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Teacher beliefs on inclusion of students with disabilities in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade in one Southern California urban school district

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TEACHER BELIEFS ON INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN

KINDERGARTEN, FIRST GRADE, AND SECOND GRADE IN ONE SOUTHERN

CALIFORNIA URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership Administration and Policy

by

Denise MacAllister

June 2017

Linda Purrington, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Denise MacAllister

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, friends, and colleagues who supported me throughout this journey, and I am truly grateful to each and every one of you. A special thank you to my family who have encouraged me throughout my studies and to my parents, Don and Marilyn, who always encouraged my sisters, Gayle and Mickie and I in all our endeavors. Thank you to my brothers in law Michael and Tadd, who have brought love and laughter to our family. A big thank you to my niece Mia and nephews Andrew and Matthew, no matter what you choose to do in life enjoy and be happy, and thank you for your love and laughter in all our adventures.

A special thank you to my friend and high school buddy, Vic, for always giving me guidance from the parent perspective of special education and for being understanding when I missed so many of our weekly walks during this journey.

I dedicate this dissertation to the special and general education teachers, administrators, and support staff that guide and teach our students each day. Thank You. I am truly grateful for your dedication.

"When someone is truly included no one will question their presence only their absence."

Renee Laporte

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

VITA

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Chapman University   2000

>   Resource Specialist Certificate

California State University, Long Beach   1983

>   Masters in Education
>   Learning Handicapped Credential
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California State University, Long Beach   1981

>   Bachelors in Education
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Professional Experience

Orange Unified School District-Administration

Executive Director, Special Education/SELPA   2013–2017

Coordinator, Special Education, Elementary/Secondary   2004–2013

Assistant Principal, Elementary   2002–2004

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Special Education Teacher   1997–2002

General Education Teacher   1984-1997

Baldwin Park Unified School District-Teaching

General Education Teacher   1981–1984

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative, descriptive, and comparative study was achieved by investigating and comparing general and special education kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade teacher beliefs on inclusion, as well as their perceptions of accommodations, preparation, and barriers to inclusion. More specifically, three categories or variables of general education and special education teachers' beliefs were explored: (a) core perspectives, (b) expected outcomes, and (c) classroom practices for student inclusion. The researcher utilized the My Thinking About Inclusion (MTAI) survey developed by Stoiber, Gettinger, and Goetz (1998).

The following research questions guided this study: (a) What relationships, if any, exist between general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in an urban school district in southern California as measured by the MTAI survey? and (b) To what extent, if at all, are general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in one urban school district in southern California, as measured by the MTAI survey, related to their demographic characteristics? The MTAI survey was administered to 91 teacher participants who supported students with disabilities in inclusive education in kindergarten through 2nd grade during the 2016-17 school year. Fifty-four participants (59%) completed the MTAI survey. Out of the 54 participants, 24 were general education teachers and 30 were special education teachers.

The findings of this study shared that a key factor promoting positive attitudes toward inclusion depended on the teacher attending professional development that supported their work with SWD. For all three belief subscales, Core Perspectives, Expected Outcomes, and Classroom Practices; coteaching was found to be the most favorable training for general education teachers. General education teachers also noted that trainings on working with behaviors, individualized coaching-support and networking with colleagues were supportive for them. Special education

teachers' data also showed that trainings on individualized coaching-support were significant for them. However, for the special education teachers' trainings on accommodations and networking with colleagues were most favorable. Classroom supports such as teacher collaboration, instructional aide(s), and special education teacher(s) support were shown to influence teacher attitude and self-efficacy toward inclusion.

Chapter I: The Problem

There is a popular belief among K-12 general education teachers that "inclusion of special needs in their classes is a policy doomed to fail" (Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhie-Richmond, 2009, p. 535). Teachers complain that SWD will disrupt the learning of their peers and that teaching students with special needs necessitates specialized teaching outside the general education classroom. However, notwithstanding teachers' concerns, there is evidence that suggests SWD who are in an inclusive classroom benefit from the inclusive classroom as compared with students in separate settings (Bui, Quirk, Almazan, & Valenti, 2010; Jordan et al., 2009).

Inequality in education has been a long-standing impediment to educating SWD in the United States; in the early 1900s, the United States did not educate children with disabilities with their typical peers; those students who were intellectually disabled, blind, and deaf were placed in state institutions (West, Perner, Las, Murdick, & Gartin, 2015). These students were not believed to have the ability to be part of the general classrooms and were educated in separate schools. Civil rights law appears to be a precursor to support SWD in the public school setting, beginning with the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education desegregation case, which ruled that one could not discriminate against any group of individuals for arbitrary reasons (Lutz, 2005). In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was signed into law and provided money to states in the form of grants that provided appropriate and equitable resources for students, including those with disabilities (Bishop & Jackson, 2015). A few years later, in 1971, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. Commonwealth case looked at the public-school law that denied an education to those children who could not demonstrate a mental age of 5 years (Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia, undated). This legislation was enacted using

the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause, which gave those who were disabled the legal right to be educated. Following in 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) was passed and made special education services available along with providing federal dollars for special education (Whitbread, 2013). This Education for All Handicapped Children Act was revised in 1997 and 2004 and titled the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Under IDEA, school districts must ensure that SWD, birth through 22, receive an appropriate education (Snyder & Dillow, 2015). The research indicates that the United States has enacted laws that more fully include SWD with their typical peers over the years (Ryndak et al., 2014).

Educational Placement Matters

Placement matters for SWD for more than 20 years of research has regularly shown that SWD who are educated in the general education classroom demonstrate "favorable outcomes" (Bui et al., 2010, p. 1). General education classrooms in which SWD are educated along with their non-disabled peers can be denoted as inclusive (Ford, 2013). Being educated with typical peers was first mandated in 2004 with the IDEA, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004). IDEA (2004) mandates that to the largest extent possible SWD should be educated in inclusive general education classrooms, unless their needs cannot be met even with supplementary aids, services, and support.

Attitudes Matter

Teacher attitudes matter for SWD. Support, training, collaboration, positive experiences, and communication are factors that have been found to influence teacher attitudes regarding inclusive education (Lee, 2013; McGhie-Richmond, Irvine, Loreman, Cizman, & Lupart, 2013; Zion & Sobel, 2014). Positive teacher attitudes have been found to be paramount to positive

experiences for teachers and students in the elementary inclusive classroom (Lee, 2013; McGhie-Richmond et al., 2013; Zion & Sobel; 2014). Teacher preparation and classroom supports, such as a co-teacher or Instructional Aides, have been found to be important factors in supporting inclusive education (McGhie-Richmond et al., 2013; Zion & Sobel, 2014). Furthermore, ongoing collaboration and communication among teachers and parents was defined as an additional factor supportive of SWD in an inclusive classroom (McGhie-Richmond et al., 2013).

Present Efforts in California

In California, there are efforts by districts to develop and implement a system that will address the needs of SWD as well as the teachers. Teachers are looking at the barriers to learning and teaching, as well as what research-based practices to implement. Promoting inclusive education is becoming a general practice for a number of school districts where SWD are educated alongside their peers without disabilities. The US Department of Education and Office of Special Education via a grant collaborated to promote inclusive education and titled it school wide integrated framework for transformation (SWIFT). According to SWIFT, districts need to have leadership, multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), family-community partnerships, and inclusive policies and practices to meet the needs of all students.

Statement of the Problem

Many K-12 school districts in California are looking to promote inclusive education to meet the needs of all learners. This study will look at one such school district, and their inclusive schooling journey and the beliefs of teachers who are teaching students with and without disabilities in an inclusive classroom setting. In the case of Seaside School District, a pseudonym, they have been preparing for a number of years. Currently the district supports students in the traditional resource specialist program, special day class, or co-teaching model for

MTSS. A few of the distinct practices the district implements include differentiated learning that is driven by student need(s), student-centered learning, and addressing individualized student needs. Using a problem-solving system in the district, such as Collaborative Academic Support Team, ensures that all school stakeholders have at least three times a year to collaborate around student instructional gaps (academic or social) and design research-based interventions for improving student learning outcomes as well as opportunities to reflect on student progress. The district embraces the inclusive education practice of co-teaching to meet the educational needs of students with diverse learning options in both general education and special education.

During the past few years, the district has been moving toward a more inclusive environment where special education students receive their education with their general education peers in co-taught classrooms. The district's climate and culture support a move toward inclusive education. Additionally, the district was awarded two grants to support inclusive education totaling $85,000.

During the 2014–2015 school year, the Seaside School District special education department along with educational services delved into planning and promoting a model of inclusion for SWD. The district worked on an inclusive model that would support SWD in the general education environment with appropriate support(s) to benefit student outcome. An action plan was developed during the 2014–2015 school year that included: (a) meeting with a neighboring school district to view their inclusive program, (b) joining the state inclusive collaborative to discuss inclusive schooling models, (c) have meetings with administration and teachers to discuss inclusive schooling, (d) provide professional development on the evidence-based strategies from literature review relating to district initiatives, and (e) determine specific needs of incoming kindergarten SWD.

Site leadership can be a powerful focus in leading a change effort and it was determined to begin the implementation with them. After meeting with site leadership to build a cohesive vision for inclusion, special education leadership met with union leadership to garner support, and mine for any conflict. This proved to be beneficial for members to voice concerns and provide input for next steps to support an inclusive model. In early February 2015, focus groups were held with site administrators to lay the groundwork for inclusive schooling. The district held after-school focus groups for both general and special education teachers and their site administration to discuss inclusive schooling. The article by Causton and Theoharis (2013), "Inclusive Schooling: Are We There Yet?" was discussed at each focus group to lead the discussion. Focus groups discussed the concerns and professional development needs of both general and special education teachers. Data from the focus groups were used to determine the needed professional developments for each site. Once the data were analyzed, it indicated teachers needed training on accommodations/modifications, working with an instructional aide, disability awareness, behavioral strategies, and mind-set.

Between March 2015 and June 2015, focus group meetings were held to share the inclusive schooling vision across all the elementary campuses. By the end of June 2015, the special education department had provided six full-day professional developments with school representatives to discuss and share evidence-based strategies for supporting students in the inclusive classroom. The professional developments were based upon the feedback compiled from the various focus-group meetings.

The outcome was a system, approved by district-level administration, which would move learning supports to a prominent place in improving academic and social/emotional outcomes for students with and without disabilities at each school site. Additionally a handful of special day

kindergarten classes were closed during the summer and these teachers were redeployed as educational specialists /co-teachers to school sites to support the incoming kindergarten SWD in an inclusive classroom. In August 2015, more than 80 kindergarten-aged SWD commenced their school year in a general education classroom with their nondisabled peers at their school of residence with supplemental aids and services. In the past, the incoming kindergarten SWD would have been in special day classrooms not at their school of residence. The importance of working with the general and special education teachers, providing professional development on working with SWD, and the sharing of the special needs of the incoming children cannot be understated. The collaboration and training to prepare Seaside teachers for the incoming students was a key factor in supporting not only the students but also the teachers with inclusion.

In the spring of 2016 the special education department wanted to look at teacher mindset after a few months of working in an inclusive classroom. The teachers completed a qualitative survey to analyze how kindergarten teacher perceptions shifted, if at all, between August 2015 and February 2016 in regard to inclusion schooling. Teachers were queried on how they felt during the first month of inclusive schooling. The sample query question was-In September 2015, I felt ___about inclusive schooling? While 49.25% noted they felt comfortable, the data show that 32.34% were apprehensive about inclusive schooling. Respondent 1 said, "We didn't really know what we were doing, but we were giving it our best shot." Respondent 8 noted, "Did not understand the point. If one qualifies for special day class and needs more help, why would being in a class of 30 or more be a good thing?" In order to compare the beginning and middle of the year perceptions, question 16 queried-In February 2016: I feel ___about inclusive schooling? Overall, the data indicated that teachers were more comfortable and confident, with seven teachers feeling apprehensive compared to the 21 in September 2015. This rise in positive

perception may be a result of the ongoing professional development ($n = 6$) as well as daily in-class support with educational specialists/co-teachers and instructional aides (MacAllister, 2015).

However, what was not fully explored in Seaside School District was a quantitative analysis that looked at the factors influencing general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion within this urban southern California school district. The opportunity existed to gather data on factors that influence general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion, and perhaps create a model for other districts in the area of professional development opportunities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative, descriptive, and comparative study was to investigate and compare general and special education kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teacher beliefs on inclusion as well as their perceptions of accommodations, preparation, and barriers to inclusion. Utilizing the 28 item Stoiber et al. (1998) My Thinking About Inclusion (MTAI) scale, the researcher wished to partially replicate their 1998 study. Stoiber et al. utilized an ANOVA analysis to examine both interaction and main effects of the variables (Creswell, 2014). This current study utilized Spearman Correlations and Mann-Whitney statistical analyses to examine the participants' answers to the MTAI study. This study looked at teacher beliefs only and did not include parent or other special education staff beliefs, as did the original MTAI study (Stoiber et al., 1998). More specifically, three categories or variables of general education and special education teachers' beliefs were explored: (a) core perspectives, (b) expected outcomes, and (c) classroom practices for student inclusion.

Core perspectives. Core perspectives held by general education and special education teachers was the first belief category, and this connects to research that a person's beliefs reflects

his or her perception (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994). This corresponds to one's belief about what is ethical and what "best practices related to educating " (Stoiber et al., 1998, p. 110) students with and without disabilities (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994).

Expected outcomes. Expected outcomes held by general education and special education teachers was the second belief category, and this connects to research that a person's beliefs both connects his or her perceptions and influences his or her educational practices within his or her classrooms and the outcomes for students in inclusive education (Schommer, 1994). Schommer's research indicates that if a teacher has positive expectations for his or her students' outcomes, this can be related to his or her students having higher achievement.

Classroom practices. Classroom practices held by general education and special education teachers was the third belief category, and this connects to how teachers think about how inclusive education and its practices influence classroom environment and the instructional strategies. A teacher's belief sets the stage for a how he or she sets up his or her classroom and which strategies he or she utilizes and accommodates within his or her classroom (Anders & Evans, 1994).

Importance of the Study

This study was compelling for Seaside School District and potentially other California school districts because Seaside School District was one of 20 California school districts in 2016 that had been working under a California Department of Education supporting Inclusive Practices grant to promote more inclusive practices within the district schools. Since 2014, Seaside School District has been awarded more than $85,000 in grant funds to support and promote the inclusion of SWD in the general education classroom. The outcomes of the study may provide information for how districts continue to implement inclusion based upon the

perceptions and beliefs of the participants. The study may provide insight into what professional development is needed for general and special education teachers who are teaching in an inclusive classroom. It may also provide insight on teacher core perspectives and expected outcomes, which will add to the literature. Insight into professional development, coaching, and implementation may provide strategies to support mind-set and change attitudes of teachers who are having difficulty with inclusive education. School districts might also provide partnership opportunities with families of students with and without disabilities. The results of this study may potentially contribute to the base of knowledge on how to support general and special education teachers who are teaching in an inclusive classroom. By fully understanding the perceptions and recommendations of general and special education teachers in regard to inclusive schooling, other districts may adopt the recommendations shared by the participants. When a school, family, and community participants work together, achievement gaps decline (Bryan & Henry, 2012). While inclusion in the United States has its roots in legislative mandates, not all districts are embracing inclusive education (Snyder & Dillow, 2015; Whitbread, 2013).

Definition of Terms

Disability: Under IDEA section 300.8, a child with a disability means he or she has been evaluated as having a physical, cognitive, and/or emotional impairment that affects ability to participate in daily activities. This can be mental retardation, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, another health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and is determined to require special education services (IDEA, 2004).

Coteaching: A strategy for two teachers, one general education and one special education, to work together to teach a diverse group of students (Friend, 2008).

Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA): The Elementary and Secondary Education Act funds all grades K-12, elementary through secondary, and emphasizes equal access to education and establishes high standards and accountability (Bishop & Jackson, 2014).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): The Every Student Succeeds Act maintains that each student must have access to an education that encompasses the Arts, Humanities, Sciences, Social Sciences, English, and Mathematics (Jones & Workman, 2016).

Free and appropriate public education (FAPE): Under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, children with disabilities have access to a free appropriate public education that provides for educational results for children with disabilities (IDEA, 2004).

IDEA: IDEA is a federal law that requires schools to serve the educational needs of eligible SWD (IDEA, 2004).

Inclusion: Inclusion is defined as the successful inclusion of children with disabilities being educated with students without disabilities. For purposes of this study the term inclusive classroom will be used for a classroom that has both students with and without disabilities (IDEA, 2004; The Special Edge, 2015).

Least restrictive environment (LRE): The least restrictive environment is defined as SWD being educated with students without disabilities and that they are not placed in special classes or separate schools unless their disability is so severe that they cannot be educated in the general education environment with aids or services (IDEA, 2004).

Student with disability (SWD): student with disability is a student who has been assessed, has one or more of the following disabilities, and requires special education services to access his

or her education: mental retardation, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, another health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and is determined to require needs special education services (Knoblauch,1998; California Department of Education, 2016).

Theoretical Frameworks

With the emphasis on promoting a more inclusive educational environment for students with disabilities (SWD) in schools, districts are faced with the challenge of developing and implementing effective inclusive practices that support teachers working with SWD in an inclusive classroom. Federal legislation requires districts to provide SWD access to the general education classroom. Parents and advocates are questioning placement of SWD in separate classrooms and programs. District administrators and teachers must respond by implementing inclusive educational practices in school settings where inclusive education is not the norm. Moreover, with training, collaboration, positive experiences, and communication as factors that influence attitudes and beliefs, developing positive experiences for teachers around inclusive education is paramount to building inclusive programs (Lee, 2013; McGhie-Richmond et al., 2013; Zion & Sobel; 2014). This study was done through the conceptualization of social inclusion and the social cognitive theory with a look at beliefs on social inclusion of SWD and a teacher's beliefs that he or she can effectively support SWD in an inclusive classroom (Bandura, 1994, Burnes, 2004; Schein, 1999; "World Bank," 2013).

Social cognitive theory. Bandura (2001) shared that self-efficacy beliefs, which are grounded in the social cognitive theory, are a pivotal part of the social cognitive theory because

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efficacy viewpoints can influence whether a person thinks positively or negatively about a situation. Efficacy plays a role in a person's decision on what goals to choose and how much effort he or she puts into doing something. When people have high self-efficacy, it heightens their achievement and their feelings of positive accomplishment. When people have low self-efficacy, they have uncertainty about their ability to accomplish a task and stay away from tasks that they perceive as too difficult or threatening (Bandura, 1994, 2001; Pajares, 1997). Figure 1 depicts Bandura's theory that a person's behaviors are affected by personal factors as well as the external environment.

Figure 1. Bandura's Theory. Behaviors are affected by personal factors and external environment.

Social inclusion. Social inclusion is doing more for people and looking at doing things in a different way so that all groups are included ("World Bank," 2013). Social inclusion can be used as a means to build collective success or efficacy for people through combined efforts that can bring about social change (Bandura, 1994; "World Bank," 2013). Social inclusion is where a person feels accepted for his or her differences and his or her daily needs are met (Robo, 2014); "World Bank," 2013). Within a socially inclusive society, a person feels accepted, acknowledged, and knows he or she belongs to the group (Robo, 2014; "World Bank," 2013).

There are two theories that framed this study (a) social inclusion and (b) social cognitive theory. The researcher for this study looked at teacher beliefs toward inclusion of SWD and specifically at the teachers' beliefs on (a) core perspectives, (b) expected outcomes, and (c)

classroom practices in relation to educating students with and without disabilities together in a classroom. Additionally, research was reviewed that looked at social cognitive theory, social inclusion, teacher attitudes toward inclusion, and what supports the research posits were needed to move teachers toward accepting SWD in the general education classroom.

Research Questions

For purposes of this quantitative, descriptive, and comparative study, the researcher will utilize Stoiber's et al. (1998) MTAI scale. Stoiber's et al. (1998) study investigated parents' and early practitioners' "beliefs concerning early childhood inclusion" (p. 107). For this study, the researcher investigated only teacher beliefs. For purposes of this study, the researcher used participants to define the general education and special education teachers that supported inclusive education in kindergarten, first, and second grade during the 2016-17 school year. With permission from Stoiber this study investigated teacher beliefs outside the student age group of the original study (see Appendix B). Stoiber noted that this would not change the scope of the survey or the analysis.

Research question 1. What relationships, if any, exist between general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in an urban school district in southern California as measured by the MTAI survey?

Alternative hypothesis. There will be at least one significant relationship between general and special education teacher beliefs about inclusion among the MTAI 28 survey items.

Null hypothesis. There will be no significant relationship between general and special education teacher beliefs about inclusion among the MTAI 28 survey items.

Statistical Test. Spearman Correlations and Mann-Whitney

Research question 2. To what extent, if at all, are general education and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in one urban school district in southern California, as measured by the MTAI survey, related to their demographic characteristics?

Alternative hypothesis. At least one of the three MTAI survey subscale scores will be related to at least one of the demographic characteristics.

Null hypothesis. None of the three MTAI subscale scores will be related to any of the demographic characteristics.

Statistical Test. Spearman Correlations

Delimitations

The delimitations utilized by the researcher sought only to gain a better understanding of the beliefs and perceptions of teachers regarding inclusion from a nonrandom sample of transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade teachers within one public K-12 school district in Southern California. A second delimitation was using one quantitative measure to look at the beliefs of teachers in regard to inclusive schooling. Additionally, the choice of theoretical perspectives and research questions are delimitations in this study.

Limitations

This study had the following limitations:

1. The sample of participants (general and special teachers) was drawn from one urban public K-12 school district in southern California.

2. Survey did not fully assess the complexity of beliefs.

3. Conceptual distinctions regarding inclusion beliefs (core, practices, outcomes) represented one possible conceptualization.

4. Snapshot of time—limited to time period survey was sent out.

5. Small sample of participants ($N = 54$)

Assumptions

This study included the following assumptions: (a) participants would answer truthfully on the Teacher Beliefs on Inclusion Survey and MTAI scale for each item, (b) the researcher would be able to be objective when analyzing the data and reporting findings, (c) assumption the sample size of 54 represents the beliefs of teachers in other districts, and (d) the MTAI survey's internal reliability validation was purported to be credible for examining factors of the participants' beliefs (Stoiber et al., 1998).

Organization of the Study

This research is presented in five chapters. Chapter I includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, definition of terms, theoretical framework, research questions, limitations, delimitations, and the assumptions of the study.

Chapter II presents a review of the literature, which includes (a) educational legislation within the United States, (b) social inclusion, (c) social learning theory, (d) social cognitive theory, (e) efficacy theory, (f) teacher perception and attitudes toward inclusion, (g) teacher role in inclusive education, and (h) instructional practices that support students in an inclusive environment.

Chapter III describes the methodology used for this research study. It includes how participants were selected, instrumentation, data collection, and procedures for data analysis.

Chapter IV presents the study's findings, including quantitative data, demographic information, results for the two research questions, and two alternative and two null hypotheses.

Chapter V provides a reflective summary of the entire research study, discusses the findings, presents conclusions, and recommendations. Recommendations addresses three things: (a) policy and practice, (b) what this researcher might have done differently, and (c) recommendations for potential future research.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

This chapter presents the rationale for conducting research on teacher beliefs and perceptions related to the practice of inclusion as well as factors related to providing teachers with evidence-based strategies for accommodations and preparation that can eliminate barriers to inclusive education. Researchers have studied what makes up the constructs of teacher beliefs and perceptions for years and purport that one's self-efficacy beliefs are a strong factor to supporting inclusive education (Bandura, 1994, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2012a; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

When implementing the practice of inclusive schooling, it is recognized that teacher efficacy is an important variable for successful implementation. The success of inclusive education is dependent upon teachers' beliefs that SWD can be educated in the general education classroom. The recognition that a teacher's attitudes and perceptions about their confidence and competence related to their preparation to teach SWD was a focus and was viewed within the framework of efficacy (Hunter-Johnson, Newton, & Cambridge-Johnson, 2014; Savolainen et al., 2012; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). This study sought to build upon the body of research on teacher attitudes and perceptions on inclusive education and the factors that influence their attitudes and perceptions.

The researcher for this study looked at perspectives on inclusive education, taking a closer look at how teachers feel SWD will do in their inclusive classroom and what classroom practices best support SWD. The recognition of perceived beliefs or self-efficacy of an individual is an important factor for inclusive education. A person's attitude toward including a student with disabilities into a general education classroom will affect how they think positively or negatively about it. In the context of teachers' efficacy, the importance of a positive

perception of inclusive education has an assumed significance to the effectiveness of inclusion for SWD. The focus for this study was delimited to teacher beliefs (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

In order to achieve saturation of the current research on self-efficacy and teacher perceptions on inclusion, the researcher for this study used the following search terms: beliefs, inclusion, collaboration, self-efficacy, co-teaching, student achievement, attitudes, perceptions, special education, general education, free and appropriate education, and social inclusion. The online databases accessed through Pepperdine University library services to conduct the literature review included Education Resources Information Center, SAGE publications, and ProQuest.

The following review of the literature represents the literature pertinent to my research study, namely, educational legislation, social inclusion, teacher beliefs/efficacy, and strategies that support inclusive education. Specifically, Chapter II is organized into eight sections: (a) educational legislation within the United States, (b) social inclusion, (c) social learning theory, (d) social cognitive theory, (e) social change, (f) teacher perception and attitudes toward inclusion, (g) teacher role in inclusive education, and (h) instructional practices that support students in an inclusive environment.

Educational Legislation Within the United States

In the United States, there are programs and services that support students with and without disabilities in the public school system as a result of the national impact of the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Public Law (PL) 94-142 and its amendment, IDEA, PL 108-446 (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2010). These acts improved the education of SWD by guaranteeing a free and appropriate public education with

the majority of persons with disabilities, whether adult or child, not educated with typically developing peers. Research indicates that for "thousands of years" (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996, p. 26), persons with disabilities were discriminated against in every country. There are accounts of persons with disabilities being put to death and isolated from peers, with many in society regarding those with disabilities as dangerous, incompetent, and lacking in the ability to contribute (Fleischer Zames, & Zames, 2001; Switzer Vaughn, 2003). Inequality in education has been a long-standing impediment to educating SWD in the United States. SWD were not educated with their nondisabled peers. For decades, state institutions were the placement option for students with significant disabilities. Children were provided food, clothing, and shelter without the opportunity to be with typical peers, receive an education, or have assessment. Before the 1950s, there were no laws that supported SWD. SWD were provided minimal if any services in the public school and services were at the discretion of the schools (Martin et al. 1996).

Early 1900s. In the early 1900s, the United States did not educate children with disabilities with their typical peers; those students who were intellectually disabled, blind, and deaf were placed into state institutions (West et. al, 2015). These students were not believed to have the ability to be part of the general classrooms and were educated in separate schools. This belief that persons with disabilities do not have rights was echoed in the 1927 U.S. Supreme Court ruling Buck v. Bell, 274 U.S. 200, 1927; (U.S. Supreme Court case, Buck v. Bell, No. 292, 274 U.S. 200). This ruling allowed for the obligatory sterilization of the mentally disabled and upheld that Carrie S. Buck, a young Virginia woman, could be sterilized (Larson, 2011). Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes delivered the court's decision with the following quote from the U.S. Supreme Court case, Buck v. Bell, No. 292, 274 U.S. 200, p. 274 U.S. 207:

We have seen more than once that the public welfare may call upon the best citizens for
their lives. It would be strange if it could not call upon those who already sap the strength
of the State for these lesser sacrifices, often not felt to be such by those concerned, in
order to prevent our being swamped with incompetence. It is better for all the world, if
instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their
imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their
kind…Three generations of imbeciles are enough. (Para 4).

Mid-1900s. Political and educational beliefs in the United States on educating SWD were
a barrier to providing SWD access to public education up until the mid-1950s. The United States
Constitution guarantees its citizens not only liberty but equal opportunity. Franklin Roosevelt's
beliefs showed openness to persons with disabilities during his presidency (1933 to 1945) when
he stated, "We are trying to construct a more inclusive society. We are going to make a country
in which no one is left out" (Perkins, 1947, p. 113). While his words preceded educational
reform for SWD in the United States, they echo the legislative acts that have been put into
practice during the past 41 years.

1950s–1960s. In 1954, the Brown v. Board of Education desegregation case ruled that
one could not discriminate against any group of individuals for arbitrary reasons (Lutz, 2005).
Educational decisions and policies were to be made without prejudgment, discrimination, or
stereotyping by looking at a person's ethnic, religious, physical, or cultural characteristics or
background.

In 1964, President Johnson created the Economic Opportunity Act, which was the start of
another movement, one that was to help eliminate poverty. Johnson also held the belief that there
needed to be equity in education. He wanted to provide educational opportunity and training so

that all could live with decency and dignity. His Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was considered to be a war on poverty and a chance to provide education to all (Bishop & Jackson, 2015).

In 1965, President Johnson enacted the federal legislation ESEA. ESEA was signed into law and provided money to states in the form of grants that provided appropriate and equitable resources for students, including those with disabilities (Bishop & Jackson, 2015). President Johnson deemed that this war on poverty was to be waged using special funding called Title I. This federal funding gave resources to support curriculum improvement, instructional activities, counseling, parental involvement, as well as allow for an increase of teachers and program improvement. The funding was to assist schools in meeting the educational goals of low-income students.

1970s. In 1971, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. Commonwealth case looked at the Pennsylvania public school law that denied an education to those children who could not demonstrate a mental age of 5 years (Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia, undated). This legislation was enacted using the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause, which gave the disabled the legal right to be educated.

Following in 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) was passed and made special education services available along with providing federal dollars for special education (Whitbread, 2013). The U.S. legislation looked at this act as the Bill of Rights for SWD, along with their families. With the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children (Public Law 94-142) in 1975, supports have been in place to protect individual rights and improve the education for all students from birth to age 22. The act noted that if the team were looking at placing a disabled student in a classroom outside of general

education, its members could only do this when the child could not meet his or her goals in the general education classroom.

1990–2004. With the signing of the Americans With Disabilities Act (1990) there was more access for people with disabilities (Fleischer Zames, & Zames, 2001). While those with disabilities still did not have full equity and bias there still was stereotypical portrayal of those with disabilities in the movies, media, as well as physical barriers in schools with the promise of the Americans With Disabilities Act not yet fully realized (Fleischer Zames, & Zames, 2001). The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was revised in 1997 and titled IDEA. Under IDEA, school districts have to ensure that SWD, birth through 22, receive an appropriate education (Snyder & Dillow, 2013).

Public Law 94-142 was revised in 1997 and 2004 and titled IDEA. Under IDEA, school districts have to work to place specialized programs for SWD into local schools, rather than separately or being institutionalized (Martin et al., 1996). This movement toward more inclusion has raised student engagement, high school graduation rates, and higher rates for employment for the disabled (Aud et al., 2010).

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act. This was an update to the ESEA of 1965. The No Child Left Behind Act focused on highly trained teachers, state accountability, use of research programs, and parental choices. The purpose was to ensure that all children have equal access and opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and at least reach minimum proficiency on state assessments (Bishop & Jackson, 2015). The academic testing under The No Child Left Behind Act was an endeavor to produce standard results for all students (Kymes, 2004).

2015. President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act in December 2015. This is the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA. With this reauthorization, states had to adopt academic standards that were challenging and would help students be prepared for college and career and increase graduation rates. Schools that have subgroups that are struggling needed to develop an evidence-based plan to help students who are falling behind, including those SWD (Education Week, 2015).

Presently in California, there are numerous efforts by districts to develop and implement a system that will address the needs of SWD. Districts are looking at the barriers to learning and teaching, as well as what research-based practices to implement. Promoting inclusive education is a new practice for school districts up and down the state. This practice is where SWD are educated alongside their peers without disabilities. The U.S. Department of Education and Office of Special Education collaborated to promote inclusive education and established the SWIFT framework. According to the SWIFT framework districts need to have leadership, a multi-tiered systems of support, family and community partnerships, and inclusive policies and practices to successfully meet the needs of all students, including SWD (SWIFT, 2014).

Since the implementation of IDEA in 1997 and its reauthorization Individuals With Disabilities Improvement Act in 2004, public education has acknowledged that general and special education teachers are responsible for teaching SWD (Blanton, Pugach, & Boveda, 2014). The coauthors of Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act were looking at students who had not learned using normal instruction (Sailor, 2015). The emphasis was on both general and special education teachers and their need to have their students demonstrate content knowledge in the classroom as well as accountability in the classroom for their students (Sailor, 2015). With the 2001 revision of ESEA, renamed The No Child Left Behind Act, there

was continued accountability and performance for both the teacher and student; additionally, there was a definition for a high quality teacher. High quality teacher meant a teacher would hold, at minimum, a bachelor's degree, certification, and have a demonstrated knowledge in subject content matter (American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 2015). The research illustrates that throughout the years, the United States has enacted laws that more fully include SWD with their typical peers (Ryndak et al., 2014).

Theoretical Frameworks

Social inclusion. Educational researchers have delved into social inclusion and it has served as a stimulus for the inclusion movement (Savolainen et al., 2012; "World Bank," 2013). In all nations there are certain groups that do not fully participate in the social fabric of their country, whether they are from a minority group, immigrants, disabled, or poor and any excluded group is less apt to receive opportunities financially, politically, and socially ("World Bank," 2013). Social inclusion can affect a person's level of income, access to a job, and ability to be part of his or her society. The term social inclusion can be difficult to understand and has political undercurrents. Social inclusion can be defined as a means of improving how groups join in and improve their opportunities to be part of society.

In May 2013, the United Nations leaders decided to look at how they would focus on reaching groups that were excluded. The United Nations Secretary-General, stated, "We should ensure that no person—regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race, or status—is denied universal human rights and basic economic opportunities" ("World Bank," 2013, p. XV).

Social inclusion asks why some groups are not represented, and why they have minimal access to both education and health services. Social inclusion is "not the same as equality" ("World Bank," 2013, p. 7). Even when one does not have the exact same assets, he or she can

participate and be included in society. World Bank (2013) found that people want to be part of three areas: "markets, services, and spaces" (p. 11). These three areas can provide inclusive opportunities for people and also be barriers to being included. For markets; the type of job one has and the type of house one lives in can lead to social inclusion or exclusion. To improve social inclusion standing, people need opportunities for health and educational services. It was found that those in a position of less power or authority are inclined to have less access to necessary services. Spaces can be referred to as neighborhoods, clubs, or political groups that are set-aside for a particular group or a dominant group in an area.

People are included in a society or excluded based upon a variety of factors ranging from gender, race, ethnicity, and religion to type of disability. While society may segregate and isolate various groups, segregation or even isolation for most people is not a choice (Bandura, 2001; "World Bank," 2013). Building social inclusion means providing people with educational opportunities for growth. Education can be a catalyst for encouraging social inclusion ("World Bank," 2013). However, when societies move toward inclusion for all people, this may trigger censure from others with longstanding prejudices and in turn could create more tension between those who are included and those who are excluded within a society. Exclusion of those with disabilities can start early in life and taking the time to look at the needs of the whole child is critical to a student's educational progress. Inclusive programs benefit disadvantaged students or SWD (Robo, 2014).

Social inclusion and policy development not only requires doing more, but also requires looking at doing things in a different way ("World Bank," 2013). Social inclusion can be used as a means to build collective success or efficacy through combined efforts where groups can bring about social change for all peoples (Bandura, 1994; "World Bank," 2013). Social inclusion is

where one feels appreciated for his or her differences and his or her day-to-day needs are met (Robo, 2014; "World Bank," 2013). In this socially inclusive society, one is accepted, acknowledged, and feels he or she belongs to the group (Robo, 2014; "World Bank," 2013).

Social learning theory. In order to support inclusive education, teachers must have a positive mind-set, take control of their classroom environments, and make optimum use of their ability to educate SWD. Teachers can participate in courses that challenge, examine, and provide discussion on their personal beliefs (Kagan, 1992).

In the social learning theory, people can learn by participation or experience as well as by observing behaviors (Bandura, 1971). Most behaviors are learned by watching others model them. If they see a behavior is reinforced positively, it becomes a good teaching lesson. Additionally, when a behavior that is not wanted is punished, the learner can be influenced not to model that behavior (Bandura, 1971). Reinforcement of a behavior that is desired can strengthen a person's awareness to repeat the positive behavior. Bandura (1971) noted that strategies such as mentally thinking of behaviors as "words, concise labels, or vivid imagery" (p. 7) can support a student to remember the new learned behavior much more than if they just see it and are not focusing on the behavior but other things. Bandura (1971) noted that modeling is not enough to learn a behavior, but rather, one may need to observe it up to 100 times. When working with students on behavior acquisition, a child's efforts can be rewarded with social praise or tangible rewards. Extrinsic rewards can support the learning of a new behavior. In the social learning theory, one's behavior is learned before it is implemented. Bandura (1971) noted that sharing with people before a behavior is modeled is a factor that can influence the learner to retain the behavior.

Social cognitive theory. Bandura's social cognitive theory followed his social learning theory and it implies that individuals are able, to an extent, control their lives. This belief in one's ability to bring about desired results is categorized as human agency (Bandura, 2001). Human agency, when connected with other people, is collective agency. According to Bandura (2001), being a human agent is the ability to "…make things happen by one's actions" (p. 2). People's beliefs systems enable them to achieve looked-for outcomes, and they act intentionally to make desired things happen. When teachers share the belief that collectively they can support and promote inclusive education, they do so as a collective agency. When one wishes to achieve a goal, he or she will do so with collaborative and socially inter-reliant efforts with others (Bandura, 2001). In the instance of collective agency, inclusive teachers and their schools collaborate to share and show commitment to inclusive education, and coordinate inter-reliant plans of action to support (Pajares, 1997). Being a human agent is when a person believes he or she has the ability, the power, to control his or her own functioning and environmental events and has the core belief that a person has the authority to produce results based on one's own activities (Bandura, 2001).

Empirical evidence reviewed by Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998) appears to support Bandura's theory that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs can be related to the effort they put into their teaching, the type of goals they want to accomplish, and the resilience they demonstrate when things don't go the way they planned (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). In their study, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) examined two of the four sources put forth by Bandura that may be sources of teachers' self-efficacy. They studied verbal persuasion and mastery as they relate to support from administrators, fellow teachers, students, parents, and surrounding community. Bandura (1989) presupposed that a person's behavior, personal

experiences, and the environment work together to influence each other through reciprocal determinism. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) looked at the reciprocal relationships between environment and personal experiences. They correlated school with environment and teacher efficacy beliefs with personal experiences.

Beliefs influence how much effort one exerts in what he or she does, how long he or she will persevere when there are difficulties, how flexible one is when dealing with failures, and how much stress he or she feels when in a demanding situation (Bandura, 2012; Pajares, 1996). Bandura (2006) notes self-efficacy is " concerned with perceived capability" (p. 308) it is about what one can do. Self-efficacy is a person's ability to construct his or her beliefs about his or her own capacity or ability to perform at a particular level (Bandura, 2006). Bandura (2006) hypothesized that a person's belief in his or her own abilities can be a significant in determining how hard he or she will work for something and if there are difficulties along the way how much perseverance they put forth to continue (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

Within the educational setting, one can utilize the social cognitive theory along with self-efficacy beliefs theory to expound that when teachers do not have the belief that they will succeed with some students that the teachers will not put forth as much effort in preparing and planning and teaching the lesson. Moreover if they have low self-efficacy, they will give up more easily when there is difficulty and not utilize the strategies they have learned to help students that are struggling (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

Efficacy plays an important part in a person's decision on what goals to choose, how much effort he or she puts into something, and whether he or she perceives something that didn't go well as inspiring or not inspiring (Bandura, 1994, 2001, 2006; Pajares, 1997; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). When people have high self-efficacy, it heightens their achievement and

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their feelings of positive accomplishment (Bandura, 2006, 2012). When people have low self-efficacy, they have uncertainty about their ability to accomplish a task and stay away from tasks that they perceive as a too difficult or threatening (Bandura, 1994, 2001, 2006; Pajares, 1997). Efficacy beliefs have great influence on what people choose to do and how they want to live their lives (Bandura, 1994, 2001, 2006). Bandura (2001) notes that when a person demonstrates high efficacy, this in turn is categorized by cooperation, goodwill, and a shared interest in each other.

Self-efficacy is grounded in the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001). Social cognitive theory has two expectations: outcome and efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) reviewed Bandura's social cognitive theory and reflected that efficacy expectation is when one feels he or she can complete a task, where outcome expectancy is the person's idea of the consequences of completing the task. Self-efficacy beliefs are a pivotal part of social cognitive theory because efficacy viewpoints can influence whether a person thinks positively or negatively about a situation (Bandura, 1989; Pajares, 1997).

"Self-efficacy has to do with self-perception of competence rather than actual level of competence" (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 211). The more a person approaches a task with self-assurance that he or she can do a good job, the more it will determine whether he or she uses his or her strengths to make a good or poor decision.

Four types of efficacy expectations. Bandura (1994) theorized that there are four types of efficacy expectations; (a) mastery-accomplishment experiences, (b) physiological-emotional states, (c) vicarious experiences, and (d) social-verbal persuasion. Mastery or accomplishment experiences are the strongest relaters to self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). When one perceives his or her action to be good, it raises his or her feelings of self-efficacy. In contrast,

when one perceives his or her action to be poor, it lowers his or her feelings of self-efficacy. One's perception of how his or her action has physiological-emotional effect on how he or she feels and his or her efficacy of how he or she did.

Vicarious experience. When one sees another model a lesson or observes a behavior of another, this is a vicarious experience (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Bandura (1989, 1994, 2001, 2006, 2012a) posited that if the person observing has respect for and positively identifies with the person modeling a lesson or behavior, there would be more influence on his or her efficacy. Just the opposite occurs—the observer has less feelings of efficacy if the person modeling does a poor job.

Social or verbal persuasion. Social or verbal persuasion is when a person receives feedback for what he or she has done. This can be in conversation with friends, feedback from a supervisor, or lunchroom conversation in a school setting. The conversation can contribute to a person's feelings of more positive self-efficacy and could impact the person to try something new (Bandura, 1994).

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) explored possible sources of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, looking particularly at verbal persuasion and mastery experiences. The researchers utilized their Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale, which they developed in 2001 (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale has three efficacy subscales, with one looking at instructional strategies, one at classroom management, and the third at student engagement. The authors also used the variables of new or experienced teachers, school setting, and demographics when they analyzed their results (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007. They had 255 U.S. teacher participants complete their survey, which has 24 items using a 9-point continuum (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998) found

that newer teachers had a somewhat lower self-efficacy belief than those who had taught longer.

They equated this to inexperience and not having a high number of mastery experiences

(Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). For those teachers with more years of experience, they were

found to have higher self-efficacy beliefs for instructional strategies and classroom management.

They found no relationship for the demographic variables looking at race and gender for self-

efficacy beliefs (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). They noted that demographic variables were

included as controls only because they are not usually predictors for efficacy beliefs among

teachers (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). For both new and experienced teachers, the school

setting of urban or rural was not found to be a factor for self-efficacy.

Relying on Bandura's theory that self-efficacy beliefs may be lower for new teachers

who require more assistance, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) postulated from their research

that the verbal support-persuasion from administration, fellow teachers, and community made a

"significant contribution to explaining self-efficacy beliefs" (p. 953). For new and experienced

teachers, their mastery experiences were explained as how happy or satisfied they were with

their teaching experiences and somewhat related to their sense of self-efficacy. The new teachers

were more satisfied with their teaching when it was correlated with support from their students'

parents and the community, whereas, the experienced teachers who noted they had good verbal

persuasion-support from administrators, fellow teachers, and the community rated their

satisfactions with their teaching not efficacy. The researchers found differences for the new and

experienced teachers; mastery experiences for the newer teachers were a higher variable than for

the experienced (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). They related this to Bandura who stated in

1997 that one's self-efficacy beliefs change more when you are newer to learning (new teacher)

versus when you have more experience and are more resistant to changing your teaching style

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(Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). The researchers theorized that administrative feedback does not have an impact on either the new or experienced teacher; however, they based this on the fact that administrators were in the classrooms maybe twice a year, but this could change with more administrative feedback (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Rather they found that verbal persuasion from teacher colleagues, parents, and community had the most impact, with mastery experiences being the most substantial indicator for self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1994; Kagan, 1992; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Mastery experiences have been noted to have a close link as one of the most considerable contributors to a teacher's self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Unianu, 2012).

Inclusive education, in and of itself, albeit a legal perspective, can be considered a human action whereby teachers intentionally design a classroom where all students can learn. This personal judgment, which is the power to initiate actions for given purposes, has been used as a theoretical premise for inclusive education (Bandura, 2001). As human agents, people self-reflect on what they have done. By self-reflecting, they are personal agents of their behavior and look at the results of their behavior through the lens of how others may judge their action. The perceived beliefs or self-efficacy of an individual is an important factor in social cognitive theory because these beliefs influence whether people think positively or negatively about something (Bandura, 1994, 2001). This can be considered personal agency, which is the power to initiate actions for given purposes. In addition, when teachers collaborate and combine efforts to bring about social change such as inclusion, it is collective efficacy (Bandura, 2001).

Social Change-Change Theory

It has been posited for social change to happen one must first identify the desired long-term goals or outcomes and then work backward to get the people to support the desired change

(Burnes, 2004; Fullan, 2006). For a district to consider and promote social change such as inclusive schooling, the concept of change theory is one lens a district could use to implement inclusive schooling. Change theory could support the development of programming and the rationale for the steps a district would take to support inclusive schooling (Sailor, 2015; Sailor & Roger, 2005). In order to focus on supporting teachers' beliefs in inclusive education, educational reform may need to be considered (Sailor, 2015; Sailor & Roger, 2005). Change theory implies that before inclusive schooling can be realized, the use of educational reform or "school reform" (Sailor, 2015, p. 94) must be studied. It has been purported that Kurt Lewin is the father of planned change (Burnes, 2004). Lewin was a "humanitarian who believed that only by resolving social conflict…could the human condition be improved" (p. 981). Lewin believed that one's perceptions and actions are grounded in the group in which he belongs, and such group shapes the behavior of that person (Burnes, 2004). He perceived that for change to happen, one must have an action and the action must be based upon studying a situation, looking at all solutions, and choosing the best solution (Burnes, 2004; Schein, 1999).

With social change or change theory, one must first identify the desired long-term goals or outcomes and then work backward. Working backward, one would identify all the outcomes that must be in place and how they are related to one another for the goals to transpire. Kurt Lewin developed a cornerstone change model in the 1950s. His model had three steps: Unfreeze, Change, and Refreeze (Burnes, 2004; Schein, 1999).

Lewin explained social change with the analogy of how one can change the shape of an ice cube by unfreezing it and changing it into a different shape and refreezing into a cone shape (Burnes, 2004; Schein, 1999). In the instance of looking at district inclusive practices, one would start by creating the motivation for change (Unfreeze) since it is necessary to change the existing

attitudes and behaviors of those involved, which in this study were the teachers. Lewin's model has people move through the second step (Change) by using effective communication to help people embrace the new ways of working (inclusive schooling) while helping them acquire new attitudes-mind-sets. During this time, one identifies the problems and develops actions plans for implementation. The third step (Refreeze) happens when the organization-group returns to a sense of stability or constancy and its members see the benefits of the change. Seeing and realizing this benefit is noted to be necessary for the team to be ready for more change.

The use of Change Theory has been part of educational discussions for decades and Michael Fullan (2006) noted that Change Theory can be a strong force in supporting and developing educational reform as well as getting the results that a school wants. He emphasized that when we want particular results, we can get them "only in the hands (and minds, and hearts) of people who have a deep knowledge of the dynamics of how the factors in question operate" (Fullan, 2006, p. 3).

Change theory encompasses seven core factors that focus on: (a) motivation, (b) building capacity, (c) learning, (d) changing, (e) reflection, and (f) engagement, and (g) perseverance (Fullan, 2006). Fullan (2006) noted that for more than 10 years, they have been using change theory to "design strategies that get results" (p. 8).

Motivation. When needing to make a change, such as toward building motivation on inclusive schooling, individually and as a group, everyone must be motivated to be a part of the change. Motivation takes time and can have bumps along the way. One must take into consideration the resources at hand such as peer teacher and administrative support. Fullan (2006) noted that motivation needs to grow over time or it will not succeed.

Building capacity. Building capacity is explained as utilizing any strategy that can build the collective efficacy of a group to support all students learning (Fullan, 2006). Building capacity encompasses building each teacher and whole-school competence. This can be done through professional training and utilization of resources. Fullan (2006) noted that positive pressure is "pressure that motivates" (p. 9). Utilizing professional development and site resources to focus on inclusive schooling can support building a site's capacity.

Learning. Teachers need to be given the ongoing opportunity to learn in the classrooms where they work each day and collaborate with teachers who are also working on similar strategies (Fullan, 2006). In the instance of inclusion, teachers need to have ongoing professional development and then be given the opportunity to practice learned strategies within their own classroom environment.

Changing. In order to change preexisting notions about inclusion, the larger context must be changed. This is to say that promoting and motivating a "shared vision and ownership" (Fullan, p. 10) such as moving toward inclusive education is how one gets there and is a result of a quality action plan.

Reflection. Reflection helps teachers think about what they are doing and gain insight into what is working and what is not working. Fullan (2006) shared that we learn by doing, reflecting, gathering data, and doing more. Professional development and site training for inclusive practices should allow time for teacher reflection and revision.

Engagement. Collaborative engagement of all stakeholders toward inclusive schooling means to engage in similar strategies that promote and foster interaction across groups, such as teachers, administrators, parents, and community. By connecting Fullan (2006) stated that a system can be changed.

Perseverance. All stakeholders must be resilient and focus on the goal. While teachers must be persistent, they must also be resilient to stay the course. There is often pushback and when teachers are rigid and this can increase pushback (Fullan, 2006).

Incorporating the variables of change theory with a clear vision along with commitment may support district-wide reform toward inclusive education (Fullan, 2006). Teachers need to be trained on effective research-based strategies that support inclusive education as well as teacher efficacy and then have the opportunity to utilize them in their classrooms. An ongoing reflective practice within a collaborative is suggested as a way to build professional learning communities around a practice such as inclusive education (Fullan, 2006).

Utilizing a framework that links perceptions could lead to an understanding of how the change occurred and what was done could support successful change. Fullan (2006) noted people would work toward a higher goal if they see the purpose of the change and if it makes sense to them. Change theory can support educational strategies; however, it is important that teachers have an understanding of the strategies needed to support the results one wants (Fullan, 2006). For successful change, one must determine the outcome desired and map out a plan; this connects perceptions so that one has an understanding of how the change happened. With social change, people can work toward a goal if they see the purpose of the change and if it makes sense to them (Fullan, 2006).

Teacher Perception and Attitudes Toward Inclusion

According to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2010) under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the basic premise of public education is to provide academic support and learning to all students at no cost and that all students have an inherent right to learn and be educated with peers (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil

Rights). Inclusive education embodies an attitude that looks into transforming an educational system in order to respond to the diversity of learners, regardless of culture, gender, or ethnicity, where all can belong, and where SWD have access to general education curriculum (Ferguson, Kozleski, & Smith, 2003; Norwich, 2005; Robo, 2014). In inclusive education, SWD learn in the general education classroom with appropriate supports for educational benefit (Causton & Theoharis, 2013; Sailor & Roger, 2005).

Positive perceptions toward inclusive education are necessary for including SWD. Teacher education programs and professional development are key to preparing teachers for inclusive education and supporting a positive mind-set toward it (Ferguson et al., 2003; Lee, 2013; McGhie-Richmond et al., 2013; Zion & Sobel, 2014). In order to implement an efficacious inclusive education practice, it is essential for the teacher programs to provide teachers with tools to support all learners: general and special education, as well as, English language learners (Ferguson et al., 2003; Kagan, 1992).

Teacher preparedness. Within the framework of teacher preparedness, researchers investigated self-efficacy and implications on teacher beliefs (Kagan, 1992; Lee, 2013; Park, Dimitrov, Das, & Gichuru, 2016; Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2012). University teacher programs and district professional development can use efficacy beliefs to support shaping the environment and perceptions of inclusive education for teachers and students. Under the umbrella of efficacy beliefs, any element that inspires one's choice can have bearing on his or her personal development. Training to prepare teachers to work with SWD can help increase their belief that they can work with SWD. Bandura (2001) shared that the power of one's self-efficacy beliefs affects what people choose to do. Training for teachers on inclusive education will promote teacher proficiencies and interests long after the original professional development

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took place (Bandura, 2001; Ferguson et al., 2003; Lee, 2013; McGhie-Richmond et al., 2013; Zion & Sobel, 2014). Teachers' mind-set to promote inclusive education and how to incorporate it into their classroom environments can be part of training. This becomes a teacher's choice in what he or she does and what he or she becomes as a person. One's beliefs can help him or her look at new information and act on the new information in a positive manner (Kagan, 1992).

      Perception and training. Despite federal mandates, such as PL 94-142 in 1974, which require the education of SWD in a general education setting, teachers' attitudes have not fully embraced inclusive education (Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). It has been opined that PL 94-142 influenced the teachers to have a more positive attitude for inclusive education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Additionally, with the passage of NCLB in 2001, the need to educate all students has been at the forefront of educational programs and teacher self-efficacy has raised awareness for educating all students, including SWD (Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012).

      The inclusion of SWD in general education classrooms is at the center of education policy and social inclusion and serves as a stimulus for the inclusion movement (Savolainen et al., 2012; "World Bank," 2013). Educating students in the least restrictive environment is mandated by federal legislation, yet general education teachers have diverse attitudes about how prepared they are to teach SWD. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) contended that general education teachers have not always been supportive toward SWD in their classrooms and attributed this to teacher educational expertise with SWD and the supports provided in the classroom. Their review of the literature found a number of variables that could affect teacher attitudes: (a) student disability, (b) teacher gender and years of teaching experience, and (c) classroom environment (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). In the case of student disability, teachers tended to have a more positive attitude toward students with a more mild disability such as a

physical disability. Teachers tended to have a more negative or apprehensive attitude toward students with severe cognitive or behavioral needs. These negative teacher attitudes were attributed to teachers' lack of teaching experience with students with more severe needs and thought of them as more challenging (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Teacher gender, according to Avramidis and Norwich's review, had varying evidence that there were differences between males and females. Years of teaching (not experience with SWD) had an impact on teacher attitudes, with those teachers having less teaching experience in general having more positive attitudes (14 years or less). Their review did show that the more experience a teacher has with SWD, the more positive his or her attitudes become if combined with classroom supports for SWD (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Classroom supports such at teacher collaboration, instructional aide(s), and special education teacher(s) influence teacher attitude and self-efficacy.

Hammond and Ingalls (2003) conducted research on teacher attitudes toward inclusion. Their study used two questionnaires to look at inclusionary practices in three rural southwestern United States school districts (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003). They received 343 (75%) out of 455 teachers' surveys (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003). The first questionnaire survey, Prevailing Attitudes About Inclusion, showed a predominant percentage of teachers' attitudes as non-supportive of inclusion. Among the respondents, 60% agreed that inclusion takes valuable instruction time, while 19% disagreed. The other 21% were uncertain. Overall, the respondents' attitudes were that inclusion is not beneficial to SWD (56%). When answering whether teachers are trained to educate SWD, overwhelmingly (81%) they agreed that they were not trained to educate SWD.

Hammond and Ingalls (2003) second survey, Inclusion in Your School, looked at teachers' core perspectives and classroom practices. Their results show that a preponderance of the teachers believed they are trying to look at least restrictive environment (58%) and provided differentiated instruction (63%) to their students. Among the teachers, 80% agreed that SWD active participation in school was encouraged (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003).

In 2012, a mixed-methods study was conducted to determine whether teacher self-efficacy regarding inclusion related with their attitudes toward inclusion in Finland and South Africa (Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Malinen, 2012). They utilized two Likert-type measures (a) Sentiments Attitudes and Concerns about Inclusive Education scale, and (b) Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (Savolainen, et al., 2012). The study found that Finnish teachers were more positive toward SWD than South African teachers. Both acknowledged that social inclusion of SWD was a social right. It was opined that teacher education regarding the needs of SWD and supporting teaching strategies would support teacher attitudes toward educating in an inclusive classroom.

Shade and Stewart (2001) conducted a study that assessed general education and special education college students' attitudes toward inclusion of SWD before and after they completed an introductory special education college class. The 194 participants were administered a 48-item mainstreaming inventory (Shade & Stewart, 2001). The inventory, a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, looked at classroom placement, student behavior, teacher self-concept, time and work, motivation, and parents. For both the general education and special education college students, results indicated that their attitudes were positively influenced by participating in the introductory special education college class (Shade et al.). The authors concluded that preservice training for teachers would support beliefs and self-

efficacy (Shade et al., 2001; Blanton et al., 2014). Additionally, data from a 2013 qualitative study looked at secondary teacher attitudes regarding teaching SWD and also found teachers need training on how to run inclusive classrooms from their college programs and school settings (Logan & Wimer, 2013).

Within the United States, Stoiber, Gettinger, & Goetz (1998) explored the factors that influence both parents and teachers of students in early childhood inclusive programs. The researchers investigated three factors: "a) core perspectives, b) expected outcomes, and c) classroom practices" (Stoiber et al., 1998, p. 107) in order to assess and measure the aforementioned belief areas and their impact on teacher and parent practices in the area of inclusion. The authors contend that beliefs are developed based upon personal experiences and these beliefs help determine one's expectations about students in an inclusive environment (Stoiber et al., 1998). The researchers developed the MTAI scale in order to measure parent and teacher beliefs about inclusive education (Stoiber et al., 1998). Core perspectives were defined as social inclusion or the right to be educated among typical peers (Stoiber et al., 1998; "World Bank," 2013). Expected outcomes reflect what one believes will occur as a result of one's action (Stoiber et al., 1998). One's expectations can influence student outcomes both behaviorally and academically (Bandura, 2001; Stoiber et al., 1998). Classroom practices were defined around the inclusive classroom environment and the inherent structures such as teaching strategies, curriculum, accommodations, and barriers to learning (Causton-Theoharis, Julie N., 2009; Stoiber et al., 1998). This study as well as other research indicated that teachers did not feel adequately trained to work with all disabilities (Nishimura, 2014; Sailor & Roger, 2005; Stoiber et al., 1998; Zion & Sobel, 2014). A teacher's level of education, a master's degree or higher, was found to influence the belief that he or she was better prepared to teach students with mild

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disabilities (Abbas, Zafar, & Naz, 2016; Stoiber et al., 1998; Unianu, 2012). Additionally, teachers who had experience in the classroom, 15 plus years, had the belief they had better preparation to work with SWD and exhibited more tolerance and openness toward cultural issues (Stoiber et al., 1998; Unianu, 2012). Stoiber et al. (1998) indicated that teachers felt they learned the most about inclusive practices through in service training. Other research indicated that teacher preparation, whether in university courses or in service training, supported improved positive attitudes and confidence toward inclusion (Ferguson et al., 2003; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012).

The MTAI (Stoiber et al., 1998) survey was used for a dissertation study comparing United States and South Korean teachers' beliefs about inclusive practices (Jeong, 2013). The author used a cross-sectional survey design pulling potential participants from the United States as well as from Korea (Jeong, 2013). Jeong had 128 pre-K through sixth grade teacher participants complete the 28-question MTAI survey along with a demographics section. The results found that special education teachers in both countries had a more favorable attitudes toward inclusion compared to their general education colleagues. Overall, the United States teachers felt they were better prepared to teach students with mild disabilities such as speech-language delay and visual or hearing impairment. The South Korean teachers felt they were better able to teach students with a learning disability. Both groups felt that when they worked with students that they did not feel they were prepared to teach, the teachers needed more accommodations for the students. Overall, Jeong rationalized that efficacy beliefs could be increased with disability awareness courses for teachers and could lead to teachers feeling more comfortable working with SWD without the need for higher amounts of accommodations.

In one qualitative phenomenological study, it was found that elementary teachers' perceptions of inclusive education were mainly negative (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014). The researchers used a convenience sampling ($N = 10$) to collect data through the use of semi-structured interviews. These teachers had a minimum of 5 years' teaching experience with a mean number of professional experience years of 12. With a mean teaching age of 36 years, there were 90% that had achieved a Bachelor's degree and one with a Doctorate degree in education. Only one out of the 10 participants shared that inclusive education was a good idea and noted it could work if training, resources, and support were in place. Negative comments reflected lack of belief that inclusive education is beneficial to SWD and SWD would benefit by being taught by special education teacher specifically trained to teach SWD. In this study, factors that influenced teacher perceptions were teacher training and resources, where 100% noted they lacked both training and resources to support SWD (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014). Administrative support was noted to be an important factor for successful inclusive education, with eight teachers stating they felt they had inconsistent and/or lack of support from their administration. Teachers indicated that resources and support from the special education teacher were also critical toward inclusive education. Overall teacher attitudes were negative with one participant stating; "Developing an intrinsic desire within teachers to willingly participate…is a challenge" (Hunter-Johnson et al., p. 153). Hunter-Johnson et al. (2014) noted that the participants expressed the view that SWD should be taught in separate classrooms. The study suggested that one main factor that influenced the participants' negative perceptions was their lack of confidence in their ability to teach SWD because they did not have special education training (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014). Additionally, Hunter-Johnson et al. (2014) found that collaboration among general education and special education teachers as well as administration

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and parents was crucial to the success of inclusive education. They opined that the successful implementation of inclusive education hinges on teacher attitudes; in order to promote positive teacher attitudes, consistent professional development is a key factor in this area (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014).

General and special education teacher perceptions and their self-efficacy were explored in a quantitative study ($N = 273$) done by Buell, Hallam, Gael-McCormick, & Scheer (1999). Their survey used a 25-item Likert-type scale with some open-ended and yes no questions that looked at teachers' confidence that all students can learn in an inclusive setting, teachers' professional development needs for inclusive teaching, and teachers' perceptions of needed support for successful inclusive programs (Buell et al., 1999). Utilizing a multivariate analysis, Buell et al. (1999) found for both the general and special education teachers that there was a positive relationship between the knowledge the participant had on what inclusion is and his or her belief that he or she could teach a student. However, for the general education teacher, there was a negative relationship between what he or she perceived inclusion is and his or her belief that "motivation depends on environment" (p. 149). The general education teachers noted the need for professional development on how to work with SWD while special teachers noted they had more confidence in all areas of working with SWD.

Teacher Role in Inclusive Education

Educational researchers have delved into social inclusion and it has served as a stimulus for the inclusion movement (Savolainen et al., 2012; "World Bank," 2013). In all communities, there are certain groups that do not fully participate in social communities, whether they are from a minority group, immigrants, disabled, or poor ("World Bank," 2013). There is evidence that education can be the catalyst for encouraging inclusion; however, inclusion may trigger

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objections from others with longstanding prejudices and, in turn, could create more tension

between those who are included and those who are excluded within a society. Effective

education needs to remove the barriers that lead to student exclusion in education (Hunter-

Johnson et. al, 2014).

There is an increasing recognition at an international level that moving toward the

practice of inclusive education is crucial to meet every student's individual educational needs

(European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2014; Hunter-Johnson et. al,

2014). Teachers play an important role in creating an environment for inclusive education with

schools broadening their focus on teaching SWD in the general education classroom (European

Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2014).

Since the 1970s, educating teachers has been a growing area and topic of research in the

United States. Blanton, Pugach, and Boveda (2014) observed that while reformation of teacher

education programs has been a part of United States educational acts, the focus has mainly been

on general education teachers, without an in-depth look at the educational programs for special

education teachers. Implementation of the principle of inclusive education necessitates

understanding that both general and special education teachers are needed to "carry out their

roles in school where inclusive practice is the norm" (Blanton et al., 2014, p. 6). Schools should

encourage and provide educational opportunities for all student needs whether they have a

disability on not (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2008).

Instructional Practices That Support Students in an Inclusive Environment

Research indicates that university programs, district professional development, as well as

site training on strategies to support students with special needs are important factors in teacher

self-efficacy or the belief that they can teach SWD (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014; Buell et al.,

1999; Savolainen et al., 2012; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Unianu, 2012). Teachers' beliefs are influential for successful implementation of inclusive education within the public school setting and suggest that professional development can influence positive teachers' beliefs toward inclusive schooling. Lack of training in strategies that support special education students has been indicated as one important factor for teachers' lack of self-efficacy and negative perception of inclusive education. University preparation programs and district professional development need to train and educate teachers in the areas of classroom management, disability awareness, and strategies that support SWD (Logan & Wimer, 2013).

In order to focus on inclusion and the educational practices needed to support it successfully, educational reform should be considered (Sailor, 2015). This implies that before inclusive schooling can be realized, the use of educational reform or "school reform" (p. 94) must be studied. According to SWIFT an acronym for school wide integrated framework for transformation, districts need to have leadership, multi-tiered systems of support, and inclusive practices that meet the needs of all students both with and without disabilities (Center, 2014). The SWIFT center conducted a review of three educational practices to support inclusive reform: multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS)-response to intervention (RTI), Universal Design for Learning, and collaborative instruction. The center considered these practices as part of equity in education for students by differentiating according to student needs (Center, 2014).

MTSS-RTI. When considering school reform, MTSS-RTI can viewed through the lens of "inclusive school reform" (Sailor, 2015, p. 95) because of the use of research-based approaches that originated from special education research. There are three tiers that refer to the amount of instruction-intervention. Tier 1 is the basic instruction in the general education room. Tier 2 instruction-intervention is the use of an intervention curriculum, and Tier 3 is more

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intensive, which can include special education services. According to Sailor's research, RTI looks at how the student responds to intervention and is a school-wide function for all students (2105). MTSS-RTI changes how teachers look at supporting student needs to look at what supports are needed in educational environments. This associates more with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 2008 than with the IDEA. The following is a review of the research-based strategies that support students both with and without disabilities: Universal Design for Learning-differentiation, collaborative-co-teaching model, peer tutoring, and cooperative learning.

Universal design for learning-differentiation. The best predictor of student achievement is the quality of the classroom instruction. Differentiated instruction provides students with differentiated strategies or avenues for learning. Differentiation can be done by what the student learns, how they learn it, and how they show mastery of the knowledge. Differentiated instruction looks different depending on the prior knowledge, interests, and student abilities. It can vary depending on the learning situation. Good first instruction is the evidence-based practice of differentiated instruction or Universal Design for Learning and is essential for the children, and teachers must continually review data, reflect on the data, and adjust their teaching to meet the needs of students to help reduce educational obstacles (Black, Weinberg, & Brodwin, 2015; Tomlinson, 1999, 2000). Students with and without disabilities are supported in the classrooms when teachers utilize Universal Design for Learning strategies (Black et al., 2015; Black & Simon, 2014; Tomlinson, 1999, 2000).

Districts that provide professional development on Universal Design for Learning will support the improvement of their classroom teachers' teaching, based upon assessment and differentiation. The evidence-based practice of differentiated instruction helps reduce educational

obstacles for SWD (Black et al., 2015; Sailor, 2015). Overall, teachers must use evidence-based practices in the classroom to promote student growth when schools want SWD to achieve academic and social emotional gain (Marder & Fraser, 2012). Differentiation happens when the teacher looks at what the student learns, how he or she learns it, and how he or she shows mastery of the knowledge, which supports diverse learners. Tomlinson (1999) noted that it is important to differentiate by looking at student differences in the elementary grades in order to help students reach their potential. Students make progress when teachers differentiate by utilizing Universal Design for Learning strategies, and look at their student talents and learning styles to ensure the children are supported.

Collaborative-coteaching model. The practice of utilizing two teachers, one general education and one special education, sharing the responsibility of teaching a single classroom is co-teaching. The collaboration between special and general education teachers had been suggested as a way to meet the needs of all students and respond to the deficiencies in the current special education system (Friend, 2008; Sailor, 2015). With this collaborative model comes the responsibility to envision and work on collaboration/rapport between the teachers, which does not always happen. Co-teaching research studies show that this strategy can be very effective for SWD. With teacher training and in-services, co-teaching can be a very successful way to teach all students in a classroom setting. According to co-teaching expert Friend (2008), the following strategies can be used in the classroom: one teach, one observe; one teach, one assist; parallel teaching; station teaching; alternative teaching; and team teaching**.**

Peer tutoring. Peer tutoring, where students work in pairs or small groups, was found to be beneficial both socially and academically for SWD and for those without disabilities (Felder & Brent, 2001). Peer tutoring is one type of intervention strategy where students work in pairs or

small groups. Peer tutoring partners can be of the same or different age. Cross-age peer tutoring involves older students as tutors for younger, lower-functioning (SWD) students. Peer tutoring partners can be of the same or different age. Peer or cross-age tutoring can support struggling readers when students spend regularly scheduled time each week with a peer reading (Mastropieri, Scruggs, & Berkeley, 2007).

Cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is closely related to peer tutoring, where the teacher will set up the environment for the students to learn from each other and have academic and social support from peers. Cooperative learning is a tool that encourages student engagement from teacher-peer coaching, as well as encouragement and feedback from peers (Felder & Brent, 2001). Cooperative learning is a tool that encourages student engagement from teacher-peer coaching, as well as encouragement and feedback from peers. This is a strong component of the common core and can also be termed project based learning.

Summary

In order to provide rationale for conducting research on teacher beliefs and perceptions related to the practice of inclusion as well as factors related to providing teachers with evidence-based strategies for accommodations and preparation that can eliminate barriers to inclusive education, this Chapter II literature review covered educational legislation as it relates to inclusion: (a) educational legislation within the United States, (b) social inclusion, (c) social learning theory, (d) social cognitive theory, (e) social change, (f) teacher perception and attitudes toward inclusion, (g) teacher role in inclusive education, and (h) instructional practices that support students in an inclusive environment.

Legislation and inclusion. Inclusive education or schooling in U.S. schools increases SWD access to general education curriculum and programs (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007).

According to Sailor (2015), it is not today's mantra to use "All means All" (p. 94) when looking at inclusive education. In schools across the nation, districts must stop looking for a place to instruct children but rather determine the instructional condition for a student to participate successfully in the general education curriculum. In 2013–2014, the National Center for Educational Statistics indicated that the 61.2% of SWD were educated in regular (general) education classrooms more than 80% of the school day. This is an overall increase from 1986, which shared that 25.5% were in the general education classroom 80% of the school day. In 2007, this percentage jumped to 52% (Snyder & Dillow, 2015).

Culturally relevant-responsive instructional practices can support academic achievement for all learners (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Ladson-Billings (1995) theorizes that in cultural relevancy students need to experience "academic success… develop and/or maintain cultural competence… develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order" (p. 160). Culturally responsive teachers realize not only the importance of academic achievement, but also the maintaining of cultural identity and heritage (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Social inclusion. Social inclusion has been a topic of discussion both in the United States and across nations and can be considered motivation for the inclusion movement (Savolainen et al., 2012; "World Bank," 2013). Social inclusion has been found to affect one's salary, type of job, and capacity to be part of their community ("World Bank," 2013). Social inclusion is when a community supports people being a part of the community and said community is helping them to improve their prospects.

Social learning theory. Bandura (1971) stated that with the social learning theory, a person learns by participating, experiencing, or observing. If a person sees a behavior positively

rewarded, it can be a good teaching experience. It is argued that positive teaching experiences are critical to building a positive mind-set toward inclusive practices and will greatly influence teachers' attitudes. (Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012; Unianu, 2012). Malinen et al. (2013) in their study of teacher attitudes in Finland, China, and South Africa noted that a common thread among the three countries was the teachers' teaching experience with SWD and it "explained teachers' efficacy evaluations in all countries" (p. 41). They opined that when teachers teach SWD and they gain successful experience, this would affect their attitudes toward successful inclusive teaching (Malinen et al., 2013).

Social cognitive theory. Bandura (2012a) theorized that the social cognitive theory has three interplaying parts: "personal determinants, behavioral determinants, and environmental determinates" (p. 12). Personal determinants are what a person can directly control. Behavioral determinants are how a person reacts to his or her environment. Environmental determinates are what are placed or selected on a person (Bandura, 2012a). Within social cognitive theory, a person's self-efficacy beliefs can help them develop their own personal efficacy (Bandura, 1989). In Social Cognitive Theory, a person contributes to his or her own "motivation, behavior, and development" (Bandura, 1989, p. 8).

Self-efficacy theory. A teacher's self-efficacy plays an important role in his or her perceived ability to impact student outcomes, which in turn is related to the teacher's behavior, student attitudes, and student achievement (Malinen et al., 2013; Savolainen et al.; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). A teacher's efficacy beliefs can be raised if he or she believes his or her teaching was successful, which in turn supports his or her expectation that the next teaching lesson will be successful (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Efforts should be given to increasing teachers' basic knowledge of inclusion, factors that surround inclusion, and strategies

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that support inclusion in order to build more confidence-self-efficacy in a teacher's ability to affect students in a positive manner (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014; Savolainen et al., 2012; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2007; Unianu, 2012). Self-efficacy theory supports that teaching experience is an important factor for supporting teachers' positive attitudes toward inclusion (Malinen et al., 2013).

Self-efficacy beliefs are connected to teacher attitudes (Bandura, 1994; Malinen et al., 2013; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). When a teacher believes he or she has the strategies to implement inclusive practices in his or her classroom, the more positive his or her attitude becomes toward SWD (Malinen et al., 2013; MacCarthy, 2010). It is suggested there is a need for teacher education programs to have a focus on self-efficacy and the importance of building supportive collaborative relationships (Malinen et al., (2013). Teacher attitudes matter and they can influence how teachers educate students (Logan & Wimer, 2013). Positive experiences in the classroom with SWD build teacher self-efficacy and a positive mind-set on inclusive schooling (Pajares, 1997; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Moreover, the effect of teacher self-efficacy on attitudes toward inclusion is a critical factor for the success of SWD in the general education environment (Malinen et al., 2013; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012; Unianu, 2012; "World Bank," 2013). One's beliefs can hinder the impact of professional development and in turn, how one perceives inclusive schooling (Bandura, 2001). A teacher who has a strong sense of self-efficacy can increase his or her resiliency to the perceived difficulties of inclusive education. The choices one makes influences what people choose to do (Bandura, 2012b).

Change theory. Change theory can be a strong dynamic in supporting and developing inclusive practices and getting the desired results when a district wants to support and develop educational reform such as inclusion (Fullan, 2006). To utilize change theory, a district would

use the seven factors shared by Fullan (2006): motivation, building capacity, learning, changing, reflection, engagement, and perseverance.

Beliefs-attitudes. Teacher attitude is a critical component in the success of SWD and inclusive schooling practices (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012; Unianu, 2012). Unianu (2012) (found some differences in attitudes and teachers' feelings of self-efficacy. She suggested that teachers in the elementary grades with more teaching experience have a stronger belief in their ability to differentiate for student needs (Unianu, 2012). It was opined that this could be attributed to the teachers' experience. A teacher's confidence that he or she can work with SWD as well as his or her belief that he or she can make a difference on student achievement are crucial to teacher success with SWD. Moreover, a teacher's needs on how to work with SWD should be covered in professional development and will have an influence on a teacher's sense of efficacy (Buell et al., 1999).

Inclusive teaching practices. Utilizing researched-based teaching practices that provide differentiation of a lesson can affect both the academic and social outcomes of students with and without disabilities (Black et al., 2015; Black & Simon, 2014; Tomlinson, 2000). Students with disabilities have been supported in the general education classroom when teachers use such methods as co-teaching and peer tutoring (Felder & Brent, 2001; Friend, 2008).

Conclusion. The interconnections of the social inclusion and social cognitive theoretical frameworks could support toward shaping teacher beliefs and perceptions related to the practice of inclusion as well as factors related to providing teachers with evidence-based strategies for accommodations and preparation that can eliminate barriers to inclusive education. Utilizing these theoretical frameworks could support a district's educational reform movement toward a more inclusive environment by having teachers participate, experience, or observe the teaching

of SWD within the general education environment (Bandura, 1971, 1989). Additionally, a person's knowledge and ability to help support his or her problem solving and decision making by thinking through solutions before he or she acts on them, can support new learning and its transference to the classroom setting (Bandura, 1989). Social cognitive theory notes modeling can be effective in teaching appropriate behavior, which supports a premise of why inclusive schooling can promote more positive behavior for SWD when educated with typical peers (Bandura, 1989). A person's behavior is motivated by positive outcomes and the consequences he or she receives by his or her behavior; hence, a teacher who utilizes a new strategy with SWD and sees that the strategy was helpful is rewarded by the positive outcome (Bandura, 1994, 2006) The positive outcome, in turn, provides the groundwork for a teacher to persevere through times when a strategy did not work in a given situation (Bandura, 2001).

Proponents of inclusive education can use the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory and its look at efficacy to support shaping the environment for teachers and students. Under the umbrella of efficacy beliefs, any factor that influences choice can impact personal development (Bandura, 2001). Bandura (2001) noted that positive outcomes from a situation affect a person's motivation and what action he or she will take in a situation and can create positive self-efficacy beliefs. Negative attitudes and doubt can impede the success of inclusive schooling; teachers need to feel competent they can meet the needs of SWD (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Attitudes toward inclusion can be positively affected through professional development and can influence efficacy beliefs and promote teacher proficiencies as well as interests long after the original professional development took place (Bandura, 2001; Buell et al., 1999; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Moreover, in inclusive education, a teacher's beliefs can hinder the impact of the training and, in turn, how the teacher perceives

inclusive schooling (Malinen et al., 2013; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012; Unianu, 2012; "World Bank," 2013). A teacher who has a strong sense of self-efficacy can increase his or her resiliency to the perceived difficulties of inclusive education and strengthen his or her perseverance. This is because the choices one makes influences what people choose to do. Bandura (2001) noted that whenever one chooses to do something, it can influence personal growth.

Furthermore, social change or change theory could be used as a guide for districts to strategize their movement toward more inclusive environments on their school sites. First, district training should build the capacity of their staff by training and teaching both general and special educations teachers on specific strategies that support SWD in the general education classroom. Training sessions should have an emphasis on researched-based methodologies and how these methodologies can support students in the classroom. Additionally the training sessions should encourage staff motivation and engagement as well as provide time for all teachers to reflect on their leaning and why they are engaged in the professional development (Fullan, 2006).

Teachers can have a hand in supporting inclusive education and incorporating effective teaching strategies into their classroom environment. Collaboration among teaching teachers is a critical factor in supporting inclusive practices (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003). Universities must prepare teachers to meet the educational and social needs of all their students. Therefore, teacher training on learning strategies, positive behavior support, co-teaching, social inclusion, differentiation, and Universal Design for Learning are important components toward the success of inclusive schooling (Fisher, Frey, & Thousand, 2003; Friend, 2008; Sailor & Roger, 2005; Zion & Sobel, 2014).

Inclusive schooling allows schools to provide an educational environment of belonging and educating for all students irrespective of their disability, race, gender, or ethnicity (Avramidis & Northwich, 2002; Malinen et al., 2013; "World Bank," 2013). However, schools will need to provide resources such as professional development and special education collaboration to increase teacher perception and belief that they can make a difference for SWD in their classrooms (Buell et al., 1999).

Teachers who have a positive attitude or mind-set about including SWD in their classrooms are found to be more prone to differentiate their classroom instruction to meet the needs of their students and have a more positive mind-set while doing so (Block, 2010; Nishimura, 2014; Tait & Mundia, 2014;Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). The need to look not only at providing educational programs that provide evidence-based strategies that promote educational gains for students but also the necessity to look at how to support positive teacher mind-set play a pivotal role in inclusive education. Teachers' attitudes toward the educational practice of inclusive schooling are an important factor in accomplishing inclusionary practices (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Malinen et al., 2013; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012; Unianu, 2012).

Chapter III is a description of the research design and methodology for the current study. Data collection, instrumentation, data analysis, and plan for reporting findings are discussed.

<div align="center">**Chapter III: Methodology**</div>

The primary goal of this quantitative, descriptive, and comparative study was to investigate and compare general and special education kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teacher beliefs on inclusion as well as their perceptions of accommodations, preparation, and barriers to inclusion. Specifically, this researcher looked at, "three belief subscales: core perspectives, expected outcomes, and classroom practices" (Stoiber et al., 1998, p. 107). The chapter is organized into nine sections: (a) research questions, (b) research design, (c) sources of data, (d) data collection strategies and procedures, (e) instrumentation, (f) human subjects considerations, (g) data analysis, (h) means to ensure study validity, and (i) plan for reporting findings.

Research Questions

The purpose of this quantitative, descriptive, and comparative study was to investigate and compare general and special education kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teacher beliefs on inclusion as well as their perceptions of accommodations, preparation, and barriers to inclusion.

Research question 1. What relationships, if any, exist between general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in an urban school district in southern California as measured by the MTAI survey?

Alternative hypothesis. There will be at least one significant relationship between general and special education teacher beliefs about inclusion among the MTAI 28 survey items.

Null hypothesis. There will be no significant relationship between general and special education teacher beliefs about inclusion among the MTAI 28 survey items.

Statistical test. Spearman Correlations and Mann-Whitney.

Research question 2. To what extent, if at all, are general education and special

education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in one urban school district in southern California, as

measured by the MTAI survey, related to their demographic characteristics?

Alternative hypothesis. At least one of the three MTAI survey subscale scores will be

related to at least one of the demographic characteristics.

Null hypothesis. None of the three MTAI subscale scores will be related to any of the

demographic characteristics.

Statistical test. Spearman Correlations.

Table 1

Research Questions, Survey Questions, Statistical Approach, and Demographics

Research Questions	Survey Questions	Statistical Approach	Demographics[1]
1. What relationships, if any, exist between general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in an urban school district in southern California as measured by the MTAI survey?	1-12 (Core Perspectives) 13-23 (Expected Outcomes) Classroom Practices (24-28)	Spearman Correlations Mann-Whitney	1. Gender (GE/SE) 2. General or Special Education Teacher (GE/SE) 3. Credential type 4. Grade Level teaching (2016-17) (GE/SE) 5. Number of years teaching (GE/SE) 6. If taught special education (GE) 7. College course taken about SWD (GE/SE) 8. District/County trainings (GE/SE) 9. Type of PD/trainings (GE/SE) 10. If taught general education (SE)
2. To what extent, if at all, are general education teachers and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in one urban school district in southern California, as measured by the MTAI survey, related to their demographic characteristics?	1-12 (Core Perspectives) (Demographics) 13-23 (Expected Outcomes) Classroom Practices (24-28)	Spearman Correlations	

1 Demographics section: GE=general education respondents; SE = special education
respondents;
The 10 demographic categories listed equate to 35 demographic variables

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative, descriptive, and comparative research design to investigate perspectives concerning elementary grade inclusion. The present study attempted to differentiate the perspectives of general and special education teachers and specifically to consider varying factions of inclusive perspectives. To examine these perspectives, the researcher employed a survey design, to collect data from the participants. The MTAI survey, with permission from the author (see Appendix B), was used for this research because it can afford a quantitative account of perspectives of the kindergarten, first, and second grade general and special education teachers by studying a sample of this group (Creswell, 2014). The survey design utilizing a cross-sectional method collected at a specific time was this researcher's preferred method for collection because of the ability to have a prompt turnaround of the data. The form of data collection was done by hand delivering a hard copy of the survey, along with a copy of the link to complete the survey on line if preferred. Participants were able to either complete the hard copy of the survey by hand or go on line to complete the survey during a two-week window. By choosing a quantitative methodology over a qualitative, participants had anonymity completing the survey; however, a limitation to the study was that the researcher did not have the ability to discuss with participants their lived experiences of inclusion. Not pursuing a phenomenological research design on their lived experiences could be considered a limitation for this study.

Sources of Data

Setting. The setting for the data collection was in Seaside School District, a public K-12 school district in Southern California. At the time of this study, Seaside supported more than 29,000 students with approximately 3,000 students eligible for special education services.

Population. The target population for this study consisted of 91 K-2 general and special education teachers from 27 elementary school sites who had supported SWD in the inclusive general education environment during the 2016-17 school year. Table 2 represents the target population by position and grade level.

Table 2

Target Population

Teacher	Grade Level of SWD	n	Total N
General Education	TK/K	30	
	1	26	
	2	1	
Special Education	RSP	23	
	Education Specialists/Coteachers	11	91

Sample. The desired sample was the entire target population of 91 K-2 general and special education teachers from 27 elementary school sites who had supported SWD in the inclusive general education environment during the 2016-17 school year. To achieve a 95% confidence level and a 5% confidence interval, the respondent group needed to have a minimum of 74 respondents. Out of the 91 surveys presented to teachers, there was a 59% return rate for the teachers ($N = 54$). The final sample was comprised of 24 general education teachers and 30 special education teachers. The sample of general education teachers taught traditional kindergarten ($n = 1$), kindergarten ($n = 11$), first grade ($n = 11$), and second grade ($n = 1$). The sample of special education teachers shows they supported more than one grade level at their

school site; traditional kindergarten ($n = 6$), kindergarten ($n = 25$), first grade ($n = 21$), and second grade ($n = 17$).

Sampling method. For the purposes of this quantitative study, the target population was represented through a convenience sample of general and special education kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers from the 27 elementary school sites via a non-stratification of the population (Creswell, 2014). The sampling design for this population was single stage because the researcher had access to the participants and could sample the participants directly.

Creswell (2014) recommends using a random sample rather than a convenience sample for the selection process for participants because each individual in the "population has an equal probability of being selected" (p. 158). However, for purposes of this study, the researcher sampled the participants using a nonprobability convenience sample, which was based upon their availability. A nonprobability convenience sampling was utilized because of the convenient accessibility and proximity of the naturally formed groups of teachers who were supporting inclusive education in Seaside, during the 2016-17 school year; therefore, when the data were analyzed any generalization was made cautiously (Creswell, 2014; Lunenburg & Irby, 2008).

Specifically, the target sample consisted of 91 participants who supported SWD in inclusive education during the 2016-17 school year. The researcher counted the total kindergarten, first, and second-grade teachers who supported SWD in inclusive education during the 2016-17 school year and it was $N = 91$.

Data Collection Strategies and Procedures

Once Institutional Review Board approval and district-level permission were granted; the recruitment letter, information/facts sheet letter for the study, and a hardcopy of the survey along with a link to the online version, were handed to all potential participants by Seaside special

education inclusive team staff inviting participants ($N = 91$) to participate in the survey (see APPENDIX C, D, E, & F). The developers of the survey noted that it was self-explanatory; however, the researcher gave directions, which were included in typed format within the survey itself (Stoiber et al., 1998). The recruitment and information letters shared the parameters and purpose of the study and provided participants time to answer questions or potential concerns they had regarding the study.

Potential participants had two ways they could complete the survey, (a) hard copy or (b) online version. As all participants were given a hard copy with directions that they could complete by hand or utilize the Survey Monkey $_{TM}$ link that was in the directions. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher did not hand carry the survey to any participants. Participants were apprised that participant identity and all information gathered on the survey were confidential and to maintain confidentiality no identifying information on the survey was requested other than their position title. During the two-week window for survey completion, the Seaside special education inclusive staff verbally reminded participants if they wished to participate the survey would be open for two weeks.

Hard copy survey. For the participants ($n = 28$) who completed the survey via the hard copy, they gave their consent to the survey by marking yes on the first question that they agreed to participate in the study. For the participants who chose to complete the survey by hand, they were asked not to put any identifying information on the survey (i.e. teacher name, site name, grade level). They were then asked to return the survey to an envelope left in the office for survey retrieval. Seaside inclusion team members periodically picked up completed surveys during the two-week period. The researcher inputted all hard copy/hand completed survey data manually into Survey Monkey $_{TM}$.

Online survey. For the participants ($n = 26$) who completed the survey via the web link they gave their consent to participate by answering yes on the first question that they agreed to participate in the study. The data were automatically placed into Survey Monkey ™ while the participant completed the online version.

Data management. All data were managed on a secure password protected computer. Only the researcher knew the password. Participant confidentiality was maintained, (a) the researcher did not hand out the survey, and (b) if a participant utilized the Survey Monkey ™ link, Survey Monkey ™, did not solicit any identifying information. To guarantee the protection of all participant-identifying data, only the researcher, statistician, and faculty supervisor reviewed the encrypted data. If any identifiable data (i.e.. e-mail addresses) was obtained, all identifiable data reviewed by the researcher will be destroyed no less than three years following upon the completion of the study.

Instrumentation

The MTAI survey along with demographic questions designed by the researcher was the instrument for this study, in order to partially replicate the Stoiber et al. (1998) study. Spearman Correlations and Mann-Whitney statistical tests were used to analyze the data for research question one in order to relate variables and do group comparisons. Spearman Correlations statistical test was utilized to examine the participants' answers for research question two in order to relate the participants beliefs about inclusion to their demographic variables/characteristics (Creswell, 2009). This study analyzed the variable of teacher beliefs but did not include parents, instructional aides, psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, or administrators, as did the original MTAI study (Stoiber et al., 1998). Only the demographics section was modified to meet the needs of the participants but this did

not change the validity of the survey. The original 28 MTAI questions were not changed or altered. Specifically, three categories of participants' beliefs on inclusion were analyzed as well as their perceptions of accommodations, preparation, and barriers to inclusion were explored: (a) core perspectives, (b) expected outcomes, and (c) classroom practices. The MTAI developers noted that the survey can provide a "quantitative approach for analyzing diverse inclusion beliefs" (Stoiber et al., 1998, p. 120). However, they noted that it did not fully look at the intricacy of beliefs (Stoiber et al., 1998).

Demographics. The demographic section is composed of 13 questions and was collected for the sake of comparing general and special education teacher beliefs about inclusion related to their demographics. From the 13 questions, the researcher used Spearman correlations to analyze the 35 demographic variables with the three scale scores of core perspectives, expected outcomes, and classroom practices.

MTAI. The MTAI survey is composed of 28 items with three sections: (a) core perspectives (Q 1-12), (b) expected outcomes (Q 13-23), and (c) classroom practices (Q 24-28) (Stoiber et al., 1998).

Core perspectives. The core perspectives section looks at participant beliefs and draws on the participants' values about what is "ethically right and what constitutes best practices for educating children" (Stoiber et al., 1998, p. 110) and is covered by the MTAI questions 1–12. This corresponds to one's belief about what is ethical and what "best practices to educating" (Stoiber et al., 1998, p. 110) students with and without disabilities (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994).

Expected outcomes. Expected outcomes will be analyzed and are the view that one's

beliefs pervade one's perceptions but influence educational perspectives and the results

(Schommer, 1994). The expected outcomes section is covered by the MTAI questions 13–23.

Classroom practices. Classroom practices looks at the participant's thinking regarding

how inclusion can impact classroom life and instructional lessons and is covered by the MTAI

questions 24–28.

Reliability and validity. This study employed the MTAI survey to analyze teacher

perspectives of attitudes and beliefs about inclusion. The developers of the 28-item

comprehensive MTAI survey noted the survey possessed an internal consistency of .91 overall

(Stoiber et al., 1998). The MTAI survey was rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 =

strongly accept and 5 = strongly reject. The developers noted that the questions were reversed

scored for 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, and 28 (Stoiber et al., 1998). Hence, the 5-point

scale was reversed with 1 = strongly reject and 5 = strongly accept for these questions (Stoiber et

al., 1998). The original authors examined their survey's reliability by using Cronbach's alpha,

with core perspective .80, expected outcomes .85, classroom practices .64, and total beliefs .91

(Stoiber et al., 1998).

Stoiber et al. (1998) established that the MTAI survey has both validity and reliability

with inter-correlations found to be $r = .50$ (core perspective-classroom practices), $r = .55$

(expected outcomes classroom practices), $r = .75$ (expected outcomes-core perspectives).

The developers of MTAI noted the following two alphas for (a) core perspective .80 (.77), (b)

expected outcomes .85 (.69), and (c) classroom Practices .64 (.69). They noted that subscale to

total scale correlations ranged from .73 to .91 (Stoiber et al., 1998). Inter-correlations between

subscales was < 80. By keeping the 28 item MTAI survey as originally designed its reliability

and validity were not compromised and maintained sound psychometric properties (Stoiber et al., 1998).

Human Subjects Considerations

Written approval for this study as well as access to the participants was obtained from Pepperdine's Institutional Review Board and Seaside School District. Pepperdine's Institutional Review Board determined that this study adequately protected human subjects. The researcher followed the protocols and standards of both entities in order to protect the human subjects involved in the study. The researcher completed Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) investigatory education training to ensure appropriate protections for human subjects.

Once the Institutional Review Board approval and district level permission were obtained, the participants were provided with the informed consent and recruitment-information-facts letter indicating that participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time with no negative consequences. Signed consent was waived and instead, willing participants acknowledged their consent when they participated in the survey after reading informed consent letter and they returned the hard copy of the survey with the yes marked they agreed to complete the survey, or they completed the online version of the survey and clicked yes giving their informed consent. All data will be stored securely in the researcher's office and will not be properly destroyed until three years after completion of the study.

During the study process, participant confidentiality was maintained, as the survey did not solicit any identifying information. If any identifiable data were obtained (i.e.. e-mail addresses), all identifiable data will be destroyed after three years. All data were managed on a secure password protected computer. Only the researcher knew the password. Participant confidentiality was maintained, as the researcher did not hand out the survey and if a participant

utilized the Survey Monkey $_{TM}$ link given to them with the hard copy, Survey Monkey $_{TM,}$ does not solicit any identifying information. To guarantee the protection of all participants-identifying data, only the researcher and statistician reviewed the encrypted data. If any identifiable data were obtained, all identifiable data will be destroyed after three years.

Participants were informed that there are minimal identifiable potential risks as a result of participating in this study, such as participants learning more about how their own personal perspectives on inclusion may affect their perceptions of SWD being educated in a general education classroom (Stoiber et al., 1998). Risks may have included psychological concerns for participants thinking about inclusion and their beliefs. Other potential and minimal risks might have included fatigue and loss of time completing the survey. The researcher attempted to avoid or minimize participant risks by providing the opportunity to complete the survey at a location and time of the participants' choice during a specified window of time and by allowing the survey to be completed in multiple settings. Benefits included access to study results to increase intrapersonal knowledge on inclusive schooling. Participants were informed that they could choose to participate partially, by choosing not to answer any questions that cause them any psychological discomfort. In addition, participants were informed that there would be no financial compensation for participating in this study; however, there might be potential benefits that included their own mind-set shift on the potential academic and social benefits of inclusion for SWD and those without disabilities.

Data Analysis

Once the survey closed, the researcher utilized the Survey Monkey $_{TM}$ export features and exported the data into an Excel spreadsheet. Data were reviewed to ensure that only those participants who completed all questions were kept and analyzed. The participants who did not

answer all questions were not utilized. The research questions have categorical predictor variables: (a) general education teachers' perspectives, and (b) special education teachers' perspectives. Additionally, there are multiple interval numeric outcome variables: (a) core perspectives, (b) expected outcomes, (c) classroom practices, (d) experience teaching SWD, (g) years of teaching experience, and (h) professional developments attended.

Once the researcher reviewed that the exported data included all the pertinent contextual information, a codebook was generated that included all variables that need to be recoded, specifically, the reverse scored items. A printed codebook was created to include all the raw data of the variables and questions. The researcher utilized SPSS $_{TM}$ (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) analysis software to conduct an appropriate statistical test to perform the analyses. Using the research data imported from Excel $_{TM}$ into the statistical analysis software, descriptive statistics were completed for each subgrouping. The data were analyzed using the following univariate descriptive statistics; (a) Table 3-means and standard deviations, (b) Table 4-frequencies and percentages, (c) Table 5-frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, (d) Table 6-frequencies and percentages, (e) Table 7- frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, (f) Table 8- frequencies and percentages, (g) Table 9-Mann-Whitney with Spearman Correlations, (h) Table 10-Mann-Whitney with Spearman Correlations, (i) Table 11-Spearman Correlations, (j) Table 12-14-frequencies and percentages and thematic codings. The analyzed data is presented in Chapter IV.

Means to Ensure Study Validity

To ensure study validity, this study employed the MTAI survey to analyze teacher perspectives of attitudes and beliefs about inclusion. By keeping the 28 item MTAI survey as

originally designed its reliability and validity were not compromised and maintained sound

psychometric properties (Stoiber et al., 1998).

Plan for Reporting Findings

Chapter IV presents the study's findings, including quantitative data, demographic

information and results for the two research questions. Chapter V provides a reflective summary

of the entire research study, discusses the findings, presents conclusions and recommendations.

Recommendations addresses three things: (a) policy and practice, (b) what this researcher might

have done differently, and (c) potential recommendations for future research.

Chapter IV: Presentation of Findings

Study Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative, descriptive, and comparative study was to investigate and compare general and special education kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teacher beliefs on inclusion, as well as their perceptions of accommodations, preparation, and barriers to inclusion. A total of 54 teachers completed surveys.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses guided this study:

Research question 1. What relationships, if any, exist between general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in an urban school district in southern California as measured by the MTAI survey?

Alternative hypothesis. There will be at least one significant relationship between general and special education teacher beliefs about inclusion among the MTAI 28 survey items.

Null hypothesis. There will be no significant relationship between general and special education teacher beliefs about inclusion among the MTAI 28 survey items.

Research question 2. To what extent, if at all, are general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in one urban school district in southern California, as measured by the MTAI survey, related to their demographic characteristics?

Alternative hypothesis. At least one of the three MTAI survey subscale scores will be related to at least one of the demographic characteristics.

Null hypothesis. None of the three MTAI subscale scores will be related to any of the demographic characteristics.

Methodology Overview

MTAI survey was the instrument administered in this study (see Appendix A). The MTAI consists of 28 items that look at teacher beliefs on inclusion. More specifically, the results of this study focused on the three belief subscales of the MTAI: "core perspectives, expected outcomes, and classroom practices" (Stoiber et al., 1998, p. 107).

The MTAI survey was administered to 91 teacher participants who supported SWD in inclusive education in kindergarten through second grade. To achieve a 95% confidence level and a 5% confidence interval, the respondent group needed to have a minimum of 74 respondents. Fifty four participants or 59% of the participants completed the MTAI survey.

Data Analysis Overview

The statistical tests of Spearman Correlations and Mann-Whitney were utilized to examine the participants' answers MTAI survey and the demographics section for question 1: What relationships, if any, exist between general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in an urban school district in southern California as measured by the MTAI Survey? The results were additionally analyzed through the lens of alternative hypothesis: There will be at least one significant relationship between general and special education teacher beliefs about inclusion among the MTAI 28 survey item; and the null hypothesis: There will be no significant differences between general and special education teacher beliefs about inclusion among the MTAI 28 survey items.

The Spearman correlations were utilized to examine the participants' answers for research question 2: To what extent, if at all, are general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in one urban school district in southern California, as measured by the MTAI survey, related to their demographic characteristics? The results additionally were analyzed

through the alternative hypotheses: At least one of the three MTAI Survey subscale scores will be related to at least one of the demographic characteristics; and the null hypotheses: None of the three MTAI subscale scores will be related to any of the demographic characteristics. The findings for this study will be presented according to research questions and hypotheses.

Group Statistics

Table 3 displays the ratings for the 28 MTAI statements sorted by the highest level of favorability. Favorability was measured on the 5-point scale where 1 = Most Favorable and 5 = Least Favorable. Some items were reverse scored when the 5-point answer considered to be most favorable. Inspection of Table 3 found the highest favorability was for Item 1, Students with special needs have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developing children ($M = 1.63$), and Item 16, The presence of children with exceptional education needs promotes acceptance of individual differences on the part of typically developing students ($M = 1.76$). Least favorable ratings pertaining to inclusion were Items 25 and 26, which were both reverse scored. Specifically, Item 25, The behaviors of students with special needs require significantly more teacher-directed attention than those of typically developing children had a mean of $M = 3.76$ while Item 26, Parents of children with exceptional education needs require more supportive services from teachers than parents of typically developing children had a mean of $M = 3.67$.

Table 3

MTAI Ratings Sorted by Favorability

Item	*M*	*SD*
1. Students with special needs have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developing students.	1.63	0.65

<div align="right">(continued)</div>

Item	M	SD
16. The presence of children with exceptional education needs promotes acceptance of individual differences on the part of typically developing students.	1.76	0.67
4. Children with exceptional education needs should be given every opportunity to function in an integrated classroom.	1.78	0.77
7. Reversed- Most special education teachers lack an appropriate knowledge base to educate typically developing students effectively.	1.81	0.73
13. Inclusion is socially advantageous for children with special needs.	1.83	0.67
5. Inclusion can be beneficial for parents of children with exceptional needs.	1.87	0.67
2. Reversed- Inclusion is NOT a desirable practice for educating most typically developing students.	2.09	0.81
12. It is feasible to teach children with average abilities and exceptional needs in the same classroom.	2.13	0.90
23. Reversed- Typically developing students in inclusive classrooms are more likely to exhibit challenging behaviors learned from children with special needs.	2.17	0.75
18. Inclusion promotes self-esteem among children with special needs.	2.20	0.92
15. Reversed- Children with exceptional needs are likely to be isolated by typically developing students in inclusive classrooms.	2.26	0.85
17. Inclusion promotes social independence among children with special need.	2.26	0.87
6. Parents of children with exceptional needs prefer to have their child placed in an inclusive classroom setting.	2.37	0.65
20. Children with special needs in inclusive classrooms develop a better self-concept than in a self-contained classroom.	2.39	0.76
21. The challenge of a regular education classroom promotes academic growth among children with exceptional education needs.	2.43	0.98
22. Reversed- Isolation in a special class does NOT have a negative effect on the social and emotional development of students prior to middle school.	2.54	0.86
28. Reversed- A good approach to managing inclusive classrooms is to have a special education teacher be responsible for instructing the children with special needs.	2.78	1.11
3. Reversed- It is difficult to maintain order in a classroom that contains a mix of children with exceptional education needs and children with average abilities.	2.86	1.03
8. Reversed- The individual needs of children with disabilities CANNOT be addressed adequately by a regular education teacher.	2.89	1.11
14. Reversed- Children with special needs will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special, separate classroom than in an integrated classroom.	2.89	0.92
11. Most children with exceptional needs are well behaved in integrated education	3.00	1.03

(continued)

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Item	M	SD
19. Reversed-Children with exceptional needs are likely to exhibit more challenging behaviors in an integrated classroom.	3.19	0.93
24. Children with exceptional needs monopolize teachers' time.	3.22	1.00
10. The best way to begin educating children in inclusive settings is just to do it.	3.28	1.11
27. Parents of children with exceptional needs present no greater challenge for a classroom teacher than do parents of a regular education student.	3.48	0.99
9. Reversed- We must learn more about the effects of inclusive classrooms before inclusive classrooms take place on a large-scale basis.	3.61	1.11
26. Reversed- Parents of children with exceptional education needs require more supportive services from teachers than parents of typically developing children.	3.67	1.01
25. Reversed- The behaviors of students with special needs require significantly more teacher-directed attention than those of typically developing children.	3.76	0.85

Note. Ratings based on a five-point metric: 1 = *Most Favorable* to 5 = *Least Favorable*. Some items were reverse scored because a five-point answer was deemed to be the *Most Favorable* response toward student inclusion

N = 54

Table 4 shows the frequency counts for the teacher credential type sorted by the highest frequency. The most common credentials General Education Multiple Subjects (64.8%) and Education Specialist Mild-Moderate (55.6%). Two of the credentials were not attained by any of the teachers. Those were Severely Handicapped Credential and Learning Handicapped Credential.

Table 4

Frequency Counts for Teacher Credential Type Sorted by Highest Frequency

Rating	n	%
General Education Multiple Subjects	35	64.8
Education Specialist Mild-Moderate	30	55.6
Autism Spectrum Disorder Added Authorization.	14	25.9
Resource Specialist Certificate of Competency	2	3.7
General Education Single Subjects.	1	1.9
Education Specialist Moderate-Severe	1	1.9

Rating	*n*	%
Severely Handicapped Credential	0	0.0
Learning Handicapped Credential	0	0.0

Note. Frequencies were based on how many credential(s) were held by general and special education teachers.

N = 54

General Education

Table 5 displays the frequency counts for the demographic variables for the general education teacher sample. Most teachers (91.6%) are teaching either in Kindergarten or first grade. Years taught range from 1 to 38 years with the mean (*M* = 18.46, standard deviation *SD* = 8.50). Only one of the teachers (4.2%) had previously taught special education. As to courses-trainings attended, 45.8% had a university-level course, 95.8% had district-level training, and 12.5% had county-level training.

Table 5

Frequency Counts for Demographic Variables for General Education Teachers

Variable	Category	*n*	%
Grade Level Taught			
	Traditional Kindergarten	1	4.2
	Kindergarten	11	45.8
	First	11	45.8
	Second	1	4.2
Years Taught [a]			
	1–9	2	8.3
	10–20	14	58.3
	21–38	8	33.3
Previously Taught Special Education			
	No	23	95.8
	Yes	1	4.2
Special Education University Level Course (Attended)			
	No	13	54.2
	Yes	11	45.8

(continued)

Variable	Category		n	%
District-Level Training (Attended)				
	No		1	4.2
	Yes		23	95.8
County-Level Training (Attended)				
	No		21	87.5
	Yes		3	12.5

[a] Years taught: $M = 18.46$, $SD = 8.50$.
$n = 24$

Table 6 displays the frequency counts for disability trainings-support sorted by highest frequency for general education teachers. Most commonly attended were coteaching and Universal Design for Learning, both attended by 70.8 % of respondents. Least common trainings were individualized coaching (8.3%) and networking with colleagues (25.0%).

Table 6

Frequency Counts for Disability Trainings-Support Sorted by Highest Frequency for General Education Teachers

Rating	n	%
Co-Teaching	17	70.8
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	17	70.8
Accommodations-Modifications	16	66.7
Behavioral Training	9	37.5
Disability Awareness	8	33.3
Networking With Colleagues	6	25.0
Individualized Coaching-Support	2	8.3

Note. Frequencies were based on general education teachers who attended one or more trainings.
$n = 24$

Special Education

Table 7 displays the frequency counts for the demographic variables for the special education teacher sample. Most special education teachers support Kindergarten (83.3%) or First (70.0%) grade inclusion students. Years taught range from 1 to 25 years ($M = 9.48$, $SD = 7.37$). Eleven special education teachers (36.7%) had previously taught general education.

Table 7

Frequency Counts for Demographic Variables for Special Education Teachers

Variable	Category	n	%
Grade Levels Supported [a]			
	Traditional Kindergarten	6	20.0
	Kindergarten	25	83.3
	First	21	70.0
	Second	17	56.7
Years Taught [b]			
	1–9	20	66.7
	10–19	9	30.0
	20–25	1	3.3
Previously Taught General Education			
	No	19	63.3
	Yes	11	36.7

[a] Special education teachers could support more than one grade level.
[b] Years Taught: $M = 9.48$, $SD = 7.37$.
$n = 30$

Table 8 displays the frequency counts for disability trainings-support sorted by highest frequency for special education teachers. Most commonly attended were Universal Design for Learning (93.3%) and Accommodations-Modifications (86.7%). Least common trainings were Disability Awareness (56.7%) and Individualized Coaching-Support (50.0%).

Table 8

Frequency Counts for Disability Trainings-Support Sorted by Highest Frequency for Special Education Teachers

Rating	n	%
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	28	93.3
Accommodations-Modifications	26	86.7
Co-Teaching	22	73.3
Behavioral Training	22	73.3
Networking With Colleagues	19	63.3
Disability Awareness	17	56.7
Individualized Coaching-Support	15	50.0

Note. Frequencies were based on special education teachers who attended one or more trainings. *n* = 30

Answering the Research Questions

Research Question 1 was: What relationships, if any, exist between general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in an urban school district in southern California as measured by the MTAI survey? The related null hypothesis was: There will be no significant relationship between general and special education teacher beliefs about inclusion among the MTAI 28 survey items. To answer this question, Table 9 displays the results of the Mann-Whitney tests with Spearman correlations comparing the position of teacher with their years of experience plus each of the three MTAI subscale scores. General education teachers taught significantly longer ($p = .001$). For the MTAI subscale scores, a lower mean represented a more favorable perception pertaining to inclusion. Special education teachers had significantly more favorable views about core perspectives ($p = .04$) and *tended* ($p = .07$) to have more favorable views about expected outcomes. However, no significant differences were found between general education and special education teachers for the perspectives pertaining to classroom practices ($p = .15$).

Table 9

Comparison of General Education and Special Education Teachers for Total Teaching Experience and the Three MTAI Subscale Scores Mann-Whitney Tests with Spearman Correlations

Variable	Position	*n*	*M*	*SD*	r_s	*z*	*p*
Total Teaching Experience					.49	3.58	.001
	GE	24	18.46	8.50			
	SE	30	9.48	7.37			
Core Perspectives					.29	2.08	.04
	GE	24	2.62	0.57			
	SE	30	2.29	0.39			

(continued)

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Variable	Position	n	M	SD	r_s	z	p
Expected Outcomes					.25	1.81	.07
	GE	24	2.48	0.60			
	SE	30	2.25	.46			
Classroom Practices					.20	1.45	.15
	GE	24	3.56	0.75			
	SE	30	3.24	0.67			

Note. General Education is denoted by GE and Special Education is denoted SE. Core Perspectives is scaled on questions 1–12. Expected Outcomes is scaled on questions 13–23. Classroom Practices is scaled on questions 24–28.
Note. Scores are based on a 5-point metric: 1 = *Most favorable* to 5 = *Least favorable*.
$N = 54$

Table 10 displays the results of the Mann-Whitney tests with Spearman correlations comparing the position of teacher with each of the 28 MTAI items. Special education teachers gave significantly more favorable ratings to 4 of 28 MTAI items. Specifically, special education teachers gave significantly more favorable ratings to: (a) Item 2. Reversed- Inclusion is NOT a desirable practice for educating most typically developing students ($p = .007$); (b) Item 3. Reversed-It is difficult to maintain order in a classroom that contains a mix of children with exceptional education needs and children with average abilities ($p = .04$); (c) Item 4. Children with exceptional education needs should be given every opportunity to function in an integrated classroom ($p = .006$); and (d) Item 22. Reversed- Isolation in a special class does NOT have a negative effect on the social and emotional development of students prior to middle school ($p = .05$). This combination of findings provided support for Alternative Hypothesis 1.

Table 10

MTAI Items Based on Position of Teacher. Mann-Whitney and Spearman Correlations

MTAI Item	Position	n	M	SD	r_s	z	p
1. Students with special needs have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developing students.					.25	1.82	.07

(continued)

MTAI Item	Position	n	M	SD	r_s	z	p
	GE	24	1.83	0.76			
	SE	30	1.47	0.51			
2. Reversed- Inclusion is NOT a desirable practice for educating most typically developing students.					.37	2.72	.007
	GE	24	2.42	0.83			
	SE	30	1.83	0.70			
3. Reversed- It is difficult to maintain order in a classroom that contains a mix of children with exceptional education needs and children with average abilities.					.28	2.05	.04
	GE	24	3.17	1.01			
	SE	30	2.60	1.00			
4. Children with exceptional education needs should be given every opportunity to function in an integrated classroom.					.37	2.72	.006
	GE	24	2.13	0.90			
	SE	30	1.50	0.51			
5. Inclusion can be beneficial for parents of children with exceptional education needs.					.21	1.51	.13
	GE	24	2.04	0.81			
	SE	30	1.73	0.52			
6. Parents of children with exceptional needs prefer to have their child placed in an inclusive classroom setting.					.06	0.45	.65
	GE	24	2.42	0.65			
	SE	30	2.33	0.66			
7. Reversed- Most special education teachers lack an appropriate knowledge base to educate typically developing students effectively.					.02	0.12	.91
	GE	24	1.83	0.76			
	SE	30	1.80	0.71			

(continued)

MTAI Item	Position	n	M	SD	r_s	z	p
8. Reversed- The individual needs of children with disabilities CANNOT be addressed adequately by a regular education teacher.					.20	1.42	.16
	GE	24	3.13	1.19			
	SE	30	2.70	1.02			
9. Reversed- We must learn more about the effects of inclusive classrooms before inclusive classrooms take place on a large-scale basis.					.11	0.80	.43
	GE	24	3.75	1.11			
	SE	30	3.50	1.11			
10. The best way to begin educating children in inclusive settings is just to do it.					.13	0.95	.34
	GE	24	3.13	0.99			
	SE	30	3.40	1.19			
11. Most children with exceptional needs are well behaved in integrated education					.24	1.76	.08
	GE	24	3.29	1.08			
	SE	30	2.77	0.94			
12. It is feasible to teach children with average abilities and exceptional needs in the same classroom.					.25	1.81	.07
	GE	24	2.42	1.10			
	SE	30	1.90	0.61			
13. Inclusion is socially advantageous for children with special needs.					.25	1.84	.07
	GE	24	2.00	0.66			
	SE	30	1.70	0.65			
14. Reversed- Children with special needs will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special, separate classroom than in an integrated classroom.					.06	0.47	.64
	GE	24	2.96	0.95			

(continued)

MTAI Item	Position	n	M	SD	r_s	z	p
	SE	30	2.83	0.91			
15. Reversed- Children with exceptional needs are likely to be isolated by typically developing students in inclusive classrooms.					.10	0.76	.45
	GE	24	2.38	1.01			
	SE	30	2.17	0.70			
16. The presence of children with exceptional education needs promotes acceptance of individual differences on the part of typically developing students.					.16	1.13	.26
	GE	24	1.92	0.83			
	SE	30	1.63	0.49			
17. Inclusion promotes social independence among children with special needs.					.15	1.12	.26
	GE	24	2.38	0.92			
	SE	30	2.17	0.83			
18. Inclusion promotes self-esteem among children with special needs.					.16	1.13	.26
	GE	24	2.38	1.06			
	SE	30	2.07	0.78			
19. Reversed- Children with exceptional needs are likely to exhibit more challenging behaviors in an integrated classroom setting.					.26	1.89	.06
	GE	24	3.42	1.02			
	SE	30	3.00	0.83			
20. Children with special needs in inclusive classrooms develop a better self-concept than in a self-contained classroom.					.00	0.03	.98
	GE	24	2.38	0.65			
	SE	30	2.40	0.86			
21. The challenge of a regular education classroom promotes academic growth among children with exceptional education needs.					.04	0.27	.79
	GE	24	2.46	1.02			

(continued)

MTAI Item	Position	n	M	SD	r_s	z	p
	SE	30	2.40	0.97			
22. Reversed- Isolation in a special class does NOT have a negative effect on the social and emotional development of students prior to middle school.					.27	1.95	.05
	GE	24	2.79	0.88			
	SE	30	2.33	0.80			
23. Reversed- Typically developing students in inclusive classrooms are more likely to exhibit challenging behaviors learned from children with special needs.					.17	1.24	.22
	GE	24	2.29	0.75			
	SE	30	2.07	0.74			
24. Reversed- Children with exceptional needs monopolize teachers' time.					.19	1.38	.17
	GE	24	2.58	1.14			
	SE	30	2.93	0.87			
25. Reversed- The behaviors of students with special needs require significantly more teacher-directed attention than those of typically developing children.					.16	1.14	.26
	GE	24	3.92	0.78			
	SE	30	3.63	0.89			
26. Reversed- Parents of children with exceptional education needs require more supportive services from teachers than parents of typically developing children.					.08	0.56	.58
	GE	24	3.75	1.03			
	SE	30	3.60	1.00			
27. Parents of children with exceptional needs present no greater challenge for a classroom teacher than do parents of a regular education student.					.19	1.38	.17
	GE	24	3.67	1.01			

(continued)

MTAI Item	Position	n	M	SD	r_s	z	p
	SE	30	3.33	0.96			
28. Reversed- A good approach to managing inclusive classrooms is to have a special education teacher be responsible for instructing the children with special needs.					.22	1.58	.11
	GE	24	3.04	1.20			
	SE	30	2.57	1.01			

$N = 54$

Research Question 2 was: To what extent, if at all, are general education teachers and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in one urban school district in southern California, as measured by the MTAI survey, related to their demographic. The related null hypothesis was: None of the three MTAI subscale scores will be related to any of the demographic characteristics. To answer this question, Table 11 displays the results of the significant Spearman correlations between the 35 demographic variables and the three scale scores. For the resulting 105 correlations, 27 were significant at the $p < .10$ level. The core perspectives score was significantly related to eight of 35 demographic variables. Among the largest correlations, the core perspective scores were most favorable for general education teachers who had training in: (a) co-teaching ($r_s = -.54$, $p = .006$); (b) behavioral training ($r_s = -.47$, $p = .02$); and (c) individualized coaching-support training ($r_s = -.44$, $p = .03$).

Table 11

Spearman Correlations Between Selected Demographic Variables and the Three MTAI Subscale Scores

		MTAI Subscale Score [a]					
Demographic Variable	n^b	1		2		3	
Position	54	-.29	**	-.25	*	-.20	
Total Teaching Experience	54	.00		.24	*	-.09	
General Education Single Subjects	54	.23	*	.23	*	.23	*

(continued)

		MTAI Subscale Score [a]					
Education Specialist Mild-Moderate	54	-.29	**	-.25	*	-.20	
Co-teaching	24	-.54	***	-.53	***	-.54	***
Behavioral training	24	-.47	**	-.51	***	-.12	
Disability awareness	24	-.38	*	-.27		-.15	
Individualized Coaching-Support	24	-.44	**	-.39	*	-.26	
Special Education Kindergarten	30	-.32	*	-.19		.34	*
Special Education Taught General Education	30	-.29		.06		-.33	*
Special Education Years Teaching General Education	30	-.26		.02		-.36	*
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	30	-.28		-.11		-.33	*
Accommodations-Modifications	30	-.22		-.14		-.48	***
Disability Awareness	30	-.22		-.32	*	-.32	*
Individualized Coaching-Support	30	-.08		-.52	****	-.29	
Networking with colleagues	30	-.20		-.43	**	-.45	***

* $p < .10$.
** $p < .05$.
*** $p < .01$.
**** $p < .005$.

[a] MTAI subscale scores: 1 = Core perspectives; 2 = Expected outcomes; 3 = Classroom practices.

[b] Analysis was performed on entire sample ($N = 54$); general education ($n = 24$) and special education ($n = 30$).

The expected outcomes score was significantly related to 10 of 35 demographic variables. Among the largest correlations, the expected outcomes scores were most favorable for general education teachers who had training in: (a) co-teaching ($r_s = -.53$, $p = .008$); and (b) behavioral training ($r_s = -.51$, $p = .01$). The expected outcomes scores were most favorable for special education teachers who had training in: (a) individualized coaching-support ($r_s = -.52$, $p = .003$); and (b) networking with colleagues ($r_s = -.43$, $p = .02$).

The classroom practices score was significantly related to nine of 35 demographic variables. Among the largest correlations, the expected outcomes scores were most favorable for general education teachers who had training in co-teaching ($r_s = -.54$, $p = .007$). The classroom practices score was most favorable for special education teachers who had training in: (a)

accommodations/modifications (r_s = -.48, p = .007); and (b) networking with colleagues (r_s = -.45, p = .01). This combination of findings provided support the alternative hypothesis.

Additional Findings

Qualitative analysis ratings for open-ended responses. Table 12 displays the frequency counts for the category themes from the responses of the 14 general education teachers to question 43: Please write any other information you would like to share for this study in the space below, sorted by highest frequency. Most responses were for the category Special Education Students' Needs and Growth (78.6%), followed by General Education Students' Needs and Growth (71.4%), Behavioral Concerns-Safety (14.3%), and Instructional Aides (35.7%). An example of a typical response for Special Education Students' Needs and Growth and General Education Students' Needs and Growth was, "I think there needs to be more extensive requirements for students to be a part of inclusion. Some students function fantastic in inclusion but some have a difficult time and unfortunately affect those around them and their safety and learning." A typical response for Behavioral Concerns-Safety and Instructional Aides was, "While I believe in general it works well for both gen. ed. and special needs students to be taught together and benefits for both groups. However there are a couple concerns. One is the need for an inclusion aide to help those with learning challenges. It is NOT feasible to have 32 students in a kindergarten with special needs students and predominately second language learners without making sure those students have extra support…Secondly, by far most of the inclusion students I have had are truly delightful, however an angry, agitated and aggressive student impacts the safety and education of himself and all other students".

Table 12

Open-Ended Response Categories for General Education Teachers Sorted by Highest Frequency

Category	*n*	%
Special Education Students' Needs-Growth	11	78.6
General Education Students' Needs-Growth	10	71.4
Behavioral Concerns-Safety	5	35.7
Instructional Aides	5	35.7
Co-teacher-Instructional Specialist	4	28.6
District Support	3	21.4
Training	3	21.4
School Administration Support	2	14.3
Class Size	1	7.1

N = 14

Table 13 displays the frequency counts for the category themes from the responses of the eight special education teachers to Question 43: Please write any other information you would like to share for this study in the space below, sorted by highest frequency. Most responses were for the category Special Education Students' Needs and Growth (75.0%), followed by General Education Students' Needs and Growth (62.5%) and Class Size (50.0%). An example of a typical response for Special Education Students' Needs and Growth, General Education Students' Needs and Growth, and Class Size was, "Inclusion is a great concept, it promotes more independence for all students. However, there is a lack of training for instructional aides and the special education teacher has too many students and or classrooms to support. If the classrooms and or students on caseload were smaller then the special education teacher and general education teacher could realistically co-teach more. Special Education teacher tends to chase students with extreme eloping behaviors instead of teaching. I love the idea of inclusive learning but needs more support to be more effective".

Table 13

Open-Ended Response Categories for Special Education Teachers Sorted by Highest Frequency

Category	*n*	%
Special Education Students' Needs-Growth	6	75.0
General Education Students' Needs-Growth	5	62.5
Class Size	4	50.0
Behavioral Concerns-Safety	3	37.5
Training	2	25.0
Co-teacher-Instructional Specialist	2	25.0
District Support	1	12.5
Instructional Aides	1	12.5
School Administration Support	1	12.5

N = 8

Table 14 displays the frequency counts for the category themes from the responses of all

22 teachers to question 43: Please write any other information you would like to share for this

study in the space below, sorted by highest frequency. Most responses were for the category

Special Education Students' Needs and Growth (77.3%), followed by General Education

Students' Needs and Growth (68.2%), Behavioral Concerns-Safety (36.4%), Instructional Aides

(27.3%), and Co-teacher-Instructional Specialist (27.3%). An example of a typical response for

Special Education Students' Needs and Growth and General Education Students' Needs and

Growth was, "I feel strongly that inclusive education is a must for all students! I do firmly

believe there needs to be the right support put in place for all to be benefited! I think of my own

children that have been in inclusive classrooms and the way they see the world and accept all!

My son had one friend in class that had no arms and he still talks about all that student could do

with his feet in amazement and awe! It is this type of experience which will make all more

tolerant and accepting of all of our strengths and challenges. It is the way of our future and I

hope all will embrace and be willing to take on the challenge." A typical response for Behavioral

Concerns-Safety was, "Ideal inclusion classes must be carefully chosen by teachers-admin who

know well about the behaviors of both mainstreaming and special ed. students." A typical

response for Instructional Aides and Co-teacher-Instructional Specialist was, "An ongoing

challenge with the inclusion program I'm involved in, in my school is that there isn't enough

help to cover the kiddos that are on the inclusion-co-teachers case load. On a daily basis I feel as

though our inclusion-co-teacher is pulled in so many directions and expected to be in several

places at one time. This results in missed opportunities for growth as teachers and for our

students. I strongly feel the idea of inclusion is beneficial to our special population however the

lack of resources does a great disservice".

Table 14

Open-Ended Response Categories for All Teachers Sorted by Highest Frequency

Category	n	%
Special Education Students' Needs-Growth	17	77.3
General Education Students' Needs-Growth	15	68.2
Behavioral Concerns-Safety	8	36.4
Instructional Aides	6	27.3
Co-teacher-Instructional Specialist	6	27.3
Training	5	22.7
Class Size	5	22.7
District Support	4	18.2
School Administration Support	3	13.6

$N = 22$

In summary, this study used survey data from 54 teachers to investigate and compare

general and special education kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teacher beliefs on

inclusion, as well as their perceptions of accommodations, preparation, and barriers to inclusion.

Hypothesis 1 (relationship between inclusion scores and position) was supported (Tables 9 and

10). Hypothesis 2 (relationship between inclusion scores and demographics) was also supported

(Table 11). In addition, other notable findings were special education and general education had

similar views, on perspectives pertaining to classroom practices ($p = .15$) and on Item 1 Students

with special needs have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developing

students ($M = 1.63$). In the final chapter, these findings are compared to the literature,

conclusions and implications are drawn, and a series of recommendations are suggested.

Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study looked at Seaside School District teacher concerns and beliefs in relation to inclusive schooling within the district and the extant literature. The purpose of this quantitative, descriptive, and comparative study was achieved by investigating and comparing general and special education kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teacher beliefs on inclusion, as well as their perceptions of accommodations, preparation, and barriers to inclusion. More specifically, three categories or variables of general education and special education teachers' beliefs were explored: (a) core perspectives, (b) expected outcomes for student inclusion, and (c) classroom practices.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What relationships, if any, exist between general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in an urban school district in southern California as measured by the My Thinking About Inclusion (MTAI) Survey?

2. To what extent, if at all, are general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion in one urban school district in southern California, as measured by the My Thinking About Inclusion (MTAI) Survey, related to their demographic characteristics?

The MTAI survey was the instrument administered in this study (see Appendix A). The MTAI consists of 28 questions that look at teacher beliefs on inclusion. More specifically, they focus on the three belief subscales of the MTAI: core perspectives, expected outcomes, and classroom practices" (Stoiber et al., 1998, p. 107). This researcher will utilize the same lens that Stoiber et. al did for their 1998 study by using Items 1-12 for Core Perspectives, Items 13-23 for Expected Outcomes, and Items 24-28 for Classroom Practices.

The MTAI survey was administered to 91 teacher participants who supported students with disabilities in inclusive education in kindergarten through second grade during the 2016-17 school year. Fifty-four participants (59%) completed the MTAI survey. Out of the 54 participants, 24 were general education teachers and 30 were special education teachers. Gender results showed that three of the participants were male and 51 were female. The general teacher participants have a mean of 18.46 years of teaching while the special teacher participants had a mean of 9.48 years of teaching.

Discussion of Key Findings

There is a popular belief among K-12 general education teachers that "inclusion of special needs in their classes is a policy doomed to fail" (Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhie-Richmond, 2009, p. 535). There are teachers who share that SWD will disrupt the learning of their peers and that teaching students with special needs necessitates specialized teaching outside the general education classroom. However, notwithstanding teachers' concerns, the findings from this current study suggest there is evidence that SWD who are educated in an inclusive classroom benefit from the inclusive setting when compared with students in separate settings (Bui, Quirk, Almazan, & Valenti, 2010; Jordan et al., 2009).

Research question 1. Research question one was analyzed to determine what relationships if any existed between the general education and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion. This study showed that special education participants had significantly more favorable views about Core Perspectives ($p = .04$) than the general education teachers. Special education teachers also tended to ($p = .07$) have more favorable views about Expected Outcomes. However, no significant differences were found between general and special education teachers for the perspectives pertaining to Classroom Practices ($p = .15$).

General education teachers ($n = 24$) had been teaching significantly longer ($M = 18.46$) years than the special education teachers ($M = 9.48$). One of the 24 general education teachers (4.2%) had previously taught special education. General education teachers (45.8%) noted they took special education university courses with 95.8% percent noting they took district-level training. The most commonly attended trainings were for co-teaching (70.8%) and Universal Design for Learning (70.8%). Individualized coaching (8.3%) and networking (25.0%) with colleagues were the least common trainings noted by general education teachers.

As previously referenced the special education teachers ($n = 30$) had been teaching less years than their general education counterparts in this study ($M = 9.48$). Eleven of the 30 special education teachers (36.7%) had previously taught general education. The most commonly attended trainings were Universal Design for Learning (93.3%) and Accommodations-Modifications (86.7%). Disability Awareness (56.7%) and Individualized coaching (50.0%) were noted as the least common trainings attended by special education teachers.

Core perspectives. MTAI Items 1-12 looked at teacher Core Perspectives. Core Perspectives connect to the research that a person's beliefs reflect his or her perception (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994; Bandura, 2001). This corresponds to one's belief about what is ethical and what "constitutes best practices related to educating children" (Stoiber et al., 1998, p. 110). Table 3 displays the ratings for the 28 MTAI statements sorted by the highest level of favorability for both special education and general education teachers. Favorability was measured on the 5-point scale where *1=Most Favorable* and *5 = Least Favorable*. Some items were reverse scored when the 5-point answer was considered to be most favorable. Examination of Table 3 found the highest favorability for both the general education and special education

teachers was for Item 1 Students with special needs have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developing children *(M=1.63)*

Special education teachers on Table 8 had significantly more favorable ratings for Items 2, 3, and 4, which come under Core Perspectives (Ferguson et al., 2003; Kagan, 1992; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Item 2 was Reversed scored-Inclusion is NOT a desirable practice for educating most typically developing students (*p* = .007). Item 3 was Reverse scored-It is difficult to maintain order in a classroom that contains a mix of children with exceptional needs and children with average abilities (*p* = .04). Item 4, Children with exceptional education needs should be given every opportunity to function in an integrated classroom (*p* =.006).

In this study, participants had the opportunity to share any additional perspectives under the open comments section. Participants noted that behavioral concerns/safety, comprised 36.4% of the participants' perspectives that students both with and without disabilities, affect teachers' perceptions of inclusion (Table 14). Comments such as "Special needs students who do not have behavior problems are great in a general ed classroom…" to "Some students function fantastic in inclusion but some have a difficult time and unfortunately affect those around them and their safety and learning" reflect the concerns that behaviors can affect the teacher perspective. These comments correlated to literature that student disability/behavior can affect teacher attitude and that teachers tend to have a more negative attitude toward students with behavioral needs (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Expected outcomes. MTAI Items 13-23 looked at teacher Expected Outcomes. Expected Outcomes held by general education and special education participants is the second belief category and this connects to research that a person's beliefs both connects his or her perceptions and influences his or her educational practices within his or her classrooms and the outcomes for

students in inclusive education (Schommer, 1994). Schommer's research indicates that if a teacher has positive expectations for his or her students' outcomes, this can be related to his or her students having higher achievement.

Examination of Table 3 for general and special education participants had Item 16, The presence of children with exceptional education needs promotes acceptance of individual differences on the part of typically developing students ($M = 1.76$) as second in the MTAI ratings sorted by favorability. Item 13, Inclusion is socially advantageous for children with special needs as rated fifth in favorability out of the 28 MTAI questions. Special education participants gave significantly more favorable ratings to Item 22 which was reversed scored-Isolation in a special education class does NOT have a negative effect on the social and emotional development of students prior to middle school ($p = .05$). Expected Outcomes perspectives were significant in their belief that when SWD are isolated in a special class that it does have a negative effect on the social and emotional development before they get to middle school.

Classroom practices. MTAI Items 24-28 looked at teacher Classroom Practices. Classroom practices held by general education and special education teachers is the third belief category and this connects to how teachers think about inclusive education and how its practices impact classroom environment and the instructional strategies teachers utilized (Causton-Theoharis, 2009; Stoiber, Gettinger & Goetz, 1998).

Examination of Table 3 shows that general and special education participants had as a group the least favorable ratings pertaining to inclusion on Items 25 and 26, which were, both reverse scored. Specifically, Item 25, The behaviors of students with special needs require significantly more teacher-directed attention than those of typically developing children with a mean of $M = 3.76$ while Item 26 Parents of children with exceptional education needs require

more supportive services from teachers than parents of typically developing children had a mean of $M = 3.67$ (Table 3).

Research question 2. The study findings suggest that general and special education participants' beliefs about inclusion have a relationship with their demographic variables. The study found relationships between general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion and the 35 demographics variables in the belief subscales areas of Core Perspectives, Expected Outcomes, and Classroom Practices.

Core perspectives. MTAI Items 1-12 looked at teacher Core Perspectives. As noted, Core perspectives connect to the research that a person's beliefs reflect his or her perception (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994). This present study found that eight of 35 demographic variables were significant in regards to relationships between general and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion and their demographics in the belief subscales area of Core Perspectives. Most notably the largest correlations for Core Perspectives were most for general education participants who had attended a training on (a) co-teaching ($r_s = -.54$, $p = .006$); (b) behavioral training ($r_s = -.47$, $p = .02$); and (c) individualized coaching-support training ($r_s = -.44$, $p = .03$) (Buell et al., 1999; Friend, 2008; Ferguson et al., 2003; Shade & Stewart, 2001; Stoiber, Gettinger & Goetz, 1998; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012).

Expected outcomes. MTAI Items 13-23 looked at teacher Expected Outcomes. Expected Outcomes was significantly related to 10 of 35 demographic variables. The Expected Outcomes score was significantly related to 10 of 35 demographic variables. Among the largest correlations, the expected outcomes scores were most favorable for general education teachers who had training in: (a) co-teaching ($r_s = -.53$, $p = .008$); and (b) behavioral training ($r_s = -.51$, $p = .01$) (Felder & Brent, 2001; Friend, 2008; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012; Ferguson et al., 2003;

Stoiber, Gettinger, & Goetz, 1998). The expected outcomes scores were most favorable for special education teachers who had training in: (a) individualized coaching-support (r_s = -.52, p = .003); and (b) networking with colleagues (r_s = -.43, p = .02) (Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012; Ferguson et al., 2003; Stoiber, Gettinger, & Goetz, 1998).

Classroom practices. MTAI Items 24-18 looked at teacher Classroom Practices. The Classroom Practices subscale had 9 of 35 significantly related demographic variables, most notably for general education teachers who had training in co-teaching. For the special education teachers the data were most favorable for those who attended trainings on accommodations/modifications and for those who networked with colleagues. This connects to the literature that an teacher's belief sets the stage for how he or she sets up his or her classroom and which strategies he or she utilizes and accommodates within his or her classroom (Anders & Evans, 1994).

Open-ended response findings. Twenty two of the 54 participants wrote in responses to-Please write any other information you would like to share for this study. Most general and special education participant responses in Table 14 were for the category, Special Education Students' Needs and Growth (77.3%), followed by, General Education Students' Needs and Growth (71.4%), Behavioral Concerns-Safety (36.4%), Instructional Aides (27.3%), and Co-teacher-Instructional Specialist (27.3%). An example of a typical response for Special Education Students' Needs and Growth and General Education Students' Needs and Growth was, "I feel strongly that inclusive education is a must for all students! I do firmly believe there needs to be the right support put in place for all to be benefited! I think of my own children that have been in inclusive classrooms and the way they see the world and accept all! My son had one friend in class that had no arms and he still talks about all that student could do with his feet in amazement

and awe! It is this type of experience which will make all more tolerant and accepting of all of our strengths and challenges. It is the way of our future and I hope all will embrace and be willing to take on the challenge" (Marder & Fraser, 2012).

A typical response for Instructional Aides and Co-teacher-Instructional Specialist was, "An ongoing challenge with the inclusion program I'm involved in, in my school is that there isn't enough help to cover the kiddos that are on the inclusion-co-teachers case load. On a daily basis I feel as though our inclusion-co-teacher is pulled in so many directions and expected to be in several places at one time. This results in missed opportunities for growth as teachers and for our students. I strongly feel the idea of inclusion is beneficial to our special population however the lack of resources does a great disservice".

A typical response for Behavioral Concerns-Safety was, "Ideal inclusion classes must be carefully chosen by teachers-admin who know well about the behaviors of both mainstreaming and special ed. students." One general education teacher commented, "…training is needed/support is needed when the placement is appropriate and there are not major behavior problems, it can be wonderful. It can be rough in the beginning and turn great by the end.…"

Comments such as "Special needs students who do not have behavior problems are great in a general ed classroom…" to "Some students function fantastic in inclusion but some have a difficult time and unfortunately affect those around them and their safety and learning" reflected the concerns that behaviors can affect the teacher perspective.

Study participants noted that the supports of an instructional aide (27.3%) and/or a co-teacher/educational specialist (27.3%) along with training (22.7%) would be beneficial for SWD in the inclusive classroom. One general education teacher noted "…we need trained aides to make a successful inclusion program especially for low functioning students with special needs."

Following are a few comments from this study on instructional aide and/or coteacher support "

…Two teachers that co-teach the classroom full day, bringing their strengths together, would of

course be the best situation", "…it is difficult to find enough qualified aides even just supporting

TK, K and 1", and "Inclusion is a great concept, it promotes more independence for all students.

However, there is a lack of training for instructional aides and the special education teacher has

too many students and or classrooms to support".

Additionally, in the open comments section of the survey the participants noted that class

size (22.7%) was not a significant concern. However, there were comments from special

education participants that shared a concern regarding class size, " I think classroom size is a

major contributing factor to a successful inclusive education" and " Class size is a challenge for

inclusive students" allow that class size is a concern. Loud noises that are a result of a larger

class size are a challenge for students". The least significant finders were that general and special

education participants noted that school administration (13.6%) and district support (13.6%) was

a factor in supporting inclusive education.

Social Inclusion, Social Learning, and Social Cognitive Theories Discussion

Previous researchers have delved into social inclusion and it has served as an impetus for

the inclusive movement (Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, &Malinen, 2012; World Band, 2013). It

has been noted that when one is included both socially and educationally, it may affect their level

of income, access to a job, and help them participate and be a part of society (World Bank,

2013). In order to improve and build social inclusion, one needs to provide children educational

opportunities. Education can be a stimulus for encouraging social inclusion (World Bank, 2013).

When one is socially included they feel appreciated for their differences and their needs are met

and they feel they belong to the group (Robo, 2014; World Bank, 2013).

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If inclusive programs benefit SWD, as Robo (2014) notes, then utilizing the lens of social learning theory could help support inclusive education. Comparing social learning theory with this present study's data suggests that when teachers attend and participate in trainings they have a more positive mindset toward inclusion of SWD (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Bandura, 1971, 2001; Blanton et al., 2014; Shade & Stewart, 2001; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). One can opine that trainings impart both knowledge and a comfort to the teachers that have gained a knowledge of strategies that can help them in the classroom to focus on student growth whether it is social, emotional, academic or all three (Blanton et al., 2014; Kagan, 1992; Shade & Stewart, 2001).

The social cognitive theory followed Bandura's social learning theory which suggests that a person can bring about the desired results they want is called human agency and the when it is connected with others it is collective agency (2001). A teacher's belief systems can support inclusive education and when they are coupled with other teachers who have the same belief; as a group, they can act intentionally and show a commitment to inclusive education (Pajares, 1996).

This present study's data shows the number one belief of the 54 participants the 28 Item MTAI survey was Item 1 (Core Perspectives)-Students with special needs have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developing students (Table 3). The second top belief was Item 16 (Expected Outcomes)-The presence of children with exceptional education needs promotes acceptance of individual differences on the part of typically developing students (Table 3). Item 4 (Core Perspectives) was the third top belief-Children with exceptional education needs should be given every opportunity to function in an integrated classroom (Table 3). However, there was extant literature that noted different results; namely that elementary teacher beliefs of inclusive education were mainly negative (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014).

This researcher suggests, based upon this study's data, that the Seaside School District kindergarten, first grade, and second grade general education and special education teachers who are teaching in inclusive classrooms tend to have a positive attitude toward including SWD in an inclusive classroom with typically developing peers. However, this researcher cannot conclusively determine if this positive attitude can be attributed to the 2015-16 and 2016-17 professional developments provided by the district or if the overall positive attitude was there before the participants attended the trainings.

Conclusions

Five conclusions resulted from study findings.

Conclusion 1. General education and special education teachers support inclusion as a positive means for educating students with disabilities and students without disabilities. The results of this study found more similarities among the general and special education teachers than differences. Both groups of participants had similar perspectives that SWD have the right to be educated in the inclusive classroom. They held similar views about what is important for all students. It is opined they shared the basic belief that inclusion is socially advantageous for SWD and that placing SWD in an inclusive setting promotes acceptance; even though they believe that SWD are more likely to exhibit more challenging behaviors in an inclusive classroom (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Bandura, 2001). Special education and general education teachers' beliefs were similar as related to two MTAI items; Item 1 and Item 16 when it came to their beliefs about social inclusion. Table 3 reflected the highest favorability for Item 1, Students with special needs have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developing children ($M = 1.63$), and Item 16, The presence of children with exceptional education needs promotes acceptance of individual difference on the part of typically developing students ($M =$

1.76). These two items share what the research notes about inclusion that in the United States and internationally, there is a growing recognition of the importance of moving toward inclusive education and social inclusion to meet every student's individual educational need (European Agency, 2014; Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014).

Conclusion 2. Teacher participation in professional development geared toward teaching SWD in an inclusive setting tends to promote more positive beliefs about inclusion (Shade & Stewart, 2001; Blanton et al., 2014; Ferguson et al., 2003; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). A number of demographic variables appear to be related to general education teachers and special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion. Table 11 shows the correlations between these demographic variables and the three MTAI subscale scores. By utilizing researched based teaching practices that provide differentiation a teacher can affect both the academic and social outcomes of all students (Felder & Brent, 2001; Friend, 2008). Core perspective scores were most favorable for general education teachers who had attended trainings in co-teaching, behavioral strategies and individualized coaching-support. Expected Outcomes were most favorable for general education teachers who had individualized coaching-support and networking with colleagues. Classroom Practices were most favorable for general education teachers who attended co-teaching training and for special education teachers who had attended training on accommodations/modifications and networked with colleagues. The largest correlations were for general education teachers who had training in co-teaching and behavioral trainings while the largest correlations for special education teachers were for those who had training in individualized coaching/support and networking with colleagues. It is likely that by attending the trainings the participants had more positive experiences working with SWD and that these positive experiences influenced their attitudes towards inclusive education (Malinen et

al., 2013).

Seaside School District provided professional development on behavioral strategies, co-teaching, Universal Design for Learning, disability awareness, collaboration/networking, and accommodations/modifications during the 2015-16 school year and the 2016-17 school year. It is likely that teacher attitudes were positively affected through these professional developments and that these professional developments influenced efficacy beliefs, as well as, promoted teacher proficiencies and their interests long after the original professional development took place (Bandura, 2001; Ruell, Hallam, & Gamel-McCormick, 1999; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012).

Conclusion 3. Knowledge of the needs of SWD, along with the experience of working with SWD, is related to teacher position (general or special education). General education participants noted more positive beliefs when they had training in co teaching and behavioral trainings while the largest correlations for special education teachers were for those who had training in individualized coaching/support and networking with colleagues. The results of this study suggest that the participants' education, experience, and their knowledge of SWD correlate to more positive perspectives regarding inclusive education (Jeong, 2013; Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Malien, 2012; Stoiber, Gettinger, & Goetz, 1998).

Conclusion 4. The more knowledgeable and experienced the teacher with regards to SWD and inclusion, the more positive perspective they have regarding inclusion. Special education participants tended to have a more favorable perspective of inclusion. They had more positive beliefs on core perspectives and expected outcomes for SWD. Teachers who are more knowledgeable about inclusion and who have had more experience working in an inclusive environment are likely to have more positive perspectives about inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Malien, 2012). The differences between the

general and special education participants could be attributed to special education teachers having more university course work in working with students with disabilities so that in their present positions the networking and individualized coaching is most supportive for them, as well as, they have more experience working with SWD (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Blanton et al., 2014; Shade & Stewart, 2001).

Conclusion 5. Classroom supports, such as a co-teacher or instructional aide, tended to promote more positive beliefs about inclusion. The favorability for the variable of a co-teacher/educational specialist (27.3%) and/or instructional aide (27.3%) coincided with literature that the collaboration between general education and special education teachers; co-teaching has been suggested as a way to meet the needs of all students and respond to the deficiencies in the current special education system (Friend, 2008; Sailor, 2016). Additionally there were variables that correlated with both general education and special education teachers beliefs regarding inclusion; such as student needs, student behavioral concerns, desire for classroom supports and training (Avramidis &Norwich, 2002; Buell et al., 1999; Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014). The participants shared that SWD were more likely to exhibit more challenging behaviors in an inclusive classroom even though they also believed inclusion is socially advantageous and promotes acceptance (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Bandura, 2001).

Recommendations

Inclusive schooling provides an educational environment of belonging and educating for all students with and without disabilities, irrespective of their race, gender, or ethnicity (Avramidis & Northwich, 2002; Malinen et al., 2013; World Bank, 2013). However, districts need to provide resources such as professional development and special education collaboration to increase teacher perception and belief that they can make a difference for students with

disabilities in their classrooms (Buell et al., 1999). This present study found that these professional developments should provide the opportunity for both general and special education teachers to express their individual concerns and needs so that they can be addressed and supported.

General and special education teachers who have a positive attitude or mind-set regarding inclusive education are found to be more prone to differentiate their classroom instruction to meet the needs of their students and to have a more positive mind-set while doing so (Block, 2010; Nishimura, 2014; Tait & Mundia, 2014;Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). It is recommended that a district not only provide educational programs that provide evidence-based strategies that promote educational gains for students but also look at how to support positive teacher mind-set which plays a pivotal role in inclusive education. A teacher's belief toward the educational practice of inclusive schooling is an important factor in promoting and accomplishing inclusive education (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Malinen et al., 2013; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012; Unianu, 2012).

Based on the results of this study it is recommended that school districts provide their teachers with professional development to support the growth of positive beliefs toward inclusive education. The successful implementation of inclusive education can hinge on teacher attitudes and in order to promote positive teacher attitudes, consistent professional development is a key factor in this area (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014). With classroom practices being defined around the inclusive classroom environment and the inherent structures; such as teaching strategies, curriculum, and accommodations; this current study's data on classroom practices adds credence to previous research related to the need for training in the areas of strategies and accommodations to support inclusive education (Causton-Theoharis, 2009; Stoiber, Gettinger, &

Goetz, 1998). Additionally, this data correlates with research that teachers tend to have more positive attitudes toward inclusion when they have participated in professional development or training on the needs of SWD in an inclusive classroom (Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Malien, 2012; Shade and Stewart, 2001). Research reflects that training for teachers whether in university courses or district trainings will support improved positive teacher beliefs, self-efficacy, and attitudes toward inclusion (Blanton et al., 2014; Ferguson et al., 2003; Shade and Stewart, 2001; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012).

It is recommended that school districts provide both their general and special education teachers with professional development to support the growth of positive beliefs toward inclusive education in the areas of accommodations/modifications, networking/coaching, co-teaching, Universal Design for Learning/differentiation, behavioral strategies, and strategies working with parents of SWD (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Black et al., 2015; Black & Simon, 2014; Friend, 2008; Tomlinson, 1999, 2000).

Overall on Classroom Practices both general and special education teachers shared similar views that behaviors of SWD require teacher directed time and that parents of SWD require more supportive services. It is recommended that trainings also have a focus on how to support positive student behaviors as well as how to support parents of students with special needs. These recommendations coincide with research that general education teachers note the need for professional development or in service training in working with SWD (Buell et al., 1999; Ferguson et al., 2003; Shade & Stewart, 2001; Stoiber, Gettinger & Goetz, 1998; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). This current study reflected that general education teachers had more favorable views toward their classroom practices when they had attended district trainings on co-teaching and accommodations/modifications (Friend, 2008; Sailor, 2015; Taylor & Ringlaben,

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2012). Open-ended comments on co-teaching such as "The gen. ed. teacher and special ed. teacher are both responsible for teaching. Co-teaching model works well in the inclusive classroom" from a general education teacher and "Two teachers that co teach the classroom full day, bringing their strengths together, would of course be the best situation" share the belief that co-teaching is a strategy that supports teachers and students (Friend, 2008; Sailor, 2015).

Furthermore, this study supported previous research that teacher inservice/training is a factor in supporting teacher belief that students with disabilities can be educated in an inclusive settings (Bandura, 2001; Ruell et al., 1999; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Districts who are interested in providing inservicing/professional development to staff would benefit from providing trainings on co teaching, universal design for learning, accommodations/modifications, behavioral strategies, and working with parent of students with special needs. These practices can provide differentiated strategies that can have an effect on the social and academic outcomes of students (Black & Simon, 2014; Black et al., 2015; Tomlinson, 2004) and provide supports to enhance teacher efficacy beliefs (Malinen et al., 2013; Savolainen et al.; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). The findings obtained in this study support the importance of providing training before starting inclusive practices to encourage teacher beliefs and to encourage networking opportunities for staff.

Based upon the results of this study there were general education and special education teacher expressed needs for supports such as a co teacher or instructional aide to support SWD in an inclusive classroom. School districts may wish to evaluate their current staff resources that could support inclusive education, such as, resource specialists or special education day class teachers who could be co teachers. Districts could also look at current instructional aide assignments and determine if they could be reassigned to an inclusive classroom. These staff

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resources could promote positive teacher beliefs that they can support both the general and special education students' needs in an inclusive classroom. This current study indicates a correlation between the participants' perception that all students can learn in inclusive settings and the participants' belief that they require supports such as teacher collaboration, instructional aide(s), and a special education teacher for a successful inclusive classroom, hence this supports the recommendation for a district to review its current resources at hand (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Buell et al., 1999; Pajares, 1996). It is important to review that Seaside School District took a year to plan for inclusive schooling. During the year both informal and formal meetings were held with district and site administration, teachers, union staff, along with both the general education and the special education team. Inclusive schooling would not have happened if the district leadership were not in agreement in the knowledge that all kids can learn and promoting inclusive schooling would benefit all children. The discussions were on professional development, mindset, and district initiatives to ensure that all were correlated and would work together.

During the first year the district chose one elementary site to start kindergarten inclusive schooling. An after school in formal meetings with the site staff first took place to discuss inclusion for kindergarten during the first year. This meeting was very transparent and staff shared concerns, wishes, and desires. There was trepidation from some staff based upon student behavior. The special education team shared that one special day class would be closed and that teacher would become a co-teacher. They shared that trainings both on site and off would be offered and that individual support for teaches was available. Parents at this school site were involved in the discussion and the Individualized Education Plans for SWD were written to reflect an inclusive educational program. After a few years of inclusive schooling at this site,

one can observe teacher beliefs that SWD have the right to be educated with typically developing peers. Based upon the strengths of the teaching staff and administration and their positive mindsets, along with professional developments together they developed a strong inclusive schooling program. It is recommended that if a district wishes to move towards an inclusive schooling environment they should work closely with staff and site administration and initially choose teachers who express a desire to support in an inclusive environment for the first year. The positive mindset of these teachers can support their colleagues along with ongoing and reflective training on their practices.

The success of inclusive schooling is an iterative process and its success can hinge on commitment, positive beliefs, professional development, and hard work. A mentor shared the following analogy in regards to building an inclusive environment. She shared it is like growing a plant. You go in and prepare the soil, plant the seed, offer nutrients to the soil, and water on a continuous basis. Inclusive schooling is like just like this; you prepare the staff and classroom environment through professional development and open discussions along with ongoing professional development.

Additional readings. There were a number of readings that influenced this study but did not find their way into Chapter Two. Books such as Fullan's *All Systems Go (2010)*; Dweck's book *Mindset (2008); The Art of Possibility* by Zander, R.S. & Zander, B. (2002); *The Speed of Trust* by Covey (2006); and Cashman's *The Pause Principle (2012)*. In *The Pause Principle* Cashman notes*,* "All real change begins with self-change; pause is a catalyst of self-change" (p. 43).

Implications for Policy and Practice

Notably under IDEA there are legal requirements for school districts to implement more

inclusive environments for SWD. The discussion of social inclusion has been widely studied

over the years (Bandura, 1994, 2001; Robo, 2014; World Bank, 2013) and in a socially inclusive

society one is accepted, acknowledged and feel they belong to the group (Robo, 2014; World

Bank, 2013).

      Change theory strategy utilization. Districts may wish to utilize Change Theory when

looking to move toward inclusive schooling. Seaside School District spent a year in preparation

for inclusive schooling. It has been suggested for social change to happen one must first identify

the desired long-term goals and then work backward to get the people to support the desired

change (Burnes, 2004; Fullan, 2006). This current study's findings suggest that when a District

wants to promote the social change toward **i**nclusive schooling, they may wish to utilize the

concept of change theory. Change theory can support the development of programming and the

foundational steps for a district to support inclusive schooling (Sailor, 2015; Sailor & Roger,

2005)**.** For a District to support the growth of a teacher's beliefs on inclusion, educational reform

may need to be considered (Sailor, 2015; Sailor & Roger, 2005).

      The use of Change Theory has been part of educational discussions for decades and it can

be a strong force in supporting and developing educational reform as well as getting the results

that a school wants (Michael Fullan, 2006). Change theory is comprised of seven core factors

that focus on: (a) motivation, (b) building capacity, (c) learning, (d) changing, (e) reflection, and

(f) engagement, (g) perseverance (Fullan, 2006).

      Districts could use motivation as an impetus for inclusion. A District could use their

current supports and resources of special education teachers, instructional aide, and

administrative staff to support their move toward inclusion. Collaboratively they could motivate

staff on inclusive schooling practices as Fullan notes everyone must be motivated to be a part of

the change (2006). Fullan additionally noted that motivation needs to grow over time or it will

not succeed. In the case of Seaside School District they prepared and worked on motivation and

staff mindset for a year before beginning inclusive schooling and it is an ongoing practice.

Seaside School Districts worked with district and site level administration first to look at their

beliefs on inclusion. During this time the district and site level administration had been reading

Carol Dweck's book on *Mindset (*2006). Dweck's book was a motivator for administration to

have open discussions on change, a look at mindset, and allowed for common language during

the discussion process.

Building capacity is important as it supports building the collective efficacy of a group to

support all student learning (Fullan, 2006). Building capacity incorporates building both each

teacher and site level proficiency. This can be done through professional training and utilization

of resources; which correlates with this study's findings the importance of training and resources

to support inclusion. Utilizing professional development and site resources such at special

education teachers and instructional aides to focus on inclusive schooling can support building a

site's capacity.

Teachers need to be given the ongoing opportunity to learn and grow in their classrooms

each day and collaborate with teachers who are also working on similar strategies (Fullan, 2006).

This current study found that networking was an important finding that supported teachers in

their inclusive practices as noted by the special education participants. Additionally, this study

also found that teachers need to have professional development and opportunity to practice

learned strategies within their own classrooms.

In order to support a teacher's belief about inclusion, Fullan noted the importance of a

collective vision and an action plan. Seaside School District had a collective vision to promote

inclusive schooling. The action plan was to provide trainings, teacher, administrative, and instructional aide support. Additionally, they started with kindergarten with the kindergarten moving to first grade and then second grade. Each subsequent year continued inclusive practices for kindergarteners, first and second. The 2017-18 school year will have the current second graders moving into third grade. While this is a measured action plan adding one grade at a time, this was the action plan that Seaside School District best believed would support their vision for inclusion.

Reflection helps one think about what they are doing and gain awareness into what is working and what is not working. Fullan (2006) shared that we learn by doing, reflecting, gathering data, and doing more. Fullan also opined that a District should allow teachers the opportunity to reflect on in service trainings and professional development. The researcher infers that this current study was a reflection of Seaside School District's in services and trainings and that this looked at the current teacher beliefs on core perspectives, expected outcomes, and classroom practices on inclusive schooling in the District.

Collaborative engagement encompasses all participants to be involved inclusive schooling. Additionally it involves training in similar strategies that encourages interaction across groups, such as teachers, administrators, parents, and community. The interactions of these groups supports system change (Fullan, 2006). The Seaside School district trainings encouraged general education and special education collaboration and their administrators; however, they did not have parent or community participation at the time of this study.

The importance of perseverance cannot be overlooked. All stakeholders, teachers, administrators, parents, and community must be resilient and focus on the goal of inclusive schooling. All stakeholders need to be not only persistent but resilient. There is often pushback

when teachers are rigid (Fullan, 2006). This study found that with inclusive education there was concern over student behaviors and the need for more supports such as a co teacher and instructional aide in the classroom. Districts should take the time to elicit teacher perspectives, provide training, and supports to help with teacher pushback on inclusive education. By utilizing Change Theory a District may begin to build a strong inclusive education program that incorporates a clear vision toward inclusive education.

Recommendations for Further Study

The goal of this study was to investigate the participants' beliefs on inclusion by comparing general and special education kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teacher beliefs on inclusion, as well as their perceptions of accommodations, preparation, and barriers to inclusion. Data were collected to test two research questions relating to this goal. The information was studied and many findings resulted from the examination of the data. While many of the findings were significant, there were some limitations. One limitation was that the sample of participants (general and special teachers) was drawn from one urban public K-12 school district in southern California. This study had 54 out of the 91 potential participants or 59%, who chose to engage in the study. A potential study could investigate several school districts' general and special teachers to gain a larger sample of participant beliefs. It is suggested that a study of this nature would need to ensure that the districts had similar trainings and were in the same place in their timelines for inclusive schooling.

While the MTAI survey did not fully assess the complexity of beliefs, it did allow for participant choice in answers and the ability to for the participant to leave an open-ended comment at the completion of the survey. It is suggested that further research allow participants to leave comments on the study topic in order to gather qualitative data to add to the depth of the

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study. Additionally, the conceptual distinctions regarding inclusion beliefs (core perspective, expected outcomes, classroom practices) represent one possible conceptualization in analysis of the MTAI data. Further research may wish to determine if there are other conceptual distinctions regarding inclusion beliefs that could be studied. Another avenue for further study could be to look at a district's inclusive schooling potential action plan and determine if and how Change Theory may support the action plan.

The researcher did not have the participants complete the MTAI survey prior to the in service trainings, hence there is lack of statistical evidence to determine if the participants' beliefs were different because of the in service trainings or if they held them before the trainings and the start of inclusive schooling.

Future research into this subject of inclusive education and beliefs of practitioners should also include the beliefs of administrators, parents, and instructional aides. The study broke down the data for general teachers and special teachers but this study did not include administrators, parents, or instructional aides. By allowing for a study with other participants the research could look at their perspectives and the type of trainings a district may provide to support the various stakeholders.

Summary

The findings of this study expanded the work of previous researchers in the area of inclusive education and teacher perception. This investigation revealed that a key factor promoting positive attitudes toward inclusion depended on the teacher attending professional development or training that supported their work with SWD. For all three belief subscales, Core Perspectives, Expected Outcomes, and Classroom Practices; co-teaching was found to be the most favorable training for general education teachers. General education teachers also noted

that trainings on working with behaviors, individualized coaching/support and networking with colleagues were supportive for them. However, for the special education teachers' trainings on accommodations and networking with colleagues were most favorable. Special education teachers' data also showed that trainings on individualized coaching/support were significant for them. Classroom supports such at teacher collaboration, instructional aide(s), and special education teacher(s) influence teacher attitude and self-efficacy.

The Seaside School District survey participants had participated in a minimum of two trainings during the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years that covered co-teaching, Universal Design for Learning, behavioral strategies, and accommodations/modifications. Additionally the participants had on going collaboration with both site and district level staff. This researcher suggests that Seaside School District trainings did support the teachers' belief scales for the MTAI survey and additionally this current study suggests that inclusive programs do benefit SWD when a teacher has participated in training.

Collaboration supports inclusive practices; both general education and special education teachers have an important part in helping to create inclusive environments for schools. This current study reveals that participants held the overall belief that students with disabilities had a right to be educated with typically developing peers and that classroom supports such as teachers and instructional aide(s) supported both teachers and students in the inclusive classroom.

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APPENDIX A

MTAI Survey

EDUCATOR BELIEFS ON INCLUSION

Section 1: Demographics: Educational Background-Teaching Position

Directions:
Please read each question carefully before responding.

Please mark either Yes or No stating if you agree to participate in this research.

◯ Yes

◯ No

Gender:

◯ Male

◯ Female

Teaching Position during the 2016-17 school year:

◯ General Education Teacher

◯ Special Education Teacher

If you are a current **General Education** teacher please check the grade level you are teaching during the 2016-17 school year:

◯ Traditional Kindergarten

◯ Kindergarten

◯ First

◯ Second

If you are a current General Education teacher please note the number of years teaching general education

[   ]

If you are a current General Education teacher please check if you have taught special education in the past under a valid special education teaching credential

◯ Yes

Please give number of years taught special education

[   ]

1

If you are a current General Education teacher please mark if you had a college course that pertained to working with students with disabilities.

◯ Yes

◯ No

If you are a current General Education teacher have you attended a specialized training related to working with students with disabilities

☐ Yes, District level training

☐ Yes, County level training

If you are a current General Education teacher please indicate what professional development you have received related to working with students with disabilities (you may choose more than one)

☐ Co-teaching   ☐ Disability awareness

☐ Universal Design for Learning (UDL)   ☐ Individualized Coaching/Support

☐ Accommodations/Modifications   ☐ Networking with colleagues

☐ Behavioral training

☐ Other (please list)

[   ]

If you are a current Special Education teacher please check the grade level you are teaching/supporting during the 2016-17 school year (you may choose more than one grade level)

☐ Traditional Kindergarten

☐ Kindergarten

☐ First

☐ Second

If you are a current Special education teacher please note number of years teaching special education

[   ]

If you are a current Special Education teacher please check if you have taught general education in the past under a valid general education teaching credential

◯ Yes

Please give number of years taught general education

[   ]

2

If you are a current Special Education teacher please indicate what professional development you have received related to working with students with disabilities (you may choose more than one)

☐ Co-teaching   ☐ Disability awareness

☐ Universal Design for Learning (UDL)   ☐ Individualized Coaching/Support

☐ Accommodations/Modifications   ☐ Networking with colleagues

☐ Behavioral training

☐ Other (please list)

[ ]

General and Special Education teachers please check the type of California credential(s) and certificate(s) you have earned:

☐ General Education Multiple Subjects   ☐ Resource Specialist Certificate of Competency

☐ General Education Single Subjects   ☐ Learning Handicapped Credential

☐ Education Specialist Mild/Moderate   ☐ Severely handicapped Credential

☐ Education Specialist Moderate/Severe   ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorder Added Authorization

☐ Other (please list)

[ ]

Section 2: My Thinking About Inclusion Scale (MTAI) Survey

Directions:
Please read each question carefully before responding. For purposes of this survey the words Special and Exceptional are used to denote students with disabilities and regular education denotes general education.

1. Students with special needs have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developing students.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

2. Inclusion is NOT a desirable practice for educating most typically developing students.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

3

3. It is difficult to maintain order in a classroom that contains a mix of children with exceptional education needs and children with average abilities.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

4. Children with exceptional education needs should be given every opportunity to function in an integrated classroom.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

5. Inclusion can be beneficial for parents of children with exceptional education needs.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

6. Parents of children with exceptional needs prefer to have their child placed in an inclusive classroom setting.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

7. Most special education teachers lack an appropriate knowledge base to educate typically developing students effectively.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

8. The individual needs of children with disabilities CANNOT be addressed adequately by a regular education teacher.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

9. We must learn more about the effects of inclusive classrooms before inclusive classrooms take place on a large scale basis.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

10. The best way to begin educating children in inclusive settings is just to do it.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

4

11. Most children with exceptional needs are well behaved in integrated education

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

12. It is feasible to teach children with average abilities and exceptional needs in the same classroom.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

13. Inclusion is socially advantageous for children with special needs.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

14. Children with special needs will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special, separate classroom than in an integrated classroom.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

15. Children with exceptional needs are likely to be isolated by typically developing students in inclusive classrooms.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

16. The presence of children with exceptional education needs promotes acceptance of individual differences on the part of typically developing students.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

17. Inclusion promotes social independence among children with special needs.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

18. Inclusion promotes self-esteem among children with special needs.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

5

19. Children with exceptional needs are likely to exhibit more challenging behaviors in an integrated classroom setting.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

20. Children with special needs in inclusive classrooms develop a better self-concept than in a self-contained classroom.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

21. The challenge of a regular education classroom promotes academic growth among children with exceptional education needs.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

22. Isolation in a special class does NOT have a negative effect on the social and emotional development of students prior to middle school.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

23. Typically developing students in inclusive classrooms are more likely to exhibit challenging behaviors learned from children with special needs.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

24. Children with exceptional needs monopolize teachers' time.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

25. The behaviors of students with special needs require significantly more teacher-directed attention than those of typically developing children.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

6

26. Parents of children with exceptional education needs require *more* supportive services from teachers than parents of typically developing children.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

27. Parents of children with exceptional needs present no greater challenge for a classroom teacher than do parents of a regular education student.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

28. A good approach to managing inclusive classrooms is to have a special education teacher be responsible for instructing the children with special needs.

Strongly accept	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly reject
○	○	○	○	○

Please write any other information you would like to share for this study in the space below.
Please return this survey to the envelope in the school office.
   Thank you for your participation. It is greatly appreciated.

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APPENDIX B

Permission to Use MTAI Survey

(need to print original email and scan in)

> From: Karen C Stoiber <kstoiber@uwm.edu<mailto:kstoiber@uwm.edu>>
> Date: March 13, 2016 at 4:40:33 PM PDT
> To: "███████████████
██████████████████████████
> Subject: Re: MTAI survey

> Hello ███████
> Yes, to all of your questions. I have included a copy of the scale. As
you will see, it would be very easily adapted for kindergarten.

> Let me know if you have any questions and keep me posted on your
dissertation.

> Best,

> Dr. Karen Stoiber

> Karen C. Stoiber, Ph.D.
> Professor and Training Director
> School Psychology Program
> University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

_____

> From: ██████████████████
████████████████████████████   >>
> Sent: Saturday, March 12, 2016 2:19 PM
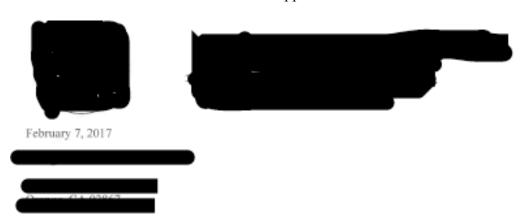> To: Karen C Stoiber
> Subject: MTAI survey
>
> Dr. Stoiber,
>
> I am finishing up my course work for Pepperdine University in southern
California. My dissertation topic will be on teacher and parent
perspectives in regards to inclusive education. I have been looking for a
preexisting survey and your article with Gettinger and Goetz was shared by
a professor of mine. In the article Exploring Factors Influencing Parents'
and Early Childhood Practitioners' Beliefs about Inclusion I was
encouraged that your instrument may support the research I would like to
complete.
> For background, I am the executive director of special education and we
have incorporated inclusive schooling for over 80 of our kindergarteners

with disabilities this year into a general education classroom rather than into a special day classroom. By the time I get to my study these children will be in first grade. I would like to have my participants (parents and teacher) from the incoming kindergarten students and the first grader students.
> Your MTAI scaled appears to be for early childhood from the article.

> 1. Do you believe your scale could be used for the grade levels I wish to study?
> 2. Would you be willing to share your survey with me? I will pay a fee.
> 3. Would you give me permission to use your survey?
> 4. Would you be willing to discuss your survey with me?
> 5. Would my work further any research you or your colleagues are pursuing?

> I look forward to discussing your work in this area.

> Most Sincerely,

APPENDIX C

District Approval Letter

February 7, 2017

Dear Pepperdine IRB Committee:

The ▇▇▇▇▇▇ chool District is aware of the research proposed by Denise MacAllister, a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy Program in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine.

We understand that Ms. MacAllister intends to conduct her research by administering a survey on Inclusive Beliefs to current general education and special education teachers employed with ▇▇▇▇▇▇ chool District. The pool of potential participants will be from the kindergarten, first, and second grade general education (N=67) and special education teachers (N=42) who have taught students with disabilities during the 2016-17 school year.

Once Pepperdine IRB and District level approval are given the researcher the District understand that Ms. MacAllister will meet with the inclusive team members who will disperse the recruitment letter, consent form/information sheet, and the survey to the potential participants. The inclusive team members will be apprised of confidentiality concerns and remind potential participants not to write their name, school, or any other identifying information on the survey. The special education inclusive team staff will meet with potential participants personally to share the parameters of the study. The participants will be given the recruitment letter, consent form/information sheet, and the survey.

The District understands that information will be collected by participants hand recording their answers directly onto the survey unless they prefer to use the surveymonkey link to the Educator Belief on line survey. The survey will not collect any identifying participant information and potential participants will be reminded in the recruitment letter and consent form/information sheet not to write their name, school or any identifying information onto the hand delivered surveys.

A member of the inclusive team will send potential participants 2 email reminders during a two-week window reminding them to complete the survey if they choose to participate.

The District acknowledges that once the surveys are completed the participants will place the survey into an envelope in the school office. The envelope will not be labeled with a school name. The envelopes will be collected and if any identifying information is written onto the envelope then the inclusive team will remove it before giving to the researcher.

██████████████████████████ worked with Pepperdine IRB to ensure that the participants identify will be kept confidential.

The research data will be shared with the District ████████████████████████████ ████████████ he data on teacher beliefs about inclusion will be used solely to inform best practices that support ████████ chool District general education and special education teachers who have students with disabilities in their classrooms.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,

████████████ PhD

Deputy Superintendent

██████████████

APPENDIX D

Pepperdine IRB Approval

PEPPERDINE

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: February 08, 2017

Protocol Investigator Name: Denise MacAllister

Protocol #: 16-05-278

Project Title: Educator Beliefs on Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Kindergarten, First Grade, and Second Grade in One Southern California Urban School District

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Denise MacAllister:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

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APPENDIX E

Recruitment Letter

TO: General Education and Special Education Teachers
DATE: February 7, 2017
FROM: Denise MacAllister, Doctoral Candidate
SUBJECT: Inclusive Schooling Belief Survey

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Dear General Education/Special Education Teacher:

My name is Denise MacAllister and I am an employee of the ███████████████████, ██████ ██████████████████████████. I am also a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy Program in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University and I am conducting a dissertation study titled: *Teacher Beliefs on Inclusion of SWD in Kindergarten, First Grade, and Second Grade in a Southern California Urban School District*. The purpose of this study is to investigate and compare general and special education teacher beliefs on inclusion of SWD in a general education classroom. The study will look at teacher beliefs on accommodations, preparation, and barriers to inclusion looking at teacher (a) core perspectives, (b) expected outcomes for student inclusion, and (c) classroom practices. The study will look at the beliefs of the current kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teacher(s) who have SWD included in their general education classroom. I am recruiting 2016-17 kindergarten, first grade, and second grade general education and special education teachers who have SWD in their classrooms to participate in this study.

███████████████████████████, I am collecting this data for my dissertation. The District and Pepperdine University have evaluated my research proposal and given me permission to conduct my research within the District and to make contact with general education and special education teachers for my research study.

Participation in this study will entail completing a survey which is anticipated to take about 15 minutes. The instrument consists of demographic questions and The My Thinking About Inclusion (MTAI) Survey. The demographics section will ask if you are a general education or special education teacher, gender, years teaching, credential type, and college/professional development information. The My Thinking About Inclusion (MTAI) Survey is a 28-question survey that looks at beliefs on inclusion of SWD in the general education classroom. The survey will not collect your any identifying information. Please do not write your school name, your name, or any identifying information onto the survey.

Participation is voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to. Mark "N/A" in the survey for questions you chose to not answer and move to the next question.

You may choose to discontinue participation at any time. You may choose not to answer all of the questions. Should you choose to participate in the study, your identity will be remain anonymous. No study information will be linked to your personal identity. All study data will be kept in a secure location accessible only to the researcher and will be destroyed three years after completion of the study.

Your participation is very important to me and much appreciated. If you are willing to consider participating in my study, please complete the attached survey. By completing the survey you are indicating informed consent and agreeing to participate.

Once the survey is completed, please drop it into the envelope labeled "dissertation study survey". The envelope will be with your school secretary.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me using my email address below.

With sincere appreciation,

Denise MacAllister
denise.macallister@pepperdine.edu

APPENDIX F

Information-Facts Sheet

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

RECRUITMENT LETTER/INFORMATION/FACTS SHEET FOR EXEMPT RESEARCH

Teacher Beliefs on Inclusion of SWD in Kindergarten, First Grade, and Second Grade in a Southern California Urban School District

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Denise Mac Allister as principal investigator with Dr. Linda Purrington as faculty advisor at Pepperdine University, because you are a general education or special education teacher supporting student(s) with disabilities in an inclusive general education classroom. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read this document. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate and compare general and special education teacher beliefs on inclusion of SWD in a general education classroom. The study will look at teacher beliefs on accommodations, preparation, and barriers to inclusion looking at teacher (a) core perspectives, (b) expected outcomes for student inclusion, and (c) classroom practices. The study will look at the beliefs of the current kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teacher(s) who have SWD included in their general education classroom.

PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey which is anticipated to take about 15 minutes. The instrument consists of demographic questions and The My Thinking About Inclusion (MTAI) Survey. The demographics section will ask if you are a general education or special education teacher, gender, years teaching, credential type, and college/professional development information. The My Thinking About Inclusion (MTAI) Survey is a 28-question survey that looks at beliefs on inclusion of SWD in the general education classroom. The survey will not collect your any identifying information. Please do not write your school name, your name, or any identifying information onto the survey.

You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to. Mark "N/A" in the survey for questions you chose to not answer and move to the next question.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

Your participation is very important to me and much appreciated. If you are willing to consider participating in my study, please complete the attached survey. By completing the survey you are providing informed consent agreeing to participate.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or completing only the items about which you feel comfortable.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will keep your surveys *anonymous* for this study as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

There will be no identifiable information obtained in connection with this study. Your name, address or other identifiable information will not be collected. The survey data will be stored on a password-protected computer in the principal investigator's place of residence. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years and then destroyed appropriately.

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact the principal investigator Denise MacAllister at 714 336 7789 or email denise.macallister@pepperdine.edu. I may also contact faculty supervisor Dr. Linda Purrington @ 949 223 2568 or email linda.purrington@pepperdine.edu if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.