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Examining Teachers Perceptions of Inclusive Practices in Secondary Education

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Examining Teachers' Perceptions of Inclusive Practices in Secondary Education

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Abstract

The aim of this literature review is to examine inclusive education in the mainstream secondary education classroom, namely how participation in training, support, and attitudes and perceptions influence the success of inclusive education. Several articles were reviewed that researched inclusive education to determine the opinions of teachers who have implemented inclusive education into the mainstream secondary classroom and whether or not support and training influenced the success of inclusion. Teachers' perceptions on inclusive education are important to investigate. This will determine where teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards and knowledge of inclusive education as well as principals' support and expectations of teachers in implementing inclusion were predictors of effective teaching practices in the mainstream classroom. Literary researched showed that attitudes towards inclusion and knowledge of inclusion predicted the effectiveness of teaching practices and the principals' expectations and how they correlated with its success.

Keywords: inclusive, education, perceptions, attitudes, special education, students with disabilities, diversity, students, teachers,

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Examining Teachers' Perceptions of Inclusive Practices in Secondary Education

Inclusion is based on the idea that all students are capable of learning. All students should be treated equally therefore inclusive education is seen as a basis for future secondary educational development and a process that promotes participation from all students. However, international research has shown that the struggle to become all-inclusive is still a work in progress and school reform for this model of teaching is a major challenge for general education teachers. Throughout the 1970s to the early 1990s, a change in policies led to the establishment of special education within the confines of mainstream schools and the opportunity for children with disabilities to be involved in mainstream classes (Costello & Boyle, 2013). This became known as integration that focused on the location of where education was provided rather than a focus on providing an inclusive education for all students.

The first international movements toward a more inclusive approach occurred in the United States and Italy in 1994 (Costello & Boyle, 2013). International and national policies and laws, such as No Child Left Behind have changed how we educate our special education students by developing inclusive practices so as to increase participation and to improve the quality of education, not only to special education students, but for all students, including talented and gifted (TAG) and English Language Learners (EL). The issue of inclusive education has become an important part of the discussions at a worldwide level. Inclusive education practices have also been implemented in several schools in diversified education systems, worldwide (Mngo & Mngo, 2018). The United Nations promoted the idea of 'Education for All' at a conference in Thailand in 1990 (Kuyini & Desai, 2007). In a preliminary report on inclusive education, the initiative identified some key challenges. In particular they reported that many children with

disabilities did not always benefit from the inclusive education initiative owing to the rigid school programs (Kuyini & Desai, 2007).

It has become a major focus of the policies of many governments in several countries. Since the ideas of inclusive education are universal, academic experts and practitioners have not yet agreed concerning the conceptualization of it (Mngo & Mngo, 2018). Furthermore, if it refers to the ideas proposed in the regulations there has not been a clear cut view of what inclusive education entails or who should be included and who should be excluded from inclusion in the mainstream classroom (Mngo & Mngo, 2018). This idea of who should be included in the mainstream classroom has become quite a challenge.

Providing inclusive education has been a challenge as many countries have failed to provide quality inclusive education in their schools (Mngo & Mngo, 2018). The inability to establish effective inclusive schools has not been unexpected, because the policy of inclusion can only be effective if general education teachers embrace it and if schools have enough resources such as self-contained classroom, resource rooms, trained teachers and paraprofessionals needed to provide vital support to students who struggle with learning (Mngo & Mngo, 2018). Therefore, teachers play a vital role in the success of effective learning experiences for students with special needs. This success of inclusive education is based on teachers' attitude towards inclusive education and having special education students in the classroom. A more positive attitude of teachers towards students with special needs leads to a successful implementation of inclusive education in the mainstream classroom (Mngo & Mngo, 2018). However, this is not always the case.

Developing and developed countries show success in implementing effective inclusive practices in school based on the contingency of several key factors, including positive principal

teacher attitudes towards and their knowledge of inclusion (Kuyini & Desai, 2007). If teachers have a negative attitude towards the implementation of inclusive education it can have damaging effects in the learning process and environment (Fine-Davis & Faas, 2014). Other variables also affect the success of inclusive education, like training for example. Teachers' experience with students with special needs and those who speak another language or qualify for TAG also influence attitudes. In relation to perceptions of having students from other ethnic groups in their classes, results show that students were also less likely than teachers to have difficulties in having students form other groups in their inclusive classrooms (Fine-Davis & Faas, 2014). Contrary to this belief, teachers fresh out of college with less experience had a more positive attitude towards inclusive education (Mngo & Mngo, 2018).

Research also shows that high educational status and quality of training in special education resulted in more positivity in the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education in the mainstream classroom (Costello & Boyle, 2013). Since there are still many interpretations and practices concerning inclusive education, administrators, teachers, parents, students and paraprofessionals need to collaborate and have the training needed to make inclusive education in the mainstream classroom successful. This literary review will consider the attitudes of secondary teachers towards inclusive education, with a specific focus on attitudes and years of study and how this impacts the training for inclusion.

Literature Review

The inclusive education model has become a crucial part of the mainstream education classroom. The success or failure of the implementation of this model and its success depends on several factors (Kuyini & Desai, 2007). The factors that contribute the most to the success of inclusion will be addressed in this literature review and will be divided into the following subtopics of origins and differentiation, inclusive education, teachers participation in training, and attitudes and perceptions of inclusive education, and support. Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education likely vary with their demographic characteristics including education, teaching experiences, teaching level and training. Public school aged population qualifies for receiving special education services and these students increasingly receive the bulk of their instruction in the general education setting (Stelitano et al., 2019). Inclusive education (IE) is presented unanimously and internationally as an ethical imperative that provides a real quality education to all student, taking into account their individual features and devoting no discrimination, equal opportunities, equity and universal accessibility principles (López-Torrijo & Mengual-Andrés, 2015). This means it must include those students in an English Language (EL) program, or in the Talented and Gifted (TAG) program, who are also placed in the mainstream classroom in an inclusive education environment. Inclusive education refers to a professional and social attitude that guarantees the inalienable right of every human to have a complete personal and social development and set the basis of a real inclusive environment, therefore action must be taken to make sure teachers are trained properly and are willing to differentiate in order for this to be successful.

Origins and Differentiation

Through the 1970s to the early 1990s, a gradual change in the policies led to the establishment of special education units within the confines of mainstream school, and the opportunity for students with disabilities to be involved in mainstream classes. This practice became known as integration, with a focus on the geographical location of where the education was provided rather than a focus on providing an inclusive education for all children (Costello & Boyle, 2013). According to Costello and Boyle, the first international movement towards a more inclusive approach to education occurred in the United States and Italy. A key principle in the framework for inclusive education was the concept that inclusion should not be limited only to students with special education needs, but should consider all individual differences. Though the concept of inclusion has expanded to cover several different groups, initially it was designed to reduce segregation between general and special education students. Inclusive education is the practice in which individuals with disabilities and who qualify for special education services receive full or part-time planned and programmed education in mainstream classrooms and includes differentiated instruction (ŞAhan, 2021). Despite the perceived importance of differentiated instruction, and the placement of students in the mainstream classroom, research has indicated the absence of its consistent use.

Limited use of differentiated instruction has also been noted for the development of student learning for a number of students, not just special education students or those with a disability. Data evaluation from studies can facilitate evidence informed diversity initiatives and provide a structure for continued investigation into intervention supporting diversity related initiatives (Young et al., 2017). Therefore, increasing focus has been placed on the diversity of the inclusive classroom. The modifications made to the curriculum are considered an essential

inclusive strategy for the education of students with special needs and EL students. Inclusion involves structured, differentiated instruction for students with special needs in the general education classroom. Teachers are the fundamental aspect for the successful implementation of inclusive education. Several studies have aimed to identify the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. It was hypothesized that their attitude towards inclusive education varies depending on the years of experience and training (Khursheed et al., 2020).

Some indirect support for a relationship between teachers' attitudes towards inclusive practices and the types of learning environment that they provide for students is provided by teacher self reports in qualitative studies of highly inclusive schools (Monsen & Frederickson, 2002). Stanovich (1999) conducted three 90-minute focus groups with six teachers in a school that was undergoing a transition from self-contained classrooms to an inclusive mode. These teachers, who had volunteered to examine and make public their practice expressed a stern commitment to inclusion (Monsen & Frederickson, 2002). One of the key themes that resulted from the study and an analysis of their discussions showed the ways in which they made decisions and choices to promote a sense of community in the school. In particular, they discussed the ways in which they selected specific teaching approaches and classroom management strategies with the purpose of crating a learning environment that communicated a climate of acceptance (Monsen & Frederickson, 2002).

Inclusive education

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) children with disabilities have the right to be education in the least restrictive environment with their nondisabled peers, with appropriate supports and services (Downing et al., 2000). As a result, schools have been educating students with varying abilities together in general education classes and those benefits have been well documented (Downing et al., 2000). With the advent of inclusive education, the roles of teachers and paraeducators for students receiving special education services have changed significantly from being only the general education teachers teaching, to having the paraeducators re-teach and tutor special needs students in the classroom. Not only does this take paraeducators to who whole new level, it makes them have to become more responsible for supporting students with disabilities in the typical learning environment (Downing et al., 2000).

In inclusive education, there can be many different definitions of special education, but the problem with inclusive education is that it varies from one school to another and/or one teacher to another. The definition of inclusion goes more beyond students with disabilities and views the innumerable ways that students differ from one another as the differences in class, gender, ethnicity, family background, language, and ability between inclusion and non inclusion (Ruwandi, 2012). Some students, for example, could not be integrated fully in the mainstream classroom, because their disabilities are so severe. On the other hand, there are many students who can be integrated into the mainstream classrooms, because their disabilities are not so severe that it is a disruption to the general education classroom. Ruwandi (2012) says, inclusive education means embracing everyone and making a commitment to provide every student with a community, every citizen with a democracy and the undeniable right to belong (Ruwandi, 2012). Inclusion supports that not just students labeled having a learning disorder are considered for

inclusion, for example TAG and EL students should also be considered and differentiation implemented for them. Inclusion includes all students, but not everyone agrees.

One of the debates, for example, focuses on where students with special needs should be integrated or separated with general education students. Some people disagree that students with a disability should be separated because they have the same rights as the general education students, but some support the separation, because the needs of the special education students and attention and treatment of them are different. In addition, the terms of inclusion are also polarized because this is not only limited to special education students, but also to EL and TAG students. Inclusion is a belief system, not just a set of strategies that all teachers must implement into their mainstream classroom and there must be a clear allocation of shared responsibilities and accountability. There must be an agreed commitment on behalf of special and mainstream schools in relation to issues connected to resource allocation, including time, funding, staff deployment and training.

A high level of collaboration, resource and expertise sharing is essential between partnerships and based on mutual respect and recognition of what each one can contribute (Ní Bhroin & King, 2019). Inclusive education is the kind of education in which the students in need of special education services are in a classroom with trained teachers in general education classrooms through special education support. In the past, the widespread opinion was that the special education students had lower abilities than their peers, however as inclusive education has become more commonplace, these students have started to be considered as belonging in mainstream classrooms. Nevertheless, it is an argument that teachers lack necessary knowledge and skills to work with our special education students in the inclusive classroom. Inclusive education is difficult to implement in secondary schools, basically because teachers are not

trained in what they must do. Inclusive education does not mean that the students in need of special education only study together with their peers in the same classroom environment without any special education support (ŞAhan, 2021). Inclusive education requires all teachers to participate in training in order for it to be implemented effectively.

Teachers are expected to do a lot and with few resources. Teachers making decisions in teaching activity based on their experiences, perceptions values and beliefs about their roles, activities and responsibilities in schools (Cristina-Corina & Valerica, 2012). The teaching profession is based on the vocational and personal skills and competencies, and involves professional and ethical standards and models and entails a continuous process of professional development (Cristina-Corina & Valerica, 2012). This leads to reform, namely inclusive education, instead of self-contained education. Teachers' job satisfaction has been recognized as extremely important for implementing any type of inclusive education reform or involving the teacher in life long learning for them and their students.

Apart from encouraging teachers to enact continually and adapt new practices to context, the role of more knowledgeable other in sharing feedback on practice is important to teachers' learning with continuing changes to practice (Bhroin & King, 2020). Collaboration is key. It is more likely to produce meaningful change to teachers' practices with higher student outcomes in the role of leadership in developing and sustain changes to this practice by fostering collaboration between teachers through building collegiality based on trust and respect (Bhroin & King, 2020). Collaboration decision making between general education classes and special education teachers based on careful consideration of the individual's learning goals and the typical classroom practices is advocated to facilitate contextualization of the individual plan within the general education curriculum (Bhroin & King, 2020).

Contrary to most studies, a study conducted by Woodcock (2013), compared attitudes of teachers experienced in special education with the attitudes of non-experienced teachers and did not find any difference in the attitude of the teachers. In a qualitative study, teachers described feelings of guilt and frustration of not spending appropriate time with regular students because they had to spend extra time with students with special needs (Khursheed et al., 2020). However, they established that the elementary teachers usually have a negative attitude towards inclusive education, because they have a lack of training and facilities are not available to teachers. In a similar study, in 2015, they found that elementary school teachers showed frustration due to a lack of preparation to deal with students with special needs in the general classroom setting. This was similar to the attitudes of secondary teachers in the same study (Khursheed et al., 2020). Teachers indicated that they were not well prepared and there was fewer training offered to prepare them for inclusion.

Participation and Training

Twenty first century students are expected to have some basic skills such as the abilities to think critically, analyze, and synthesize information, work in cooperation and collaboration (Erman & Altiok, 2017). While researching this topic, several studies have shown that teacher training provides the basis for differentiated instruction and a successful implementation of the inclusive mainstream classroom. Inclusive education is hard to implement in secondary school, probably because one of the determining factors lies in teachers' initial training that determines their attitude, identity and professional practice. They are also required to acquire further skills that have emerged as a result of the rapid development in technology. Consequently, they are obliged to equip themselves with knowledge and skills and use them effectively (Erman &

Altiok, 2017). Several qualitative studies have shown that examine the number of credits dedicated to inclusive education. Several studies conclude that the initial teacher training provides sufficient theoretical basis regarding the conceptualization of inclusive education and the skills to deal with the tutorship in an academic and professional orientation (López-Torrijo & Mengual-Andrés, 2015). Torrijo mentions that no educational improvements or inclusion would take place without proper training.

It also recommended that all teacher training courses include training components referring to it and urged to ensure that teacher training programs both initial and in-service training were addressed to deal with the special educational needs in mainstream schools. Some teachers, because of their lack of training, lack the flexibility to adapt education to students' diverse abilities, interest, expectation and needs as well as to adapt to the changes that students and society experience (López-Torrijo & Mengual-Andrés, 2015). Among these factors and despite the perceived importance of differentiated instruction, research has indicated the absence or inconsistent use of it. Several factors have been identified that include the lack of content knowledge necessary to extend and differentiate. This goes far beyond the fact that teachers aren't being trained for differentiation. They do not know the content of what they are teaching well enough to do it. So not only are students in special education not getting the quality inclusive education they need, neither are the EL or TAG students.

According to Costello and Boyle (2013), it was discovered that students with special needs or disabilities reported that classroom teachers produced modifications of lower quality and clarity that special educations and teaching assistants (Costello & Boyle, 2013). In addition, they found that experienced teachers created more simplified modifications in comparison to novice teachers who created more functional alternative modifications. Even though many

teachers agree that effective inclusion occurs when teachers use modifications and differentiation according to the needs of the students, limited knowledge does not exist about the types and the quality of them, nor are they understood and used effectively by teachers. Teachers feel the need for training to get ready to teach in an inclusive environment and at the same time a majority of teachers are in favor of the assertion that all teachers must hold a set of specific skills, teaching methods and tools that will provide students with qualitative learning experience that has a main golf of value to the classroom and its diversity (Marin, (2014). Taking this all into consideration, teachers must be aware of the fact that education and training system s can increase their capacity to include all earners and to achieve equitable outcomes for all, while meeting the increasing diversity of learners' needs, maintaining cultural diversity and improving quality of inclusive education (Marin, 2014).

Attitudes and Perceptions

Teachers' attitudes have been found to be highly related to successful inclusive education (Costello & Boyle, 2013). It is important that there is consideration for their attitudinal changes towards inclusive education over years of experience. They have found that generally, teachers with more experience indicated less positive attitudes towards inclusive education. Of the teachers surveyed, the attitudes of secondary teachers and found that while attitudes towards inclusion were positive, there was a significant decline in positive attitudes after the first year of teaching. They also discovered that competency has been identified as an area of significant concern for teachers tasked to implement inclusive education. Teachers' concerns or lack of facilities and training regarding inclusive education brought negativity in teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education at the elementary and secondary levels (Khursheed et al., 2020).

Furthermore, they found that the overall success of an inclusion model depends upon teachers' attitudes and identified that negativity towards inclusion is more likely to cause a reduction in academic performance and an increase in the isolation of special needs students, which is very concerning. They specified that teachers with a negative attitude are the hardest obstacles to bring change in the educational environment (Khursheed et al., 2020). This is why collaboration, training and support are so important. For improvement in attitudes towards inclusive education to occur, they suggest that ongoing professional training for existing teachers is necessary as well as further development in pre-service teacher training for more inclusive practices. It is important to note that because of the lack of training, teachers may have a negative attitude and perception towards inclusive education.

Because of this negative perception, inclusive education cannot be implemented effectively. The factors mentioned but also included organization and infrastructures of the school, the curricular and methodological management, and the availability of personal and mater resources condition success or failure of the implementation of this model. The attitude of the teacher and the perception, beliefs and humanity attributed to the students with disabilities, acquire great value for the implementation of inclusive education since it can facilitate or hinder the processes or integration, learning and participation of students (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2021). The perception and attitudes of teachers are conditioned by several factors, but mainly training, experience and years or practice, which plays a fundamental role in the success of inclusive education. The lack of knowledge is a major shortcoming that can be remedied. Teacher training has become a fundamental pillar of the quality of the educational response of students and the generation of attitudes and positive predisposition towards inclusion (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2021).

Secondary education teachers have been described as less positive towards inclusive education than teachers of younger children.

The findings of a study by Barnes and Gaines (2015) support the results of some more current studies, like Pérez-Jorge. It was concluded that teachers teaching in inclusive schools scored high on three dimensions of attitudes including cognate, affective and behavioral, which is consistent with the findings of Salvovita, (2019) who found a significant difference among teachers teaching in different types of school settings. He concluded that teachers teaching special education schools had a more positive attitude towards inclusion than teachers working in regular schools who were not inclusive (Khursheed et al., 2020).

It has been suggested that this may be attributed to results centered pedagogy in secondary school, rather than the child-centered pedagogy more commonly found in primary and preschools (Costello & Boyle, 2013). As teachers in training, it is essential that pre-service secondary teachers maintain a positive attitude towards inclusive education in secondary schools and suggest that individuals pursue activities and situations where they feel competent and it follows that positive attitudes are associated with feelings of competency brought by training in order to be successful. Not all researchers agree that attitudes towards inclusive education are improved through training. Costello & Boyle (2013) found that training was not a significant factor for attitudes toward inclusive education and that attitudes were determined by the types of disabilities, with less inclusive attitudes held towards children with behavioral and emotional difficulties than those with learning disabilities. They go on to say that a limitation to categorizing disabilities in the manner was that many pre-service teachers may not have had any personal experiences or specific training with children in either or both categories and that their

attitudes may be indicative of stereotypes in the absence of personal experience or specific training and more importantly, support from administration.

However, in a study conducted on teamwork, teachers who participated in teamwork studies reported generally positive in regards to teamwork and the team process in planning and implementing supports for children with disabilities (Malone & Gallagher, 2009). Furthermore, these teachers' perceptions of performance characteristics of the teams on which they served were generally positive These findings not only parallel those reported for other disciplines including general education teachers, and support personnel. And those given the role played by special education teachers in school based teams (Malone & Gallagher, 2009). Team members who positively appraise their team experience not only are more likely to invest effort into the process, but also may be in a position to have a positive influence on inclusive education (Malone & Gallagher, 2009). In addition to rating their opinion on teamwork, teachers expressed their views on benefits, limitations, supports, and recommendations related to teamwork.

For example, benefits of teamwork such as different perspectives and sharing of ideas and information and problem solving and decision making to improve inclusive education and ge3neral collaboration. (Malone & Gallagher, 2009). In addition, team members who experienced the benefits reflected in this study were more likely to engage in or contribute to the team effort (Malone & Gallagher, 2009). Similarly, limitations of teamwork found in the literature reviews such as time or scheduling constraints and the lack of commitment and participation on the part of team members were also noted by the teachers in this particular study (Malone & Gallagher, 2009). This is what produced the negative feedback.

It appears likely that teachers who demonstrate very positive attitudes towards inclusive education would communicate these to their students. In turn, the perceptions of learning

environment by the students in the classroom would be different from those of students in classroom without the positive feedback (Monsen & Frederickson, 2002). This can lead to differences in perceptions of learning environments by students in the classrooms, because it would be different from those who have a positive opinion. There has been a direct relationship between the characteristics of the classroom learning environment and the acceptance of students who have special education needs (Monsen & Frederickson, 2002). Because of these differences of opinion, support is needed.

Support

It is imperative to understand the attitudes and knowledge of parents and teachers about children's fundamental rights. The lack of evidence in this field both impedes the development of a positive culture regarding them and effective programs promoting child welfare and preventing mistreatment (McCarthy, 2012). As well, finding evidence about the state of parents' and teachers' attitudes and knowledge in inclusive education can reveal whether there is any need for further awareness and can even inform effective interventions. This would help change attitudes of those who support inclusive education.

Collaboration between teachers and the provision of support from school administration can improve teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. Salovita (2019) found that teachers' positive attitude towards inclusive education was highly associated with the supportive environment provided by school and their professional development (Abiodulla & Khursheed, 2020). The absence of training programs and support for special education programs for special education professionals such as teachers and paraprofessionals in educational settings has resulted in an acute shortage of qualified personnel (Mngo & Mngo, 2018). It is true to say that the inability to establish effective inclusive schools has not been unexpected, because the policy

of inclusion can only be effective if general education teachers embrace the practice and if schools have essential resources such as self-contained classroom, resource room, trained teaches and professional are established to provide vital support to the students who struggle with learning disabilities. Special education is best managed when qualified and well trained teachers and related service personnel are available and have support and collaboration. This ensures that proper identification, development of individualized education programs (IEPs) and the implementation and evaluation and academic achievement for the students is better promoted and supported.

A principal's leadership may be a critical factor for the school's performance through shaping teachers' beliefs, values, attitudes and work behavior (Ching & Cheong, 1997). This importance of leadership has been strongly emphasized in the literature of school effectiveness and educational reforms (Ching & Cheong, 1997). It has also been indicated that leadership is a critical factor for organizational performance and effectiveness, which shapes organizational process and structure patterns of social interactions, attitudes and behaviors (Ching & Cheong, 1997). Having principals, teachers and paraprofessionals work together will support a positive mindset.

Teachers and paraprofessionals need to work together to support inclusive education. Generally speaking, the teachers and paraprofessionals support each other and this became very clear through the analysis of the data collected in several studies. In order to gain an understanding of factual working relationships and support, semi-structured interviews used the observation and notes to focus the discussion on actual practices rather than on how they wished to be supported. The belief that support and communication is essential to effective inclusion does not just fall upon the shoulders of the teachers and the administrators.

Parents are also important for support. Parents should participate as part of a team in IEP meetings and work with Special education teachers, general education teachers and administrators when developing their child's program (Malone & Gallagher, 2009). Parent involvement for students at the secondary level differs from involvement in many ways. For example, differences between laws and policies in high school and college significantly impact communication and parental involvement (Francis et al., 2016). Program staff cultivate parent involvement in several ways including shared expectations, communication, person centered planning and parent leadership to name a few (Francis, et al., 2016). Students in a special education program are also held to the same standards as other students. They are expected to uphold rules and a code of conduct and are afforded the same degree of decision-making when it comes to their IEP. Attitudes of parents and students, at times finding them in conflict with those that the education system seeks to impart. (Tannenbaum et al., 2020).

As for students' attitudes, a diversified linguistic background and high fluency in languages were found to be correlated with more positive attitudes (Devicci, & Rouse, 2010). Although special education offers individualized support and services to facilitate a positive student outcome, the program does not provide one to one in most cases. Usually support is provided by a paraprofessional in a small group setting within the general education classroom (Devicci & Rouse, 2010). Many students with intellectual disabilities receive this kind of support in high school; therefore students and some teachers rely heavily on support provided by them. But in a long-term situation, students' families offer long-term involvement and support (Devicci, & Rouse, 2010). The analysis of classroom observations and post observations resulted in a long and detailed list of ways in which the teachers and paraprofessionals worked together.

According to the participants in several studies, the success of their collaboration was based on several factors, such as sharing knowledge, skills and resources and ideas useful to support individual students and the whole class (Devicci & Rouse, 2010). In addition, knowing each other's teaching strategies and classroom management was crucial. Having clear, but also flexible roles and responsibilities, but still maintaining professional conduct and competency were also key factors along with being knowledgeable of the subject, approachable and respectful of each other, allowed the inclusive classroom to be successful (Devicci & Rouse, 2010). The benefits of support and collaboration can also be summarized by using Huxman and Vangen (2005) theory of collaborative advantage in which they listed the benefits of collaboration as follows: access to resources, shared risk and successes, efficiency and effectiveness, coordination and seamless learning, and the moral imperative (Devicci, & Rouse, 2010). This list portrays the teachers and paraprofessionals accounts and practices and what was innovative in the way they managed to sustain their collaboration and how they challenged traditional views about inclusive education and the roles and responsibilities and success of the special education program and inclusive education. Finding a balance between knowledge and power rather than following strictly defined roles and responsibilities seemed to be most relevant to the teams and their success (Devicci & Rouse, 2010).

It is also important to realize that administration needs to support the general education teachers along with the special education teachers in order to implement inclusive education. According to teachers' perceptions there was a positive relationship between instructional leadership behaviors of their principals and teachers' attitudes towards organizational change (Kursunoglu & Tanrıogen, 2009). It can be seen that the teachers working in an inclusive classroom have responsibilities along with the principals. Therefore principals should inform and

train their teachers about the changes at school and they also should discuss the important of the organizational change for the entire school system with them (Kursunoglu & Tanrıogen, 2009). Thus, teachers can have a more positive outlook and attitude towards change in the school system with the right support from administration.

Principals' instructional leadership and support, as perceived by teachers was a significant predictor or the attitudes towards change. In other words, we can assert that when teachers' perceptions towards instructional leadership behaviors of their principals increase, the levels of their attitudes towards change are expected to increase as well (Kursunoglu & Tanrıogen, 2009). In order to implement effective and successful inclusive education and change principals must have required instructional leadership skills and support for their staff (Kursunoglu & Tanrıogen, 2009). Much research has been invested recently in looking for changes in teachers' perceptions of inclusive education. Most of this research points to the notion that reform is highly dependent on our ability to change conservative ideas that many teachers, all over the world hold in relation to teaching and learning (Orion & Thompson, 1999). All of these changes require a thorough understanding of inclusive education and how teachers differentiate for the individual needs of the students.

Paraeducators offer a lot of support in the general education classroom. Even though the general education teachers provide the curriculum, paraeducators oftentimes have to modify and adapt the curriculum for special education students. Paraeducators described teaching students specific skills across a wide range of academic and nonacademic subjects, like English, Math, art writing and spelling, along with social and self care skills (Downing et al., 2000). The majority of paraeducators described their instructional efforts as helping not only the students being supported to learn, but also the other students in the class as well. While all the paraeducators

reported providing instruction on a one to one basis, they also described providing instruction for small and large groups (Downing et al., 2000).

All paraeducators, reported doing a great deal of adapting and modifying of curriculum, materials and other activities so that the supported students would be included in class activities or so the work would be easier and more fun to do. One paraeducator stated that she previews curriculum and material that the teacher will cover. It can be handouts or in the textbook. She generally used this to find supplementary material for quizzes, tests, worksheets, labs or whatever the assignment may be that day. Then she can modify it or adapt this material for the students with disabilities. She then has the teacher approve the materials and gives them to the general education teacher for input and approval (Downing et al., 2000).

This can also be done with the special education teacher and the general education teachers as collaboration. A good suggestion would be to hand out supplementary or modified materials to the special education students along with the materials handed out to the general education students. Many special education students would not be singled out this way. No one would know the difference, unless the materials were examined fairly closely (Downing et al., 2000).

Most paraeducators also reported that adaptations and modifications were completed during the school day when students did not need support, like during their work time. Types of adaptations described by the paraeducators included reducing the amount of work, questions, color coding important information, enlarging materials, using manipulative, audiotaping material and using pictures for reading and writing (Downing et al., 2000). Some of the adaptations that were mentioned were minimal or extensive in nature, as noted in the following statement by a paraeduator without formal training:

Some paraeducators may completely rewrite what is in the textbook. They may use shortened text in order to reduce the number of pages, for example from 300 pages to 6 pages, upon approval of the general education teachers. This way the students can get the most important information from the reading, without the daunting task of reading so many words (Downing et al., 2000).

In addition to adaptations, paraeducators also modify curriculum. For example, increased time for processing or task completion, additional verbal cues or directions, close physical proximity or physical assistance of an adult or a peer (Downing et al., 2000). Their awareness of the student's disability provides additional support in the general education classroom. Not only do they support the students' academic needs, they also support personal care needs that also requires training. Most paraeducators spend part of their day providing support for personal care needs of their students, such as helping at lunchtime and when using the restroom (Downing et al., 2000). Sometimes they are the only ones responsible for personal care needs and some of these needs require training that paraeducators seldom receive. In order for special education students to be successful, these needs must also be met.

Some paraeducators facilitate interactions between students a an important activity during their day (Downing et al., 2000). When facilitating interactions, they have to carefully select classmates based on their demonstrated willingness to assist and on the completion of their own classwork. The students are paired up with general education students for the most part. Sometimes they are removed from class and participate together in a small group with the par educator, where they model appropriate behaviors.

Not only do paraeducators assist student in the classroom, they also assist with clerical work. They are many times the ones who keep track of behaviors in the classroom, if the student

has a behavior goal. Many students on a behavior goal have a behavior rubric that needs to be completed, either by class period or by day. Some students also receive Medicare, so they have to fill out paperwork to be sent in.

Other clerical tasks involve filing, grading, checking mail, cleaning, putting up bulletin boards, checking homework folders and training other educational assistants (Downing et al., 2000). Paraeducators are sometimes trained to be substitute teachers, so they can fill in for a teacher if needed. Paraeducators reported that they were willing to do anything asked of them (Downing et al., 2000). Even though they may not be trained in some of these tasks, they are more than willing to do whatever they can to assist teachers and students.

Paraeducators are part of a team. Although they may work closely with students and teachers, oftentimes they are not part of the IEP team. This may cause paraeducators to have a negative attitude about being included and may affect interactions and relationships with team members. Clear differences exist between discussions related to teams and school based teams members and parents (Downing et al., 2000). Collaborating with teams and school based members for IEP meetings are important in order to be a cohesive team. Although they may not attend a meeting, their input and contributions to the information brought to the IEP team is immeasurable.

Information that paraeducators contribute to meetings included how the student was behaving in specific situations and activities in which the student was engaged and to the extent to which both instructional and behavior strategies were effective (Downing et al., 2000). In other words, they are the eyes and ears of the teachers and the parents. Most paraeducators consider both receiving feedback related to their interactions with students and brainstorming future interventions with other team members to be forms of support (Downing et al., 2000).

Some, however, feel that conflicting advice and direction from different teachers pose a problem. This is especially true coming from those who are not trained in inclusive education. Paraeducators are part of a team, therefore touching base with them and having monthly or quarterly meetings is a huge benefit. Some paraeducators work with several special education students who have different special education teachers. Not only do these meeting provide information about students, they also provide additional support.

For example, some students, especially those who have one on one aides, are very difficult to work with and take an emotional toll on the paraeducator. Therefore they benefit from emotional support from the special education teachers and from the general education teachers. This is why special education and general education teachers along with the paraeducators and other supportive resources are considered a team. If a paraeducator is overloaded with adaptations or modifications, other team members can assist and provide additional support (Downing et al., 2000).

Most paraeducators feel comfortable working in the general education classroom verses special education classrooms and they felt that the general education teacher made them feel welcome. Paraeducators typically feel that all or most of the team members, including general education teachers in the inclusive classroom, values them. The value they reported feeling was attributed to their perception that they were with the students the most and therefore knew the students the best and were treated like teachers (Downing et al., 2000). However, some paraeducators reported that there were negative attitudes from one or more team members.

Dealing with such negative and stressful interactions among team members was one aspect of their job with which paraeducators were uncomfortable. Some reported that there was a lack of training and communication and collaboration with the other team members. Some noted

that they felt that since they were not general education teachers, their opinions did not matter. One teacher, who almost had her bachelor's degree and was taking classes to become a teacher, described being totally on her own (Downing et al., 2000). She mentioned that she sometimes feels as though she is completely on her own. Some also criticized their role in on the team, because of their lack of involvement at IEP meetings and from the general education teachers. (Downing et al., 2000).

Even when collaborative interactions occurred, paraeducators continuously referred to being responsible for making many decisions about instruction that could have a great impact on a supported student's learning (Downing et al., 2000). These areas typically included making decisions regarding adapting and modifying the curriculum, providing behavioral support, providing information to team members and informing parents (Downing et al., 2000). All of the tasks mentioned are tasks that are to be performed by a trained, special or general education teacher or administrator. These additional responsibilities, without proper training, stirred up negative feelings among the paraeducators.

For example, one area that paraeducators were responsible for was behavioral supports. How paraeducators intervened in relation to inappropriate behaviors depended on the individual students, the situation, and the extent to which a specific behavioral intervention plan existed (Downing et al., 2000). For instance, when an intervention plan did not exist, because of the newness or infrequency of the behavior, the paraeducators frequently stated that they made spontaneous decisions about how to respond (Downing et al., 2000). These decisions were only based on the experience of the paraeducator and not based on knowledge of what to so or proper training.

Paraeducators believe that there needs to be effective training in order to be responsible for their many tasks they perform with students. Although they stated that training was critical for doing their job effectively, the majority of them stated that they received no training when they were first hired (Downing et al., 2000). However there were a few paraeducators who had or were working on their teaching credentials and said they had appropriate training and support form their institution of higher learning (Downing et al., 2000). The majority reported teaching themselves about the student and about what to do with them by reading, observing, and recalling their own experiences in school.

Despite their overall comfort with their positions, they did express concern for their lack of qualifications related to some of their activities and responsibilities (Downing et al., 2000). This was particularly true for the paraeducators who did not have a bachelor's degree or teaching license. Some paraeducators wondered if they were the best qualified team member to provide direct instruction to students, especially instruction on new curriculum and materials (Downing et al., 2000). Overall paraeducators are expected to have a lot of responsibilities, with far less training.

Future Research

Several quantitative and qualitative studies have been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of training and the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. Many studies confirm that demographics characteristics such as qualification of teachers, grade level they teach, teaching experience of students with special needs, teaching experience of general education students, types of students being taught, special education training in general and gender were important factors. It was found that the difference between the qualification of teachers and attitudes towards inclusive education was very significant. Although qualification showed a difference in attitudes, its effect was pretty small and future research should be done in order to determine the perspectives of special education teachers and general education teachers find inclusive education beneficial for not only special education student, but for all students.

Conclusion

Changes in behavior shows the willingness of teachers to actually modify the curriculum to meet the special needs of students that would gradually bring change in cognitive and affective attitudes of teachers. This may not be consistent with the research of some who found differences in cognitive and affective attitudes due to qualification, however the difference in the results can be due to the difference in the sample of their studies, for example the sample studies of some of the studies done overseas, who may have cultural difference or financial difficulties providing training for inclusive education. Conclusively, inclusive education can only be implemented in school by improving teachers' attitudes. It is important to provide teachers training either in regular school in special school, or inclusive school. Moreover teachers' concerns regarding inclusive education should be addressed to fewer obstacles for the implementation and the success of inclusive education.

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