

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF SECONDARY SPECIAL AND  
GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS WORKING IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS IN THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**

by

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Administration and Supervision of Special Education

(ABSTRACT)

One of the major challenges facing special and general classroom teachers stems from the current educational movement towards inclusion, a process that emphasizes providing special education services to students with disabilities within the regular classroom. Studies reviewed indicate that difficulties occur in instituting integrated programs within general classrooms because educators working in inclusive settings lack knowledge of strategies needed to implement such programs effectively.

The purposes of this study were to determine whether secondary special and general education teachers working in inclusive settings in Virginia had: (a) a positive attitude towards inclusion and students with disabilities; (b) perceived themselves capable of adapting instruction to students with disabilities; (c) had the resources and support needed; and (d) perceived themselves knowledgeable of pertinent information required for teaching students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Information collected was also designed to identify: (e) whether these special and general educators collaborated in their inclusive classrooms; (f) the type of support received in working with students with disabilities; and (g) areas of needs the two groups of teachers have in working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

A total of 400 questionnaires, consisting of 36 Likert-statements and 19 open-ended items, were mailed to a stratified random sample of 200 special and 200 general classroom teachers working in inclusive settings in Virginia. Out of this total, usable questionnaires were received from 84% (n = 167) of the general education and 62% (n = 124) of the special education teachers, for an overall response rate of 73%.

An analysis of data collected, using descriptive statistics, thematic analysis, and analysis of variance, indicated that special educators, compared to general educators: (1) had more

positive attitudes towards inclusion and students with disabilities; (2) perceived themselves more capable of adapting instruction to students with disabilities; (3) felt resources and support needed to work with students with disabilities were available; (4) had a greater sense of efficacy when it comes to knowledge required for teaching students with disabilities; and (5) worked more collaboratively in providing assistance to each other regarding students with disabilities.

Both groups of special and general educators had a negative attitude towards educating: (6) most students with disabilities (regardless of the level of their disability) in the regular classroom; especially (7) students with behavioral disorders, mental retardation, and multi-disabling conditions. These teachers also felt: (8) students with disabilities lack skills needed to master the regular classroom course content; and that (9) the large teaching load in the regular classroom makes it hard to meet the needs of students educated in inclusive settings effectively. Furthermore, both groups of teachers indicated they: (10) predominantly received support from other teachers and guidance counselors in working with students educated in their inclusive classrooms.

Information focusing on areas of needs in working with students with disabilities indicated the two groups of teachers identified different areas of needs. The special educators noted they need: (11) more influence in the placement and decision making process, extra time for collaborating with others, reduced class loads, a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of special and general educators working in inclusive classrooms, and guidelines for meeting the new standards of learning. In contrast, the general educators indicated they require: (12) support from their administrators and parents, more resources and instructional material, assistance in dealing with school administrators who hold all students to equal standards, and training in special education and strategies for working with students with disabilities, behavior management, discipline, and anger management and conflict resolution. Implications this information has for school districts and teacher training institutions are discussed.

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“Life is nothing but a long Journey.

Some are fated to complete it, some are not.”

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***DEDICATION***

As a child, one always wishes for the love and guidance of a parent. This dissertation is dedicated to Mr. E. A. Luseno, the uncle who raised me as one of his own, and to Mrs. Gladys Ritho, my mother. You must have done something right.

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***THIS DISSERTATION IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY UNCLE, MR. LEONARD ISIGI LUSENO***

***AND***

***MRS. MARGARET MUNGASIA LUSENO***

***AND***

***MR. JAPHETHA AVUGWI LUSENO***

***THE BEST GRANDPARENTS, MENTORS, AND FRIENDS ONE COULD ASK FOR***

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iv
DEDICATION .....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
 CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Purpose of the Study .....	2
Research Questions .....	2
Significance of the Study .....	3
 CHAPTER	
II. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	5
 CHAPTER	
III. RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCEDURES .....	14
Subjects .....	14
Procedure .....	14
Description of Instrument .....	15
Instrument Development .....	16
Questionnaire Review and Field Test .....	17
Data Analysis .....	17
 CHAPTER	
IV. RESULTS .....	18
Return Rate and Sample Distribution .....	18
Description of the Respondents' Demographic Attributes .....	20
Analysis of the Participants' Perceptions towards Working in Inclusive Classrooms.....	24

Analysis of the Extent to which the Special and General Educators Work Collaboratively .....	35
Analysis of Current Support Received.....	38
Areas of Needs in Working with Students With Disabilities .....	40
Summary of Results .....	44
CHAPTER	
V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .....	46
Discussion .....	46
Conclusion .....	51
Recommendations .....	52
REFERENCES .....	54
APPENDICES .....	63
A. Field Studies Letters .....	63
B. Letter Accompanying Questionnaire Mailed to Special Education Directors and Cover Letter and Questionnaire.....	67
C. Comparison of the Respondents Based on Responses Provided for the Likert-scale items Clustered Under Four Factors.....	75
VITA .....	84

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
RETURN RATE AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
Table 1 .....	19
Table 2 .....	21
RESPONDENT'S PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS WORKING IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS	
Table 3 .....	25
Table 4 .....	28
Table 5 .....	30
Table 6 .....	33
EXTENT TO WHICH SPECIAL AND GENERAL EDUCATORS WORK COLLABORATIVELY	
Table 7 .....	36
CURRENT SUPPORT RECEIVED AND AREAS OF TRAINING NEEDS	
Table 8 .....	39
Table 9 .....	41

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

One of the major challenges facing special and general classroom teachers stems from the current educational movement towards inclusion (integration), a process that emphasizes providing special education services to children with disabilities within the regular classroom. According to Shoho & Van-Reusen (2000), McCarthy (1998), and Putnam, Spiegel, & Bruininks (1995), inclusion can be defined as the provision of special education services to exceptional students in their neighborhood schools, in age-appropriate general education classes, with the necessary support services and supplementary aids.

Inclusion must be considered in relation to the concept of "Least Restrictive Environment", and federal regulations promulgated under P.L. 94-142 (The Education for All Handicapped Children's Act), now known as P.L 105-17 (The Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act - IDEA). Provisions stipulated under this law specify that:

- a) to the maximum extent appropriate, disabled children (be they in public, private schools, and/or any other care facilities) should be educated with their normal peers;
- b) the removal of disabled children from the regular classroom, for placement in a special or separate environment, should only occur when the nature or severity of the disability limits the child's ability to benefit from instruction provided in the regular classroom; and
- c) a continuum of alternative settings (i.e., regular classrooms; part-time/full-time special classrooms; special day and/or residential schools; home instruction; hospitals; and/or institutions) should be utilized in educating or meeting the needs of individual students.

(Shoho & Van Reusen, 2000; Etscheidt & Bartlett, 1999; McCarthy, 1998; Huefner, 1994; Tucker, Goldstein, & Sorenson, 1993; Margolis & Tewel, 1990; and Turnbull & Turnbull, 1990).

Some support for inclusion also arises from decisions made by the U.S. Supreme Court. For example, in Oberti v. Board of Education of the Borough of Clementon School district, 801 F.Supp.1392 (D.N.J. 1992), the court noted that: (1) inclusive public education offers substantial benefits to all students and the communities; (2) inclusion is a right versus a privilege for selected students; and (3) success in separate settings does not negate successful functioning in integrated settings.

Though lending support to inclusion, the Courts in Daniel R. v. State Board of Education, 874 F.2d 1036 (5th cir. 1989), and in Sacramento City Unified School District v. Holland, 786 F.Supp.874 (E.D. Cal. 1992) also cautioned that the appropriateness of inclusive education should be determined based on whether the: (1) student will receive little or no benefit from inclusion because of the nature and the severity of the disability; (2) student's behavior is so disruptive that the education of other students in the classroom will be affected; and/or (3) cost of providing inclusive education to an individual student significantly affects the availability of district resources for educating other students.

This movement towards inclusion demands that attention be directed toward ensuring special and general classroom teachers currently working in inclusive settings have the expertise needed to work with exceptional students (Bull, Overton, & Montgomery, 2000; Hutchinson & Martin, 1999; Hehir, 1999; the Council for Exceptional Children, 1998; Wolery, Werts, Caldwell, Snyder, & Lisowski, 1995; Schumm & Vaughn, 1991; and Friend & Cook, 1990).

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether secondary special and general classroom teachers currently working in inclusive settings in twenty school divisions in Virginia had: (a) a positive attitude towards inclusion and students with disabilities. In addition, this study was designed to identify whether these secondary special and general educators: (b) perceived themselves capable of adapting instruction to students with disabilities; (c) had the resources and support needed in inclusive classrooms; (d) perceived themselves knowledgeable of: (i) strategies for teaching students with disabilities; (ii) characteristics of students with special needs; (iii) special education law; (iv) collaborative strategies; (v) strategies for managing students' behavior; and (vi) the individualized education program. Information collected was also designed to identify: (e) the extent to which these special and general educators collaborated in their inclusive classrooms; (f) the type of support received in working with students with disabilities; and (g) areas of needs in working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

#### Research Questions

The following research questions were explored:

1. What are secondary special and general classroom teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and students with disabilities?

2. Do secondary special and general classroom teachers perceive themselves capable of adapting instruction to students with disabilities?
3. Do secondary special and general classroom teachers have resources and support needed in inclusive classrooms?
4. Do secondary special and general classroom teachers perceive themselves knowledgeable of: i) strategies needed for teaching students with disabilities; ii) characteristics of exceptional children; iii) special education law; iv) collaborative strategies; v) strategies for managing students' behavior; and vi) the individualized education program?
5. To what extent do secondary special and general classroom teachers collaborate in their inclusive classrooms?
6. What type of support do secondary special and general educators receive in working with students with disabilities? and
7. What are the areas of needs of secondary special and general educators working in inclusive classrooms?

Assumed is the idea that, if resistance to inclusive programs is to be avoided, attention needs to be directed towards identifying perceived needs of special and general classroom teachers working in inclusive settings. As such, special and general classroom educators are important informants about the availability of resources and support needed for implementing inclusive education.

Though several studies have espoused factors similar to those evaluated in this study, an analysis done by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) noted that a majority of researchers assessing the preparation of teachers for inclusion investigated elementary or primary school teachers. This finding affirms a need for surveying teachers at the secondary school level.

#### Significance of this Study

The relevance of this study is based on the assumption that local school districts and/or teacher training institutes can utilize information generated to design effective training programs that are pertinent to the needs of middle and high school teachers. In addition, such information can be presented to school boards for funding purposes and planning effective inservice training. Alternatively, the questionnaire developed could be used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of teachers and pinpoint areas of training needs in State or Local Educational Agencies.

According to authors such as Moffett (2000), Hutchinson et al. (1999), Brownell & Pajares (1999), McLaughlin (1999), Baker and Zigmond (1995), Bradley & West (1994), Hines (1994), Burrello & Wright (1993), Kauffman (1993), and Leyser & Abrams (1986), teachers working in inclusive classrooms need to be sensitive to the educational needs of students with disabilities, and utilize strategies such students need to learn, if they are to be provided with the most appropriate educational services. These authors also note that teachers need to know effective teaching strategies for reinforcing their students with disabilities, and for encouraging them to perform to their maximum, if they are to succeed in an inclusive classroom.

Studies pertaining to the evaluation of training programs (Treder, Morse, & Ferron, 2000; Brownell et al., 1999; Peterson & Beloin, 1998; Zionts, 1997; Zigmond, 1995; Davis & Maheady, 1991; Coates, 1989; and Leyser & Abrams, 1986) indicate that educating special and general classroom teachers is not only effective in helping them improve their teaching strategies but also leads to the development of more positive attitudes towards exceptional children and the concept of inclusion. In particular, these researchers found that teachers who participated in training programs that looked at a general overview of the philosophy of inclusion, information on teaching skills, and strategies for classroom management, time management, and assessment techniques had significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusion at the completion of the program.

Several authors also emphasize training programs can only be successful when the outcomes being fostered are relevant to teachers' needs. As such, if meaningful changes are to occur, training programs have to focus on areas where teachers need improvement (Bull et al., 2000; Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Peterson & Beloin, 1998; Villa & Thousand, 1995; O'Neil, 1995; Bradley & West, 1994; and Rogers, 1994).

Having identified factors that are important to teachers who are practicing inclusion of children with disabilities, the following chapter will not only provide a more detailed discussion of the variables that influence the successful implementation of inclusive programs, but also identify the preparation needed by teachers working in inclusive classrooms. It would be of interest to know the degree to which the middle and high school special and general classroom teachers surveyed in this study possessed these characteristics.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The degree to which special and general classroom teachers are prepared to work in inclusive settings greatly determines the ultimate success of inclusive programs (Treder et al., 2000; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998; and Baker & Zigmond, 1995).

Studies investigating general classroom processes that are associated with academic and social benefits to exceptional children indicate that the following variables influence achievement in general education classrooms: (a) how subject matter content is organized in curricula material, and (b) how teachers interact with students. The academic progress of students with disabilities is influenced by the educational environment they experience, teacher characteristics, and the nature of the classroom. Teachers, thus, need to be prepared for the implementation of inclusion. Such preparation typically includes disability awareness programs, training teachers in methods that enable them to promote positive interactions, and an active system for sharing information prior to and concurrent with inclusion (O'Shea, Stoddard, O'Shea, 2000; Federico, Herrold, & Venn, 1999; Heflin & Bullock, 1999; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1992; and Sailor, Anderson, Halvorsen, Doering, Filler, & Goetz, 1989).

According to Brownell & Pajeras (1999), Sack (1998), and Olson, Chalmers, & Hoover (1997), teacher efficacy beliefs for teaching students with special needs influence their perceptions of success in educating students in inclusive classrooms. As such, the effective implementation of inclusive programs requires that special and general classroom teachers know: (a) characteristics of children with disabilities; (b) the individualized educational program (I.E.P) and pertinent special education laws; (c) strategies for assessing student needs; and (d) strategies for teaching and structuring instruction to individual student needs, if they are to successfully educate exceptional students in integrated settings. These special and general classroom teachers also need: (e) strategies for evaluating student learning (e.g. performance based assessment, group projects, or portfolio assessment); (f) strategies for responding to inappropriate student behavior; and (g) strategies for analyzing and managing the instructional environment if they are expected to do an efficient job (Moffett, 2000; Peterson & Beloin, 1998; deBettencourt, 1999; National Association of State Boards of Education, 1995; Billingsley & Tomchin, 1992; and Magliaro & Wildman, 1990).

Other factors such as participation in individualized educational program (I.E.P) meetings, the availability of administrative support and instructional resources, the availability of planning and consultation time, smaller class sizes, and allowances for teacher input in important meetings have also been identified by Bull, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, & Sheer (1999), Soodak et al. (1998), Barnett & Monda-Amaya (1998), O'Neil (1995), Martin (1994), Sailor (1991), and Brown(1988) as variables that influence how special and general classroom teachers execute inclusive programs.

Studies done by Langon & Vesper (2000), Treder et al. (2000), Heflin & Bullock (1999), Hehir (1999), Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996), and Diebold & VonEschenbach (1991), support information discussed in the preceding paragraph. These authors state that for integration to be effective, teachers have to be receptive to the principles and demands of inclusion. Emphasized is the idea that successful inclusive efforts are associated with: administrative support; adequate material and personnel resources; adequate planning time; and disability-specific teaching skills. As such, teachers need support in teaching classes that include students with disabilities, particularly in terms of considering the severity of the disability of students integrated in regular classrooms. These authors note that teachers are more willing to include students with mild disabilities than students with more severe disabilities due to their perceived ability to successfully implement instructional goals for the entire classroom. Studies done by Prom (1999), Langdon (1999), Salend (1999/1998), Soodak et al. (1998), Taylor, Richards, Goldstein, & Schilit (1997), and Soodak & Podell (1993) indicate teachers do not believe the academic and social needs of majority of students with disabilities can be best met in general education classrooms. Specifically, these authors indicate effective general education teachers tend to be less tolerant of maladaptive behavior and learning problems, and have higher standards for acceptable classroom behavior. As such, given the belief that students with disabilities are disruptive to the regular classroom, general educators are more likely to resist the placement of students with special needs in their classrooms. Furthermore, these authors indicate many teachers believe educating students with disabilities in the regular (inclusive) classroom requires additional time, work, and attention. The majority of teachers also believe that significant classroom changes need to be made to accommodate inclusion, in addition to perceiving inclusion as requiring significant changes in classroom and instructional procedures and curricula. Given these facts, information provided by the Center for

Policy Research on the Impact of General and Special Education Reform (2000), the Division of Learning Disabilities (1998), Shoho, Katim, & Wilks (1997), Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996), and Diebold & VonEschenbach (1991) emphasize that teachers working in inclusive classrooms need reduced class sizes, in addition to extra planning time; training; personnel assistance; and adequate instructional and curriculum material. Noted is the fact that these needs may be greater for secondary school teachers than for elementary teachers.

Information provided by the Council for Exceptional Children (2000), and by studies done by O'Shea et al. (2000), Liu & Pearson (1999), Mayrowetz & Weinstein (1999), Pearman, Huang, & Mellblom (1997), Bullough (1995), Houck & Rogers (1994), Barton (1992), and Myles & Simpson (1992) also support arguments provided in the preceding paragraph. Noted is the fact that teachers currently working in inclusive classroom: do not have sufficient time for inclusion; are not adequately prepared for placement of students with disabilities in their classes; lack sufficient resources, expertise, and training for inclusion; and perceive themselves to be unprepared to teach students with disabilities in the regular classroom.

Given that regular classroom teachers are responsible for teaching a diversity of students with a wide range of achievement levels, inclusion of children with disabilities further increases variance in achievement, as well as in behavior problems, requiring regular education teachers to direct more attention to their specific needs. In the absence of increased time to devote to individual students, and a continued press to improve mean achievement of the class, regular classroom teachers recognize that the educational needs of children with and without disabilities are likely to suffer (Salend & Duhaney, 1999; Bryant, Bryant, & Raskind, 1998; and Minke, Bear, Deemer, & Griffin, 1996).

Literature pertaining to the effects of training teachers to work with exceptional students indicates that the number and type of courses taken by special and general classroom teachers influence their acceptance of inclusion. For example, special and general classroom teachers who have undergone training that offers both course work and practicums in special education tend to implement inclusive programs more effectively. Emphasized is the fact that teachers' willingness to teach children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms increases as training in special education is offered (Hill, 1999; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999; Peterson et al., 1998; Mcleskey, Henry, & Hodges, 1998; Bradley & West, 1994; and York & Vandercook, 1990).

The importance of providing training to teachers working with exceptional children is supported by the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development mandate stipulated under P.L. 105-17 (the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act – I.D.E.A). Regulations specified under this mandate require states to develop and implement a comprehensive system of personnel development that is designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified special and regular education teachers and related service personnel. To meet this mandate, each state is expected to design and carry out a plan that is aimed towards organizing and promoting efforts to recruit, prepare, and retrain qualified personnel. Procedures used in this endeavor can include providing inservice training for regular and special education and related service personnel, disseminating knowledge secured from educational research, and adopting promising practices, material, or technology (IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R § 380; Yell, 1998).

Studies looking at the importance of adapting instruction to the needs of children with disabilities (Federico et al., 1999; Scott, Vitale, & Masten, 1998; Mcleskey et al., 1998; Hutchinson & Martin, 1999; Schumm & Vaughn, 1991; Ysseldyke, Thurlow, Wotruba, & Nania, 1990; and York & Vandercook, 1990) indicate teachers need to use a variety of instructional approaches geared towards meeting individual student needs and learning styles. To be precise, teachers working in inclusive classrooms need to: utilize task analysis to break classroom activities into smaller manageable steps; utilize a variety of student response modes; allow for different completion rates and workloads; use computer assisted instruction; and use a variety of teaching strategies such as peer-tutoring, cooperative learning, and grouping techniques. When teaching in inclusive classrooms, teachers need to devote a substantial amount of their time to active instruction; break complex skills and concepts into small easy to understand steps and systematically teach in a step-by-step fashion; provide immediate feedback to students about the accuracy of their work; and conduct much of the instruction in small groups to allow for frequent student teacher interactions. Emphasized is the idea that routines aimed at providing reinforcement and encouragement, establishing expectations, and involving exceptional students in all class activities have to be utilized by teachers when adapting instruction to children educated in inclusive settings.

The significance of ensuring teachers know how to adapt instruction to the needs of students with disabilities comes from observation studies of instruction which indicate that regular classroom teachers make few, if any, adaptations in instruction. The most commonly cited source of teacher resistance is related to the judgment among regular educators that the instructional and curricula adaptations required of children with disabilities are unfeasible in the typical classroom, particularly at the middle and high school level (deBettencourt, 1999; Kampwirth, 1999; Salisbury, Wilson, & Palambara, 1998; and Minke, Bear, Deemer, & Griffin, 1996).

Collaboration (i.e., jointly working together towards a common goal) among general and special education teachers is also stressed as imperative to the success of inclusive programs by researchers such as Wood (1998), Thousand, Villa, & Nevin (1997), Dettmer, Thurston, & Dyck (1993), Friend & Cook (1992), Johnson & Pugach (1992), Voltz (1992), and Slavin, Madden, & Stevens, (1989/1990). According to these authors, special and general classroom teachers need to: team teach; share their expertise in adapting instruction to individual student needs; and help one another use cooperative teaching methods. To do this, these teachers need to form more interactive relationships, coordinated teaching arrangements, and flexibility in organization if they are to include students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. As such school systems need to ensure special and general educators have time to plan goals and strategies together; prepare common instructional material; make decisions about cooperative activities involving more than one class; and invite parents and other community members to participate in class activities. Noted is the fact that these special and general classroom teachers also need to jointly: exchange student progress information; share diagnostic testing information; share responsibility for grading; and plan their lessons. Furthermore, these teachers need to equally use their collective expertise to share their teaching strategies, recommend supplementary teaching material, share suggestions, observe each other, and direct small group instruction.

Recent research on collaboration and inclusive schooling (Kampwirth, 1999; Hobbs & Westing, 1998; Foley & Mundschenk, 1997; Wolter-Thomas, 1997; Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Malgeri, 1996; Pugach & Johnson, 1995; Idol, Nevin, & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1994; and Thousand & Villa, 1990) indicates learners with special needs can be effectively educated in inclusive settings when teachers collaborate to generate and merge instructional strategies and accommodate ideas. Emphasized is the idea that effective collaborators can expect positive changes at three levels: (a) changes in schooling systems (e.g. more team teaching among general and special

educators); (b) changes in the skills, attitudes, and behaviors of adult collaborators; and (c) improvements in the academic progress and social skills of learners with special needs. These authors note that elements essential to effective collaboration include: (a) recognizing the need for joint effort to achieve complex goals; (b) acknowledging the increased creativity that such joint efforts often yield; (c) enjoying the social nature of joint problem solving, even though difficult; (d) valuing individual intellectual growth of participants; and (e) reflecting about professional practices and changing procedures based on deliberate analysis of merits and pitfalls.

Other studies indicate that knowledge of strategies for behavioral and classroom management are needed, if inclusion is to be implemented successively (Cook, Semmel, & Berber, 1999; Cramer, 1998; Cole & Mcleskey, 1997; Billingsley & Tomchin, 1992; and Hitz & Roper, 1986). In particular, special and general classroom teachers need to know how to: (a) identify inappropriate classroom behavior; (b) identify factors that might be influencing the inappropriate classroom behavior; and (c) identify strategies needed to manage the inappropriate classroom behavior (e.g. time out, ignoring inappropriate behavior). In addition, these teachers also need to know how to: (d) reinforce positive classroom behavior (e.g., token reward system); and (e) help students manage their own behavior (by using a timer for example) if they are expected to help children with disabilities function in an inclusive environment. In short, effective management systems that allow students to work independently while teachers try to meet the needs of smaller groups are required for inclusive classrooms (Wood, 1998; Hobbs, 1998; Kauffman, 1993; Ziegler, 1990; and Nevin, Thousand, Paulucci-Whitcomb, & Villa, 1990).

To maintain a good learning environment, most inclusive classroom teachers also need to motivate their exceptional students in a positive way, particularly in terms of encouraging them to complete their classroom assignments and attend to instructions. As such, special and general inclusive classroom teachers need to determine how to organize the classroom; group students for instruction; evaluate the instructional material; and analyze instructional methods in relation to student needs. In addition, these teachers need to help children with disabilities develop independent learning strategies, thus, emphasizing the need to know strategies for: encouraging student self-awareness or self-advocacy; and teaching independent learning in terms of helping students learn to use such strategies effectively (Hegler & Dudley, 1987; Wang & Walberg, 1987; Sailor, 1991; & Martin, 1994).

Alternatively, Brownell et al., (1999), Cook et al. (1999), Mayrowetz et al. (1999), Barnett et al. (1998), McDonnell & Hardman (1989), Sailor et al., (1989), and Snell & Eichner (1989) note that inclusion is facilitated when it is supported by top school administrators and building principals, in addition to district-wide planning involving parents, teachers, students, and key community members. According to York & Vandercook (1990), support is a term that refers to the availability of various types of help. Teachers working in inclusive classrooms need four types of support. They include:

- (a) Resource support: requires the provision of instructional material (e.g., computers & books), financial resources, informational resources (e.g., professional literature), or human resources (e.g., paraprofessionals, consultants, teacher's aids).
- (b) Moral support: refers to person to person interactions that recognize the worth of people as individuals. It includes listening and acceptance of ideas and feelings without being critical.
- (c) Technical support: refers to the need to offer concrete strategies, methods, or ideas by providing teachers with resource materials, inservice training, staff development activities, on-site collaborative consultation, or peer-coaching.
- (d) Evaluative support: refers to assistance in collecting information that allows support to be monitored and adjusted.

The type of support provided in inclusive classrooms varies depending on needs at different points in time (Cook et al., 1999; Wagle & Wilcox, 1997; Villa et al., 1996; Burrelo & Wright, 1993; Putnam, 1993; Rogers, 1994; and Coates, 1989).

How well teachers implement inclusive programs also depends on their attitude towards inclusion. Attitudes can be defined as learned beliefs that develop over time. Inclusive special and general classroom teachers have to believe that all children can be educated; children with disabilities can be educated in regular classrooms; and that inclusion is a beneficial program if they are expected to accept working with included students. Variables that influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusion consist of: the availability of building principal and parental support; teachers' pre-service and inservice preparation; experience with disabled children; knowledge of disabling conditions; knowledge of pertinent special education laws; and the length of teaching experience. Additionally, the availability of community support, technical support, and administrative support also influences teachers' attitude towards inclusion (Bull et al., 2000; Langdon et al., 2000; Kirk,

1998; Wigle & Wilcox, 1997; Taylor, Richards, Goldstein, & Schilit, 1997; Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher, & Saumell, 1996; and Davis & Maheady, 1991).

Literature looking at the effects of teaching experience on teacher's ability to work in inclusive classrooms found that teachers who had previously worked with exceptional students implemented inclusive programs more successfully. Alternatively, authors looking at the effects of grade level taught on teachers' ability to teach in inclusive classrooms found that teachers at the elementary school level are more likely to implement inclusion effectively than those at the secondary school level (Petch-Hogan, 1999; Agran et al., 1999; and Sardo-Brown & Hinson, 1995). Studies looking at the effects of other variables such as certification, gender, training on working with students with disabilities, length of training received, school location, years of teaching experience, and subject area taught showed contradictory results. While some studies indicated these variables had no significant effects on teacher's ability to work in inclusive classrooms, others indicated these variables have a significant effect (Winzer & Chow, 1988; Schumm & Vaughn, 1991; and Wolery et al., 1995).

Studies looking at inclusive programs at the secondary school level (the Center for Policy Research on the Impact of General and Special Education Reform, 2000; the Council for Exceptional Children, 2000; Shoho et al., 2000; Langon & Vesper, 2000; Tralli, Colombo, Deshler & Schumaker, 1996; Sardo-Brown & Hinson, 1995; Coates, 1989; and Schumaker & Deshler, 1988) indicate that factors that pose the most significant barriers to the successful implementation of inclusion include: the structural limitations of secondary school schedules and the intensive instruction required at this level to address exceptional students' deficiencies in skills and strategies; teacher perceptions and attitudes towards exceptional students; pragmatic factors such as limited planning time, existing rules and regulations; and insufficient institutional support.

In short, difficulties in educating students with disabilities at the secondary school regular classroom level stem from the fact that: (1) teachers are under great pressure to cover large amounts of content to meet the demands of the excellence in education movement; (2) teaching loads of at least 125 students daily allow little time for individualization and extra support for at-risk students; (3) teachers have limited meaningful planning or collaboration time during the school day; (4) students with disabilities lack many of the necessary skills and strategies required to respond successfully to the demands of the secondary setting; and (5) the prevailing culture in many secondary schools is more supportive of content-centered rather than student-centered

orientation towards education. As such, accommodating the needs of students with disabilities is not a priority of teachers and administrators. Information provided (the Center for Policy Research on the Impact of General and Special Education Reform, 2000; the Council for Exceptional Children, 2000; Shoho et al., 2000; Langon & Vesper, 2000; Tralli, Colombo, Deshler & Schumaker, 1996; Sardo-Brown & Hinson, 1995; Coates, 1989; and Schumaker & Deshler, 1988) also indicates that for many teachers, raising overall class achievement is an important goal. However, many may be unwilling to engage in heroic efforts on the behalf of a few students with disabilities in their classes.

Given these realities, successful inclusive programs require total support from teachers, administrators, parents, and other stake-holders providing services to students with special needs. Teachers need to collaborate with other professionals providing services to students educated in inclusive classrooms, while administrators need to help promote the schools' goals for implementing inclusion by helping secure support services, supplies, and resources necessary for successful inclusive programs (Langdon, 1999). In this researcher's view, unless teachers receive proper training and support, inclusion of students with disabilities at the secondary school level may be accomplished in name only. On that account, it would be helpful to identify whether secondary special and general classroom teachers currently working in inclusive settings in Virginia have the necessary attitude, training, support, and knowledge needed for inclusion to be implemented effectively.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCEDURES

#### Subjects

The sample consisted of 400 middle and high school special and general educators selected from 20 school divisions (districts) in Virginia. They consisted of a stratified random sample of special and general educators currently working in inclusive (regular) classroom settings. They were selected from a pool of all special and general classroom teachers chosen from 20 school divisions categorized by their geographic location (i.e., urban, suburban, and rural schools). The selection of general classroom teachers who participated in this study was restricted to teachers currently teaching academic subjects to students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. The term “inclusive classrooms”, was defined by this study as any general classroom setting where children with disabilities are educated (be it on a part-time or full-time basis) with their non-disabled peers.

#### Procedure

The procedure used to select the sample surveyed was as follows: first, a listing of all school divisions in Virginia was obtained from the Virginia Department of Education Internet Directory for the 1995-1996 school year. Second, school divisions were categorized into three major groups based on their geographic location (i.e., urban, suburban, and rural setting). Third, 21 school divisions were randomly selected utilizing the equal allocation method (i.e., an equal number of school divisions were selected from each stratum). Fourth, Local Special Education Administrators from the 21 selected school divisions were sent a letter requesting them to participate in this study, in addition to providing the investigator with information pertaining to the total number of middle and high school special and general classroom teachers currently working in inclusive settings in their division.

Information received was used to create a general pool of all special and general educators currently working in inclusive classrooms in the selected school divisions. A total of 200 special and 200 general classroom teachers were then randomly selected from the pool to participate in this study. The investigator mailed cover letters and questionnaires to each Special Education Administrator who, in turn, distributed them to all the middle and high school special and general classroom teachers identified. The cover letter (See Appendix A) accompanying each questionnaire was designed to invite the teachers to participate in this survey, inform them about the study, and request that they provide information solicited.

Two weeks after the mailing, a post-card was mailed to the participants reminding them to return the questionnaires sent. Two weeks after mailing the post-card, a second letter, accompanied by a second questionnaire, was sent to non-respondents providing them with another opportunity to reply.

### Description of Instrument

A two-part questionnaire (See Appendix B) designed to elicit the respondents' demographic attributes and attitudes towards inclusion and students with disabilities was used. This questionnaire also identified whether the participants perceived themselves capable of adapting instruction to students with exceptional needs and considered themselves knowledgeable of information needed to work in inclusive classrooms. Data pertaining to areas of training need in working with students with disabilities were also collected.

The first part of the questionnaire consisted of thirty-six Likert-type statements classified according to four factors. Items delineated under each factor were designed to identify information described below:

Factor 1: Attitudes Towards Inclusion consisted of fifteen statements (questions 1 - 15) designed to identify the Participants' attitudes towards inclusion and students with disabilities.

Factor 2: Perception Towards Adapting Instruction to Students with Disabilities was composed of four positively worded statements (questions 16-19) designed to identify the subjects' perception towards their ability to adapt instruction to students with disabilities.

Factor 3: Availability of Resources and Support Needed in Inclusive Classrooms was comprised of nine statements (questions 20-28) designed to identify the respondents' perceptions about the availability of resources (i.e. instructional material, teacher's aide, and time) and administrative and parental support needed in inclusive classrooms.

Factor 4: Knowledge of Pertinent Information consisted of eight statements (questions 29-36) designed to identify whether the participants perceived themselves knowledgeable of the following: strategies for teaching students with disabilities; characteristics of students with disabilities; special education law; collaborative strategies; behavioral management strategies; and the individualized education program.

Means and standard deviations were computed for items classified under each factor. A low mean average score ranging from 1 - 1.4 would indicate respondents disagreed with statements classified under each factor; 1.5 - 2.4 would indicate that they tended to disagree; 2.5 - 3.4 would

indicate they tended to agree; while 3.5 - 4 would indicate that they agreed with statements classified under each factor. Summated scales were formed by averaging each person's responses across the items.

The second part consisted of nineteen open-ended questions designed to determine: (1) the extent to which these secondary special and general classroom teachers worked collaboratively (items 1-6), in addition to collecting demographic information pertaining to (2) gender (item 7); (3) subject and grade level taught (items 8-9); (4) length of teaching experience (item 10); (5) certification (item 11); (6) highest degree earned (item 12); (7) type and length of training received in working with students with disabilities (items 13-15); (8) school location (item 16); and (9) type of exceptional students integrated in inclusive classrooms (item 17). In addition, information pertaining to support received (item 18) and areas of needs in working with students with disabilities (item 19) was collected.

In general, members of the sample were asked to provide short responses to questions asked and/or indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the Likert-type statement by selecting one of the following five choices:

Disagree	Tend to	Tend to	Agree	Not
(1)	Disagree	Agree	(4)	Applicable
	(2)	(3)		(5)

Instrument Development

Whereas the demographic items were created by the investigator based on review of literature, the Likert-type statements in the first-part of the questionnaire represent a combination of items adapted from the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), The Adaptation Evaluation Instrument (Schumm & Vaughn, 1991), and The Special Education Teacher-General Education Teacher Interaction Scale (Voltz, Elliott, & Cobb, 1994). Items adapted from these three scales were combined and modified slightly, particularly in terms of making the wording in the original scales suitable to this study.

The original Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) was designed to assess teachers' beliefs about their own effectiveness as teachers, in addition to their beliefs about the influence of teachers in general. The internal consistency reliability alpha of this instrument was estimated to be .79 when administered to 208 elementary school teachers in California (Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

The original Adaptation Evaluation Instrument (AEI) was designed to examine teachers'

willingness to make adaptations for special learners in their classroom. Items were developed from a review of special education literature, in addition to interviews with teachers designed to identify classroom adaptations considered appropriate for teaching children with disabilities. The internal consistency reliability alpha of this instrument was estimated to be .97 when administered to 93 elementary school teachers in the southeastern United States (Schumm & Vaughn, 1991).

The Special Education Teacher-General Education Teacher Interaction Scale (SET-GETIS) was developed to assess and compare general and resource room teachers' collaborative roles. The internal consistency reliability alpha of this instrument was estimated to be .87 when administered to 200 primary school teachers selected from a national pool (Voltz, Elliott, & Cobb, 1994).

#### Questionnaire Review and Field Test

In developing items for the questionnaire, members of this investigator's dissertation committee reviewed and provided suggestions that were used to revise the first draft. Ten secondary school teachers (5 special and 5 general educators) were subsequently interviewed to identify their perception, concerns, and attitude towards inclusion. Feedback collected was used to rewrite the second and final questionnaire used in this study, thus, ensuring the applicability of questions asked to both Secondary special and general classroom teachers.

#### Data Analysis

The following analyses were applied to the data.

1. Response frequencies, means, and standard deviations were obtained for all items in the questionnaire.
2. Reliability estimates were obtained for the four factors computed by summing responses across clusters of items.
3. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if there were any significant mean differences between the secondary special and general educators on the Likert-type items classified under four factors.
4. Thematic analysis was used to categorize and code responses provided to the open-ended response items.

The following chapter will provide detailed information on the findings of this study.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The findings of this study are summarized in this chapter. Information collected is described in the following sequence. First, the return rate and sample distribution will be given. Second, a detailed description of the participant's demographic attributes (part two of the questionnaire) will be presented. Third, a general description of responses provided on the Likert-type statements (part-one of the questionnaire) will be described, followed by a general discussion of the extent to which the participants collaborate in their inclusive classrooms. The chapter will conclude with an account of information pertaining to current support received and identified areas of need.

#### A. Return Rate and Sample Distribution

A total of 400 questionnaires were mailed to a stratified random sample of 200 special and 200 general classroom teachers working in inclusive settings in Virginia. Out of this total, usable questionnaires were received from 84% (n = 167) of the general education and 62% (n = 124) of the special education teachers, for an overall response rate of 73%.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the two groups of respondents by their grade level and geographic location. As indicated, the special educators were equally divided between middle and high school, whereas a greater percentage of the general educators (56%) were located in high school. Due to the nature of the sampling procedure, the geographic distribution of the two groups of teachers was virtually identical with most located in rural areas (43%). This geographic breakdown is generally consistent with information provided by the National Center for Educational Statistics, which indicates 49% of Virginia school divisions are classified as rural. The following section will summarize the samples demographic characteristics.

Table 1

Sample Distribution

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Teacher Group</u>					
	<u>Special Educators</u>		<u>General Educators</u>		<u>All Teachers</u>	
	<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Grade Level Taught</u>						
Middle School	62	50	73	44	135	46
High School	62	50	94	56	156	54
Total	124		167		291	
<u>School's geographic Location</u>						
Urban Area	26	21	34	20	60	21
Suburban Area	45	36	61	37	106	36
Rural Area	53	43	72	43	125	43
Total	124		167		291	

Note: Total = number of respondents; Freq = frequencies; % = percentages

## B. Respondents Demographic Characteristics

Table 2 provides a comparison of the two groups of respondents based on their demographic characteristics. The special educators consisted of more female teachers (76%) than the general educators (57%), and reported teaching a wider range of subjects than general educators. A greater percentage of special educators (62%), compared to general educators (48%), also indicated they had earned a masters degree. Compared to only 54% of the general educators, more special educators (77%) reported having training on working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

Descriptive information about the respondents was similar with respect to years of teaching experience, the type and length of training received in working with students with disabilities, and the type of students with disabilities educated in their inclusive classrooms. To be specific, the respondent's years of teaching experience, which ranged from one to over twenty-six years, was virtually identical with an average of 64% of the respondents indicating they had 15 years or less of teaching experience. As indicated in Table 2, both groups of special (50%) and general (47%) educators noted they had received training on working with students with disabilities at university level. As such, the length of training received by both special (50%) and general (43%) educators was a semester or longer. One or two day inservice training were also reported by another 34% of the respondents.

Furthermore, the type of students educated by both groups of educators was similar aside from students with mental retardation. More special educators (44%), than general educators (20%), reported teaching students with mental retardation in their inclusive classrooms. The next section will summarize information pertaining to the respondent's perceptions towards working in inclusive classrooms.

Table 2  
Comparison of the Respondents Based on their Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Teacher Group					
	<u>Special Educators</u>		<u>General Educators</u>		<u>All Teachers</u>	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
<u>Gender</u>						
Males	30	24	71	43	101	35
Females	94	76	96	57	190	65
Total	124		167		291	
<u>Subject Area(s) Taught</u> <sup>(a)**</sup>						
Math	69	56	51	31	120	41
Science	50	40	55	33	105	36
English	85	69	72	43	157	54
Social Studies	66	53	58	35	124	43
Total	124		167		291	
<u>Years of teaching Experience</u>						
1 - 5 years	32	26	43	26	75	26
6 - 10 years	27	22	38	23	65	22
11 - 15 years	20	16	26	16	46	16
16 - 20 years	27	22	21	13	48	17
21 - 25 years	15	12	27	16	42	14
Over 26 years	3	2	12	6	15	5
Total	124		167		291	
<u>Highest Degree Earned</u>						
Bachelors	38	31	85	51	123	42
Masters	77	62	80	48	157	54
Other	9	7	2	1	11	4
Total	124		167		291	

Note: (a)\*\* = duplicate count due to multiple responses, as such, the percent total is more than 100; Freq= Frequencies; %= percentages

Table 2 (Continued)

Characteristics	Teacher Group					
	Special Educators		General Educators		All Teachers	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
<u>Training on working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms</u>						
Teachers with training	95	77	90	54	185	64
Teachers without training	29	23	77	46	106	36
Total	124		167		291	
<u>Type of training received</u> <sup>(b)</sup>						
Inservice	13	14	13	14	26	14
Workshop	8	8	9	10	17	9
University training	47	50	42	47	89	48
Other	27	28	26	29	53	29
Total	95		90		185	
<u>Length of training received</u> <sup>(b)</sup>						
1 - 2 days	29	30	33	37	62	34
1 Week	13	14	13	15	26	14
2 Weeks	1	1	2	2	3	2
3 Weeks	—	—	—	—	—	—
4 Weeks	—	—	—	—	—	—
Over 5 Weeks	5	5	3	3	8	4
1 Semester and Over	47	50	39	43	86	46
Total	95		90		185	

Note:(b)= computation based on number of teachers with training; Freq= frequencies; %= percentages.

Table 2 (Continued)

Characteristics	Teacher Group					
	Special Educators		General Educators		All Teachers	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
<u>Type of students with disabilities</u>						
<u>educated in inclusive classrooms</u> <sup>(c) **</sup>						
Learning Disabled	107	97	164	98	271	98
Visually Impaired	18	16	42	25	60	22
Behaviorally Disordered	78	71	115	69	193	70
Hearing Impaired	27	25	36	22	63	23
Communication Disordered	21	19	40	24	61	22
Physically Impaired	33	30	48	29	81	29
Health Impaired	41	37	48	29	89	32
Mentally Impaired/Retarded	48	44	33	20	81	29
Other	18	16	14	8	32	12
Total	124		167		291	

Note: (c) \*\* = duplicate count due to multiple responses, as such, the percent total is more than 100; Freq = frequencies; % = percentages.

### C. Perceptions Towards Working in Inclusive Classrooms

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with thirty-six statements categorized under four factors. These four factors consisted of items designed to determine whether the respondents had: (i) a positive attitude towards inclusion and students with disabilities - Factor 1; (ii) perceived themselves capable of adapting instruction to students with disabilities - Factor 2; (iii) had resources and support needed in inclusive classrooms – Factor 3; and (iv) perceived themselves knowledgeable of pertinent information needed for working in inclusive classrooms – Factor 4. Responses were recorded using a four-choice likert-response scale wherein: 1 = Disagree; 2 = Tend to Disagree; 3 = Tend to Agree; 4 = Agree; and 5 = Not Applicable. To simplify interpretation, summated scales were formed by averaging each person's responses across items categorized under each factor. Teacher's rankings of items classified under these four factors are given in Appendix C, Table C-1.

The following section presents the means, standard deviations, and number of special and general educators who responded to items clustered under each factor. Also shown are the internal consistency reliability coefficients computed for each scale, the F ratios, and P values obtained for a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) used to determine if there were significant differences between the two groups of respondents.

#### Attitude Towards Inclusion and Students With Disabilities (Factor 1)

Table 3 summarizes the results for the 15 items making up Factor 1. These items were designed to identify the respondent's attitude toward inclusion (items 1 – 6) and toward educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom (items 7 – 15).

Significant mean differences were identified between the two groups of respondents on 13 of the 15 items classified under this factor. However, the size of the mean differences was small, suggesting little practical significance. Collectively, though, the higher means for special educators represented a more positive attitude towards inclusion and students with disabilities.

Exceptions were identified with respect to educating most students with disabilities (regardless of the level of their disability) in the regular classroom. Both groups of special and general educators had a negative attitude towards educating students with behavioral disorders – item 8, mental retardation – item 14, and multi-disabling conditions – item 15, in the regular classroom. Both groups of respondents also felt students with disabilities lack skills needed to master the regular classroom course content – item 4.

Table 3

Comparison of the Respondents Based on Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Item Clustered under Factor 1

<u>Factor 1: Attitude Towards Inclusion and students with disabilities</u> <sup>(b)</sup> Statements:		<u>Teacher Group</u>			F- Value	P- Value	
		<u>Special Educators</u>	<u>General Educators</u>	<u>All Teachers</u>			
1	I'm willing to make needed instructional adaptations for my students with disabilities	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	18.2	.001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.94	3.72	3.81		
		<u>Std</u>	.33	.49	.44		
2	Inclusion is a desirable educational practice	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	10.8	.001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.33	3.01	3.15		
		<u>Std</u>	.77	.85	.83		
3	Most students with disabilities (regardless of the level of their disability) can be educated in the regular classroom	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	1.4	.243
		<u>Mean</u>	2.24	2.36	2.31		
		<u>Std</u>	.82	.87	.85		
4	Students with disabilities lack skills needed to master the regular classroom course content	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	1.1	.293
		<u>Mean</u>	3.02	2.92	2.96		
		<u>Std</u>	.85	.87	.86		
5	Believe in an academic program where students are held to similar standards	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	15.4	.001**
		<u>Mean</u>	2.46	2.90	2.71		
		<u>Std</u>	.96	.95	.98		
6	Educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom is disruptive to other students	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	5.6	.018*
		<u>Mean</u>	2.12	2.38	2.27		
		<u>Std</u>	.85	.95	.92		

Note: n<sup>a</sup> = total number of respondents; <sup>(b)</sup> = mean average scale score = 2.88; Std = .35; Reliability Alpha = .69; \*Statistically significant differences at  $p \leq .05$ ; and \*\*Statistically significant differences at  $p \leq .01$  between the average mean scores of special and general educators; Rating Scale Range: 1- 1.4 = disagree; 1.5 - 2.4 = tend to disagree; 2.5 - 3.4 = tend to agree; 3.5 - 4 = agree

Table 3 (Continued)

Statements:	Teacher Group			F-Value	P-Value	
	Special Educators	General Educators	All Teachers			
Most students with the following disability can be educated in the regular classrooms:						
7 Learning Disabilities	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	9.3	.003**
	<u>Mean</u>	3.62	3.40	3.49		
	<u>Std</u>	.55	.68	.63		
8 Behavioral Disorders	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	14.3	.001**
	<u>Mean</u>	2.38	2.01	2.17		
	<u>Std</u>	.82	.81	.84		
9 Physical Disabilities	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	7.8	.006**
	<u>Mean</u>	3.60	3.38	3.48		
	<u>Std</u>	.58	.73	.68		
10 Hearing Impairments	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	11.2	.001**
	<u>Mean</u>	3.52	3.22	3.35		
	<u>Std</u>	.63	.82	.76		
11 Visual Impairments	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	11.5	.001**
	<u>Mean</u>	3.44	3.13	3.26		
	<u>Std</u>	.71	.84	.81		
12 Communication Disorders	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	3.8	.052*
	<u>Mean</u>	3.06	2.86	2.95		
	<u>Std</u>	.83	.85	.85		
13 Health Impairments	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	7.6	.006**
	<u>Mean</u>	3.32	3.07	3.18		
	<u>Std</u>	.66	.87	.80		
14 Mental Impairment	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	6.6	.011**
	<u>Mean</u>	2.04	1.81	1.91		
	<u>Std</u>	.74	.78	.77		
15 Multi-disabled	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	5.7	.018*
	<u>Mean</u>	2.31	2.06	2.16		
	<u>Std</u>	.87	.88	.88		

The internal consistency reliability coefficient alpha for this factor (as shown in the footnote of Table 3) was .69, thus, indicating most responses to items classified under this factor were highly correlated with each other. The following section will describe the respondents' perceptions towards their ability to adapt instruction to students with disabilities.

#### Perception Towards Adapting Instruction to Students With Disabilities (Factor 2)

Table 4 presents the response data to Factor 2, which consists of four items designed to identify the respondent's ability to adapt instruction to students with disabilities. Significant mean differences were identified in all cases, thus, indicating special educators, when compared to general educators, consistently had higher average mean scores on all items classified under this factor. To be precise, the special educators, compared to general educators, hold a more positive attitude towards their ability to adapt instruction to students with disabilities. This was specifically true for items 18 and 19 where the general educator's average mean scores were markedly lower than those of the special educators. This indicates that general educators are less confident about their ability to increase retention and/or make instructional adaptations for students with disabilities.

The internal consistency reliability coefficient (as shown in the footnote of Table 4) was .83, thus, indicating most responses to items classified under this factor were highly correlated with each other.

Table 4  
Comparison of the Respondents Based on Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Items Clustered Under Factor 2

<u>Factor 2: Perception Towards Adapting Instruction to Students With Disabilities:</u> <sup>(b)</sup> Statements.		<u>Teacher Group</u>			F- Value	P- Value
		<u>Special Educators</u>	<u>General Educators</u>	<u>All Teachers</u>		
16	When students with disabilities experience difficulties with an assignment, I'm able to adjust it to their level of need	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	47.6 .001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.60	3.07	3.30	
		<u>Std</u>	.54	.72	.70	
17	When students with disabilities encounter problems with assignments, I can assess whether its appropriate for their ability	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	53.3 .001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.67	3.05	3.32	
		<u>Std</u>	.51	.83	.77	
18	If one of my students with disabilities is unable to remember information given in a lesson, I know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	65.2 .001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.33	2.57	2.90	
		<u>Std</u>	.66	.87	.87	
19	I have the skills needed to make instructional adaptations for my students with disabilities.	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	140.3 .001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.64	2.61	3.05	
		<u>Std</u>	.60	.81	.89	

Note: n<sup>a</sup> = total number of respondents; <sup>(b)</sup> = means average scale score = 3.14; Std = .66; Reliability Alpha = .83; \*Statistically significant differences at  $p \leq .05$ ; and \*\*Statistically significant differences at  $p \leq .01$  between the average mean scores of special and general educators; Rating Scale Range 1 - 1.4 = disagree; 1.5 - 2.4 = tend to disagree; 2.5 - 3.4 = tend to agree; 3.5 - 4 = agree

### Availability of Resources and Support Needed in Inclusive Classrooms (Factor 3)

Table 5 summarizes the results for Factor 3, which consists of eight items designed to identify the respondent's perceptions towards the availability of resources and support needed in inclusive classrooms. Significant mean differences were found on 7 of the 8 items, among the special and general educators. Only question 28, "the large teaching load in the regular classroom makes it hard to effectively meet the needs of my students with disabilities", was not significantly different between the two groups of teachers.

The general educators consistently had lower mean ratings, than special educators, on all the statements categorized under this factor. This indicates general educators do not perceive as much support and availability of resources as do the special educators. This was especially true for items 21, 25, 26, and 27 where the general educators consistently held a more negative attitude towards the availability of appropriate instructional material needed for students with disabilities in their classrooms. Moreover, these general educators noted a lack of sufficient time needed to consult with other teachers and specialists and/or go to meetings pertaining to students with disabilities. These general educators also indicated lack of sufficient time needed to undertake the responsibility of educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom. Both groups of special and general educators noted that the large teaching load in the regular classroom makes it hard to meet the needs of their students with disabilities effectively.

As noted in the footnote of Table 5, the estimated internal consistency reliability coefficient for Factor 3 was .66. It should be pointed out that item 20 was eliminated from items categorized under this factor because it is a redundant question to ask special educators. The respondent's knowledge of pertinent information needed for working in inclusive classrooms will be discussed next.

Table 5  
Comparison of the Respondents Based on Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Items Clustered Under Factor 3

<u>Factor 3: Availability of Resources and Support Needed in Inclusive Classrooms:</u> <sup>(b)</sup> Statements.		<u>Teacher Group</u>			F-Value	P-Value	
		<u>Special Educators</u>	<u>General Educators</u>	<u>All Teachers</u>			
21	Appropriate instructional materials needed for students with disabilities are available to my classroom	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	46.9	.001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.07	2.23	2.59		
		<u>Std</u>	1.02	1.04	1.11		
22	I have a special education teacher's aid in my classroom when needed	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	13.1	.001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.13	2.47	2.75		
		<u>Std</u>	1.64	1.44	1.56		
23	Parents of my students with disabilities support me	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	4.7	.032*
		<u>Mean</u>	3.15	2.89	3.00		
		<u>Std</u>	.86	1.11	1.02		
24	I get support pertaining to my students with disabilities from my school principal	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	13.4	.001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.48	3.08	3.25		
		<u>Std</u>	.74	1.00	.92		
25	I have sufficient time to consult with other teachers and specialists working with my students with disabilities	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	5.3	.022*
		<u>Mean</u>	2.57	2.28	2.41		
		<u>Std</u>	1.11	1.03	1.08		

Note: n<sup>a</sup> = total number of respondents; <sup>(b)</sup> = mean average scale score = 2.74; Std = .61; Reliability Alpha = .66; \*Statistically significant differences at  $p \leq .05$ ; and \*\*Statistically significant differences at  $p \leq .01$  between the average mean scores of special and general educators; Rating Scale Range: 1 - 1.4 = disagree; 1.5 - 2.4 = tend to disagree; 2.5 - 3.4 = tend to agree; 3.5 - 4 = agree

Table 5 (Continued)

Statements.		<u>Teacher Group</u>			F- Value	P- Value	
		<u>Special Educators</u>	<u>General Educators</u>	<u>All Teachers</u>			
26	I have sufficient time to go to meetings pertaining to my students with disabilities	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	22.7	.001**
		<u>Mean</u>	2.65	2.07	2.31		
		<u>Std</u>	1.02	1.03	1.06		
27	I have sufficient time to undertake the responsibility of educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	36.8	.001**
		<u>Mean</u>	2.81	2.05	2.37		
		<u>Std</u>	1.28	.87	1.13		
28	The large teaching load in the regular classroom makes it hard to effectively meet the needs of my students with disabilities	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	1.3	.255
		<u>Mean</u>	3.16	3.29	3.24		
		<u>Std</u>	1.06	.91	.98		

#### Knowledge of Pertinent Information Needed for Working in Inclusive Classrooms (Factor 4)

Table 6 presents the response data to Factor 4, which consists of eight items designed to identify the respondent's knowledge of information needed to work with special education students.

Significant mean differences were identified in all cases, thus, indicating special educators, compared to general educators, consistently had higher average mean scores on all items classified under this factor. This suggests that special educators, when compared to general educators, have a greater sense of efficacy when it comes to knowledge of information pertaining to strategies for teaching students with disabilities, characteristics of students with disabilities, special education law, and collaborative and behavioral management strategies. This was especially true for items 31 and 36 where the general educator's average mean scores were markedly lower than those of the special educators. As such, the general educator's response indicates they were less confident about their knowledge of special education law, in addition to the fact that they don't participate as much as special educators in I.E.P meetings. As noted in the footnote of Table 6, the computed internal consistency reliability coefficient for Factor 4 was .84, thus, indicating most responses to items classified under this factor were highly correlated with each other. The next section will summarize information pertaining to the extent to which the respondents work collaboratively in their classrooms.

Table 6

Comparison of the Respondents Based on Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Items Clustered Under Factor 4

Factor 4: Knowledge of Pertinent Information <sup>(b)</sup> Statements.		Teacher Group			F- Value	P- Value
		Special Educators	General Educators	All Teachers		
29	I know various teaching strategies for helping students with disabilities master new concepts	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	79.6 .001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.63	2.84	3.18	
		<u>Std</u>	.63	.82	.84	
30	I know characteristics of students with disabilities	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	113.8 .001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.80	2.87	3.27	
		<u>Std</u>	.51	.86	.86	
31	I know special education law	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	232.2 .001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.63	2.11	2.76	
		<u>Std</u>	.62	.98	1.13	
32	I know collaborative strategies needed for working with other colleagues in inclusive classrooms	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	46.9 .001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.45	2.72	3.03	
		<u>Std</u>	.76	.99	.96	
33	If any students becomes disruptive in my classroom, I know some techniques to redirect his/her behavior	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	19.5 .001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.45	3.09	3.24	
		<u>Std</u>	.65	.72	.71	

Note:  $n^a$  = total number of respondents; <sup>(b)</sup> = mean average scale score = 3.14; Std = .63; Reliability Alpha = .84; \*Statistically significant differences at  $p \leq .05$ ; and \*\*Statistically significant differences at  $p \leq .01$  between the average mean scores of special and general educators; Rating Scale Range: 1 - 1.4 = disagree; 1.5 - 2.4 = tend to disagree; 2.5 - 3.4 = tend to agree; 3.5 - 4 = agree

Table 6 (Continued)

Statements.		Teacher Group			F- Value	P- Value
		<u>Special Educators</u>	<u>General Educators</u>	<u>All Teachers</u>		
34	I know behavior management strategies for controlling student's classroom behavior	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	26.0 .001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.56	3.16	3.33	
		<u>Std</u>	.56	.71	.68	
35	I try to help all my students find appropriate ways to deal with their feelings	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	8.9 .003**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.65	3.44	3.53	
		<u>Std</u>	.54	.64	.61	
36	I usually participate in I.E.P. meetings	<u>n<sup>a</sup></u>	124	167	291	251.1 .001**
		<u>Mean</u>	3.88	2.00	2.80	
		<u>Std</u>	.62	1.21	1.37	

#### D. Extent to Which the Special and General Educators Collaborate in their Classrooms

Table 7 provides a comparison of the two groups of respondents, based on six items designed to identify the extent to which they collaborate in their inclusive classrooms. Differences were found between the two groups of teachers, based on four (items 1, 3, 4, and 6) of the six items listed. To be specific, 44% of the special educators, compared to 27% of the general educators, reported they collaborate on a weekly basis in developing their instructional plans. A greater percentage of the special educators (54%), than general educators (30%), also indicated they conduct joint parent conferences on a monthly basis, while 40% of the special educators, compared to 33% of the general educators, indicated they team-teach, on a daily basis, in the regular classroom. Furthermore, 47% of the special educators, compared to 32% of the general educators, noted they provide assistance to each other regarding students with disabilities on a daily basis. It is hypothesized that these differences are reflective of the responsibilities and services special educators generally provide in a school setting.

There was little difference between the two groups of respondents based on the extent to which they exchange student progress information and share information on effective teaching strategies. 42% of the special and 38% of the general educators indicated they exchange student progress information on a weekly basis, while 34% of the special and 31% of the general educators reported they share information on effective teaching strategies on a weekly basis. The following section will summarize information pertaining to the type of support received in working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

Table 7

Comparison of the extent to which the Special and General Educators Work Collaboratively in their Inclusive Classrooms

<u>Statements:</u>		<u>Teacher Group</u>						
		<u>Special Educators</u>		<u>General Educators</u>		<u>All Teachers</u>		
Indicate the extent to which you, the special and general educator collaboratively :		<u>Schedule</u>	<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>
1	Develop your instructional plans	Daily	15	12	30	18	45	15
		Weekly	55	44	46	27	101	35
		Monthly	18	15	25	15	43	15
		Never	24	19	56	34	80	28
		Not Applicable	12	10	10	6	22	7
		Total	124		167		291	
2	Exchange student progress information	Daily	39	32	46	28	85	29
		Weekly	52	42	64	38	116	40
		Monthly	21	17	35	21	56	19
		Never	5	4	17	10	22	8
		Not Applicable	7	5	5	3	12	4
		Total	124		167		291	
3	Conduct joint parent conferences	Daily	3	2	1	1	4	1
		Weekly	6	5	6	3	12	4
		Monthly	67	54	50	30	117	40
		Never	28	23	87	52	115	40
		Not Applicable	20	16	23	14	43	15
		Total	124		167		291	

Note: Freq = frequencies; % = percentages

Table 7 (Continued)

<u>Statements:</u> Indicate the extent to which you, the special and general educator collaboratively :		<u>Teacher Group</u>						
		<u>Special Educators</u>		<u>General Educators</u>		<u>All Teachers</u>		
Schedule		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
4	Team-teach in the regular classroom	Daily	49	40	55	33	104	36
		Weekly	15	12	17	10	32	11
		Monthly	8	6	12	7	20	7
		Never	36	29	68	41	104	36
		Not Applicable	16	13	15	9	31	10
		Total	124		167		291	
5	Share information on effective teaching strategies	Daily	25	20	24	14	49	17
		Weekly	42	34	51	31	93	32
		Monthly	31	25	41	25	72	25
		Never	18	15	45	27	63	22
		Not Applicable	8	6	6	3	14	4
		Total	124		167		291	
6	Provide assistance to each other regarding students with disabilities	Daily	58	47	54	32	112	39
		Weekly	32	26	35	21	67	23
		Monthly	18	15	36	22	54	18
		Never	8	6	35	21	43	15
		Not Applicable	8	6	7	4	15	5
		Total	124		167		291	

### E. Current Support Received In Working with Students with Disabilities

The respondents were given an open-ended question designed to identify the type of support they receive in working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Table 8 outlines the type of support received, based on responses provided.

For the most part, majority of the special (80%) and general educators (88%) indicated they predominantly receive support from other teachers. Whereas an additional 42% of the special educators reported receiving support from guidance counselors and 39% reported receiving support from school administrators, only 24% of the general educators respectively reported receiving support from guidance counselors and school administrators. The following section will provide samples of direct teacher quotes provided to illustrate the type of support received. To be specific, some teachers, in certain instances, commented they currently “wing it” when it comes to receiving support in working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Five high school teachers noted “the only support given consists of spontaneous conferences with three overworked LD teachers on student progress.”

Other middle school teachers also pointed out “the only support received in working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms is an occasional report from a special education teacher for us to complete.” An additional teacher pointed out “I have a class of 15 students, 9 of them classified as special education students. Last semester, I had very little assistance for very big problems - many behavior problems - too many students who could not function in a regular classroom.”

Likewise, one high school teachers also emphasized “I resent having special education students in my large classes with very little assistance. I have no training in special education - special education teachers do. I am a regular classroom teacher of English. With the class load I have and a very short planning period, I feel unqualified to teach those students, and I resent having to do so. I am not trained to teach special education students.”

A high school educator also wrote “In my school, a special education teacher is assigned to assist a regular education teacher with a mixed population. It is not proving to be successful”. Another noted “I currently don’t receive any support. Special education students are mostly below grade level; lack specific skills to successfully compete; do not make the progress of their peers; are made to feel obviated in the inclusive setting; and are placed against the recommendation of the special education teacher by administrators.”

Table 8

Comparison of the respondents, based on Type of Support Received in Working With Students With Disabilities

<u>Statements:</u>	<u>Teacher Group</u>					
	<u>Special Educators</u>		<u>General Educators</u>		<u>All Teachers</u>	
Please list:	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
<u>Type of support received in working with students with disabilities in the regular classroom: (d)**</u>	n =	124		167		291
Support from other teachers	83	80	145	88	228	85
Support from guidance counselor	44	42	39	24	83	31
Support from school administrator/ principal	41	39	39	24	80	30
No support received	11	10	18	11	29	11

Note: (d)\*\* = duplicate count due to multiple responses, as such, the percentage total is more than 100;  
 Freq = Frequencies; % = percentage

Given the respondents predominantly indicated they receive support in working with students with disabilities from other teachers, data collected, in addition to the comments made, indicate the type of support provided was inadequate and/or could have been better. The next section will summarize information pertaining to the respondents' areas of needs in working with students with disabilities.

#### F. Areas of Need In Working With Students With Disabilities

The two groups of teachers were given an open-ended question designed to identify and describe five areas of needs they have in working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Table 9 provides a detailed outline of specific areas of needs, classified under five major categories. An "X" indicates the teacher group that identified each area of need. Samples of direct teacher quotes are provided to illustrate the findings:

##### Support:

A greater percentage of the general educators (71%), than special educators (64%), indicated they need support from their administrators and parents, particularly when it comes to understanding what is expected of their students. Most of these general educators, than special educators, also indicated they need more resources such as tried and true instructional material and equipment appropriate for students' reading levels and disabilities, alternative tests and individualized educational programs designed to gradually decrease support exceptional students need in preparation for graduation, more resource people (i.e. teacher's aide, special education teachers etc.) in inclusive classrooms, and more funds. Also requested was assistance in dealing with school administrators who hold all students to equal standards.

##### Training:

71% of the general educators, compared to 42% of the special educators, indicated they would like to receive training in special education, particularly in terms of learning about the characteristics of children with special needs, inclusion, the individualized education program (I.E.P), and special education law. Most of these general educators, compared to special educators, also indicated they would like to receive training on strategies for collaborating with other teachers, behavioral management, discipline, and strategies for adapting instruction and incorporating various instructional methods into a lesson. These teachers also requested training on strategies for teaching a variety of students with disabilities, testing and assessing student progress, adjusting class requirements, communication, conflict resolution, and anger management.

Table 9

Comparison of the Respondents, based on Areas of Needs in Working With Students With Disabilities

<u>Statements:</u> Please list:	<u>Teacher Group</u>						
	<u>Special Educators</u>		<u>General Educators</u>		<u>All Teachers</u>		
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
<u>Your Areas of need in working with students with disabilities in the regular classroom: (e)**</u>	n =	124		167		291	
A. <u>Support: Need to receive:</u>	71	64	116	71	187	68	
1. Administrative & parental support		X		X		X	
2. More resources		X		X		X	
3. Help in dealing with school administrators		X		X		X	
B. <u>Training: Need to receive training on:</u>	47	42	115	71	162	59	
1. Special education		X		X		X	
2. Strategies for teaching & collaborating with others		X		X		X	
3. Behavior management		X		X		X	
4. Strategies for communication & conflict resolution		X		X		X	
C. <u>More influence &amp; time: Need to have more:</u>	75	68	84	52	159	58	
1. Influence in the placement & decision making process		X		X		X	
2. Extra time for collaborating & planning with others		X		X		X	
D. <u>Class size: Need reduced class size/load</u>	56	51	70	43	126	46	
		X		X		X	
E. <u>Other needs : Need to have:</u>	49	44	52	32	101	37	
1. A description of responsibilities		X		X		X	
2. Assignment & grading policies		X		X		X	
3. Attitude adjustment & motivation		X		X		X	

Note: (e)\*\* = duplicate count due to multiple responses, as such, the percentage total is more than 100;

Freq = Frequencies; % = percentage

Additional requests consisted of the need to provide training for school administrators and support groups for classroom teachers.

More Influence and Time, and Reduced Class size:

Many of the special educators (68%), than general educators (52%), indicated they would like to have more influence in the placement and decision making process, in addition to extra time for collaborating with others, and a shared planning time with their co-teachers. 51% of these special educators, compared to 43% of the general educators (43%), also noted they need reduced class loads if they are expected to individualize instruction and meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Other Needs:

44% of the special educators, compared to 32% of the general educators, indicated they need assistance in clarifying allowances teachers need to make for students with disabilities, in addition to the roles and responsibilities of special and general educators in inclusive setting. Also indicated was a need for assignment guidelines and grading policies, and attitude adjustment and motivation.

These teachers also indicated there was a need for guidelines for meeting the new standards of learning (a Commonwealth of Virginia requirement) in inclusive settings, in addition to administrative agreement regarding the expectations/role of teachers, and better screening of students with disabilities, with regard to reading and language. It was also pointed out that parents of students with disabilities need to be educated about their children's participation in the regular classroom curriculum. Furthermore, these special educators indicated there was a need for flexibility within the master schedule, if the needs of students with disabilities are to be met.

Quotations provided by some of the respondents emphasized the fact that administrators need to understand the need for teachers to get involved in scheduling, in addition to moving away from "grade level goals" to "individual goals for all students" if inclusion is to work. Some teachers felt a balance of work expectations has to be found, and that it would be beneficial if professional educators did class observations or interviews with the intention of identifying the pros and cons of instruction given, for the sake of assisting them. As one individual put it, "we need a system for dealing with frustration, if we are to build a bridge over troubled waters."

Some participants mentioned there is a lack of communication between elementary and secondary schools, particularly when it comes to exchanging information on student performance. Others felt it would be helpful if student files were reviewed on a regular basis, not after so many years, and that more effort has to be put into making appropriate placement decisions for all mainstreamed students (be they disabled or not). Some general educators pointed out they need: “more input on the I.E.P; assistance in keeping straight who has what problems; teacher to teacher conferences; collaborative teachers who know what they are doing and are willing to work with other teachers in inclusive settings; and copies of students’ individualized education programs before school starts, thus, allowing for better planning”.

To provide a sample of some of the issues raised with regard to this question, one middle school teacher wrote: “I know many tactics to use with behavior problems students but they rarely work. I have found that a behavior problem student can disrupt an entire class from learning. Some of my Learning Disabled students make the best grades in my class. I have mixed views on inclusion.”

Another general high school teacher said, “Special education students lack note-taking skills; have low reading comprehension levels and attention span; lack focus; have weak test-taking skills; and lack concentration. I have problems trying to get them to keep pace with the regular students”.

Furthermore, another said, “Even though, in theory, I agree with inclusion, I don’t think it should be done to the detriment of regular students. Having special education students in my regular classroom has lead to lower standards and resulted in more time being spent on teaching basic reading and math skills because students with disabilities have not been made to master the basics before being placed in the regular classroom.” An additional high school teacher also said, “I have concerns about emotionally disturbed students being allowed to hinder the learning of other students. I would like to be able to remove repeatedly disruptive students from my classroom without so much fear of legality or without foot dragging from my superiors. I grieve for average students whose learning suffers from constantly disruptive students.”

- Other comments also included complaints such as, “I’m not certified as an LD teacher (I don’t want to be)” and/or, “Sometimes I feel like I’m spread thin as a special educator trying to keep up with four core subject areas and modify for them. I wish I could handle teaching more in the

classroom, the whole regular class.” Likewise, other comments consisted of arguments such as:

- “Arranging test-taking with the special education teacher is - simply put - cheating”.
- “I wish I could stop kids with special needs from flaunting their attitude and legal rights in the face of regular treatment.”
- “In my view, inclusion is a waste of time”.
- “I wish some responsibility was placed on parents of students with disabilities”.
- “I don’t treat my students separately. At our school, all students are equal. They just have different learning styles”.

These comments speak for themselves and deserve no summary from this researcher.

### Summary of Results

Irrespective of the fact that special educators had, on average, a somewhat better attitude towards inclusion and students with disabilities than general educators, data collected indicates the two groups of respondents had a negative attitude towards educating all students with disabilities (regardless of the level of their disability) in the regular classroom. In particular, both groups of teachers were less willing to educate students with behavioral disorders, mental retardation, and multi-disabling conditions in the regular classroom. These two groups of teachers also felt students with disabilities lack skills needed to master the regular classroom course content.

An analysis of responses collected from the two groups of teachers also indicates special educators, unlike general educators, hold a more positive attitude towards their ability to adapt instruction to students with disabilities, especially when it comes to their ability to increase retention and/or make instructional adaptations for students with disabilities. In addition, these special educators, unlike general educators, hold a more positive perception towards the availability of support and resources needed to work with students with disabilities. In contrast, the general educators had a negative attitude towards the availability of appropriate instructional material needed for students with disabilities in their classrooms. These general educators also had a more negative attitude towards the availability of sufficient time needed to consult with other teachers, go to meetings pertaining to students with disabilities, and adequately undertake the responsibility of educating students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Both groups of respondents felt the large teaching load in the regular classroom makes it hard to effectively meet the needs of students with disabilities in their classrooms.

Moreover, a comparison of the two groups of respondents indicates special educators, unlike general educators, have a greater sense of efficacy pertaining to their knowledge of strategies for teaching students with disabilities, characteristics of students with disabilities, special education law, and collaborative and behavioral management strategies. In contrast, the general educators are less certain about their knowledge of special education law and participation in I.E.P meetings. Furthermore, a greater percentage of the special educators, than general educators, indicated they collaboratively develop their instructional plans, conduct joint parent conferences, and team-teach in the regular classroom.

An analysis of data pertaining to the type of support received and areas of needs in working with students with disabilities indicates a large percentage of the general educators need support and training, while more of the special educators need more influence, time, and reduced class loads. In addition, both groups of respondents indicated they need a description of responsibilities; assignment and grading policies; and attitude adjustment and motivation, given they predominantly receive support from other teachers and guidance counselors in working with students with disabilities.

Overall, the goal of this study was not necessarily to generalize data collected to all secondary special and general educators working in inclusive settings in Virginia. Rather, the interest was in identifying whether secondary special and general educators working in inclusive settings have the perception, ability, resources, and support needed to work with students with disabilities.

As such, generalizing data collected to all secondary special and general educators should be done with caution, given some findings may reflect bias, since data analyzed was based on teachers' perceptions. As such, additional research focusing on the attitudes and needs of secondary special and general educators working in inclusive classrooms needs to be carried out to support the results found in this study, thus, providing a basis for generalizations.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Discussion

The purposes of this study were to determine whether secondary special and general educators: 1) had a positive attitude towards inclusion and students with disabilities; 2) perceived themselves capable of adapting instruction to students with disabilities; 3) had resources and support needed in inclusive classrooms; and 4) perceived themselves knowledgeable of pertinent information needed for working with students with disabilities. Data collected were also designed to determine: 5) whether these two groups of teachers collaborated in their inclusive classrooms; 6) the type of support received in working with students with disabilities; and 7) areas of needs the two groups of educators had in working with students with disabilities. The following section will summarize the findings in these areas, and suggest implications this information has for school districts and teacher training institutions.

#### A. Attitude towards Inclusion and Students With Disabilities

Irrespective of the fact that special educators, than general educators, have a somewhat better attitude towards inclusion and students with disabilities, both groups of respondents had negative attitudes towards educating most students with disabilities (regardless of the level of their disability), in the regular classroom. Specifically, the two groups of teachers were less willing to educate students with behavioral disorders, mental retardation, and multi-disabling conditions in the regular classroom. These teachers also felt that such students lack skills needed to master the regular classroom curriculum. These findings suggest secondary special and general educators are more willing to include students with mild disabilities than students with more severe disabilities. These findings are in agreement with Langdon (1999), Liu et al. (1999), Soodak et al. (1998), Barnett et al. (1998), Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996), Schumm & Vaughn (1992), and Diebold & VonEschenbach (1991). Thus, teachers tend to be more willing to educate students in their classroom as long as the students do not exhibit emotional or behavioral problems, and/or have severe disabilities.

The fact that special educators have more positive attitudes towards inclusion and students with disabilities may be related to the finding that a majority possessed masters degrees or above and had received training in working with students with disabilities. As such, these special educators may be more willing to include students with disabilities, given their awareness of how

to work with them. O'Shea et al. (2000), Brownell et al. (1999), deBettencourt (1999), Peterson et al. (1998), and Mcleskey et al. (1998), support this position by emphasizing that the number and type of courses taken by special and general educators influence their acceptance of inclusion. In short, teachers who have received training tend to be more willing to work with students with disabilities.

As such, school systems need to take note of the U.S. Supreme court's caution in Daniel R. v. State Board of Education, 874 F.2d 1036 (5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1989) and in Sacramento City Unified School District v. Holland, 786 F.Supp.874 (E.D. Cal. 1992). That is, determination of the appropriateness of inclusive education should be based on: a) whether the student will receive little or no benefit from inclusion because of the nature and severity of the disability, and b) on whether the education of other students in the classroom will be affected by the student's disruptive behavior.

In trying to determine whether the term "least restrictive environment" means "the regular classroom environment", I believe some school systems have moved towards full-inclusion, neglecting to use the student's needs as a gauge for determining whether the regular classroom is the least restrictive setting for that particular student. In addition, they have not ensured that teachers have been appropriately trained for inclusive education. These factors have apparently influenced teachers' attitude towards inclusion in a negative direction.

#### B. Perception towards Adapting Instruction to Students With Disabilities

Even though special educators had more positive attitudes towards their ability to adapt instruction to students with disabilities, general educators were less confident about their ability to increase retention and make instructional adaptations for students with disabilities. These findings suggest, in accordance with researchers such as deBettencourt (1999) and Minke et al. (1996), that general educators make few adaptations in instruction when working with students with disabilities. These outcomes emphasize the importance of ensuring teachers know how to adapt instruction to students with disabilities. To be specific (Hutchinson et al., 1999; Schumm et al., 1991; Ysseldyke et al., 1990; and York et al., 1990), teachers working in inclusive classrooms need to know how to break complex skills and concepts into small, easy to understand steps, provide immediate feedback to students about the accuracy of their work, and conduct instruction in small groups to allow for frequent student-teacher interactions. It would be beneficial for school systems to implement mandates stipulated under the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development specified under P.L. 105-17 (the Individuals With

Disabilities Education Act – I.D.E.A). School systems should plan and implement personnel development programs designed to not only help teachers adjust instruction to students with disabilities, but also help them identify and implement effective instructional strategies if inclusion is to succeed.

#### C. Availability of Resources and Support Needed in Inclusive Classrooms

General educators do not perceive the same degree of support and availability of resources as special educators. To be specific, general educators indicated they lack appropriate instructional material needed for students with disabilities, and sufficient time needed for consulting with other teachers, going to meetings pertaining to students with disabilities, and undertaking the responsibility of educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom. Both groups of teachers indicated that the large teaching load in the regular classroom makes it hard for them to meet the needs of their students with disabilities effectively. These results agree with studies done by O’Shea et al. (2000), Federico et al. (1999), Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, & Scheer (1999), Pearman et al. (1997), Scruggs et al. (1996), Bullough (1995), Baker et al. (1995), Zigmond (1995), Houck et al. (1994), Barton (1992), and Myles et al. (1992), and suggest that general educators lack sufficient time, resources, and support needed to effectively work with students with disabilities. Given limited funding and the cost of instructional material and equipment needed for students with disabilities, these findings are not surprising. School systems vary in terms of the availability of resources needed to get what they require. More effort needs to be put into helping teachers come up with innovative ways of making their own instructional material and/or adapting what they have to suit their needs. This can be achieved through in-service training, possibly in conjunction with teacher training institutions.

#### D. Knowledge of Pertinent Information Needed for Working With Students With Disabilities

In contrast to special educators, general educators had a lesser sense of efficacy when it comes to their participation in I.E.P meetings and knowledge of special education law. In my view, these findings reflect differences in the assigned school responsibilities of special and general educators, and in the way the two groups of teachers are trained. While special educators take courses designed to enhance their knowledge of legal aspects and instructional strategies needed to work with students with disabilities, general educators, for the most part, take courses designed to prepare them to work with non-disabled students (Peterson et al., 1998). Also, as the designated teachers of students with disabilities, special educators are usually the ones who

attend I.E.P meetings. Teacher-training programs may need to change the way educators are prepared. Emphasis should be placed on training all teachers to work with students of all abilities. General and special education departments at institutions of higher learning must work collaboratively to determine skills or strategies teachers should be taught, if educators are expected to implement inclusive programs successfully. Inclusion or mainstreaming might be useful at the university level, if they are to succeed in preparing effective teachers who know what they are doing (Bull et al., 2000, Mcleskey et al., 1998; McCory-Cole & Mclesky, 1997; Wigle et al., 1997; Putnam, Spiegel, & Bruininks, 1995; Bradley & West, 1994; and York & Vandercook, 1990). Also, school systems need to ensure that general educators participate in I.E.P meetings as mandated under P.L. 105-17 (the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act Amendment of 1997).

E. Extent to which the Special and General Educators Work Collaboratively in their Inclusive Classrooms.

Data collected suggest general educators do not collaborate, as much as special educators, in developing their instructional plans, conducting joint parent conferences, team-teaching in the regular classroom, and providing assistance to each other regarding students with disabilities. In accordance with information provided by deBettencourt (1999), Hobbs et al. (1998), Tralli et al. (1996), Walter-Thomas, Bryant, & Land (1996), Sardo- Brown et al. (1995), Schumaker et al. (1988), and Coates (1989), these findings reflect structural limitations of secondary school schedules and pragmatic factors such as limited time, existing rules and regulations, and insufficient institutional support, which, to a certain extent, interfere with how teachers work. These factors may pose the most significant barriers to collaboration and the successful implementation of inclusion at the secondary school level. Thus, it is important for school systems to, not only encourage teachers to work cooperatively, but also provide them with opportunities to plan and share information, if students with disabilities are to be successfully educated in inclusive classrooms (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Lead, 1999; Hamill, 1999; Scott et al., 1998; Villa et al., 1996; Pugach et al., 1995; Idol et al., 1994; Friend et al., 1992; Nevin et al., 1990; and Thousand et al., 1990).

#### F. Type of support currently received in working with students with disabilities.

The two groups of respondents primarily receive support from other teachers and guidance counselors. Survey information collected, together with comments made by some teachers, indicate that school systems and administrators need to provide more help to secondary special and general educators working in inclusive classrooms. According to researchers such as Brownell et al. (1999), Cook et al. (1999), Barnett et al. (1998), Wagle et al. (1997), Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996), Diebold et al. (1991), Sailor et al. (1989), and Snell et al. (1989), successful inclusive efforts are associated with administrative support and adequate material and personnel resources. As such, school systems need to involve parents, teachers, students, and key community members in district-wide planning, if inclusion is to be implemented successfully.

#### G. Areas of Needs in Working with Students with Disabilities

The two groups of respondents identified different areas of needs. In particular, more general educators indicated they need administrative and parental support in understanding what is expected of their students. In addition, these general educators indicated they need more instructional resources, additional resource people, more funds, and assistance in dealing with school administrators. Furthermore, they indicated the need for training on the characteristics of children with special needs, the individualized education program, special education law, and strategies for adapting instruction, collaboration, behavior management, conflict resolution, anger management, and discipline. Other requests consisted of training for school administrators and support groups for classroom teachers. These findings are in accordance with information provided by Bull et al. (2000), Brownell et al. (1999), Cook et al. (1999), Barnett et al. (1998), Peterson & Beloin (1998), Mcleskey et al. (1998), Wagle et al. (1997), Baker & Zigmond (1995), Hines (1994), Bradley & West (1994), Burrello & Wright (1993), Kauffman (1993), and Leyser & Abrams (1986). These authors indicate secondary general educators need training in special education, strategies for teaching and reinforcing students with disabilities, and strategies for collaboration, behavior management, and anger management.

In contrast, special educators indicated that they need more influence in the placement and decision-making process, extra time for collaboration, shared planning time, and reduced class loads. These special educators also requested a clarification of accommodations teachers need to make for students with disabilities, the roles and responsibilities of special and general educators, assignment and grading guidelines, attitude adjustment, motivation, and flexible master

scheduling if they are to meet the needs of students with disabilities. These findings, agree with studies done by O'Shea et al. (2000), Brownell et al. (1999), deBettencourt (1999), Peterson et al. (1998), Mcleskey et al. (1998), Vaughn et al. (1996), Martin (1994), Smelter et al. (1994), and Coates (1989), and reflect some of the ambiguity associated with inclusive programs. Teachers working in inclusive classrooms are: not sure of what is expected of them; don't have a clear picture of how an inclusive program operates; and don't have sufficient expertise for inclusion. Steps need to be taken to ensure teachers have the required training and support needed to implement inclusive programs successfully. Brownell et al. (1999), Vaughn et al. (1996), Smelter et al. (1994), McDonnell and Hardman (1989), Sailor et al. (1989), and Snell and Eichner (1989) indicate inclusion is facilitated when teachers know their roles and responsibilities.

Information provided in this study, together with comments made by some teachers clearly emphasize the importance of making changes in classroom instructional procedures, and the significance of providing special and general educators with training, additional instructional and planning time, reduced class sizes, personnel assistance, and adequate instructional and curriculum material (Soodak et al., 1998; Salisbury et al., 1998; Vaughn et al., 1996; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Smelter et al., 1994; and Diebold & VonEschenbach, 1991 ). It might be said that teachers do not really need to learn some kind of magical instructional strategies to work with students with disabilities. Rather, students can be taught using what teachers already know, as long as their needs are identified.

### Conclusions

Information discussed thus far leads to a few conclusions. Despite the fact that secondary special educators hold a more positive attitude towards inclusion (i.e., believe students with disabilities should be educated with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible) than general educators, both groups of teachers had negative attitudes towards educating most students with disabilities (regardless of the severity of their disability) in the regular classroom. In particular, these two groups of teachers felt students with disabilities lack skills needed to master the regular classroom course content. Specifically, these teachers are less willing to educate students with behavioral disorders, mental retardation, and multi-disabling conditions in inclusive classrooms.

Compared to general educators, secondary special educators hold more positive attitudes towards their ability to adapt instruction to students with disabilities. These special educators also perceive themselves more knowledgeable of pertinent information needed to work with students with disabilities. These findings imply that secondary special educators feel better about their training in working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms than their general education peers.

As such, general educators could use more resources, support, and training on strategies for working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Many not only need expertise and pertinent information required for working in inclusive classrooms, but also expressed a need for training on strategies for adapting instruction to students with special needs.

Furthermore, both groups of special and general educators expressed the need for a clarification of their roles and responsibilities in inclusive classrooms, reduced class sizes, increased instructional time, and more resources and support services. It is not surprising some teachers made the comments provided, given that they may be aware of the difficulty of handling inclusive classrooms in the absence of adequate expertise, resources, and support services.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that school districts, working in conjunction with teacher training institutes, provide secondary special and general educators working in inclusive classrooms with:

1. Information sharing workshops and adequate in-service training designed to enhance their knowledge of legal aspects of special education and strategies for: teaching students with special needs; adapting and adjusting instruction; working collaboratively; adapting and grading tests; classroom management; and conflict resolution;
2. Adequate collaborative and planning time;
3. A clear rationale for, and description of, inclusive programs and adequate administrative and district support in implementing inclusive programs;
4. Adequate resources, equipment, support personnel, and teaching material suitable for included students;
5. A clear description of the roles and responsibilities of special and general educators working in inclusive classrooms; and
6. Reduced class sizes and additional funding.

Additional training also needs to be provided for school administrators. It should focus on the definition of inclusion; special education law; and strategies for assisting, evaluating, motivating, and scheduling teacher duties so co-teachers have time to plan together and/or share information.

All in all, it is not advisable for school systems to view general education classrooms as the least restrictive environments for all students, regardless of disability and teacher preparation. Rather inclusion should be based on each student's individual needs and adequate in-service training designed to prepare teachers for working with students with disabilities. Addressing the areas of needs identified in this study would go a long way in helping secondary special and general educators accept and implement inclusive programs successfully. It would be advisable for university programs to address these needs, if they are to help school districts succeed in implementing inclusive programs for students with disabilities. Failure to do this will only result in placing students with special needs in classroom environments where teachers cannot help them achieve expected standards and outcomes.

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**APPENDIX A**

**FIELD STUDIES LETTERS**

Letter mailed to special Education Directors Requesting Permission to conduct my study

To the Special Education Director:

RE: -REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT MY SURVEY IN YOUR SCHOOL DIVISION

I am a Graduate Student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) currently in the process of conducting a survey designed to collect information on the needs and perceptions of Secondary (Middle & High School) special and general education teachers currently working in inclusive classrooms. For the purpose of this survey, inclusive classrooms are defined as any regular classroom setting where students with disabilities are educated either on a part-time or full-time basis with their normal peers in your school division.

Information provided by teachers in your school division will be highly confidential and will only be used to generate a summary of data that can be used by local school divisions or teacher training institutions to design effective training programs relevant to teachers' needs. In addition, such information can be presented to boards of education for funding purposes and planning effective inservice training. Alternatively, the questionnaire developed could be used to identify the strengths and weakness of teachers and determine areas of training needs in State or Local Education Agencies.

I am requesting permission to conduct this study in your school division. In addition, I would also like to ask you to provide the information requested in the attached questionnaire.

This information will remain confidential, and will only be used to identify the total number of teachers that would participate in your school division. If you agree, I will mail the number of questionnaires needed for teachers in your division to you for distribution purposes. A random sample will be selected.

Should you need additional information about the study, please contact me at (540-231-5925) or the professors supervising my work - Dr. Harold McGrady and Dr. Diana Gillespie - at the same number.

Thank you for the assistance provided and your prompt reply.

Signed By:

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor Student

Florah K. Luseno  
Virginia Tech  
Department of Special Education Administration  
202 E. Eggleston Hall  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302

Enclosed: Sample of cover letter & Questionnaire that will be mailed to teachers in your school division, given permission.

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND RETURN IT IN THE ENCLOSED POST-PAID ENVELOPE**

**Directions:** The following questions are designed to provide information needed to determine the extent to which inclusion is implemented in your school division. I would greatly appreciate it if you could take a few minutes of your time to complete it. Return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. Thanks for your assistance and prompt reply.

1. Your school division is located in an (Circle One): (1).Urban; (2)Suburban; (3) Rural area
2. Using the list provided, please indicate the type of students with disabilities who are educated in regular (inclusive) classrooms at the following school levels (Put a check mark by all that apply):

	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
<b><u>Type of Disability</u></b>		
a. Learning Disabilities	_____	_____
b. Behavioral Disorders	_____	_____
c. Physical Disabilities	_____	_____
d. Hearing Impairment	_____	_____
e. Visual Impairment	_____	_____
f. Communication Disorders	_____	_____
g. Health Impairment	_____	_____
h. Mental Impairment	_____	_____
i. Other (please specify)	_____	_____

3. In what subject areas are the students indicated in number 2 above integrated in (in the regular classroom)?

a). At the Middle School Level? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

b). At the High School Level? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many special and general education teachers work with students with disabilities in the regular (inclusive) classroom at each of the following levels:(Write the numbers of teachers in the spaces given):

	<u>Number of Teachers</u>	
<u>School Level</u>	<u>Special Education</u>	<u>General Education</u>
a). Middle School	_____	_____
b). High School	_____	_____

5. Your school division educates secondary level students with disabilities in the regular classroom on a: (Circle one, and write the number of instructional hours provided in the spaces given):

(1). Full- time Basis for \_\_\_\_\_ hours a day.;

(2). Part-time Basis for \_\_\_\_\_ hours a day.

Letter mailed to school divisions' office of Research

To Whom it May Concern:

This is a follow-up of my letter requesting permission to conduct my survey in your school division. Thank you for responding and informing me of your school division requirements. As requested, I have attached a copy of my research proposal (together with a copy of the questionnaire that will be used) for your attention.

I'm interested in assessing the perceptions and needs of secondary (middle & high school) special and general education teachers currently working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. To be specific, the term " inclusive classrooms" is defined as any regular classroom setting where students with disabilities are educated either on a part-time or full-time basis with their normal peers.

If given permission, I intend to mail my questionnaires, through the special education director, to:

1. **All the Middle & High school special education teachers** currently working with students with disabilities educated in inclusive classrooms in your school division; and
2. **All the Middle & High school general education teachers** currently **teaching academic subjects only** to students with disabilities educated in inclusive classrooms in your school division.

I hope to conduct this survey during the month of April and/or as soon as permission is granted.

Given the fact that the questionnaire only takes a few minutes to complete, in addition to the fact that postpaid return envelopes will be attached for teachers to mail their responses to me, my study will not detract from the educational program, nor intrude upon instructional time.

I would be greatfull if you could consider my request to do my survey in your school division.

Should you need additional information about the study, please contact me at (540-231-5925) or the professors supervising my work - Dr. Harold McGrady and Dr. Diane Gillespie - at the same number.

Once again, thank you for your consideration and the assistance provided.

Sincerely,

Florah K. Luseno  
Virginia Tech, Department of Special Education Administration  
202 E. Eggleston Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302  
Email: fluseno@vt.edu

**APPENDIX B**

**LETTER ACCOMPANYING QUESTIONNAIRES MAILED TO SPECIAL EDUCATION  
DIRECTORS, AND  
COVER LETTER & QUESTIONNAIRE**

## **Letter Accompanying Questionnaires mailed to Special Education Directors for Distribution**

To the Special Education Director:

This is a follow-up of my letter requesting permission to conduct my survey in your school division. Thank you for responding and granting me permission to mail my questionnaires to secondary (i.e., middle & high school) special and general education teachers currently working in inclusive classrooms in your school division.

For the purpose of this survey, inclusive classrooms are defined as any regular classroom setting where students with disabilities are educated either on a part-time or full-time basis with their normal peers.

I would kindly like to ask you to distribute the enclosed cover letters and questionnaires to:

1. **All** the **Middle & High** school **special education teachers** currently working with students with disabilities educated in inclusive classrooms in your school division; and
2. **All** the **Middle & High** school **general education teachers** currently **teaching academic subjects only** to students with disabilities educated in inclusive classrooms in your school division. **Do not** give them to regular education teachers currently teaching P.E., Art, & Music.

Attached are postpaid return envelopes for teachers to mail their responses to me.

Should you need additional questionnaires and/or information about the study, please contact me at (540-231-5925) or the professors supervising my work - Dr. Harold McGrady and Dr. Diane Gillespie - at the same number.

Once again, thank you for your consideration and the assistance provided.

Sincerely,

Florah K. Luseno  
Virginia Tech, Department of Special Education Administration  
202 E. Eggleston Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302  
Email: fluseno@vt.edu

Cover Letter Accompanying Questionnaire

Dear Colleague:

You have been selected to participate in a study designed to collect information on the perception and needs of secondary (middle and high school) special and general education teachers currently working in inclusive classrooms (i.e., any regular classroom setting where students with disabilities are educated either on a part-time or full-time basis with their normal peers).

I would kindly like to ask you to share your experiences and views with me. **Please take a few minutes out of your busy schedule to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the enclosed postpaid return envelope.** Your opinions are very important because you represent many other teachers who have similar experiences. To that end, your honest impressions and opinions, whether favorable or unfavorable, are very necessary to ensure training needs of teachers like you are accurately represented.

Please be assured that I will treat your responses confidentially and will only report group data. The identification number at the top of the questionnaire is solely for record keeping purposes. It will only be used if needed for a follow-up mailing and will not be entered into the data base.

Should you have any questions, please contact Florah Luseno at (540) 231 - 5925, or email me at: fluseno@vt.edu

Thank you for your help and prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Florah Luseno  
Virginia Tech  
Department of Special Education Administration  
202 E. Eggleston Hall  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302.

<b>IDENTIFICATION CODE</b>

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**PART ONE :- Teacher Opinion.**

Please circle the number under the column that best describes your agreement/disagreement with the following statements.

		<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Tend to Disagree</b>	<b>Tend to Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
1.	I am willing to make needed instructional adaptations for my students with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I believe inclusion is a desirable educational practice	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I believe most students with disabilities (regardless of the level of their disability) can be educated in the regular classroom	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I believe many students with disabilities lack skills needed to master the regular classroom course content	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I believe in an academic program where all students are held to similar standards	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom is disruptive to other students	1	2	3	4	5

		<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Tend to Disagree</b>	<b>Tend to Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
	In my view, most students with the following disabilities can be educated in regular classrooms:					
7.	Learning Disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Behavioral disorders	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Physical disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Hearing impairments	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Visual impairments	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Communication disorders	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Health Impairments	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Mental Impairment (retardation)	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Multi-disabled	1	2	3	4	5
16.	When my students with disabilities are experiencing difficulties with an assignment, I am able to adjust it to their level of need	1	2	3	4	5
17.	When my students with disabilities encounter problems with their assignments, I can assess whether it is appropriate for their ability	1	2	3	4	5
18.	If one of my students with disabilities is unable to remember information given in a lesson, I know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I have the skills needed to make instructional adaptations for my students with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5

		<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Tend to Disagree</b>	<b>Tend to Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
20	A special educator is available for my classroom when needed	1	2	3	4	5
21	Appropriate instructional materials needed for educating students with disabilities are available to my classroom	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I have a special education teacher's aide in my classroom when needed	1	2	3	4	5
23.	The parents of my students with disabilities support me	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I get support pertaining to my students with disabilities from my school principal	1	2	3	4	5
25.	I have sufficient time to consult with other teachers and specialists working with my students with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I have sufficient time to go to meetings pertaining to my students with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I have sufficient time to undertake the responsibility of educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom	1	2	3	4	5
28.	The large teaching load in the regular classroom makes it hard to effectively meet the needs of students with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
29.	I know various teaching strategies for helping students with disabilities master new concepts	1	2	3	4	5
30.	I know characteristics of students with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
31.	I know special education law	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I know collaborative strategies needed for working with other colleagues in inclusive classrooms	1	2	3	4	5
33.	If any student becomes disruptive in my classroom, I feel assured I know some techniques to redirect his/her behavior	1	2	3	4	5
34.	I know behavior management strategies needed for controlling student's classroom behavior	1	2	3	4	5
35.	I try to help all my students find appropriate ways to deal with their feelings	1	2	3	4	5
36	I usually participate in IEP meetings	1	2	3	4	5

**PART TWO: Background Information.**

**Please circle or write your responses to the following questions.**

Please circle the number that best indicates the frequency which you (the special and general education teacher) work collaboratively to:

		<b>Daily</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
1.	develop your instructional plans	1	2	3	4	5
2.	exchange student progress information	1	2	3	4	5
3.	conduct joint parent conferences	1	2	3	4	5
4.	team-teach in the regular classroom	1	2	3	4	5
5.	share information on effective teaching strategies	1	2	3	4	5
6.	provide assistance to each other regarding students with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5

7. What is your gender? (check one) (1) Male \_\_\_\_\_; (2) Female \_\_\_\_\_
8. What grade level(s) do you currently teach in? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What subject area(s) do you currently teach? \_\_\_\_\_
10. For how many years have you been teaching altogether? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Please check the certification you have: (1) Special Educator \_\_\_\_\_; (2) Regular Educator \_\_\_\_\_
12. What is your highest degree?(check one):(1) Bachelors \_\_; (2) Masters \_\_; (3) Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
13. Have you had any training on teaching students with disabilities in inclusive (regular classrooms)?  
(Check one): (1) Yes \_\_\_\_\_; (2) No \_\_\_\_\_ (If “No”, go to number 16)

14. If your response to number 13 was “Yes”, What type of training did you receive? (check all that apply);  
 (1) Inservice training \_\_\_\_\_; (2) Workshop \_\_\_\_\_; (3) University training \_\_\_\_\_;  
 (4) I have no training \_\_\_\_\_; (5) Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_
15. For how long was the training indicated in number 14? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Your school is located in an (circle one): (1). Urban Area; (2). Suburban Area; (3). Rural Area
17. Please put a check mark by the number(s) representing students with disabilities educated in your regular classroom:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Learning disabilities \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Hearing impairments \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Health impairments  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Visual impairments \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Communication disorders \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Mental Impairment/retardation  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Behavioral disorders \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Physical disabilities \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
18. Please list support that you currently receive in working with students with disabilities in the regular classroom:
19. Briefly list and describe five areas of need you have in working with students with disabilities in the regular classroom:
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.

*Your contributions to this effort is very greatly appreciated. Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. Thanks for your assistance and prompt reply. Florah*

**APPENDIX C**

**COMPARISON OF THE SPECIAL AND GENERAL EDUCATORS  
BASED ON RESPONSES PROVIDED FOR THE LIKERT-SCALE ITEMS CLUSTERED UNDER FOUR FACTORS**

Table C-1

Comparison of the two groups of teachers based on responses provided for the Likert-Scale items

Factor 1: Attitude Towards Inclusion and students with disabilities Statements:		Teacher	n	Disagree		Tend to Disagree		Tend to Agree		Agree		N/A		Total <sup>(b)</sup>	
				F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	SD
1	I'm willing to make needed instructional adaptations for my students with disabilities	Special Educators	124	1	100	—	—	5	11	118	49	—	—	3.81	.44
		General Educators	167	—	—	3	100	41	89	123	51	—	—		
		Total	291	1		3		46		241		—	—		
2	Inclusion is a desirable educational practice	Special Educators	124	4	31	10	24	52	41	57	52	1	100	3.15	.83
		General Educators	167	9	69	32	76	74	59	52	48	—	—		
		Total	291	13		42		126		109		1			
3	Most students with disabilities (regardless of the level of their disability) can be educated in the regular classroom	Special Educators	124	23	48	55	43	39	43	7	32	—	—	2.31	.85
		General Educators	167	25	52	74	57	52	57	15	68	1	100		
		Total	291	48		129		91		22		1			
4	Students with disabilities lack skills needed to master the regular classroom course content	Special Educators	124	5	56	28	33	50	48	41	45	—	—	2.96	.86
		General Educators	167	4	44	58	67	54	52	50	55	1	100		
		Total	291	9		86		104		91		1			
5	I believe in an academic program where students are held to similar standards	Special Educators	124	24	67	36	43	47	47	17	24	—	—	2.71	.98
		General Educators	167	12	33	47	57	54	53	53	76	1	100		
		Total	291	36		83		101		70		1			
6	Educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom is disruptive to other students	Special Educators	124	26	46	67	49	23	33	6	23	2	50	2.27	.92
		General Educators	167	30	54	68	51	47	67	20	77	2	50		
		Total	291	56		135		70		26		4			

Note: n = total number of respondents; <sup>(b)</sup> = Total Mean and SD across both populations; F = Frequency; % = percent; N/A = Not Applicable

Table C-1 (Continued)

Statements:	Teacher Certification	n	Disagree		Tend to Disagree		Tend to Agree		Agree		N/A		Total <sup>(b)</sup>	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	SD
Most students with the following disabilities can be educated in the regular classrooms:														
7 Learning Disabilities	Special Educators	124	1	50	1	7	42	37	80	50	—	—		
	General Educators	167	1	50	14	93	71	63	80	50	1	100		
	Total	291	2		15		113		160		1		3.49	.63
8 Behavioral Disorders	Special Educators	124	17	26	53	42	44	52	10	77	—	—		
	General Educators	167	48	74	74	58	41	48	3	23	1	100		
	Total	291	65		127		85		13		1		2.17	.84
9 Physical Disabilities	Special Educators	124	—	—	6	33	37	36	81	49	—	—		
	General Educators	167	4	100	12	67	67	64	84	51	—	—		
	Total	291	4		18		104		165		—	—	3.48	.68
10 Hearing Impairments	Special Educators	124	—	—	8	28	45	39	70	52	1	33		
	General Educators	167	6	100	21	72	72	61	66	49	2	67		
	Total	291	6		29		117		136		3		3.35	.76
11 Visual Impairments	Special Educators	124	—	—	13	41	46	37	62	52	3	75		
	General Educators	167	10	100	19	59	79	63	58	48	1	25		
	Total	291	10		32		125		120		4		3.26	.81

Table C-1 (Continued)

Statements:	Teacher Certification	n	Disagree		Tend to Disagree		Tend to Agree		Agree		N/A		Total <sup>(b)</sup>	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	SD
12 Communication Disorders	Special Educators	124	3	21	27	41	57	42	34	49	3	75		
	General Educators	167	11	79	39	59	80	58	36	51	1	25		
	Total	291	14		66		137		70		4		2.95	.85
13 Health Impairment	Special Educators	124	—	—	12	25	61	49	50	46	1	50		
	General Educators	167	7	100	36	75	64	51	59	54	1	50		
	Total	291	7		48		125		109		2		3.18	.80
14 Mental Impairment	Special Educators	124	25	28	75	50	18	42	6	75	—	—		
	General Educators	167	64	72	75	50	25	58	2	25	1	100		
	Total	291	89		150		43		8		1		1.91	.77
15 Multi-disabled	Special Educators	124	15	25	71	47	26	44	9	53	3	60		
	General Educators	167	45	75	79	53	33	56	8	47	2	40		
	Total	291	60		150		59		17		5		2.16	.88

Table C-1 (Continued)

Factor 2: Perception Towards Adapting Instruction to Students With Disabilities															
Statements:		Teacher Certification	n	Disagree		Tend to Disagree		Tend to Agree		Agree		N/A		Total <sup>(b)</sup>	
				F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	SD
16	When students with disabilities experience difficulties with an assignment, I'm able to adjust it to their level of need	Special Educators	124	—	—	2	7	46	34	75	62	1	100		
		General Educators	167	4	100	26	93	91	66	46	38	—	—		
		Total	291	4		28		137		121		1		3.30	.70
17	When students with disabilities encounter problems with assignments, I can assess whether its appropriate for their ability	Special Educators	124	—	—	1	4	40	33	82	61	1	100		
		General Educators	167	10	100	23	96	82	67	52	39	—	—		
		Total	291	10		24		122		134		1		3.32	.77
18	If one of my students with disabilities is unable to remember information given in a lesson, I know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson	Special Educators	124	2	11	6	9	66	52	49	65	1	100		
		General Educators	167	17	89	63	91	61	48	26	35	—	—		
		Total	291	19		69		127		75		1		2.90	.87
19	I have the skills needed to make instructional adaptations for my students with disabilities	Special Educators	124	1	7	5	8	32	30	86	80	—	—		
		General Educators	167	14	93	58	92	74	70	21	20	—	—		
		Total	291	15		63		106		107		—	—	3.05	.89

Note: n = total number of respondents; <sup>(b)</sup> = Total Mean and SD across both populations; F = Frequency; % = percent; N/A = Not Applicable

Table C-1 (Continued)

Factor 3: Availability of Resources and Support needed in Inclusive Classrooms		Teacher Certification		Disagree		Tend to Disagree		Tend to Agree		Agree		N/A		Total <sup>(b)</sup>	
				F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	SD
Statements:		n													
21	Appropriate instructional materials needed for students with disabilities are available for my classroom	Special Educators	124	9	16	30	33	31	46	51	70	3	60		
		General Educators	167	47	84	60	67	36	54	22	30	2	40		
		Total	291	56		90		67		73		5		2.59	1.11
22	I have a special education teacher's aid in my classroom when needed	Special Educators	124	39	36	6	21	15	42	28	40	36	72		
		General Educators	167	68	64	22	79	21	58	42	60	14	28		
		Total	291	107		28		36		70		50		2.75	1.56
23	Parents of my students with disabilities support me	Special Educators	124	6	24	19	32	51	45	47	61	1	6		
		General Educators	167	19	76	41	68	62	55	30	39	15	94		
		Total	291	25		60		113		77		16		3.00	1.02
24	I get support pertaining to my students with disabilities from my school principal	Special Educators	124	4	21	5	16	44	41	70	56	1	13		
		General Educators	167	15	79	26	84	63	59	56	44	7	87		
		Total	291	19		31		107		126		8		3.25	.92
25	I have sufficient time to consult with other teachers and specialists working with my students with disabilities	Special Educators	124	24	34	38	44	33	40	25	57	4	67		
		General Educators	167	47	66	49	56	50	60	19	43	2	33		
		Total	291	71		87		83		44		6		2.41	1.08

Note: n = total number of respondents; <sup>(b)</sup> = Total Mean and SD across both populations; F = Frequency; % = percent; N/A = Not Applicable

Table C-1 (Continued)

Statements:	Teacher Certification	n	Disagree		Tend to Disagree		Tend to Agree		Agree		N/A		Total <sup>(b)</sup>	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	SD
26 I have sufficient time to go to meetings pertaining to my students with disabilities	Special Educators	124	18	24	38	38	40	56	26	70	2	29		
	General Educators	167	57	76	63	62	31	44	11	30	5	71		
	Total	291	75		101		71		37		7		2.31	1.06
27 I have sufficient time to undertake the responsibility of educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom	Special Educators	124	22	30	33	34	31	42	22	73	16	100		
	General Educators	167	51	70	65	66	43	58	8	27	—	—		
	Total	291	73		98		74		30		16		2.37	1.13
28 The large teaching load in the regular classroom makes it hard to effectively meet the needs of my students with disabilities	Special Educators	124	6	43	30	55	39	46	36	30	13	87		
	General Educators	167	8	57	25	45	46	54	86	70	2	13		
	Total	291	14		55		85		122		15		3.24	.98

Table C-1 (Continued)

Factor 4: Knowledge of Pertinent Information		Teacher Certification		Disagree		Tend to Disagree		Tend to Agree		Agree		N/A		Total <sup>(b)</sup>		
Statements:		n	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	SD
29	I know various teaching strategies for helping students with disabilities master new concepts	Special Educators	124	2	14	4	10	32	27	86	72	—	—			
		General Educators	167	12	86	36	90	86	73	33	28	—	—			
		Total	291	14		40		118		119		—	—	3.18	.84	
30	I know characteristics of students with disabilities	Special Educators	124	1	7	3	8	16	17	104	73	—	—			
		General Educators	167	13	93	34	92	81	83	39	27	—	—			
		Total	291	14		37		97		143				3.27	.86	
31	I know special education law	Special Educators	124	1	2	6	10	31	41	86	87	—	—			
		General Educators	167	55	98	54	90	44	59	13	13	1	100			
		Total	291	56		60		75		99		1		2.76	1.13	
32	I know collaborative strategies needed for working with other colleagues in inclusive classrooms	Special Educators	124	3	12	11	21	37	36	73	67	—	—			
		General Educators	167	22	88	42	79	65	64	36	33	2	100			
		Total	291	25		53		102		109		2		3.03	.96	
33	If any student becomes disruptive in my classroom, I know some techniques to redirect his/her behavior	Special Educators	124	1	25	8	23	49	35	66	58	—	—			
		General Educators	167	3	75	27	77	89	65	48	42	—	—			
		Total	291	4		35		138		114		—	—	3.24	.71	

Note: n = total number of respondents; <sup>(b)</sup> = Total Mean and SD across both populations; F = Frequency; % = percent; N/A = Not Applicable

Table C-1 (Continued)

Statements:	Teacher Certification	n	Disagree		Tend to Disagree		Tend to Agree		Agree		N/A		Total <sup>(b)</sup>	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	SD
34 I know behavior management strategies for controlling student's classroom behavior	Special Educators	124	1	20	1	5	50	36	72	57	—	—		
	General Educators	167	4	80	19	95	90	64	54	43	—	—		
	Total	291	5		20		140		126		—	—	3.33	.68
35 I try to help all my students find appropriate ways to deal with their feelings	Special Educators	124	1	50	—	—	41	37	81	48	1	100		
	General Educators	167	1	50	10	100	70	63	86	52	—	—		
	Total	291	2		10		111		167		1		3.53	.61
36 I usually participate in I.E.P. meetings	Special Educators	124	3	4	3	7	5	18	108	86	5	38		
	General Educators	167	80	96	40	93	22	82	17	14	8	62		
	Total	291	83		43		27		125		13		2.80	1.37

## **VITA**

## VITA

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### EDUCATION

- 2001                    **Ph.D.**  
Special Education Administration and Supervision  
**Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University**  
**(Virginia Tech)**, Blacksburg, Virginia
- 1996                    **CAGS**  
Special Education Administration and Supervision  
**Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University**  
**(Virginia Tech)**, Blacksburg, Virginia
- 1994                    **MASTERS OF ARTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**  
Ontario Institute of Studies in Education  
**University of Toronto**  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- 1988                    **BACHERLORS OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION**  
Special Education (Children with Emotional Impairment),  
**Central Michigan University**, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

### EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

- 1997-Present            **Assistant Professor**  
Chicago State University, Department of Special  
Education, Chicago, Illinois  
Responsibilities: Train graduate and undergraduate students  
working towards their degree in special education; provide  
inservice training for local school systems presenting workshops  
to teachers/school personnel working with students with disabilities;  
supervise students obtaining their field experience hours in local school  
systems; advice new incoming students; and participate on community and  
university related professional organizations and committees.

- 5/1996 - 8/1996      **Instructor**  
 Central Michigan University, Department of Counseling & Special Education, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan  
Responsibilities: Taught undergraduate & masters level courses on strategies for teaching culturally diverse students; cognitive strategies for teaching children with special needs; introduction to autistic children; & current issues in special education. Also supervised student teachers in the field, advised new incoming undergraduate students, and participated in a grant writing activity.
- 1994 – 8/1997      **Senior Graduate Research Assistant**  
 Dept. of Special Education Administration and Supervision  
**Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (Virginia Tech)**, Blacksburg, Virginia  
Responsibilities: Conducted research & teaching activities assigned by the department.
- 1989 – 7/1991      **Lecturer/Acting Head of Department**  
 Kenya Institute of Special Education  
 Department of teachers of children with Mental Retardation  
 Nairobi, Kenya.  
Responsibilities: Taught courses in the area of children with disabling conditions, strategies for teaching children with learning and mental retardation, strategies for teaching reading, issues in special education, and educational psychology. Supervised student teaching practicum & field experiences; advised teachers enrolled in the distance education program at the Institute; and was the resource person/consultant for the Ministry of Education, on site teacher consultant for Nairobi City Council Primary Schools, and various community & professional organizations and colleges & universities. Was also the Parent Consultant/Assessment Coordinator for various assessment centers in Nairobi and participated in research & publication, grant writing, and other scholarly activities.
- 1989 – 6/1991      **Private Tutor**  
 Nairobi, Kenya  
Responsibilities: Privately tutored students with Mental & learning disabilities (grades 2- 7) in Reading, English, and Math
- 1987/1988      **Student Teacher (Special and Regular Education)**  
 Ithica North Elementary School, Vowels Elementary School, and Alma Middle (Junior) High School, Michigan  
Responsibilities: Taught in an integrated third grade classroom and sixth grade students with emotional impairment.

## **OTHER EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES**

1987 – 1988

### **Counselor/Hall Monitor**

Central Michigan University Summer Speech Camp  
Mount Pleasant, Michigan, U.S.A.

Responsibilities: In charge of monitoring children attending the summer speech camp and those staying in the residence halls.

1987 - 1988

### **General Student Assistant**

Central Michigan University,  
International Students' Office, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

Responsibilities: Assisted with various activities assigned by the international students' coordinator.

1983 – 1984

### **Librarian**

U.S. Peace Corps Office, Nairobi, Kenya

Responsibilities: Maintained the library reference system, ordered resources needed, and ensured material requested by Peace Corps volunteers in the field was dispatched and returned when due.

## **PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

5/99 – Present

### **Secretary**

Illinois Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders  
Chicago, Illinois

1994 – Present

### **Member of the Council for Exceptional Children and CEC Divisions Of:**

- Children with Behavioral and Emotional Disorders
- Learning Disabilities
- Mental Retardation
- Teacher Education
- International Special Education & Services
- Administrators of special Education

1995 – Present

### **Member of Phi Delta Kappa**

Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University Chapter  
Blacksburg, Virginia

## **NATIONAL AND STATE PRESENTATIONS**

Presentation, "Curriculum Based Assessment: What is it and how can it be used to measure the performance of students with Behavioral Disorders?", International Adolescent Conference: Programming for the needs of Adolescents with Behavioral Disorders, Portland, Oregon, November, 2000

Presentation, "Curriculum Based Assessment: An alternative Strategy for Measuring Students' Performance", Paraeducators Working in Special Education Conference, Chicago Public School Systems, Chicago, March, 2000.

Presentation, "Test Driving Instruction and Alternative Assessment", Assessment Citywide Conference, Chicago Public School Systems, Chicago, October, 1999.

Presentation, "Writing I.E.P Goals and Objectives to the Illinois Learning Standards". Elementary School District No. 170, Chicago Heights, April, 1999.

## **RESEARCH/PUBLICATIONS**

M.A. Thesis Research, (1994). "Attitudes of Kenyan Teachers Towards the Integration Of Handicapped Children Into Regular Schools". **MAI**, Vol 33-06, pg 1661.

Training manual for the Kenya Institute of Special Education, (1991). "Children with Learning Disabilities". Nairobi: Kenya

## **RESEARCH INTERESTS**

- Factors that influence teachers to refer children for special education services and their relationship to training received
- Training needs of special and general education teachers currently working in integrated (inclusive) classroom settings.
- Attitudes of special and regular education teachers and administrators towards inclusion
- Strategies for adapting instruction for disabled students integrated into regular classrooms
- Characteristics of successful inclusive classrooms
- Staff development in special education: What skills should teacher training institutions be emphasizing with the current movement towards inclusion?