

RUNNING HEAD: Teacher Attitudes toward Inclusion

TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE
GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM

By

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Submitted to

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Submitted in Fulfillment for the Requirements for

61-683 Research Paper

Summer 2014

March 9, 2015

ABSTRACT

With the implementation of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in 1975, educating students in the least restrictive environment has become common practice among schools. This leads to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. The following study evaluates the impact that inclusion has on general education teachers. 22 general education teachers were surveyed to determine how inclusion affects their attitude toward multiple variables, including stress level, planning time, enjoyment of teaching, and perceived value of students with special needs. The study found that the majority of teachers feel that students with disabilities are a valuable part of the classroom and are enjoyable to teach. The teachers feel that general education students learn better when students with disabilities are included in the classroom. However, having special needs students included in the classroom takes additional planning time and causes teachers to feel more stressed. Furthermore, the study compares the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of teaching experience and teachers with 11 or more years of teaching experience. It is concluded that additional professional development opportunities and training should be given to general education teachers to help them successfully implement inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Background, Issues and Concerns

There have been concerns regarding inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom. It has been determined that educating a child in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is best for students with special needs, but actually putting this into practice has been a challenge for educators. Research has shown that the challenge of including special needs students in the general education classroom may result in increased workload and burdens for general education teachers. The challenge of including students with special needs students in the classroom may lead teachers to develop negative attitudes toward students with disabilities.

Practice under Investigation

The practice under investigation is the inclusion of students with special needs in the regular education classroom. There will be an investigation of general education teacher attitudes toward students with disabilities in their classrooms.

School Policy to be Informed by Study

The policy that is addressed in this study is educating students in the Least Restrictive Environment, and determining its effect on general education teachers. Missouri Legislation requires students to be educated in the LRE, but this may be detrimental for educators and students.

Conceptual Underpinning

Students with special needs require extra accommodations and modifications when included in the general education classroom. These take time for general education teachers to

plan and implement, which puts an extra burden on teachers, leading them to perceive students with special needs differently than they perceive regular education students. If it is found that some teachers have unfavorable attitudes toward students with disabilities, professional development activities could be implemented that would mold teacher attitudes so special education student's academic achievement will not be impacted by teacher biases.

Statement of the Problem

If there is teacher bias toward students with special needs it needs to be made known and addressed. Negative attitudes and bias toward students with special needs can be detrimental to student learning and teacher effectiveness.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out how general education teachers perceive students with special needs in their classroom.

Research Questions

RQ#1: What is the overall opinion of general education teachers toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classroom?

RQ#2: Is there a difference between the attitudes of teachers with 1-10 years of experience verses teachers with 11 or more years of experience toward the inclusion of students with disabilities?

Null Hypothesis

There is no difference in attitude between teachers with 1-10 years of experience verses teachers with 11 or more years of experience toward the inclusion of students with disabilities.

Anticipated Benefits of the Study

If there is a difference in attitude, this study will help teachers recognize personal bias toward students with special needs. By being aware of negative attitudes and perspectives of students with special needs, educators, administrators, and school districts can reflect on the treatment of all students who are included in the general education classroom, and make changes to practically meet the needs of students and teachers.

Definition of Terms

- Students with special needs- students that have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or receive special education support services. Synonyms include “students with disabilities”
- General education teachers- teachers who teach in the regular (elementary) classroom
- Inclusion- the integration of students with special needs into the general education classroom with their non-disabled peers.
- Least Restrictive Environment- the setting in which students with disabilities are to the greatest extent possible, educated with their non-disabled peers.

Summary

In this study surveyed educators about their views of special needs students who are included in the general education classroom. This study will determine if teachers see inclusion as a burden or a benefit to their classroom. Also included is a comparison of the attitudes of teachers with 1-10 years or experiences with those who have 11 or more years of teaching experience. This study benefited educators by helping them identify personal bias/attitudes toward general education and special needs students. Furthermore, the study can be used to

determine if general education teachers need further training to support affective inclusion practices in their classrooms.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A century ago, most students with disabilities had very limited educational opportunities. Torreno, (2012), supports this in his article *The History of Inclusion* by stating that students with disabilities were usually educated at home or institutionalized. When they began receiving education, they were forced to attend separate schools and learn in classes that were apart from their peers. “Today, educational trends have shifted toward having students with disabilities learn beside other students in inclusive classrooms” (p.1).

Asserted by Bowerman, (2007), inclusion is “a philosophy that states all individuals, regardless of ability, should participate within the same environment with necessary support and individualized attention” (p.2). Inclusion is more than just placing students with and without disabilities together. It is a view that all children, in spite of differences, belong and are valued. Furthermore, Gokdere, (2012), summarizes inclusion as an educational approach that provides students with special needs an education in normal classrooms. These students should be placed in the least restrictive educational environment that includes the necessary services for support of the student’s needs.

The first piece of legislation that began enforcing inclusion was the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975. IDEA requires that all school districts provide a free, appropriate public education for all children (Torreno, 2012, p.1). IDEA required that education be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for each child, meaning that students with disabilities could be taught in local schools and in general education classes with their peers, if this is deemed the most appropriate education.

IDEA defines the LRE is as, “to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled” (Bowerman, 2007, p.2). IDEA adds that, “special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily” (Bowerman, 2007, p.2). This legislation made educators evaluate what is the best learning environment for all students. The vast majority agree that students with special needs should taught in an inclusive classroom, as concluded by Whitbread in his article *What Does the Research Say About Inclusive Education?*. Inclusion began to take off in the 1990s when children with physical disabilities gained access to neighborhood schools. “Inclusion has grown so that 90% of students with disabilities receiving education in typical schools. About half of these students were included in the general classroom for 80% of the day” (Torreno, 2012, p.1).

Current research supports the success of Inclusion for both students with disabilities and the students in the general education classroom. Researcher Debbie Staub, (n.d.), project coordinator at the University of Washington's Consortium for Collaborative Research on Social Relationships, found that inclusion provided benefits including, friendships, self-esteem, comfort interacting with peers, and patience. In Staub's article, *Inclusion and the Other Kids*, she clarifies that “These benefits are specific to classrooms that use effective inclusion strategies that foster kindness, consideration, empathy, concern, and care for others” (p.2). The author adds that situations vary, and inclusion is not always successfully implemented.

The website, *Does Inclusion Help or Hurt Students?*, 2014, offers further support for the inclusion of students with special needs. The author interviewed general education teachers about inclusion in their classrooms, expecting to hear complaints about “disruptive students, students who couldn't handle the academic pace, students who were socially isolated, etc.” (Does Inclusion Help or Hurt Students?, 2014, p.1) . But instead, the author found that making adaptations to meet the needs of individual special needs students also challenges teachers to adapt the curriculum to more closely meet the individual needs of all students. The website adds that other benefits of inclusion are “the ongoing support of school personnel, training in social skills, and increased willingness to take academic risks” (Does Inclusion Help or Hurt Students? 2014, p.2).

Although the research shown above supports inclusion of students with disabilities, teacher attitudes toward inclusion vary based on the experience and training of the teacher. According to Woodcock, (2013), teacher attitudes often don't change over the teacher's career span, so preparing teachers for inclusive education is extremely important. Woodcock conducted a study aimed to compare the attitudes of trainee teachers and experienced teachers towards students with specific learning disabilities. He concluded, “There were no differences in attitudes according to experience with students with specific learning disabilities” (p.12).

Another study done on teacher attitudes toward inclusion was completed by Md. Saiful Malak, 2013, detailed in the article, *Inclusive Education Reform in Bangladesh*. Malak interviewed 20 pre-service teachers and experienced teachers to determine their opinions of inclusion. The findings revealed that majority of the pre-service teachers have unfavorable

attitudes to include students with disabilities in regular classrooms. Malak further explained that, “Large class size, high workloads, inflexible curriculum policy of primary education and inadequate experiential learning facilities of teacher education program are identified as barriers to Inclusion” (p.210).

A very similar study completed by Gokdere, 2012, found that there were overwhelming differences between the in-service and pre-service teachers’ attitudes towards inclusive education and their view of individuals with special needs. Gokdere concluded that these differences were related to experience and the preparation levels of teachers. Gokdere’s study, found in the article *A Comparative Study of the Attitude, Concern, and Interaction Levels of Elementary School Teachers and Teacher Candidates towards Inclusive Education*, suggests that “Professional development workshops and seminars on special and inclusive education would improve the knowledge of in-service elementary teachers and enhance the qualification of the inclusive practices” (p.2). Furthermore, Hernandez, (2012), states that often teachers lack collaboration skills to make inclusion for students with special needs successful. Some obstacles to collaboration are time, effort, individuality, mandated testing, and personal differences. Collaboration and inclusion are still a struggle for educators. Hernandez suggests that further training is necessary for successful collaboration.

In conclusion, the literature and research on inclusion states that inclusion is beneficial for students with and without disabilities. Inclusion must be successfully implemented to be most beneficial, which requires teacher training. Pre-service teachers were generally found to have more negative attitudes toward inclusion compared to those with experience and training. Kuzub, (2003), confirms in his article, *Attitudes Toward Teaching Children With Disabilities*, that

teacher attitudes, although difficult to measure and hard to change, will impact teacher behavior toward students.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

In this study general education teachers were surveyed using a Likert scale. The survey included statements regarding teacher opinions toward students with special needs in their classroom. Teachers rated how they felt about statements ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The survey can be found in Appendix A. The independent variable of this study was the years of experience a teacher had, and the dependent variable was the response selected by teacher, which determined the teacher opinion of various aspects related to inclusion.

Study Group Description

The participants in this study were 22 general education teachers from a Midwestern rural School District. This school district located in a town of approximately 10,000 people. For this study, 8 of the teachers surveyed had 1-10 years of experience and 14 teachers surveyed have 11 or more years of teaching experience. All of the participants were teaching elementary students grades K-4 when the survey was given.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The instrument used to collect data was a survey that the author created and revised. The survey was electronic, anonymous, and individual responses were confidential. The survey consisted of 6 statements related to inclusion that the educators rated using a Likert Scale. There were also 4 survey items that addressed respondent demographics, background information, and years of experience.

Statistical Analysis Methods

The results of the survey were analyzed through a Chi Square Analysis. Each of the 6 research question variables were analyzed through a frequency plot and a cross-tab contingency. The frequency plots were used to determine the overall opinion of teachers toward inclusion, and the cross-tab contingencies were used to compare teachers with various years of experience. The Alpha level was set at 0.25 to test the null hypothesis: There is no difference in attitude between teachers with 1-10 years of experience versus teachers with 11 or more years of experience toward the inclusion of students with disabilities.

FINDINGS

A Chi-Square Analysis was conducted to analyze the results of a survey given to 22 elementary school teachers. The findings were evaluated for three purposes. In the first findings section, respondent status was analyzed. In the second section, the overall opinion of respondents was analyzed for 6 variables regarding inclusion. And in the third section, the Chi-Square Analysis was used to determine if years of teaching experience impacted respondent opinions toward the 6 different variables related to inclusion. The following tables, graphs, and narratives will depict the findings based on the survey results.

Section 1: Analysis of Respondents

Figure 1

VARIABLE:	Status	FRQ.	CUM.	%	CUM.	FREQUENCY PLOT
x < 1		0	0	0	0	
x = 1		8	8	36.4	36.4	*****
x = 2		14	22	63.6	100	*****
x > 2		0	22	0	100	
TOTAL		22		100		

Key for plot #1= Teachers with 1-10 years of experience

#2= Teachers with 11+ years of experience

Total Respondents = 22

Number of Teachers with 1-10 years of experience = 8 (36.4% of respondents)

Number of Teachers with 11+ years of experience = 14 (63.6% of respondents)

A survey was given to 22 elementary school teachers in order to gather information about the inclusion of students with special needs. Of the 22 surveyed teachers, 8 respondents,

or 36.4%, have been teaching for 1-10 years, while 14 respondents, or 63.6%, have been teaching for 11 or more years.

Figure 2

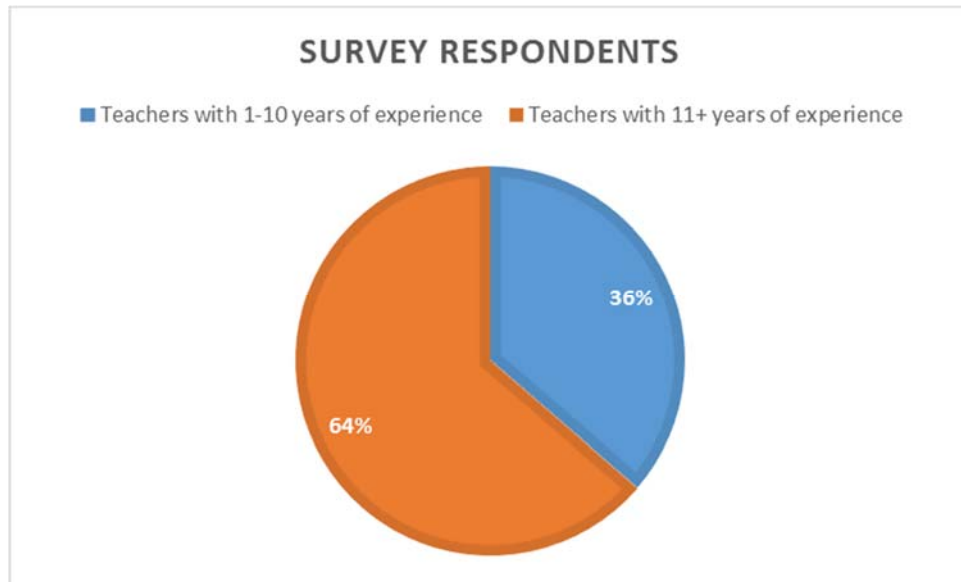


Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the status of the survey respondents.

Approximately 36% of respondents have been teaching for 1-10 years and approximately 64% of respondents have been teaching for 11 or more years.

Section 2: Overall Opinion of Respondents

Research Question 1: What is the overall opinion of teachers toward the inclusion of students with special needs?

VARIABLE: Difficult

Figure 3

	FRQ.	CUM.	%	CUM.	FREQUENCY PLOT
x < 2	0	0	0	0	
x = 2	2	2	9.1	9.1	*****
x = 3	8	10	36.4	45.5	*****
x = 4	10	20	45.5	90.9	*****
x = 5	2	22	9.1	100	*****
x > 5	0	22	0	100	
TOTAL	22		100		

Key for plot:

1= Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

Frequency of #1 - 0	Percentage of #1 – 0.0%
Frequency of #2 - 2	Percentage of #2 – 9.1%
Frequency of #3 - 8	Percentage of #3 – 36.4%
Frequency of #4 - 10	Percentage of #4 – 45.5%
Frequency of #5 - 2	Percentage of #5 – 9.1%

In determining the overall opinion about the inclusion of students with special needs, the teachers were asked to evaluate the statement, “Having students with special needs in my classroom makes teaching more difficult.” No respondents, 0.0%, strongly disagreed with this statement, while 2 respondents, 9.1%, reported that they disagreed with this statement. 8 respondents, 36.4%, were neutral about this statement, 10 teachers, 45.5%, agreed with this statement, and 2 teachers, 9.1%, strongly agreed. The overall results of the survey show that

VARIABLE: Value

Figure 8

	FRQ.	CUM.	%	CUM.	FREQUENCY PLOT
x < 4	0	0	0	0	
x = 4	3	3	13.6	13.6	****_
x = 5	19	22	86.4	100	*****
x > 5	0	22	0	100	
TOTAL	22		100		

Key for plot:

1= Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

Frequency of #1 - 0	Percentage of #1 – 0.0%
Frequency of #2 - 0	Percentage of #2 – 0.0%
Frequency of #3 - 0	Percentage of #3 – 0.0%
Frequency of #4 - 3	Percentage of #4 – 13.6%
Frequency of #5 - 19	Percentage of #5 – 86.4%

In determining the overall opinion about the inclusion of students with disabilities, the statement, “Students with special needs are a valuable part of my classroom” was evaluated. No respondents, 0.0%, strongly disagreed, disagreed, or were neutral about this statement. 3 teachers or, 13.6%, agreed with this statement, and 19 teachers, 86.4%, strongly agreed. The overall results of the survey show that all teachers surveyed agree or strongly agree that students with special needs are a valuable part of their classroom.

Figure 9

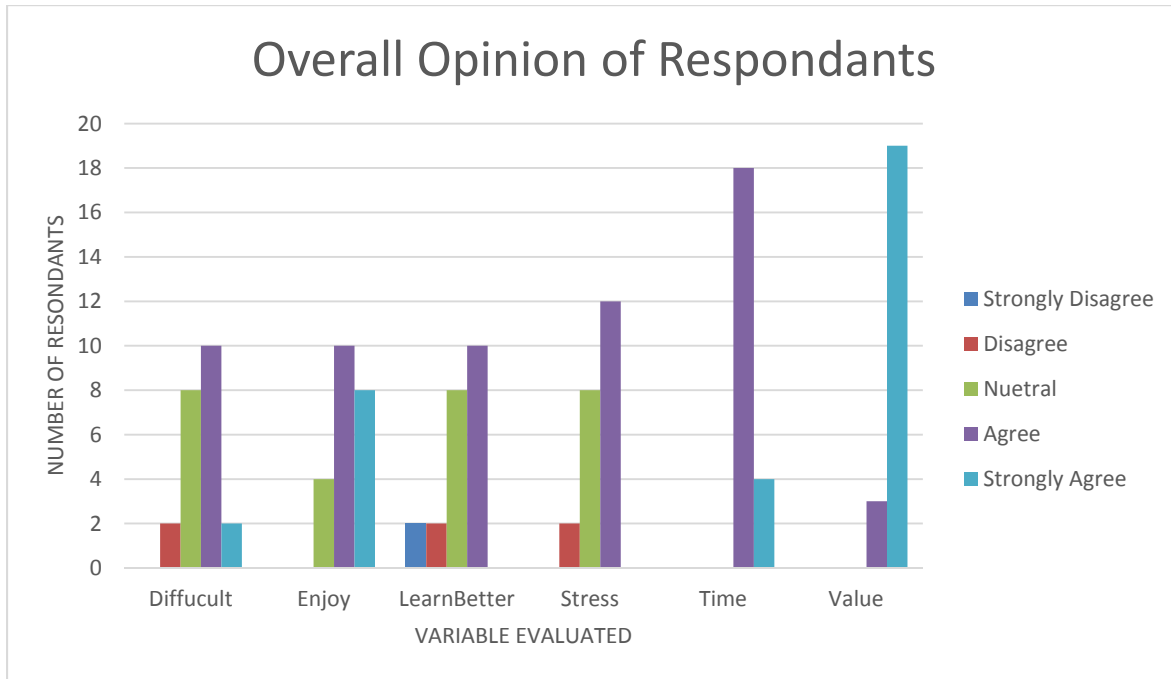


Figure 9 provides a visual summary of the findings in Section 2. Teacher responses toward all 6 variables are compared in the graph above.

Section 3: Effect of Teaching Experience on Response

Research Question 2: Is there a difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience toward the inclusion of students with special needs?

Figure 10

Variable: Difficult					
<i>Summary of Chi Square Analysis</i>					
Source	1-10 years	11+ years	Chi Sq	df	p-value
<i>SD/Disagree</i>	25.0% (2)	00.0% (0)			
<i>Neutral</i>	25.0% (2)	42.9% (6)			
<i>SA/Agree</i>	50.0% (4)	57.1% (8)	3.99	1	0.14
<i>Sign = or < 0.25</i>					

The p-value is .14 The alpha level is .25

Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience.

The conclusion is that we will reject the null because there is a significant difference between responses of teachers with 1-10 years or experience verses those with 11+ years of experience

The independent variable was the status of the respondent as having 1-10 years or experience or 11+ years of experience. The dependent variable was whether the teachers feel that having students with disabilities in their classroom makes teaching more difficult. Out of the 22 teachers surveyed there were 8 teachers with 1-10 years of experience and 14 teachers with 11+ years of experience. For this variable (difficulty), respondents evaluated the statement, "Having students with special needs in my classroom makes teaching more difficult". For teachers with 1-10 ears of experience, 25.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed, 25.0% were neutral, and 50.0% agreed or strongly agreed. For teachers with 11 or more years

of experience, 0.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed, 42.9% were neutral, and 57.1% agreed or strongly agreed. The Chi Square value was 3.99. The degree of freedom was 1.

The Null Hypothesis stated “There is no difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience.” The null is rejected because the p-value is .14, which is less than the alpha level of .25. This means that there is a significant difference between the opinions of teachers with varying levels of experience on the difficulty of teaching students with special needs. More teachers with 11+ years of experience were neutral or strongly agreed that having students with special needs in their classroom made teaching more difficult.

Figure 11

Variable: Enjoy					
Summary of Chi Square Analysis					
Source	1-10 years	11+ years	Chi Sq	df	p-value
SD/Disagree	00.0% (0)	00.0% (0)			
Neutral	00.0% (0)	28.6% (4)			
SA/Agree	100.0% (8)	71.4% (10)	2.79	1	0.09
Sign = or < 0.25					

The p-value is .09 The alpha level is .25

Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience.

The conclusion is that we will reject the null because there is a significant difference between responses of teachers with 1-10 years or experience verses those with 11+ years of experience

The independent variable for this survey item was the status of the respondent as having 1-10 years or experience or 11+ years of experience. The dependent variable was

whether the teachers enjoy teaching students with special needs. For this variable (enjoy), respondents evaluated the statement, "I enjoy teaching students with special needs". For teachers with 1-10 years of experience, 0.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed, 0.0% were neutral, and 100.0% agreed or strongly agreed. For teachers with 11 or more years of experience, 0.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed, 28.6% were neutral, and 71.4% agreed or strongly agreed. The Chi Square value was 2.79 and the degree of freedom was 1.

The Null Hypothesis stated "There is no difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience." The null is rejected because the p-value is .09, which is less than the alpha level of .25. This means that there is a significant difference between opinions of teachers with varying levels of experience on the enjoyment of teaching students with special needs. All teachers with 1-10 years of experience enjoy teaching students with special needs, while some teachers with 11+ years of experience were neutral about this statement.

Figure 12

Variable: Learn Better					
Summary of Chi Square Analysis					
Source	1-10 years	11+ years	Chi Sq	df	p-value
SD/Disagree	00.0% (0)	28.6% (4)			
Neutral	25.0% (2)	42.9% (6)			
SA/Agree	75.0% (6)	28.6% (4)	5.15	1	0.08
Sign = or < 0.25					

The p-value is .08 The alpha level is .25

Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience.

The conclusion is that we will reject the null because there is a significant difference between responses of teachers with 1-10 years of experience versus those with 11+ years of experience

The independent variable was the status of the respondent as having 1-10 years of experience or 11+ years of experience. The dependent variable was whether or not the teachers feel that regular education students learn better by having students with disabilities in their classroom. Out of the 22 teachers surveyed there were 8 teachers with 1-10 years of experience and 14 teachers with 11+ years of experience. For this variable (learn better), respondents evaluated the statement, "Regular education students learn better with special needs students in the classroom". For teachers with 1-10 years of experience, 0.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed, 25.0% were neutral, and 75.0% agreed or strongly agreed. For teachers with 11 or more years of experience, 28.6% strongly disagreed or disagreed, 42.9% were neutral, and 28.6% agreed or strongly agreed. The Chi Square value was 5.15. The degree of freedom was 1.

The Null Hypothesis stated "There is no difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience." The null is rejected because the p-value is .08, which is less than the alpha level of .25. This means that there is a significant difference between opinions of teachers with varying levels of experience on their opinion of whether or not the teachers feel that regular education students learn better by having students with disabilities in their classroom. A large majority of teachers with 1-10 years of experience agreed with this statement, while a majority of teachers with 11+ years of experience were neutral about the statement.

Figure 13

Variable: Stress					
Summary of Chi Square Analysis					
Source	1-10 years	11+ years	Chi Sq	df	p-value
SD/Disagree	25.0% (2)	00.0% (0)			
Neutral	00.0% (0)	57.1% (8)			
SA/Agree	75.0% (6)	42.6% (6)	9.04	1	0.01
Sign = or < 0.25					

The p-value is .01 The alpha level is .25

Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience.

The conclusion is that we will reject the null because there is a significant difference between responses of teachers with 1-10 years or experience verses those with 11+ years of experience

The independent variable was the status of the respondent as having 1-10 years or experience or 11+ years of experience. The dependent variable was whether the teachers feel that having students with disabilities in their classroom makes teaching more stressful. Out of the 22 teachers surveyed there were 8 teachers with 1-10 years of experience and 14 teachers with 11+ years of experience. For this variable (stress), respondents evaluated the statement, "Having students with special needs in my classroom makes teaching more stressful." For teachers with 1-10 ears of experience, 25.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed, 0.0% were neutral, and 75.0% agreed or strongly agreed. For teachers with 11 or more years of experience, 0.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed, 57.1% were neutral, and 42.9% agreed or strongly agreed. The Chi Square value was 9.04. The degree of freedom was 1.

The Null Hypothesis stated "There is no difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience." The null is rejected

because the p-value is .01, which is much less than the alpha level of .25. This means that there is a significant difference between opinions of teachers with varying levels of experience on the stress of teaching students with special needs. A large majority of teachers with 1-10 years of experience agreed or strongly agreed that teaching students with special needs adds stress, while a majority of teachers with 11+ years of experience were neutral about the statement.

Figure 14

Variable: Time					
Summary of Chi Square Analysis					
Source	1-10 years	11+ years	Chi Sq	df	p-value
SD/Disagree	00.0% (0)	00.0% (0)			
Neutral	00.0% (0)	00.0% (0)			
SA/Agree	100.0% (8)	100.0% (14)	0.00	1	.99
Sign = or < 0.25					

The p-value is .99 The alpha level is .25

Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience.

The conclusion is that we will not reject the null because there is not a significant difference between responses of teachers with 1-10 years or experience verses those with 11+ years of experience

The independent variable was the status of the respondent as having 1-10 years or experience or 11+ years of experience. The dependent variable was whether the teachers feel that having students with disabilities in their classroom takes additional planning time. Out of the 22 teachers surveyed there were 8 teachers with 1-10 years of experience and 14 teachers with 11+ years of experience. For this variable (time), respondents evaluated the statement,

“Making accommodations and modifications for students with special needs takes additional planning time.” For teachers with 1-10 years of experience, 0.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed, 0.0% were neutral, and 100.0% agreed or strongly agreed. For teachers with 11 or more years of experience, 0.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed, 0.0% were neutral, and 100.0% agreed or strongly agreed. The Chi Square value was 0.00. The degree of freedom was 1.

The Null Hypothesis stated “There is no difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience.” The null is not rejected because the p-value is .99, which is greater than the alpha level of .25. This means that there is a significant difference between opinions of teachers with varying levels of experience on the difficulty of teaching students with special needs. Both teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience agree that teaching students with disabilities takes additional planning time.

Figure 15

Variable: Value					
Summary of Chi Square Analysis					
Source	1-10 years	11+ years	Chi Sq	df	p-value
SD/Disagree	00.0% (0)	00.0% (0)			
Neutral	00.0% (0)	00.0% (0)			
SA/Agree	100.0% (8)	100.0% (14)	0.00	1	0.99
Sign = or < 0.25					

The p-value is .99 The alpha level is .25

Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience.

The conclusion is that we will not reject the null because there is not a significant difference between responses of teachers with 1-10 years or experience verses those with 11+ years of experience

The independent variable was the status of the respondent as having 1-10 years or experience or 11+ years of experience. The dependent variable was whether the teachers feel that students with disabilities are a valuable part of their classroom. Out of the 22 teachers surveyed there were 8 teachers with 1-10 years of experience and 14 teachers with 11+ years of experience. For this variable (value), respondents evaluated the statement, "Students with special needs are a valuable part of my classroom." For teachers with 1-10 ears of experience, 0.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed, 0.0% were neutral, and 100.0% agreed or strongly agreed. For teachers with 11 or more years of experience, 0.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed, 0.0% were neutral, and 100.0% agreed or strongly agreed. The Chi Square value was 0.00. The degree of freedom was 1.

The Null Hypothesis stated "There is no difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience." The null is not rejected because the p-value is .99, which is greater than the alpha level of .25. This means that there is not a significant difference between opinions of teachers with varying levels of experience on the value of students with disabilities in their classroom. . Both teachers with 1-10 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience agree that students with disabilities are a valuable part of their classroom.

Figure 16

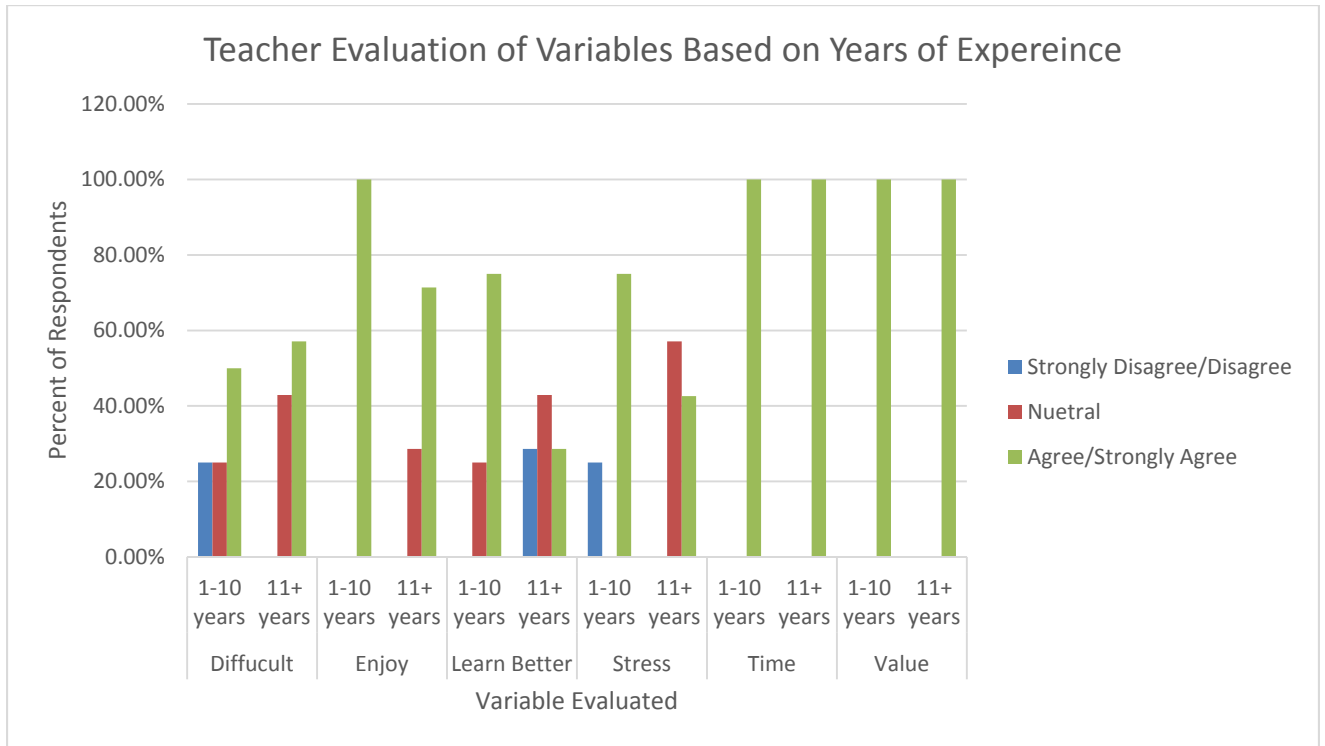


Figure 16 provides a visual summary for the findings in Section 3. Each of the 6 variables was evaluated by both teachers with 1-10 years of experience and 11+ years of experience. Teacher responses were divided into 3 categories: Strongly disagree and disagree, neutral, and, agree and strongly agree. Teacher responses are shown above.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The outcomes reported from this study show that the overall opinions of general education teachers toward inclusion are as follows: General Education teachers believe that students with special needs are a valuable part of the classroom and teachers enjoy having these students in their classroom. A little over half of teachers surveyed feel that general education students learn better when students with disabilities are included in the classroom. Moreover, this study found that having special needs students in the classroom takes additional planning time and causes teachers to feel stressed.

Additionally, the outcomes reported from this study show that there is a difference between the opinions of teachers with 1-10 years of experience and those with 11 or more years of experience concerning the following variables: difficulty, enjoyment, learn better, and stress. Teachers with 1-10 years of experience were more likely to state that they enjoy teaching students with disabilities and that regular education students learn better when their peers with disabilities were included in the classroom. Teachers with 11 or more years of experience were more likely to agree that teaching students with disabilities was difficult. There were mixed opinions of both teachers with 1-10 years of experience and 11+ years toward the stress level associated with inclusion. Finally, the study found that both teachers with 1-10 years of experience and 11+ years of experience unanimously agreed that teaching students with disabilities takes additional planning time, and students with disabilities are a valuable part of their classroom.

The conceptual underpinning was supported by the findings. The study found that students with special needs do require extra accommodations and modifications when included

in the general education classroom. These take additional planning time for general education teachers to implement. This puts an extra burden on teachers, leading them to feel more stressed. However, the majority of teachers still enjoy teaching students with special needs and agree that they are a valuable part of the classroom. This leads one to conclude that even though inclusion is time demanding and stressful for teachers, the teachers still enjoy and value the inclusion of students with special needs.

Questions have been formulated about the impact of the additional planning time and stress teachers have felt since inclusion has been implemented. One wonders if the general education teachers are getting enough support and training as they cope with the extra stress and time required to plan for inclusion. Further research could be conducted to see if teachers are receiving the proper training through professional development opportunities, such as workshops, observation, or classes. Additional data could also be collected on the impact of experience and teacher attitude toward students with disabilities. The data could be evaluated to determine if teacher experience impacts not just the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion, but the effectiveness of inclusion implementation.

It is concluded that general education teachers would be benefited by further support and training to effectively implement inclusion. Because many teachers stated that teaching students with disabilities made them feel stressed, one could conclude that teachers are struggling with educating students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Training on inclusion, and specifically working with students with disabilities, would be helpful for teachers and lead to better inclusion practices. Also, administrators should consider the impact inclusion is having on general education teachers. If general education teachers feel burdened

with inclusion, specifically with students with special needs, administrators should be open to providing assistance and training to teachers. This will lead to more successful teachers and better educated children.

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APPENDIX A

Teacher Opinions of Inclusion Survey

In the following survey “special needs” refers to any student with an IEP. Answers will remain anonymous, and data collected will be kept completely confidential, used only to improve instruction.

This survey is intended for general education teachers that have students with special needs included in their classroom at some point in the school day.

1. Please evaluate the following statements using the following criterial: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree or Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.

- A. Students with special needs are a valuable part of my classroom.
- B. Having students with special needs in my classroom makes teaching more stressful.
- C. Making accommodations and modifications for students with special needs takes additional planning time.
- D. I enjoy teaching students with special needs.
- E. Having students with special needs in my classroom makes teaching more difficult.
- F. Regular education students learn better with special needs students in the classroom.

2. How many years have you been teaching?

- How many years have you been teaching? less than 1

- 1- 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 or more

3. What grade level do you currently teach?

- What grade level do you currently teach? Elementary
- Middle School
- Secondary
- Other

4. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! If you would like to add any comments feel free to do so in the text box below.