersome task, but was beneficial. Analyzing data by hand allowed the researcher to develop close connections with the data (Merriam, 2009). Using the hand coding method to analyze data allowed the researcher to become entrenched in the data. All data were separated into broad categories and themes. Using a color-coding system, the data were checked to link similar codes and themes. Data with similar connections were coded with similar colors. Color-coded information was analyzed to determine major themes. Phrases, notes, and other relevant information was examined to develop themes.

Once the data were analyzed and interpreted, each participant was sent a draft of the interview analysis. This step provided participants the opportunity to review the identified themes and interpretations. Member checking was utilized to ensure reliability, validity, and that the responses reflected the participant attitudes. The member checking procedures permitted researchers to improve credibility, validity, and critical analysis of the findings of recorded interviews (Creswell, 2012). Participants were requested to e-mail the researcher with any clarifications or modifications within 72 hours, to request changes. None of the participants requested changes. The interview data were analyzed and then compared to the information collected on the surveys to look for consistencies and inconsistencies across data sources. Comparing the survey data with interview data was a method of triangulating the data. Triangulation referred to "using multiple sources of evidence . . . to support a conclusion" (Eisner, 1991, p. 26).

Ethical Considerations

The ethical practices of researchers impacted the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative studies. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were ethical considerations related to qualitative studies. According to Babbie (2008), all research posed certain risk. However, this study involved minimal risk to participants and safeguards were taken to protect participants. Informed consent was provided when participants accessed the electronic survey. Participants were informed they could withdraw from the study at any time or refuse to answer any question on the survey. An email stating this information is provided in Appendix A. All participants were further informed that all information provided would remain confidential and would only be reported as group data with no identifying information included. Data were collected anonymously using *Survey Monkey* and access to the data was only available to the researcher. The participants were referred to by pseudonyms assigned by the researcher in an attempt to further ensure confidentiality. All data were kept in a secure location, and only those directly involved with the research had access.

Summary

Chapter Three summarizes the research design and methodology of this qualitative study. Through an electronic survey and semi structured interviews this study explored and analyzed general and special education teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the secondary general education setting. The information was analyzed through transcription and coding. As the researcher immersed in the data, emergent categories and themes that connected back to the research questions were discovered. In the final analysis, the interviews and surveys were compared to the research found within the literature review and analyzed to discover if any changes had been reported. After data analysis and reduction, five themes emerged: (1) attitudes related to the practice of inclusion, (2) professional development and training, (3) support for practices, (4) barriers to inclusion, and (5) collegial and administrative support. The themes that emerged are discussed separately in Chapter Four. Chapters Four and Five present the results of data analysis and discussion of the findings, as they relate teachers' attitudes towards inclusive

education on the secondary level. For this study, the impetus was to research general and special education teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

The attitude of teachers towards students with disabilities became one of the most researched topics and was given a vast amount of attention during the four decades previous to this writing (Davis, 1995; Mohapatra et al., 2001; Grossman et al., 2007). Gottlieb (1975) cited the motivation for this concentration of research was the view that teacher attitudes were key factors in successful educational outcomes for all students. Awareness increased in response to the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA) mandating that students with disabilities be educated with their non-handicapped peers (Wright & Wright, 2007). With this shift in views towards public education and equal opportunities for students with disabilities, controversy emerged among teachers, triggering the rise of teacher resistance and frustration (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Lead, 1999: Hardy, 1999).

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to investigate the attitudes of secondary general and special education teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. Furthermore, the aim was to determine if the attitudes of the 40 participants aligned with the literature on the attitudes of secondary general and special education teachers. Specifically, the study explored whether the attitudes of secondary teachers differed regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education setting and factors that played a role in influencing the attitudes of teachers. Additionally, the purpose was to seek ideas that possibly would further enhance effective inclusive practices. Sixteen participants voluntarily participated in a qualitative semi structured interview and 40 completed the on-line survey process of the study.

The study used the qualitative method of data collection of semi structured interviews and an online survey. The surveys and interviews, as well as the pilot interview, took place in the fall of 2016. Two stages of data collection were employed in this study. The first stage was collected through an online survey via *Survey Monkey*, an electronic instrument for collecting and analyzing data. The second stage of data collection was derived from semi-structured

interviews. The online survey asked if the participant would subsequently consent to an interview. These interviews, as well as the pilot interview, took place in the spring of 2016.

Initially, the researcher contacted then-current and past colleagues about participating in the study, and also ask them to recommend other teachers who fit the study criteria. Based on referrals, the recommended potential participants were contacted and several were included in the survey and interview process, thus constituting the snowball method of recruitment. In this method "by asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases" (Patton, 2002, p. 237). Participants were selected who were likely to have a wealth of information concerning the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education setting. All participants were willing to communicate their perceptions regarding the practice of inclusive education.

Chapter Four presents the findings that emerged from the data collection, which were analyzed, and coded. The data collected through interviews and surveys facilitated answering the eight research questions geared toward understanding of the attitudes of the participants. Data were collected through 16 semi-structured interviews and 40 surveys from secondary teachers from seven school districts around the metropolitan Saint Louis area. The organization of the data into categories and themes captured the general thoughts communicated throughout the interview and survey process.

The first three chapters of this dissertation presented an introduction to inclusion, a review of the literature relative to teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, and the factors that impacted their attitudes; and lastly, the methodological design utilized for this study. Moreover, Chapter includes an overview of the participants involved in the study. Chapter Four also includes an analysis using the information collected from the 10 interview questions (Appendix F) and the 18 survey questions (Appendix G) for this study.

Research Questions

The following guiding research questions were addressed in this study:

RQ 1: What are the attitudes of general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

RQ 2: What are the attitudes of special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

RQ 3: What are attitudes of special and general education teachers in relationship to the nature and type of disability?

RQ 4: What are the issues contributing to teachers' positive and negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

RQ 5: Do secondary special and general classroom teachers perceive they have the needed resources and support in inclusive classrooms?

RQ 6: To what extent do secondary special and general classroom teachers collaborate in the inclusive classroom?

RQ 7: Do secondary special and general classroom teachers perceive themselves knowledgeable about: (i) strategies needed for teaching students with disabilities; (ii) characteristics of students with disabilities; (iii) special education law; (iv) collaborative strategies; (v) the individualized education program; and (vi) behavior management strategies?

RQ 8: What are the areas of need of secondary special and general educators working in the inclusive classroom?

Participant Profile

The population for this study was comprised of secondary general and special education teachers who taught in public high schools across the Metropolitan St. Louis area. The participants were employed in seven school districts located in the Saint Louis area. During the 2015-2016 school year, the participants were all teaching in the inclusive setting. All participants were licensed teachers, certified as either general education or special education. The participants consisted of 21 general education and 19 special education teachers. The teachers were comprised of 24 females and 16 males. Of the 40 participants included in the survey process, 16 agreed to the interview process; nine of the interviewees were classified as general education and the remaining seven were classified as special education.

Included in the interview process were five males and 11 female respondents. The special education teachers all had experience teaching in the inclusive setting and the modified or resource program. The general education teachers had experience in the following inclusive class areas: communication arts, social studies, mathematics, science, and elective courses. Twenty, or 50%, of the participants held Masters' Degrees, three participants had attained an Education Specialist degree, and one participants was then-currently enrolled in a doctoral program. The participants all had five to 32 years of teaching experience and five to 26 years' experience working in the inclusive setting. Table 1 indicates the educational background, by degree, of the teachers who participated in the study. As seen in Table 1, 23 of the 40 teachers had graduate degrees. The demographics of participants in the study provided insight into their profiles (i.e., age, gender, experience, subject area taught, level of education). These demographic were significant because it allowed the researcher the opportunity to verify if any correlation existed between specific demographic categories and the participants' attitudes.

Table 1

Educational background of teachers who participated in the study

Certification Area	Number of Participants	Teaching Experience Years
Master's Degree	20	16
Education Specialist	3	11
Doctoral	*1	

**Currently enrolled in doctoral program*

Table 2

Years of experience of teachers who participated in the study

Certification Area	Number of Participants	Teaching Experience years
Special Education	19	16
General Education	21	11

Data Collection

In order to ascertain teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education setting, the researcher performed the following procedures to collect data for the current qualitative study.

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Lindenwood University IRB. Upon IRB approval, an email invitation was sent to colleagues and other participants fitting the study criteria, to request their assistance as participants in the study. When the participants responded in the affirmative, the online survey link was emailed to them. Participants were requested to recommend other teachers that fit the study criteria who might be willing to participate. Using the contact information provided by colleagues, the teachers identified as potential participants were invited to participate in the study via email (Appendix B). The interested participants were invited to obtain more information during an informational meeting to review the goals of the study. During the meeting, the consent documents were reviewed and signed by potential subjects. Participants were provided the opportunity to review the survey and interview questions in advance. One participant agreed to be interviewed following the informational meeting. The online survey asked participants if they would be willing to consent to a face-to-face interview. If the participants were agreeable, interview times were scheduled via email communications.

Pilot Study

Yin (2009) recommended researchers utilize pilot studies as a method "to develop relevant lines of questions" prior to the beginning of the study and to assist with the process of refining data collection procedures (p. 92). Before the commencement of the current study the researcher conducted a field test, or pilot test, of the survey and interview questions. An email invitation was sent to five former colleagues asking for their input; only three consented to both the survey and interview. The other two potential pilot participants declined participation (Appendix C). The pilot test was conducted with the three former colleagues who did not meet the study criteria of then-currently working within the inclusive setting. Conducting the pilot study verified that the questions were relevant and allowed the researcher to check for clarity and ambiguity (Powney & Watts, 1987).

Surveys

An electronic survey was utilized as one method of data collection in this study. Researchers cited surveys as data collection instruments employed to obtain information about and from people (Fink, 2006) and to reveal trends in

a sample population (Creswell, 2003). Surveys were important because they allowed the researcher to gather information from the participant about their knowledge of a particular subject (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009). This study collected data from a sample population in order to gather information about teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education; therefore, a survey approach was appropriate for this study.

The online survey link was emailed to 40 participants that consented to participate in the study. The survey instrument for data collection was separated into two parts. Part one was designed to obtain participants' professional and demographic information. The teachers were asked to provide demographic variables, such as gender, experience, educational background, years teaching in inclusive setting, and subject area. The survey was developed by the researcher for this study and contain 18 items (see Appendix G). It was designed to elicit participants' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education setting. The survey consisted of 18 specific open-ended questions about teaching in the inclusive setting. These questions focused on the participants' thoughts concerning the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. The survey measured participants' attitudes towards three aspects of inclusive education: academics, social, and behavioral.

Interviews

Sixteen semi structured interviews were completed that lasted for approximately forty-five minutes to one hour each. Each interview session began with background questions before proceeding to the interview questions (Appendix F). Subsequent questions queried the interviewees about the concept of inclusive education. Interview questions were devised for this study and an interview protocol was created to serve as a tool to keep the interviews centered on the subject at hand. The semi-structured interviews consisted of specific open-ended questions about teaching in an inclusive setting that allowed for "individual perspectives and experiences to emerge" (Patton, 1990, p. 283). These questions focused on the participants' thoughts concerning the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. To "seek more clarity about what the person has just said" during each of the interviews (Merriam, 2009, p.101), some probing was utilized by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher the

opportunity to observe non-verbal expressions or behaviors (Mason, 2006; Merrian, 1998). The interview sessions were audio recorded and transcribed within 24 hours using Microsoft Word. Patton maintains, "The period after an interview is a critical time of reflection and elaboration. It is a time of quality control to guarantee that the data obtained will be useful, reliable, and authentic" (Patton, 2003, p. 384). The researchers additionally utilized memos during the interview sessions to add to the depth of information communicated in the research (Mason, 2006; Merrian, 1998). Following each interview, the researcher wrote reflective memos to record her feelings and potential preconceived notions. These memos were retained as an integral part of the data collection and analysis. Memos are a method that facilitates the thought processes and adds stimulating analytic insights in the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) affirm the following:

> Memos are primarily conceptual in intent. They don't just report data; they tie together different pieces of data into a recognizable cluster, often to show that those data are instances of a general concept. Memos can also go well beyond codes and their relationships to any aspect of the study — personal, methodological, substantive. They are one of the most useful and powerful sense-making tools at hand. (p. 72)

Pseudonyms were employed to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of participants. In order to ensure reliability and validity, the participants were permitted to review the transcript drafts of the interviews. Member checking was utilized to ensure that the information obtained was complete, and the responses reflected the participant attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities. The member checking procedures permitted researchers to improve credibility, validity, and critical analysis of the findings of recorded interviews (Creswell, 2012). Generally, the participants responded to the interview questions freely and without difficulties. None of the participants declined to respond to any specific interview questions.

Once the interviews were transcribed to written form, the participants were allowed to make changes to the transcripts if they deemed it necessary. Changes were allowed to reflect the participants' thoughts more clearly. The interviews were recorded with the participants' permission, transcribed, and coded. If needed, follow-up questions were

asked for clarification or to expand upon an answer. Surveys results from the two participant groups were also referenced to look for consistencies and inconsistencies across data sources. The information gained from the semi structured interviews strengthened the trustworthiness of the survey findings.

Data Analysis

Researchers cited one of the unique characteristics of qualitative inquiry was data analysis it "happens while data is being collected as well as after the evaluator has left the field" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1986, p. 98; Creswell, 2002). It was further defined by Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p. 145) that qualitative data analysis was working with the data, organizing it, breaking it down into manageable components, synthesizing, searching for patterns, discovering what was important and what would be learned, and deciding what the researcher would convey to others. As a result, Glesne (2006) recommended the following stages of qualitative data analysis:

> (1) Immediate data analysis: assist the researcher in focusing on the new data by identifying the meanings and themes and categorizing the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1998; Harasymiw, Horne & Lewis,1976; Layder,1982, p. 119).

Miles and Huberman (1994) similarly maintained that immediate data analysis facilitates with eliminating irrelevant data.

> (2) Later data analysis: enables researchers to synthesize raw data, to make sense of the raw data, discover how the information fits together, and synthesize the texture and structure in which the real meaning belongs (Bogdan &, Biklen 1986; Eaves, 2001; Foucault,1983; Kirk, 1964; Rueda, 2005; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). (Glesne, 2006, p. 152)

Merriam (1998) similarly noted that the right way to analyze data was simultaneously with data collection. Data analysis was conducted using the aforementioned suggested qualitative methods. The initial step in the data analysis process involved organizing the data by transcribing the interviews into a written document. Next, the researcher read the interviews to obtain an understanding of the content. This step involved reading through the surveys and interviews

extensively numerous times and writing reflective memos. This process allowed the researcher to interpret the data to find significance and meaning of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, through extracting important themes, recurring ideas, and patterns that repeated throughout the interviews. After reading through the data, the researcher began coding the data into categories by taking parts of text from the data and identifying it within a specific category. Open coding was utilized to simplify the comparison, as a method of developing and refining the interpretations of data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The researcher looked specifically at the general education teachers' responses and then the special education teachers' responses for additional relevant data and coded in a similar fashion. While perusing through the data from each group of participants, the researcher referred to the coding results made during the first stage of the survey analysis. This was to make sure that the coding was consistent.

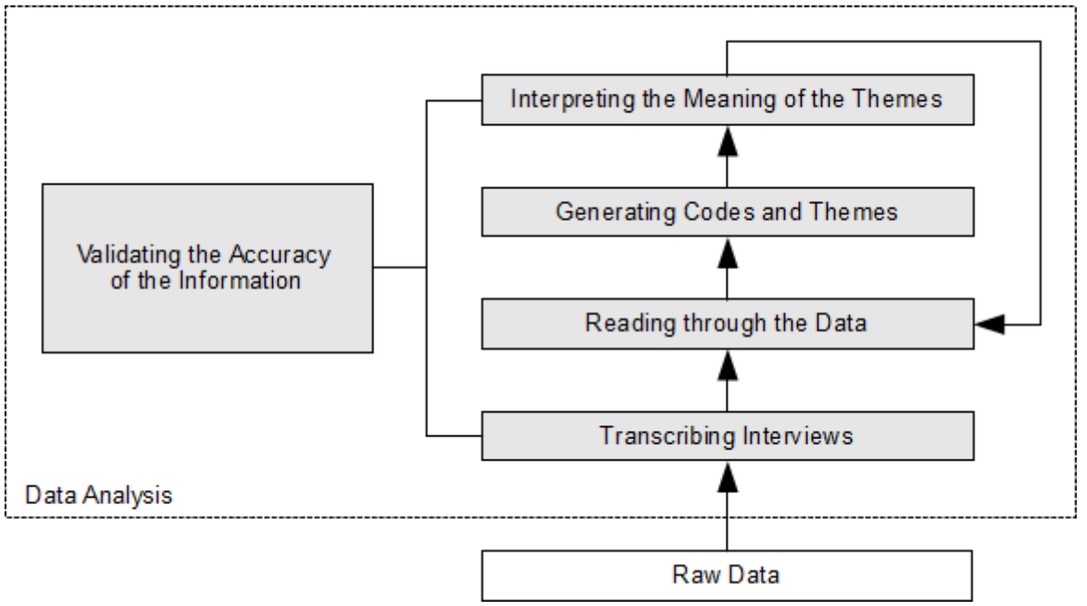

Figure 2. Steps of qualitative data analysis (adapted from Creswell, 2009, P. 185).

Once the data were coded and categorized, they were organized into the themes, which emerged through the coding process. The emergent themes were assigned specific codes. In this stage the data were interpreted by identifying several recurring themes, similarities, and differences in the data, which were highlighted. Through the surveys and interviews, data categories were identified that were associated with the attitudes of general and special

education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general educational setting. Subsequently, the researcher coded and categorized the survey and interview transcripts into five themes. Lastly, the data were verified by checking the validity of the researcher's interpretations by checking the transcripts and codes again. This allowed the researcher to amend or verify any previous conclusions.

Results. This section describes the results of the surveys and individual interviews with the 40 general and special education teachers, with findings categorized into themes, with explanations and discussion presented for each. Analysis of the data led to a number of findings. The themes that emerged included: (1) attitudes related to the practice of inclusion, (2) the benefit of inclusion, (3) support for practices, and (4) barriers to inclusion; (5) collegial and administrative support. Each theme provided insight relative to the attitudes, and perceptions of general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the inclusive setting. Themes were determined by coding the interviews and surveys immediately after they were all completed. This process involved reading through the transcripts and determining themes and inconsistencies. As themes emerged, they were categorized according to the questions asked during this study. The data were triangulated with the document analysis to improve consistency and to see discrepant findings. Triangulation allowed the researcher to look at the data from several types, such as the interviews and surveys used in this particular study (Creswell, 2012). The use of triangulation minimized bias on the part of the participants and the researcher. Overall, the several forms of data collection supported the impression that teachers generally possessed positive attitudes towards the concept of inclusion. The researcher was apprehensive about participants stating what was politically correct, as several were past and then-current colleagues.

Emergent Themes

Initially, 50 codes emerged from the analysis of the interview and survey transcripts. From the 50 codes, five themes emerged and were analyzed to gain a true understanding of the attitudes of teachers of students with disabilities included in the general educational setting.

The emergent themes were: (1) attitudes related to the practice of inclusion, (2) professional development and training, (3) support for practices, (4) barriers to inclusion, and (5) collegial and administrative support.

The themes that emerged are discussed separately in Chapter Four. Excerpts from the interviews and surveys are included to further clarify the emergent themes.

Theme 1: Attitudes related to the practice of inclusion

The first theme to emerge was teachers' attitudes related to the practice of inclusive education. Most of the general education teachers revealed positive attitudes towards the practice of inclusion. However, the majority of the participants acknowledged that inclusion in the general education setting was not appropriate for all students with disabilities. Participant J stated, 'You have to consider issues such as, intellectual limitations, behavioral issues, and attention deficit problems. We are not equipped to deal with these issues in the gen ed classroom.' The participant went on to state:

> Speaking for my colleagues, as well as myself, we [general education teachers] are not ready to teach special students in our classes. Special strategies are needed to teach these students because their needs are different and vary according to their disabilities.

The participant further stated: 'We can't use the same proven strategies effective with general education students to teach them. They need special teachers who have the expertise, training, and previous experience, and we do not have enough training or expertise to do that.' The responses were a mixture that ranged from positive feelings towards inclusion to a negative remark that stated, 'Inclusion is being forced upon us because parents refuse to believe that there is something wrong with their kids and administration gives in.'

Participant H, a female English teacher with 20 years of experience stated, 'I have taught in the mainstream or inclusive classroom since its inception; and at first I lacked confidence in myself to teach these students. In order to gain confidence, I had to change my attitude towards these kids.' She additionally agreed that inclusion was the placement for everyone, but she concluded, 'It is important for students capable of being in general ed classes.'

Participant M clearly affirmed, 'There are benefits to inclusion such as the exposure to the regular curriculum and the socialization skills. The kiddos needed the real world connection.' Participant U was a female general education social studies teacher with 25 years of experience in the classroom, and she had experience with inclusion. She maintained, 'Inclusion is fine if it is implemented the 'right way.'' When asked to explain the right way she stated, 'Our schools cannot expect all students to be successful in general education classes and should not expect all students to be there [general classroom].' She further stated, 'There are circumstances where special education students need to be placed in separate, special classes. There they have the opportunity to be with special education teachers who are trained to teach them.' Participant U explained, 'Schools are legally obligated to include any student who wants to be in regular classes and this does more harm to the student than good.'

Participant B's responses differed from the responses of participants J, H, M, and U who were in favor of inclusion as long as the students were placed there according to their ability to handle the general education class curriculum. Participant B, however, a male math teacher with 22 years of experience, stated, 'Inclusion is the law and it does not matter how I feel about it, because it is the law.' After some prompting for specifics, Participant B commented that he understood that all kids deserved equal chances; but, 'Our schools are trying to fit round holes in square pegs (sic) and it's just not working well.' He went on to explain that he had experience with inclusion and some of it had been positive, but he always felt the needs of students with disabilities were best met in special education classes.

The majority of special education participants indicated they were concerned about the general education teachers' attitudes towards them in the inclusive class setting. Special education teachers communicated that they did not always feel welcome in the general education classrooms. They indicated there was not a designated space or area for their supplies and materials. The majority of the special education participants stated they needed to have an area in the general education classroom to be successful with students.

Participant L, a special education teacher, stated:

> I feel that my role is influenced by the attitudes and commitment of the general education teacher to work with sped students, as well as with me. The gen ed teacher sets the tone in the classroom and if negativity exists all the students pick up on it.

Another special education participant remarked that the general education teacher's attitude made her feel that she [the special education teacher] was an intruder in the classroom. The special education teacher indicated she sensed that the students noticed the attitude; therefore, they treated her as a paraprofessional instead of a teacher. Overall, the majority of special education teachers expressed favorable attitudes towards the concept of inclusion; their concerns were with their general education counterparts. This result was predictable, given that special education teachers were the service providers for students with disabilities and were experienced working with these students.

Theme 2: Professional Development and Training

The second most common theme identified throughout the survey and interview process was the need for, or lack of on-going professional development and training for teachers participating in inclusive education. Professional development training helps to give teachers "a sense of ownership over their teaching and a real commitment to their acquired beliefs with inclusion" (Costley, 2013, p.4). The majority of the participants reported the need for more training on inclusion. 'The last training I received was decades ago on the district level and I can't ever remember any school level professional development on the subject,' said Special Education Participant C. Another participant stated, 'As a gen ed teacher, I have no experience with strategies to assist students with special needs. Professional development on the subject would be quite useful.' Several general education participants stated, they had attended a few workshops over the years for the inclusive class setting; but, they were few and far between. Most participants agreed that the workshops provided information they could use in their classes; but, as one of the general education teachers said, 'We need more specific training and information to become more effective teachers.' Yet, in contrast, Participant N, also a general education teacher, did not feel the same way. She did not feel that professional development classes were helpful. She stated, 'There have been several professional development sessions district wide

that addressed inclusion, but after that day, we go back to our respective schools and just go through the motions. We need on-going training to make this work.'

The majority of special education teachers mentioned professional development could increase their knowledge and increased the relationships between general and special education teachers. Several other special education participants maintained that relevant professional development school wide would help administrative personnel understand what they do. One special education participant stated,

> They (administration) need to attend training to understand special education and what it means to implement IEP's and teach all at the same time. I would like to see them attend conference after conference and answer the concerns of demanding parents. But most of all, I want administration to treat me the same way the general education teachers in the building are treated. All I want is to be respected as a professional and not as a para. I feel we (special education teachers) deserve the same respect as gen ed teachers. We are treated like second class citizens by everyone including the general education students.

Consistent with this statement, Shoho & Katims (1998) acknowledged, "Special education teachers reported higher levels of alienation than general education teachers" due to feeling "More stigmatized and less connected to the school value system than general education teachers" (pp. 9 - 10). It was documented by the researcher that the relationships of all involved in the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting could be improved with professional development and sensitivity training for teachers and administration to come to grips with special education issues.

Theme 3: Support for Inclusive Practices

Previous research indicated that teachers' attitudes toward inclusion impacted the success of the inclusive class and programs (Cook et al., 1999; Praisner, 2003). Consistent with past and then-current research, the majority of the special education participants mentioned that several factors affected the inclusionary setting; however, the most

frequently stated factor was the attitudes of the general education teachers. Collaboration between general education and special education teachers was also mentioned as an important factor affecting the success of inclusion.

It was suggested there was a need for special education teachers to share common planning with general education teachers. This was a concern for all the participants in this study. Special education teachers worked with several teachers, and scheduling limited a common planning time between the teachers to collaborate. Several of the teachers indicated they had to communicate their lesson plans through email. Some special education teachers indicated they were able to meet with one course level during planning one week and another course level the following week. One general education participant remarked:

> My co-teacher and I plan occasionally, but I need to write plans, so I can be prepared. The special education teacher plans with me infrequently and this causes tension among us, because the co-teacher feels I'm not keeping her up-to-date.

Participant Q, a special education teacher, also mentioned that collaboration was problematic, and she tried to meet weekly with her co-teachers when time was available. This participant believed that collaboration was a major issue when working with more than one teacher. The overall feeling of all participants was the need for more time to collaborate, so the needs of all students could be met.

Training was a major issue stated by both general and special education teachers as essential for the successful implementation of inclusion. Nearly all of the general education teachers acknowledged they never received formal training in the area of inclusion. The majority of the special education teachers also stated there was a need for on-going training and expressed concern for the lack of professional experience related to inclusive education. They all agreed to university special education coursework; but, none directly related to the actual practice of inclusion. During the interview process one special education participant expressed, 'There was no mention of inclusion when I was in college nineteen years ago.'

Most of the teachers agreed they had received limited amounts of professional development devoted to the topic of inclusion. Most of the general education teachers stated they needed training in methods of instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities in their classes. Participant R (Gen Ed) stated:

> How can policy makers expect us [general education teachers] to teach students whom we have not been trained to teach? Isn't that the whole purpose of special education certification? The inability to meet the needs of students with disabilities gets in the way of our academic progress.

The general education teachers admitted they lacked confidence in their abilities to handle behavior problems or to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Participant I stated:

> I think special problems need specific training. It is hard to know how to deal with different types of students. For instance, anger management; I have never taught a student identified as such; and I think you need to have an understanding of the disability. Yes, I have heard of it, but I would not know how to teach such a student.

The need for training and personal professional development was a consistent theme echoed by all the teachers. The teachers indicated they needed to understand the disability and how to deal with it, otherwise they would be unable to work successfully with the students with special needs. This created frustration for both the teacher and the students. Professional development was revealed as an important support at both the district and school levels.

It is interesting to note that the majority of the participants in this study did not feel there were many opportunities to learn new techniques and strategies associated with inclusive education in their school districts. Although school districts required professional development, most did not reliably incorporate best practices involving special education. The special education teachers confirmed they were often placed with content area teachers for professional development. The researcher believed that relevant professional development would increase positive attitudes towards the practice of inclusion for both the general and special education teachers.

Theme 4: Barriers to Inclusion

In addition to the need for professional development/training and support for the practice of inclusion; issues related to the barriers to inclusion were also a common theme repeated by the participants. When asked what they perceived as barriers to their inclusive classes, several participants stated that knowledge was a great barrier that impacted the success of their inclusive classes.

Several general education teachers stated they did not have adequate knowledge or special education training needed to teach students with disabilities. Participant Y stated, 'I am not trained on the best practices to teach students with severe learning disabilities, developmental issues, or behavior issues; the idea of it is overwhelming.' The special education teachers said they were experienced in some general education curriculum classes, but it became a problem when they were assigned to three and four different core content classes. 'How can I be knowledgeable about so many subjects?'

The teachers also indicated that spending equal time with each student while meeting district goals was a primary concern. One teacher reported, 'The biggest challenge is trying to make sure I spend enough time with my gen ed students because the sped students require a lot of my time and I feel sometimes I don't get to my other students.' General Education Teacher P stated, 'We can't just think about the students with disabilities in general education classes, we must in all fairness also think about how inclusion is going to impact the academic performance of other students in the class.'

Several other general education participants also mentioned students with disabilities negatively impacted the academic performance of their non-handicapped peers. Several teachers pointed out that it was difficult to control classroom behaviors when several students with disabilities were included, especially those with multiple disabilities and behavior problems. Another participant expressed, 'Learning is an individual process and what each student has the capacity to learn may or may not meet state or federal expectations, yet we are still judged.'

Responses also highlighted a number of other concerns from the participants about making inclusion work, including the need to differentiate instruction, seeing students who used their IEP as a crutch, the needed to keep all

students engaged despite differences in how slowly students learned new material, and the possibility that some students may be overlooked. The participants agreed that inclusive education 'makes the job harder' and its takes time to 'get through some turbulences' that were inevitable.

Both special and general education teachers revealed that the challenges of the inclusive setting caused teachers to feel they were not supported and made the job difficult. This added to the likelihood of teacher burnout and frustration while working in the inclusive class setting, which required additional work to attain success. This was consistent with research that maintained that teachers required support and training to provide services to students with and without disabilities in the inclusive setting (Lee-Tarver, 2006). However, despite the challenges, another general response was that inclusion classrooms created a positive environment and experience, if implemented correctly.

Theme 5: Collegial and Administrative Support

The fifth theme to emerge was support from colleagues and administration. The majority of participants revealed the need for support from the administrations as an extremely important component for teachers involved in inclusive education. This support included scheduling time for collaboration, a lack of professional development and ongoing training, and taking part in the decision-making process that affected inclusion.

Special education participant V, expressed the importance of creating a master schedule with the inclusive classroom in mind. She further explained if this was not considered during the planning stage 'it will not happen for the most part later. It is much more difficult to change when schedules are up and running.'

It was also mentioned that the ratio of students with disabilities in the general education setting was not taken into consideration when planning the master schedule. The participants explained when the inclusive class was not considered during the planning stages, several classes often consisted of 40% to 50% of students with disabilities in the general class setting.

Participants identified teamwork and resources as two important supports to facilitate successful inclusion of students with disabilities. The majority of participants agreed that a crucial support needed for successful inclusion was teamwork. Participant H stated:

> General and special education teachers must work together to educate all the students in the classes. It takes special education teachers who are willing to make modifications to the general curriculum so students are successful in the gen ed setting.

Several others participants also agreed the general and special education teachers must work together in order for inclusion to be successful. There must be open lines of communication between the two teachers to discuss concerns and needs. Participant P asserted:

> I think it would be to our advantage if the teachers had the option to choose whom we work with and the subject area in which co-teach. It benefits the students if we are able to plan together and it gels. If we are able to function cohesively it's a better experience, for everyone not just the students but the teachers as well.

She cited, one of the most important factors for successful inclusion was resources. These resources included time, as well as the need for additional staff.

Summary

Chapter Four presents the research data obtained through interviews and surveys. The purpose of this study was to ascertain how secondary general and special education teachers' attitudes affected the inclusion practices and environments of students with disabilities in the general education setting, and to determine possible contributing sources for these negative and positive attitudes, which affected the inclusive setting. The 40 participants in this study revealed their experiences, views, and perceived factors that impacted the practice of inclusion. After analyzing the results there appeared to be fidelity in the participants' responses to the interview and survey questions. In the current study understandably, the special education teachers, on the average, possessed better attitudes towards inclusion of students with disabilities than the general education teachers. According to research, the difference in attitudes may be

due to different concentrations of education and training, regarding methods for teaching students with disabilities (Holdheide & Reschly, 2008). The data collected indicated the two groups of participants held a mixed attitude towards educating all students with disabilities (regardless of disability level), ranging from positive to negative with neutral in between. Both groups of participants indicated resistance to teaching students with behavioral disorders, intellectual disabilities, and multi-handicapping conditions in the general education setting. Further analysis of the collected responses also indicated the majority of the teachers expressed the need for teamwork, in order for inclusive education to be beneficial for students with disabilities. Additionally, the data revealed a strong relationship between the teachers' attitudes towards including students with disabilities and professional development and training. Collegial and administrative support resonated throughout the data. All of the participants expressed the need for scheduled time for collaboration and a voice in the decision-making process relative to inclusion.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter Five is to analyze and relate the findings detailed in Chapter Four to existing literature and describe how the findings extend the then-current literature base related to teacher attitudes towards inclusive education. A brief summary outlines the study including an overview of the methodology, findings, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

The aim of this study was to ascertain how secondary general and special education teachers' attitudes affected the inclusion practices and environments of students with disabilities in the general education setting; and to determine possible contributing sources for the negative and positive attitudes, which affected the inclusive setting. The methodology comprised of a selected sample and an online survey and interviews as methods of data collection. The sample population included teachers from schools around the metropolitan Saint Louis area. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and survey research methods; and analyzed through qualitative analysis.

Chapter Five includes a discussion of the findings related to the eight research questions and how the results relate to the review of the literature. Suggestions and recommendations for future research will be provided; and lastly, Chapter Five presents concluding thoughts about the completed study and teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. One important reason for conducting this study was to examine the relationship between the ideology of the practice of inclusion and the actual inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education setting. The researcher wanted to know if what she read and what she witnessed were the same. The researcher anticipated that it would not be, and this study proved the perception to be accurate. Completing this study forced the researcher to be in tune to attitudes and perceptions involving the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education class setting so that it did not influence the interpretation of the data. Throughout the course of this study the researcher consistently investigated experiences that resembled her own. Self-

reflection was employed throughout this study to minimize the possibility of prejudices and judgments into the findings.

This study may add to the existing knowledge base regarding the attitudes, perceptions, and concerns of teachers towards inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. Hopefully school districts and pre-service teacher education programs will utilize the information as a contribution to devising relevant professional development and teacher preparation programs.

An online survey and semi structured interviews were used to conduct this qualitative study of secondary teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. The 40 participants in the study were selected based on purposeful sampling. Subjects were general and special education teachers then-currently working in the secondary school inclusive setting.

The surveys began with demographic information and progressed towards open-ended questions focused on the teachers' experiences in inclusion. The open-ended questions allowed flexibility during this phase of the data collection process, facilitating an increased understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2012).

The researcher used open coding to simplify comparison, as a method of developing and refining the interpretations of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). She looked specifically at the general education teacher's responses and then the special education teacher's responses for additional relevant data and coded in a similar fashion.

While perusing through the data from each group of teachers, the researcher referred to the coding results made during the first phase of the survey analysis. This was to make sure that the coding was consistent. Once the data were coded and categorized it was organized into themes and sub-themes, which emerged through the coding process. The emergent themes were assigned specific codes.

In this stage, the data were interpreted by identifying several reoccurring themes and similarities, and differences in the data were highlighted. Through the surveys and interviews, data categories were identified that were associated with the attitudes of general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities

into the general educational setting. Subsequently, the researcher coded and categorized the survey and interview transcripts into five themes. The themes that emerged revealed several key areas of teacher concerns related to inclusive education. Specifically, five themes emerged from the analysis that suggested important areas of concern related to the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.

Core Emergent Themes

The core emergent themes found during data analysis were: (1) attitudes related to the practice of inclusion, (2) professional development and training, (3) support for practices, (4) barriers to inclusion, and (5) collegial and administrative support. The data were verified by checking the validity of the researcher's interpretations by checking the transcripts and codes again. This allowed amendment or verification of previous conclusions. A summary of the findings and conclusions are presented in Chapter Five. The eight research questions were addressed based on the themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview and survey data, followed by recommendations for practice and further research.

Theoretical Construct

A number of theories of learning provided the framework for the current study. Worthy of consideration were scholars, Berger and Luckmann (1991), whose research, knowledge, and findings about the social construction of a person's reality and how this construction helped shape their attitudes about knowledge they have accepted as 'real.'

Additionally, the social cognitive theory introduced by Bandura (1977, 1986, 1997) provided a framework for understanding, predicting, and changing human behavior. Social cognitive theory attempted to explain how individuals' thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and interactions - not necessarily direct - with their environment affected how they behaved. This implied that the stimulus of social forces in the internal and external realms of one's environment influenced the factors associated with behavior, actions, and growth. Consequently, Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997) social cognitive theory supported the idea of self-efficacy in human beings.

Providing a foregoing view of this self-efficacy topic, essentially leads to the TRA. Interchangeably referred to as the Fishbein Model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), the theory viewed the ways attitudes could be influenced. TRA maintained that an individual's attitudes and intentions were the most immediate factors influencing behavior. Social norms and attitudes toward inclusion were in essence, behavioral acts that affected the individual attitudes of the person(s) observing the act. Acclimatization to these acts proposed that teachers in general education classroom settings who expressed positive attitudes towards the inception of inclusive classrooms might increase their appreciation for students with exceptionalities and might begin overseeing more exceptional children (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Equally important to this study was the attitudinal theory supported by research studies conducted by Eagly and Chaiken (1993) and Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), "Attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (p. 1). Moreover, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) purported, "A person's attitude toward any object is a function of his beliefs about the object and the implicit evaluative responses associated with those beliefs" (p. 29). The theory of attitude explains why people act and react to objects, situations, or people. These theories connect to the attitudes of secondary general and special education teachers who teach students with disabilities in the inclusive setting. Undoubtedly, teachers' attitude toward including students with disabilities in the general educational setting was essential to successful inclusion (Hasazi, Johnston, Liggett, & Schattman, 1994; Wilczenski, 1993). The quality of education was clearly, affected by student-teacher relationships. Van Maele and Van Houtte (2011) supported that student learning and behaviors were influenced by the teachers' perceptions of the student. Identifying and understanding teacher attitude was critical to successful inclusion outcomes.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

RQ 1: What are the attitudes of general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

RQ 2: What are the attitudes of special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

RQ 3: What are attitudes of special and general education teachers in relationship to the nature and type of disability?

RQ 4: What are the issues contributing to teachers' positive and negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

RQ 5: Do secondary special and general classroom teachers perceive they have the needed resources and support in inclusive classrooms?

RQ 6: To what extent do secondary special and general classroom teachers collaborate in the inclusive classroom?

RQ 7: Do secondary special and general classroom teachers perceive themselves knowledgeable about: (i) strategies needed for teaching students with disabilities; (ii) characteristics of students with disabilities; (iii) special education law; (iv) collaborative strategies; (v) the individualized education program; and vi) behavior management strategies?

RQ 8: What are the areas of need of secondary special and general educators working in the inclusive classroom?

Discussion of Findings

Research Questions 1 and 2: What are the attitudes of general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities? What are the attitudes of special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities?

Research Questions 1 and 2 focused on exploring the attitudes of general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities. Numerous responses were given by the participants regarding their perceptions of the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general educational setting. The results presented in Chapter Four revealed that general education teachers predominantly held positive attitudes towards inclusive education; however, they did not believe entirely in the concept of total inclusion. The participants rendered differing

attitudes and perceptions about suitable class settings and placements options for students with disabilities. The participants revealed mixed opinions towards the concept of inclusion. They overwhelmingly reported that although inclusion was not for every student with disabilities, there were benefits to inclusion, such as the exposure to the general education curriculum and the socialization skills that benefitted all students. The participants indicated their concerns with limited time to plan and modify instruction for the students with disabilities in the inclusive setting. Participants further rationalized that schools could not expect all students to be successful in the general education classroom. Participants maintained that 'there are cases where special education students need to be in separate, special classes.' There they would have the opportunity to be with special education teachers who knew how to connect with them. Several participants acknowledged that schools were forced legally to include any student who wanted to be in general education classes, and this was more harmful than good. The participants reported they were required to use more time and effort planning for students with disabilities. They also had to spend more time in the classroom working with students with disabilities, because they required extra help. In order to meet the needs of these students, the participants reported more support and resources were needed to implement correctly.

According to data analysis, the amount of experience the teachers had did not have an effect on the teachers' attitudes toward including students with disabilities. However, as indicated by previous research the amount of experience teachers had with inclusion may have a positive effect on their attitude. This suggested that university teacher education programs and school districts may benefit from more access to established inclusion programs for teachers. These findings were consistent with the results of previous research, indicating teachers who taught in an inclusion setting were found to have the most positive beliefs of inclusion, while general education teachers in traditional class settings held the least positive attitudes (Minke et al., 1996).

Likewise, Avramidis et al. (2000) reported that general education teachers who had been involved in inclusive programs for several years had significantly more positive attitudes when compared to teachers with less experience. Overall the special education teachers had more positive attitudes regarding inclusion than general education teachers.

These results were anticipated, given that special education teachers were the service providers for students with disabilities and had more experiences with special needs students.

Research Question 3: What are attitudes of special and general education teachers in relationship to the nature and type of disability?

Research Question 3 focused on teacher attitude in relationship to the student's disability. The participants agreed that students with disabilities should be taught with their nondisabled peers, as much as feasible. This, however, was not the case when it came to teaching students with behavioral/emotional disorders and severe intellectual disabilities. The majority of the teachers in the current study agreed the nature and type of disability should determine whether a student should be included in the general education setting.

Fluctuations existed in teacher support for inclusion and appeared to be dependent on the nature and type of disability of the student. This claim was supported by several other research studies. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) discovered different levels of support for the inclusion of students with different types of disabilities. Shotel, Iano, & McGettigan (1972) found teachers supported including students with LDs; however, less than one third of the teachers supported the inclusion of students with behavioral/emotional disorders or intellectual disabilities.

In the current study, when examining teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, it was found that the majority of general education teachers believed that students with moderate or severe disabilities were best served in special classes. Center and Ward (1987) found in their study that teachers, generally, did not support including students with profound sensory disabilities, multi-handicapping conditions, or moderate behavioral or intellectual disabilities.

This study found through analysis of the responses that, in relation to teaching students with severe disabilities, teachers' anxieties occurred in reference to their lack of skills, individual time available, and support (Center & Ward, 1987). The National Center for Educational Statistics (2002) indicated the percentage of students with disabilities included in the general education setting (1988-1998) significantly increased among students with specific LDs (from

20% to 45%) and the smallest increase occurred for students with multiple disabilities (from 12% to 14%) (p. 10). This statistic further confirmed the importance of students' nature and type of disability relative to inclusion.

The results of this study supported previous findings that overall teachers had negative attitudes towards students with severe disabilities. It was probable that the special education teachers have experienced working with students with disabilities severely handicapped students, whereas general education teachers had worked with fewer students and with less severity levels. These finding were consistent with past research that also indicated teachers had negative attitudes toward students with severe and less common disabilities (Cook, 2001, Cook et al., 2007; Dupoux et al., 2005). The results further revealed that there was not a major difference in attitude between the general and special education teachers.

Research Questions 4, 5, 8: What are the issues contributing to teachers' positive and negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities? Do secondary special and general classroom teachers perceive they have the needed resources and support in inclusive classrooms? What are the areas of need of secondary special and general educators working in the inclusive classroom?

According to the findings, there were a number of issues participants indicated that contributed to teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. These factors included class size, lack of resources, and lack of teacher training and professional development. According to Avramidis et al. (2002), three groups of variables contributed to teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities. The variables included: student-related variables, teacher related variables, and educational environment variables.

Consistent with previous research, the findings of this study indicated that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion were also influenced by the nature and type of disabilities of the student and the educational problems that arose. The results further indicated the milder the degree of the disability, the more willing teachers were to include these students in their classes. Research completed by Avramidis et al. (2000) revealed that teachers exhibited more concern and

anxiety with students diagnosed with behavioral and emotional problems than with students with other types of disabilities (Avramidis et al., 2000).

In response to Research Question 8 the majority of the teachers indicated they needed training in specific cases of disabilities in order to achieve effective inclusion. All of the teachers felt they needed professional development, training, and education to experience more successful comfort in their inclusive classes.

Research Question 6: To what extent do secondary special and general classroom teachers collaborate in the inclusive classroom?

In response to Research Question 6, the majority of the teachers in this study affirmed the extent of collaboration as generally lacking among inclusive class teachers. The teachers stated they rarely planned instruction in collaboration with other teachers, and only nine of the general education participants expressed they planned instruction with the special education teacher. They indicated they did not have mutual planning times that were convenient to collaborate. The teachers that indicated they planned or collaborated together stated, it was for a brief time on average. They further indicated they usually planned together less than a half an hour a week. Several teachers revealed they met spontaneously, such as in the hallway or at lunch. The lack of time to collaborate was cited as a barrier to inclusion for teachers that worked together to provide or promote inclusive practices.

Research indicated the school administrator played an important role in the collaboration process; because, they were responsible for providing inclusion teachers with mutual collaborative times to plan for the inclusive class setting (Fuchs, 2009). Often; however, the majority of the teachers acknowledged administration did not provide them with time to collaborate (Allison, 2011; Fenty & McDuffie, 2011; Fuchs, 2009; Leatherman, 2009; Orr, 2009). These findings indicated organizational limitations of secondary schools' schedules; which, interfered with how the teachers collaborated. As a result, inclusive classes lacked collaboration among the teachers (Conderman, Johnston-Rodriguez, & Hartman, 2009) and their ability to address the needs of students with disabilities was hindered.

Research Question 7: Do secondary special and general classroom teachers perceive themselves knowledgeable about: (i) strategies needed for teaching students with disabilities; (ii) characteristics of students with disabilities; (iii) special education law; (iv) collaborative strategies; (v) the individualized education program; and (vi) behavior management strategies?

In response to Research Question 7 (i), the majority of the general education teachers indicated that they had limited knowledge of special education or the strategies needed for teaching students with disabilities in the inclusive setting. Several of the participants indicated that they had taken a course in college; however, the course did not prepare them for their then-current teaching assignments.

These findings corresponded with the research results of DeBettencourt (1999) and Minke, Bear, Deemer, and Griffin (1996). Their findings revealed general education teachers made few modifications to the curriculum for students with disabilities. All special education participants indicated they perceived themselves knowledgeable of strategies for teaching students with disabilities. They further indicated, however, they needed refresher training to stay abreast of new special education best practices.

All participants agreed that professional development and training were crucial to developing strategies for effective inclusion classes. The majority of the general education participants indicated they were not familiar with the characteristics of students with disabilities. They were aware that there were a number of disabilities and differences existing in teaching a student with a learning disability, as opposed to teaching a student with an intellectual disability. The special education teachers revealed they were not always aware of the characteristics of all disabilities and cited this as one of the chief reasons for professional development and training.

7 (iii). In response to knowledge of special education law, all of the general education teachers revealed they were not knowledgeable of all the laws governing special education. In contrast, the special education teachers indicated they were knowledgeable of most laws governing special education. It was additionally revealed that as

special education teachers they enrolled in classes in college to enhance their knowledge of the legal aspects of special education.

7 (iv). All of the participants in the study indicated they needed clarification of collaborative strategies. This finding revealed further the need for professional development and training.

7 (v). As anticipated, the majority of the general education teachers revealed they were not familiar with the individualized education program.

Summary

Understanding the attitudes of secondary teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities is important to public education. As supported by the findings of this study, the majority of the teachers were positive toward the inclusion of students with disabilities. However, reality indicated that the typical general education teacher was insufficiently prepared to handle the escalating number of students with disabilities included in the general education setting, which contributed to their less than positive attitudes. Although secondary special education teachers possessed more positive attitudes towards inclusion than general education teachers, both groups of teachers possessed negative attitudes towards educating students with behavioral disorders, mental retardation, and multi-handicapping conditions in the inclusive setting.

Research conducted by Avramidis et al. (2000) revealed that teachers had less than positive attitudes towards including students with emotional and behavioral issues within the inclusive class settings, which correlated with the findings of the current study. This negativity appeared to emerge from the lack of training or education. Compared to the general education teachers, the special education teachers possessed more positive attitudes relative to their ability to adapt instruction for students with disabilities. Additionally, the special education teachers were more knowledgeable of the legalities of special education and the strategies needed to teach students with disabilities.

Most evident in the findings was the implication that both groups of teachers felt the need for professional development and training to work with students with disabilities. Both groups of teachers further suggested the need for

additional resources, support, and training on strategies for teaching students with disabilities in the inclusive environment. Moreover, both groups of teachers expressed the need for support from administration in terms of reduced class sizes, clarification of roles, and responsibilities in inclusive the classrooms. The present findings indicated that the majority of the teachers felt it was not feasible to teach all students with disabilities within the inclusive class setting.

Limitations

There were several limitations that impacted the results of this study. First, this study sampled only secondary teachers then-currently teaching in the inclusive setting. Although this was a common practice when conducting research in schools, it limited the overall generalizability of the results. Replication of this study among teachers without inclusive education experience and within various geographical locations would serve to substantially increase the external validity of these research findings.

Recommendations

The purpose of the study was to examine the attitudes of general and special education teachers towards inclusion on the secondary level from several school districts around the metropolitan Saint Louis area. Future research studies regarding the attitudes of secondary teachers towards inclusion may increase the existing limited body of research on this subject and strengthen the findings of existing studies and furthermore present the opportunity for generalization of the results.

Recommendations for future studies include:

(1) A comprehensive study of inclusive practices and teachers' attitudes working in the same school district may provide opportunities for division-wide improvement in the area of inclusion.

(2) A mixed methods study exploring the possible correlation between teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and student outcomes could add to the improvement of inclusive practices.

(3) Expansion to other regions of the country could provide further opportunities for generalization of the results.

(4) Conducting a study to include students' and parent's perceptions to provide extra information about the attitudes of teachers could provide important implications involving inclusive practices.

(5) Future research conducted using private school teachers exclusively and the practices they utilize in the inclusive setting could provide a comparison of practices, given that private schools were not controlled by the same laws as public schools.

Recommendations for school districts include: (1) Professional development and training designed to enhance the knowledge of inclusion of teachers working in the inclusive setting; (2) Provide adequate collaborative and planning time; (3) Administrative and district support in implementing inclusive programs; (4) Adequate resources, equipment, and support personnel working in inclusive classes; (5) A description of the roles and responsibilities of special and general teachers working in the inclusive setting; and (6) Training for school administrators focused on scheduling to incorporate time for teachers working in the inclusive to plan together.

Conclusions

From this study, conclusions and implications emerged which were beneficial for universities, public school stakeholders, administrators, and teachers to understand the attitudes of secondary general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities within the general education setting. This section outlines the conclusions and implications of the study.

Overall, teachers were positive towards the inclusion of the majority of students with disabilities in the general education setting. The finding in this study supported the claims of literature reviewed; which maintained that the majority of general and special education teachers overall generally possessed positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities. However, in reality the average general education teacher was professionally unequipped to handle the escalating population of students with disabilities included in the general education setting.

Although secondary special education teachers possessed more positive attitudes towards inclusion than their general education counterparts, both groups of teachers possessed negative attitudes towards educating students with

behavioral disorders, intellectual disabilities, and multi-handicapping conditions in the inclusive setting. Compared to the general education teachers the special education teachers possessed more positive attitudes relative to their ability to adapt instruction for students with disabilities.

The special education teachers additionally, were more knowledgeable of information relevant to teaching students with disabilities as compared to general education teachers. Most evident in the findings was the implication that both groups of teachers felt the need for professional development and training to work with students with disabilities. Both groups of teachers further suggested the need for additional resources, support, and training on strategies for teaching students with disabilities in inclusive environment. Another important finding from this study was the importance of administrative support in the successful inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. Both groups of teachers cited reduced class sizes, clarification of their roles, and responsibilities in the inclusive class settings as the forms of supports needed from administration.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Letter A

Dear Colleague:

I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University. I am writing to invite you to participate in a qualitative research project to study secondary school general education and special education teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. This is part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. Participating in this study will include an interview that will be conducted at a mutually agreed upon site. Prior to the interview, I will provide the interview questions. You may review the questions prior to the interview. The interview will be recorded and I will also take hand written notes. After transcription you will be provided a copy to make sure your comments are clear. If deemed necessary, a follow up meeting may occur which will allow me to check the accuracy of my written notes and to clarify questions I may have after reviewing the transcripts of the first interview.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating or for withdrawing from the study at any time. If you decide to participate in this study, your identity will be kept confidential. The information obtained from you will be referenced by a pseudo name and the results will be included in my research paper. All transcripts will be kept in a secured office in the researcher's home. Included with this letter is an informed consent form to participate in this study. Through your participation I hope to examine high school general education and special education teacher attitudes and opinions on inclusion. I hope the results will be useful in adding to the growing data on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or this study, you may contact me by e-mail at bap753@lindenwooduniversity.edu. Or feel free to contact me via phone at (314) 3020138.

Respectfully,

Barbara Portwood

Appendix B

Recruitment Letter B

Dear Study Participant:

Thank you for your participation in the 'Inclusive Special and General Education Secondary Teachers' Attitudes towards the Inclusion of Student with Disabilities in the General Education Setting' study. I am writing to ask whether you would be willing to pass along the enclosed information to other teachers involved in inclusion who may also be interested in learning about this research study. You are under no obligation to share this information.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Portwood

Appendix C

Pilot Study Recruitment Letter

Dear Former Colleague:

I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University and I am writing to invite you to participate in a pilot study. The larger scale study is part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. This qualitative research project is to study secondary school general education and special education teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The purpose of conducting this pilot study is to examine the feasibility of the approach that will be utilized in the main study. Participating in this pilot study will include an interview that will be conducted at a mutually agreed upon time and site. Prior to the interview, I will provide the interview questions. You may review the questions prior to the interview. The interview will be recorded and I will also take hand written notes. After transcription you will be provided a copy to make sure your comments are clear. Participation in this pilot is completely voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating or for withdrawing from the pilot at any time. If you decide to participate in this pilot study, your identity will be kept confidential. Included with this letter is an informed consent form to participate in this pilot study. Through your participation I hope to enhance the probability of the success in the main study. If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or this study, you may contact me by e-mail at bap753@lindenwooduniversity.edu. Or feel free to contact me via phone at (314) 3020138.

Respectfully,

Barbara Portwood

Appendix D

LINDENWOOD

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES -Interview

Inclusive Special and General Education Secondary Teachers' Attitudes towards the Inclusion of Student with Disabilities in the General Education Setting

Principal Investigator: Barbara Portwood
Telephone: (314) 3020138 E-mail: bap753@lindenwood.edu

Participant_____ Contact info_____

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Barbara Portwood under the guidance of Dr. John Long. The purpose of this research is to determine how general education and special education teachers' attitudes affect the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education population; and to determine possible contributing aspects for these negative and positive attitudes, which affect the inclusive setting.
2. Your participation will involve:
   a) Participating in a one-on-one interview with the researcher, discussing teacher attitude and perceptions of the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education classroom. The interview will take place in person or by phone at a mutually agreed upon time.
   b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be 30-45 minutes during the one-to-one interview. Approximately 20 – 40 participants will be involved in this research.
3. There may be certain risks or discomforts associated with this research. They include potential discomfort answering the questions in the interview, as well as potential identification of individuals based on the small sample sized being used. Every effort will be made to maintain participant confidentiality and minimize potential discomfort during the interview.
4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about how general education and special education teachers' attitudes affect the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education population; and to determine possible contributing aspects for these negative and positive attitudes, which affect the inclusive setting and may help society.
5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.
6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location. However, in some studies using small sample sizes, there may be risk of identification.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Barbara Portwood (314) 302-0138 or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. John Long (636) 949 4937. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Marilyn Abbott, Interim Provost at mabbott@lindenwood.edu or 636-949-4912.

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 Date	Investigator Printed Name

Appendix E

Interview Protocol

Research Project: Inclusive Special and General Education Secondary Teachers' Attitudes towards the Inclusion of Student with Disabilities in the General Education Setting

Time of interview: _____

Date of interview: _____

Location: _____

Interviewee: _____

Signature _____

Thank you for consenting to participate in this study. I would like to record the interview so the study can be as accurate as possible. You may request that the recording be turned off at any point of the interview. It may be necessary to contact you for a follow up interview to clarify some of your responses.

Appendix F

Interview Questions

Participant Number:

Date and time of interview:

Location:

1. Do you feel that teachers have the support, resources, training, and time to effectively implement inclusion? If not, what support, resources, and training would be beneficial?

2. Are you aware of the disability / level of disability of students with special needs in your classroom?

3. How do you feel about the inclusion of students with disabilities in your classroom?

4. Do you think that the needs of the majority of students with disabilities are met in your classroom?

5. What do you understand the concept of inclusive education to mean?

6. Do you see yourself as an inclusive teacher? Explain why or why not?

7. What do you see as positive factors with regard to your role as an inclusive teacher? / What do you see as obstacles to your fulfilling your role as an inclusive teacher?

8. To what extent do you include the efforts / opinions of the special education teacher in your programming?

9. Have you made modifications to your planning and teaching to include the needs of students with disabilities? Elaborate

10. Have you provided individualized instruction for students with special needs?

Questions adapted from the survey carried out by Minke et al. (1996)

Appendix G

Online Survey

Demographics

Please specify the answer that applies to you.

Your position: General education teacher or Special education teacher

Subject you teach (i.e. English, Mathematics etc. or ED, LD, EMH, OH)

Number of years taught in general education:

Number of years taught in an inclusive setting:

Questionnaire

1. Explain your teaching philosophy?
2. What training if any have you received in regards to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom?
3. What are your goals for all your students? (General as well as students with disabilities)
4. What do you see as your role/responsibility to the students with disabilities included in your classroom?
5. Describe your teaching style.
6. Research indicates that teaching style affects students with disabilities being included into the general education classroom. What, in your opinion, is the most effective teaching style in dealing with students with disabilities? (What traits should the teachers have?)
7. Has your attitude towards the concept of inclusion changed over time? How or how not?
8. Do you use collaborative partnerships in your classroom, such as peer buddy systems?
9. What do you see as your greatest challenge as a teacher in the inclusive setting?
10. How often do you collaborate with the special education inclusion teacher?
11. Describe your experiences with students with disabilities as part of your classes over the years.
12. Do you always plan on teaching in inclusive setting? Why? or Why not?
13. What is the best part about teaching in the inclusive classroom?
14. Has anything specific helped shaped your attitude/perspective towards students with disabilities? Elaborate.
15. In your opinion what are the most effective methods to deal with the behavioral problems students with disabilities sometimes display and would a general education teacher be able to implement these strategies as effectively?
16. What advice would you give to general education teachers critical of or apprehensive about teaching in the inclusive setting?
17. What measures if any have you taken to prevent students with disabilities from simply being "helped" by peers and instead thought of as an equal, capable member of the class.
18. Please write any additional comments you have concerning inclusion.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY!

Vitae

Barbara A. Portwood

Education

Ed.D. Education Administration
Lindenwood University
St. Charles, Missouri — December 2018

Education Specialist
Lindenwood University — August 2012
Education Administration
St. Charles, Missouri

Masters of Arts
Lindenwood University — August 2006
Education Administration
St. Charles, Missouri

Masters of Arts — August 1992
National Louis University
Curriculum and Design
Evanston, Illinois

Bachelor of Arts
Harris Stowe State College — December 1981
St. Louis, Missouri
Major: Elementary Education
Minor: Special Education K-12

Certifications
Emotional Disturbances
Intellectual Disabilities
Learning Disabilities
Orthopedically Handicapped
Reading Specialist

Current Employment — 1987 – present
Cross Category Teacher

Professional Experience
Teaching special education Mathematics in the self-contained setting
Teaching English in the resource and inclusive setting
Develop and implement individualized education plans for students in the Student to Employment Program in accordance with PL-94-142

Responsible for triennial re-evaluations
Skilled in developing and improving students' social skills and successfully addressing behavioral problems
Adept in conducting IEP conferences and working with parents
Design learning environment to meet Individualized Education Plan objectives
Collaborated in the development of Functional Academics Social Studies Curriculum

Professional Memberships
Council of Exceptional Children (CEC)
Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (ACLD)

Community Activities
Girl Scouts of America
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority