Examining The Challenges And Benefits Of Inclusion In Urban Secondary Schools

Jeff James Spaletta

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EXAMINING THE CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF INCLUSION
IN URBAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Affiliated Faculty of

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies at the University of New England

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the degree of Doctor of Education

Portland & Biddeford, Maine

July 2020
EXAMINING THE CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF INCLUSION IN URBAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Abstract

American high schools with full-inclusion programs often struggle to offer effective academic instruction to students with disabilities. While academic researchers have conducted studies on inclusion programs, a literature review revealed a dearth of academic studies specific to inclusion programs in secondary schools. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the attitudes of general-education teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding the ability of those teachers to provide effective academic instruction to students with disabilities in schools that offer full-inclusion education. This study was motivated by three research questions: 1) What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms? 2) How do teachers describe their qualifications/preparation to provide appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms? 3) How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools? To answer these questions, I used social media platforms and email to invite teachers in four regions of the United States to participate in a survey to measure their attitudes about inclusion education in their schools. Fifty-six teachers from across the United States anonymously completed a Scale of Teachers’ Attitudes toward Inclusion (STATIC) survey, which consisted of 20 multiple choice questions and two open-ended
questions. Multiple themes emerged from the data, including the importance of materials and resources, qualifications and ability, and administrative support in shaping the attitudes of teachers about inclusion education. Recommendations from this analysis include: 1) Ongoing training of general-education teachers specific to strategies for accommodating students with disabilities within the regular education classroom, 2) Increased access to materials, learning supports, time for professional collaboration, administrative support, and time to plan for the needs of students, and 3) Ongoing opportunities for teachers to communicate to administration their needs related to the education of students with disabilities.

**Keywords:** Equity, full-inclusion, Title 1, urban, mainstream
University of New England

Doctor of Education
Educational Leadership

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my friends, family, and colleagues whose urging, encouragement, and unwavering support have been invaluable throughout my doctoral journey. My friend, Misty Blackmon, inspired me to embark on this journey. I would also like to thank the University of New England, the program professors, and Mr. Greg Andrews, who kept me focused. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Brianna Parsons for her valuable and constructive suggestions during the planning and development of this journey. The members of my dissertation cohort committee are exceptionally knowledgeable and have been immensely supportive. I am particularly grateful for the assistance of my dissertation committee: Dr. Michelle Collay (Lead Advisor), Dr. Catherine Stieg, and Dr. Rodney Johnson. The time, assistance, and motivation that each of you has offered has been extremely helpful, and I could not have done this without you. Also, I appreciate my son Brayden Spaletta, who spent many hours with me at the library or at home during the summers or weekends while I worked on my classwork or on dissertation drafts. Lastly, a special thank you to my mom, who passed away one month before I undertook this journey. She instilled in me a sense of determination, willpower, and work ethic, all of which I needed in order to undertake and complete this journey.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

An equitable education is one that ensures that children have the opportunity to acquire through education the basic skills necessary for productive work, irrespective of that child’s background or abilities. Public schools in the United States have historically struggled to provide equitable educations to students from low-income families and/or from certain ethnic backgrounds, but students with disabilities have often fared even worse. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 mandated that states must supply “every student with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in his or her least restrictive environment,” (Clark, 2016, p. 1). Inclusion programs are one way for schools to fulfill their obligation to provide a FAPE, as dictated through IDEA (Clark, 2016).

Researchers have written reams about the ethical and legal considerations of the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general-education (also known as mainstream) setting, and most researchers in the area of educational equity agree that inclusion is the ethical and the moral choice (Brookes Publishing Co., 2017), largely because researchers have found that inclusive classrooms lead to greater social and academic opportunities, more friendships, enhanced community involvement, and increased acceptance among their typical peers (Greene, 2017). In other words, the positive effects for students who are part of an inclusive program go far beyond the walls of the school (Greene, 2017). Less research has been conducted on the teachers required to create such inclusive classrooms. To address this gap in the literature, this study focused on the general-education (also known as mainstream) teachers who are responsible for
educating the special-education students who are benefitting from inclusion programs, specifically from “full-inclusion” programs.

The focus of this research study was the impact that teachers’ attitudes have on urban high school students who have disabilities and thus, are designated special-education students, whose status is documented via an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Without proper support in full-inclusion classrooms, students with disabilities often struggle to work at the same level as their peers, especially if they suffer from learning disabilities linked to autism, dyslexia, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), where interventions and one-on-one support in an inclusive environment can help these students make gains in academic achievement (Clark, 2016). Throughout this study, the phrase “full inclusion” will be used to describe a special-education strategy through which all students with disabilities participate full time in general-education classrooms with their typical peers, although they also receive one-on-one support services from special-education teachers in those general-education classrooms (Stout, 2001). It is important for students with disabilities to have access to such individualized instruction because they usually achieve lower levels of academic success than their typically developing peers in inclusive classrooms. In addition to their academic struggles, students with disabilities often have behavioral challenges unique to their specific disabilities, making individualized instruction all the more essential (Clark, 2016). Thus, full-inclusion programs must provide specialized, individual instruction from special-education teachers who come to general-education classrooms to provide such instruction.

One of the greatest challenges facing schools that adopt full-inclusion programs is that general-education teachers in general-education classrooms are often ill-equipped to provide effective instruction to the students with disabilities in their classrooms. General-education
teachers are often underprepared and lack the necessary resources to address the challenges posed by students with disabilities in full-inclusion classrooms (Pearce & Forlin, 2016). Additionally, it may be the case that students with disabilities struggle in full-inclusion classrooms due to the unconscious biases and negative attitudes of their teachers (Noreen et al., 2019). This study documented teachers’ attitudes about full inclusion by inviting a small, national sample of urban, Title 1 high school teachers who teach in full-inclusion classrooms to respond to a survey. If students with disabilities are to receive full-time education in full-inclusion classrooms, then teachers’ attitudes are critical to the success of those students.

Secondary students with disabilities require general-education teachers who are well prepared to implement evidence-based practices that can address their unique challenges in order to improve their academic performance in general-education settings (Clark, 2016). General-education teachers can be effective at implementing full inclusion in their classrooms if they have the proper tools and training, but too often general-education teachers do not receive adequate training or the support that they need to properly accommodate students with disabilities in their classrooms (Murphy, 2015). Most high schools struggle to offer effective instruction to students with disabilities (Clark, 2016), but a literature review reveals that there is a dearth of research about general-education teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion programs in high school classrooms. I sought to contribute to the body of knowledge needed to address the challenges of full-inclusion requirements at the secondary level by working to uncover and understand the attitudes of general-education high school teachers who work in urban, Title 1 high schools that employ full-inclusion requirements. By discovering teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements, researchers can gain insights that could help close the gap between
the challenges facing students with disabilities and the support, tools, and training in evidence-based practices that secondary teachers receive to address those challenges.

**Personal Narrative**

My exploration of the literature related to full-inclusion offered me a broad understanding of the topic, but much of what I learned from my review of the literature helped me narrow my focus on full-inclusion programs in secondary schools. I have worked in urban schools for the past 20 years and have been studying full-inclusion programs for several years. I currently work as a network director of a full-inclusion program. While serving as an executive director administrator for multiple full-inclusion urban schools, I realized that educators and administrators could improve attitudes about full-inclusion requirements in those urban schools. Schools are making gains in the education of students with disabilities, but those students are still lagging behind their typically developing peers, and I am concerned about adequately meeting the needs of all students in American schools.

**Statement of the Problem**

There is extensive evidence of below-average academic performance by high school students with disabilities, who continue to under-perform academically and who too often fail to meet the learning standards in full-inclusion programs. According to a National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2016 study of public high school graduation rates between 2010 and 2014, during the 2013/2014 school year, students with disabilities graduated at a significantly lower rate than their typical peers in every state in the United States and in the District of Columbia. In reviewing these statistics, one cannot help but wonder about the impact that teachers’ attitudes might have on student performance and outcomes. If teachers feel ill-equipped, overwhelmed, or under-supported, then they may develop negative attitudes that affect
their teaching and, therefore, their students’ outcomes. According to Pearce and Forlin (2016), one of the chief obstacles facing students with disabilities in full-inclusion classrooms is that secondary general-education teachers are often underprepared and lack the necessary resources to address the challenges of those students. This, in turn, could engender frustration and other negative attitudes among teachers, who may feel ill-equipped to instruct these students and under-supported by school administrators.

The problem of the study was that there are few studies about the attitudes of urban, Title I secondary school teachers regarding the full-inclusion requirements in their schools. Teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements are paramount to the successful implementation of those programs (Evins, 2015), but a literature review revealed that there is scant information available about teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements at the secondary level. Those studies that have focused on full-inclusion requirements have concentrated on elementary students (Boyle et al., 2013), making it difficult to diagnose the problematic approaches that high school teachers are using in their classrooms to instruct their students with disabilities. Appropriately meeting the needs of secondary school students with disabilities likely requires solutions that differ from the solutions that teachers use at schools at other levels.

The role of administrators in supporting secondary teachers is also unstudied. School administrators often fail to provide their teachers with the training and resources that they need to provide effective instruction to students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs. According to Pearce and Forlin (2016), secondary general-education teachers are often underprepared and lack necessary resources to address the challenges of providing effective instruction to students with disabilities. Many teachers who have students with disabilities in their general-education classrooms receive little or no training on evidence-based practices specific to the challenges
posed by students with disabilities (Murphy, 2015). A result of that lack of training and resources can be teachers’ becoming frustrated, which increases the chances that those teachers will develop negative attitudes.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of general-education teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding the ability of those teachers to provide effective academic instruction to students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs in those schools. As noted above, most American high schools with full-inclusion programs struggle to offer effective academic instruction to students with disabilities. The purpose of this study was to seek insights into this challenge by surveying four regions of the United States. There are currently 46,969 Title 1-eligible schools in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020), which makes the collection of individualized data difficult. The geographic focus of this study was four regions of the United States. Though small, the survey sample size was statistically significant. This study used a survey of high school teachers in four regions of the United States about their attitudes about full-inclusion requirements to draw conclusions.

The attitudes of teachers are paramount to the successful implementation of inclusion education (Evins, 2015). My goal in undertaking this study was to contribute to the existing body of literature and to begin filling in the gap left by the relative absence of studies exploring secondary teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements. Future studies are needed to delve further into the factors that most contribute to the successful implementation of full-inclusion requirements in high schools. More research may produce findings that bring about positive changes and inspire positive attitudes in teachers about full-inclusion requirements.
This study used a descriptive research survey to examine teachers’ attitudes toward full-inclusion requirements. The survey included a demographic questionnaire and a 20-item, Likert-type instrument called the Scale of Teachers’ Attitudes toward Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC) (Cochran, 1997). This study’s Q-sort process allowed the participants to fully express and explain their perceptions and attitudes about the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms (Monje, 2017). For this reason, the survey protocol was modified to include two additional questions: (1) “Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you pick the two statements that you most agreed with?” and (2) “Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you choose the two statements you most disagreed with?” By surveying teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements in their high schools, this study brought to light some problems that can be rectified to improve the delivery of full-inclusion practices. This study may provide school administrators with needed insights about their teachers’ concerns about full-inclusion education, which can help them close a gap between instructional practice and student outcomes (Clark, 2016). My ultimate goal was to help schools improve their delivery of instruction in full-inclusion programs so that the students with disabilities in those classrooms are likelier to graduate from high school and to succeed in the workplace.

**Research Questions**

The main objective of this study was to examine the factors that may influence the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding the full-inclusion requirements in those schools. More specifically, this study examined how professional development, experience with the inclusion of students with disabilities, and administrative support may impact the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs in those schools.
This study sought to answer the following questions:

RQ1. What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms?

RQ2. How do teachers describe their qualifications/preparation to provide appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms?

RQ3. How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools?

Conceptual Framework

The Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) Act of 2004 mandated that students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) that equips them with the knowledge and the skills that they need to succeed in college and/or in the workplace. To meet those obligations, many schools began to implement inclusion programs, which incorporate students into general-education classrooms in order to expose them to learning environments that increase their chances of success in college and/or the workplace, that increase the likelihood that they will form friendships with typical peers, and that increase their opportunities for participation in the greater community. By incorporating students with disabilities into general-education classrooms, schools also increase the empathy and understanding that typically developing students feel for their peers with disabilities, which, in turn, positively impacts those students’ perceptions about people with disabilities outside of the classroom. There are two main branches of this approach: “inclusion” and “full inclusion.” This study focused on full-inclusion programs, which incorporate all students with disabilities into general-education classrooms.
Students in full-inclusion classrooms continue receiving one-on-one instruction from special-education teachers, but those teachers come to them in their general-education classrooms.

General-education teachers in full-inclusion programs play a significant role in the education of their students with disabilities, and those teachers’ attitudes are paramount to the success of those programs (Evins, 2015; Greene, 2017). A number of factors could influence general-education teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements, including the age of a school’s full-inclusion program. For teachers who have transitioned to a full-inclusion program from the old model of separating students with disabilities from their typically developing peers, teachers might experience negative feelings similar to the feelings experienced by people who have lost a loved one to death. For this reason, the Kubler-Ross model is the ideal lens through which to examine teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion education.

In the book *On Death and Dying* (1969), Kubler-Ross developed a theory of loss that described the five stages of change through which people pass after the death of a loved one. In addition to the pain following death, the Kubler-Ross model is useful for describing all sorts of emotionally challenging experiences, including the difficulties that general-education teachers experience when transitioning to full-inclusion programs. Undertrained general-education teachers who have not worked directly with students with disabilities and who transition to a full-inclusion model may need to work through the five stages of the Kubler-Ross model in order to arrive at acceptance of full-inclusion. If a teacher has not worked their way to acceptance, then they are likely to have negative attitudes about full-inclusion requirements, and those negative attitudes are likely to have negative effects on the students with disabilities in their classrooms.

To measure teacher attitudes about full-inclusion programs, this study used Cochran’s (1997) Scale of Teacher’s Attitudes toward Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC), an instrument that
has been validated in prior studies. STATIC is a 20-item survey instrument that consists of statements about the inclusion of students with disabilities in general-education classrooms. The survey respondents answered the survey questions using a six-point Likert-type scale. The sum of the 20 items on the survey served as an index of the teachers’ attitudes about inclusion. This study surveyed teachers from urban, Title 1 high schools—in school districts across the United States—that have full-inclusion programs. In order to allow participants to fully express and explain their attitudes about the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms, the STATIC tool used in this study was modified to include these two additional questions: (1) “Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you pick the two statements that you most agreed with?” and (2) “Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you choose the two statements you most disagreed with?”

**Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope**

As the researcher undertaking this study, I made several assumptions. First, I assumed that the teachers’ survey responses accurately reflected their professional opinions. Second, I assumed that the teachers who responded to the surveys answered all of the questions openly and honestly. Third, I assumed that participants understood the questions presented to them. Finally, I assumed that a significant percentage of the selected sample population would choose to participate in the study and complete the survey. According to a study about average rates of response to surveys, “E-mail response rates may only [be] approximate 25% to 30% without follow-up e-mail and reinforcements” (Fincham, 2008, para. 11). For this study, I hoped to secure approximately one-third of this rate, or about 10%.

Through this study, teachers from urban, Title 1 high schools in California, New York, Ohio, and Texas were surveyed. The goal was to get a small sample from four regions of the
United States in order to have a representative sample of teachers from school districts across the country so that the analysis results would be statistically significant. This study is unique because it only focused on urban, Title 1 high schools that have adopted full-inclusion requirements in their classrooms.

For the sake of this study, I assumed that there would be some similarities in the urban, Title 1 schools whose teachers participated in this study. Urban schools across the country have certain characteristics in common, including larger student bodies than suburban and rural schools, more low-income students, more students who score lower on achievement tests, greater problems with chronic absenteeism and behavioral issues, more problems with crime in the neighborhoods that house the schools, fewer resources available to teachers, more teachers who are temporary, more teachers who are in the first few years of their career, and more teachers who teach outside of their content areas (The Center for Technology in Education [CTE], n.d.).

According to U.S. Legal (2019), in order to qualify as a Title 1 school, at least 40% of the school’s student body must come from low-income families. Those schools receive federal funds to help them close the achievement with their suburban and rural counterparts. Additionally, “The types of students served by Title 1 funds include migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, homeless students, students with disabilities, neglected students, delinquent students, at-risk students or any student in need” (U.S. Legal, 2019, para. 3). To address these challenges, teachers at Title 1 schools must adopt teaching strategies and lesson plans that better address the needs of their students.

The students with disabilities in the full-inclusion programs whose teachers participated in this study also have certain shared characteristics. To qualify for special-education instruction, as defined by IDEA, an IEP team must determine if a student has one of these 13 disabilities:
emotional disturbances, intellectual disabilities, specific learning disabilities, autism, traumatic brain injuries (TBI), visual impairments, deafness, hearing impairments, deaf-blindness, speech or language impairments, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, or multiple disabilities (Understanding Special Education, 2019). As noted by Casale-Giannola and Green (2012), “At the secondary level, the majority of students with special-education classifications have high-incidence disabilities. They include learning disabilities, high functioning intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbances, and traumatic brain injury” (p. 4). While no two disabilities are exactly alike, there is some overlap in the characteristics of the students with disabilities in the full-inclusion programs whose teachers participated in this study.

**Limitations**

Although there are many important advantages to descriptive survey research, it is also important to note the limitations of such research. For instance, these types of surveys cannot possibly answer every question that a researcher may have about teacher attitudes in classrooms that have implemented full-inclusion programs. The survey used in this study includes 20 questions in the STATIC, and it also asked respondents to answer socio-biographical background questions in order to categorize the respondents by age, qualification, and teaching experience. Additionally, only a small percentage of the surveys were returned, which affected the study’s sample size. In random, participatory studies, there is no way to document a percentage of return, as not all individuals who see a posting or receive a recruitment notice will respond. Because many teachers declined to participate, the survey used in this study yielded a lower response rate. In an effort to increase participation, I sent two follow-up messages to the teachers who received the survey.
In addition to a low response rate, the study might also have yielded results that are not truly indicative of teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements because teachers might not have offered honest responses to the survey questions. For instance, if a general-education teacher who teaches students with disabilities in a full-inclusion classroom has negative attitudes about full-inclusion requirements, they might have felt uncomfortable about expressing such attitudes in a survey, even though the survey was anonymous. That discomfort might have been born of a fear of owning one’s negative thoughts about full-inclusion requirements, or teachers might have worried that the expression of negative attitudes about full-inclusion requirements might somehow have deleterious effects on their careers as educators. If either was the case, the survey might have returned skewed data.

Given the possibility that teachers might have refused to participate if they experienced any of the fears or worries mentioned above, then the respondents might be primarily teachers who have positive attitudes about full-inclusion requirements, which would also skew the data. Thus, the sample might not be representative of all teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools. The survey results might also have been affected by teachers’ attitudes toward education in general, which can be swayed by such factors as their attitudes about their administrative leaders, their levels of stress, or their degree of general professional burn-out. In short, satisfaction with their jobs might influence teachers’ attitudes about inclusion programs (Boyle et al., 2013). One of the chief limitations of this study was that the survey did not ascertain teachers’ levels of overall job satisfaction, and the study did not explore the impact that job satisfaction may have on attitudes about full-inclusion requirements.
Scope

The scope of this study focused only on the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 high schools in the United States and the factors that affect those attitudes. The study sought input from a small pool of teachers from various states around the United States. The study was conducted between May 2020 and June 2020.

Rationale and Significance

Implementing full-inclusion requirements in high schools is more challenging than implementing such programs at other levels (Boyle et al., 2013) because high school students change classes throughout the day, because there is generally less teacher support for all students in high school than at other levels, because high school students are expected to be more accountable for their own education, and because the material is more challenging and requires greater study in order to achieve mastery. These factors pose significant challenges both for the students with disabilities in these full-inclusion high school classrooms and for the general-education teachers providing instruction to these students. That is not to say that there are not excellent full-inclusion classrooms that can serve as models for the best means of implementing full-inclusion requirements. This is only to acknowledge the challenges specific to full-inclusion requirements at the secondary level.

I chose to undertake this study because there is a lack of research on general-education teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements in high school classrooms (Mngo, Z. Y. & Mngo, A. Y., 2018). Given that dearth of research, educators and administrators have a limited understanding of the relationship between teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements in high schools and about the achievement levels and the graduation rates of the students with disabilities in those classrooms. Thus, this study may prove beneficial both for administrators
trying to implement full-inclusion requirements in their schools and for future researchers who are interested in the attitudes of teachers in the schools examined through this study.

**Definition of Terms**

This study contains certain key concepts and constructs particular to education. Although these concepts are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, it is important to introduce them briefly in Chapter One to allow the reader to make sense of the presented content in the subsequent chapters.

*Educational Equity* – “The educational policies, practices, and programs necessary to: (a) eliminate educational barriers based on gender, race/ethnicity, national origin, color, disability, age, or other protected group status; and (b) provide equal educational opportunities and ensure that historically underserved or underrepresented populations meet the same rigorous standards for academic performance expected of all children and youth” (Bitters, n.d., para. 1).

*Full Inclusion* – “All students, regardless of … [disability] or severity will be in a regular classroom/program full time. All services must be taken to the child in that setting” (Stout, 2001, para. 14).

*Inclusion* – “Expresses commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students)” (Stout, 2001, para. 13).

*Mainstream* – “The selective placement of special education students in one or more regular education classes. Proponents of mainstreaming generally assume that a student must
‘earn’ his or her opportunity to be placed in regular classes by demonstrating an ability to keep up with the work assigned by the regular classroom teacher” (Stout, 2001, para. 12).

Throughout this study, the word “mainstream” is used interchangeably with the word “general-education.” Although “general-education” is my preferred term, use of the word “mainstream” is sometimes unavoidable because it is the preferred term of the author of the STATIC survey tool used in this study (see Appendix A for survey instrument).

**Paraprofessional** – “School employees who work alongside and/or under the directio
n of a licensed or certificated educator to support and assist in providing instructional and non-instructional services to children, youth, and their families” (National Education Association, 2002, para. 1).

**Students With Disabilities or Special-Education Needs** – “The concept of ‘children with special educational needs’ extends beyond those who may be included in handicapped categories to cover those who are failing in school for a wide variety of other reasons that are known to be likely to impede a child’s optimal progress” (OECD, 2008, p. 18).

**Title 1 Programs** – “Title 1 is the largest federally funded educational program. The program provides supplemental funds to school districts to assist schools with the highest student concentrations of poverty to meet school educational goals. A Title 1 school is a school receiving federal funds for Title 1 students. The basic principle of Title 1 is that schools with large concentrations of low-income students will receive supplemental funds to assist in meeting students’ educational goals” (U.S. Legal, 2019, paras. 1-2).

**Urban Schools** – “Schools located in or near urban centers, primarily serving poor and ethnically diverse students in densely populated areas. Urban schools are often characterized by
lower academic achievement than suburban schools, and high rates of mobility by students” (IGI Global, 2020, para. 2).

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of general-education (also known as mainstream) teachers working in urban, Title 1 high schools with full-inclusion programs. More specifically, this study surveyed teachers in such settings to determine their attitudes about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into general-education classrooms and to determine what factors influence those teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements. It is essential to understand the nature of teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements because those attitudes likely have a significant impact on the academic success and graduation rates of the students with disabilities in those classrooms. Because most of the existing literature focuses on students with disabilities in elementary schools with full-inclusion programs, it may be the case that effectively meeting the needs of students with disabilities at the secondary level requires solutions that are different from those used at the primary level (Greene, 2017). Cochran’s STATIC 20-item survey demonstrates that it is possible to measure teachers’ attitudes about inclusion, as defined by the STATIC. As a result, this study measured teachers’ attitudes toward full-inclusion requirements in urban, Title 1 high schools in California, New York, Ohio, and Texas.

The following chapters include a review of the literature, followed by a detailed outline of the methodology of the study. Chapter Two is an explanation of how the reading of the literature influenced the scope and direction of the study. Chapter Three is a discussion of the study’s methodology, including the details of the research design, the survey instrument, and the data analysis. Chapter Four is an overview of the survey results collected in relation to the
research questions. Chapter Five is a summary of the conclusions that can be drawn from this study.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Full-inclusion programs are an important tool that schools use to meet the FAPE requirements laid out in IDEA (Clark, 2016). While the implementation of full-inclusion requirements has helped students with disabilities emotionally and academically, students with disabilities still lag behind their typically developing peers in academic achievement and in graduation rates. As Marx (2016) noted, “Historically, students with disabilities have not performed well on annual statewide assessments” (para. 2). Students in full-inclusion programs are still struggling due to various challenges specific to their disabilities (Clark, 2016). Some of those challenges include behavioral and physical problems related to their specific disabilities, bullying from their peers, and a lack of the resources necessary to ensure the successful integration of students with disabilities into general-education classrooms. As a result of the lack of resources, teachers are often ill-equipped to provide the instruction that students with disabilities need to succeed in those classrooms.

Organization

This literature review examines more than 70 resources from the last 10 years. The research covers many areas in order to gain a broad understanding of full-inclusion education at all education levels and to acquire in-depth knowledge about narrower ideas such as teacher attitudes about inclusion education in high schools. In order to provide a well-rounded discussion of the topic of full inclusion, this review includes resources that present both the positives and the negatives of all of the issues. To avoid any unintentional bias, I deliberately sought out resources that challenged preconceived notions.
Context

Students with disabilities have historically been excluded from participation in public education in the United States. According to Dudley-Marling and Burns (2014):

Prior to the enactment of the landmark *Education for All Children Act* (also known as Public Law 94-142), only one in five students with disabilities in the US were educated in public schools. Moreover, many states had laws on their books that explicitly excluded many students with disabilities from public schooling including children who had been labeled deaf, blind, emotionally disturbed. (pp. 14-15)

The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (2007) noted that:

Before the enactment of Public Law 94-142, the fate of many individuals with disabilities was likely to be dim. Too many individuals lived in state institutions for persons with mental retardation or mental illness. In 1967, for example, state institutions were homes for almost 200,000 persons with significant disabilities. Many of these restrictive settings provided only minimal food, clothing, and shelter. Too often, persons with disabilities…were merely accommodated rather than assessed, educated, and rehabilitated. (p. 1)

Public Law 94-142 mandated that states provide all children, including children with disabilities, with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The writers of the law wrote that:

It is the purpose of this Act to assure that all…children [with disabilities] have available to them…a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs, to assure that the rights of…children [with disabilities] and their parents or guardians are protected, to assist States and localities to provide for the education of all…children [with disabilities], and to assess
and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate…children [with disabilities]. (Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, p. 775)

The passage of Public Law 94-142 ushered in a new era for public schools and for students with disabilities, but it did not go far enough in ensuring that students with disabilities received a FAPE, and legislators made many amendments to the law over the next 30 years.

For the purposes of this study, the most significant amendment came through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004, which mandated “placing and serving children with disabilities, including minority children, in the least restrictive environment appropriate” (p. 2784). The phrase “least restrictive environment appropriate” is vague and open to interpretation, but education leaders adopted “inclusion” policies at their schools in order to remain in compliance with the law. The impact of inclusion education was positive for the students with disabilities who were integrated into general-education classrooms. Researchers who explored the effects of inclusion education found that, “Students with intellectual disabilities that were fully included in general-education classrooms made more progress in literacy skills compared to students served in special schools” (U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, n.d., p. 1). In spite of those gains, the students with disabilities in those inclusion classrooms still lag behind their typically developing peers. An NCES study of the graduation rates of high school students between 2010 and 2014 found that during the 2013/2014 school year, students with disabilities graduated at much lower rates than their typically developing peers in every state in the United States and in the District of Columbia (NCES: Digest of Education Statistics, 2016). Given the disparities in academic performance between students with disabilities and their typically developing peers, it is clear that educators and administrators must do more to address the educational needs of students with disabilities.
The teachers providing instruction in those inclusion environments are of paramount importance to the education of students with disabilities (Evins, 2015), and it is only logical to begin the exploration of the path to improved performance in full-inclusion classrooms with those teachers. Students with disabilities may struggle in full-inclusion classrooms because of the unconscious biases and negative attitudes of their general-education teachers in those classrooms (Noreen et al., 2019), but there have been no systematic studies of the teachers’ attitudes about inclusion education at the secondary level. This study collected data to gauge teachers’ attitudes in the hope that a better understanding of teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion education will help schools improve their ability to serve students with disabilities.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study was built on the premise that children with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) that equips them with the knowledge and the skills that they need to succeed in college and/or in the workplace. Section 1400 (c)(1) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 states that:

Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. (U.S. Department of Education: IDEA, 2019, para. 1)

One way that schools put the mandates laid out in IDEA into effect is through inclusion programs, which, to varying degrees, incorporate students into general-education classrooms in order to expose them to learning environments that increase their chances of success in college.
and/or the workplace, that increase the likelihood that they will form friendships with typical peers, and that increase their opportunities for participation in the greater community. By incorporating students with disabilities into general-education classrooms, schools also increase the empathy and understanding that typically developing students feel for their peers with disabilities, which, in turn, positively impacts those students’ perceptions about people with disabilities outside of the classroom. In other words, inclusion programs benefit the students with disabilities receiving the education in those classrooms, the typically developing students receiving that education in those classrooms, and the people with disabilities in the greater community. In short, those programs are a boon to the individual and to society.

**Inclusion: Two Models**

There is little disagreement among researchers, educators, and administrators about the need to provide students with disabilities with a FAPE, but schools have adopted different versions of inclusion programs to meet their obligations to provide a FAPE. The two main branches of this approach are “inclusion” and “full inclusion.” While the two approaches have certain commonalities, there are also important differences in their practical implications and theoretical underpinnings. “Inclusionists,” or those who advocate for “inclusion,” believe that students with disabilities should receive instruction from both special-education teachers and general-education teachers in both special-education classrooms and general-education classrooms (Fuchs, D. & Fuchs, L. S., 1998). Inclusionists push for what amounts to limited inclusion or what could be termed “hybrid inclusion,” in that special-education classrooms would continue to exist in the inclusion model.

“Full inclusionists,” on the other hand, advocate for a purer form of inclusion, one that, ideally, incorporates all students with disabilities into general-education classrooms (Fuchs, D. &
Fuchs, L. S., 1998). Under the full-inclusion model, students would receive one-on-one instruction with special-education teachers, but all of that instruction would occur in general-education classrooms. In other words, classrooms dedicated to special education would become a relic of a bygone era. As Fuchs, D. and Fuchs, L. S. (1998) explained, supporters of full inclusion believe that all special-education instruction should occur in general-education classrooms for two reasons: “First, only full-time placement confers legitimacy on special-needs children’s membership and place in regular classrooms. Second, as long as special-education placements exist, educators may use them as dumping grounds for the difficult-to-teach student” (p. 80). Full inclusion requires a greater paradigm shift than inclusion, but advocates of full inclusion believe that, in the long run, it will yield greater results for students, for schools, and for society at large.

**Kubler-Ross Model**

In her renowned book *On Death and Dying* (1969), Kubler-Ross developed a theory of loss that described the five stages through which people pass after the death of a family member, friend, or close acquaintance. According to Hamilton (2016), “Kubler-Ross proposed the ‘stage theory’ where grief proceeded along a series of predictable stages including shock and denial, anger, resentment and guilt, depression, and finally acceptance” (p. 523). As Maciejewski et al. (2007) explained, “The identification of the patterns of typical grief symptom trajectories is of clinical interest because it enhances the understanding of how individuals cognitively and emotionally process the death of someone close” (p. 717). In short, Kubler-Ross’ model is so valuable because it helps people better understand themselves and others.

While Kubler-Ross developed her theory to explain the grief process following the death of a loved one, others have used her theory to describe the stages of grief that can accompany
any emotionally painful experience. Maciejewski et al. (2007) wrote that, “The stage theory of
grief became well-known and accepted and has been generalized to a wide variety of losses,
including children’s reactions to parental separation, adults’ reactions to marital separation, and
clinical staffs’ reactions to the death of an inpatient” (p. 716). The generalizability of the Kubler-
Ross model allows for the application to a range of situations, including, in my opinion, to
teachers experiencing significant changes within their classrooms.

**Conceptual Framework**

The ultimate goal of educators and administrators is to provide students with disabilities
with the instruction and the support that they need to improve their academic performance and
their likelihood of graduation so that they graduate at rates comparable to the those of typically
developing students. After the enactment of IDEA, schools implemented different types of
inclusion programs in order to fulfill their obligations to provide a FAPE. Some opted for
inclusion programs that require students with disabilities to split their time between special-
education classrooms and general-education classrooms. Others chose to implement full-
inclusion programs that put students with disabilities in general-education classrooms for the
entire school day.

General-education teachers in inclusion programs play a large role in the education of
their students with disabilities, but general-education teachers in full-inclusion programs play a
proportionately larger role in the education of their students with disabilities because those
students spend more time in the classrooms of those general-education teachers. It stands to
reason that the attitudes of the general-education teachers responsible for implementing the full-
inclusion practices crafted by administrators at schools with full-inclusion programs are
paramount to the success of those programs (Evins, 2015; Greene, 2017). There is no guarantee
that a general-education teacher with a positive attitude about their full-inclusion requirements will be successful in helping students with disabilities improve their academic performance and increase their graduation rates, but it seems highly unlikely that a general-education teacher with a negative attitude about their full-inclusion requirements will be able to help students with disabilities succeed.

A number of factors could influence general-education teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements, including the length of time the teachers have been teaching in full-inclusion classrooms and the age of a school’s full-inclusion program. For those teachers who transition to a full-inclusion program from a special-education program that separated students with disabilities from their typically developing peers, it is possible that teachers experience negative feelings similar to the feelings experienced by people who have lost a loved one to death. For this reason, the Kubler-Ross model is the ideal lens through which to examine teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion education. I propose that undertrained teachers—especially those teachers who have transitioned from the old model of teaching students with disabilities to a full-inclusion model—engaging in the difficult work of instructing students with a variety of disabilities must work through the five stages of the Kubler-Ross model in order to arrive at acceptance of full-inclusion. Those teachers who have not worked their way to acceptance are likely to have negative feelings about full-inclusion requirements, which may have a negative impact on the academic achievements of the students with disabilities in their classrooms.

**Federal Guidelines**

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of general-education teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding the ability of those teachers to provide effective academic
instruction to students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs in those schools. This study sought to contribute to the body of knowledge needed to address the challenges facing students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs at the secondary level and to close the gap between the objectives spelled out in the IDEA of 2004 and the application of the evidence-based training and support that secondary teachers receive to address those challenges.

High schools often struggle to offer effective academic opportunities to students with disabilities, as evidenced by the NCES study of public high school graduation rates between 2010 and 2014, which revealed that during the 2013/2014 school year, students with disabilities graduated at a significantly lower rate than their typical peers in every state in the United States and in the District of Columbia (NCES: Digest of Education Statistics, 2016). Some of the blame for those lackluster graduation rates can be placed at the feet of the school administrators who are failing to provide their teachers with the training and resources that they need to provide effective instruction to students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs. According to Pearce and Forlin (2016), secondary general-education teachers are often underprepared and lack necessary resources to address the challenges of inclusive students with disabilities. Many teachers who have students with disabilities in their general-education classrooms receive little or no training on evidence-based practices specific to the challenges posed by students with disabilities (Murphy, 2015). That lack of training and resources gives rise to frustration and negative attitudes among teachers, who often feel ill-equipped to provide adequate education to the students with disabilities in their full-inclusion classrooms.

Much of the literature about full-inclusion programs focuses on elementary students (Boyle et al., 2013), which makes it difficult to diagnose the weaknesses in the approaches that high school teachers are using in their classrooms to instruct their students with disabilities. It is
likely the case that appropriately meeting the needs of secondary school students with disabilities requires unique solutions that differ from the solutions that teachers use at schools at other levels because the inclusion strategies that have proven successful at the primary school level may not work as well at the secondary school level.

The attitudes of teachers are paramount to the academic achievement of all students (Evins, 2015), and it is logical to conclude that teachers’ attitudes also play a significant role in the successful implementation of full-inclusion requirements. It can be difficult, however, for teachers to develop positive attitudes about full-inclusion requirements when the administrative leaders in their schools provide them with so little training on the implementation of those requirement. As Clark (2016) noted, part of the problem is that “educators are overwhelmed and underprepared to address the challenges of inclusive students with disabilities because there is such a wide range of symptoms and needs” (p. 1). Clark (2016) further stated that “secondary general education teachers need more training to address the growing complexity of secondary curriculum and the socialization aspects that can impact learning in secondary settings” (p. 2). If it can be established that teachers’ attitudes are directly impacted by a lack of training, then given the importance of those teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements to the success of the students of in full-inclusion programs, it is vital that administrators provide teachers with adequate training in order to improve their full-inclusion programs.

The purpose of this literature review is to identify the challenges and benefits of full-inclusion programs—especially full-inclusion programs in urban, Title 1 high schools in the United States—for students with disabilities. This literature review will examine the history of special education and full-inclusion requirements in United States schools, researchers’ attitudes about inclusion, teacher professional development centered on teaching in full-inclusion
programs, leadership efforts in the implementation of full-inclusion programs, teaching and learning within full-inclusion programs, and inclusion policies. All of these areas will be examined in order to identify the challenges and benefits of inclusion at the secondary level.

A Brief History of Special Education

People with disabilities and their advocates had to struggle mightily to gain the right to an education in U.S. schools. As noted by Ferguson (2014), “Traditionally, children with disabilities and learning difficulties would have been marginalized within or excluded from education due to their apparent incapacities” (p. 8). Children with disabilities were historically categorized as either “handicapped” or “normal,” and they were provided with separate educational opportunities that accorded with those categories. Education leaders thought that separating children within educational institutions was the best way to provide children with disabilities, who were thought to be incapable of learning in general-education classrooms, with a minimal education while also “safeguarding the efficient education of the majority” (Ferguson, 2014, p. 8). In many ways, the segregation of children with disabilities mimicked the other forms of segregation that have marred American history.

This segregation of students with disabilities into separate classrooms persisted for decades, until advocates began railing against the injustice of that segregation, especially during the 1960s and 1970s (Ferguson, 2014). Much like the movement to integrate Black students into white schools, the movement to end the segregation of students with disabilities into separate classrooms centered around notions of equality of opportunity. “People with disabilities spoke out against the ‘stigmatizing and limiting nature of segregated education’” (Ferguson, 2014, p. 9). Advocates for students with disabilities argued that segregation of students with disabilities into their own classrooms empowered people without disabilities to look down upon their peers
with disabilities and made those students with disabilities feel inferior and unworthy of inclusion in general-education classrooms and, in turn, in mainstream society. In short, advocates for the integration of students with disabilities into general-education classrooms believed that the practice of segregation was harmful to all students.

The cultural shift in attitudes about people with disabilities toward the end of the second millennium led to many new laws meant to protect people with disabilities from discrimination and to expand their opportunities for meaningful participation in the American Dream. The passage of the 1975 Public Law 94-142 drastically changed the way that public schools educated students with disabilities, but it did not adequately ensure that they received a FAPE. The main reason that supporters of inclusion fought against segregation was because research showed that those segregated schools were having a deleterious effect on students with disabilities (Kortering & Christenson, 2009). “Consequently, ‘normalization and integration’ became principal objectives for education policy” (Ferguson, 2014, p. 9). Thus began the movement to include students with disabilities in general-education classrooms.

The desire to implement integration of students with disabilities brought about various pieces of new federal legislation proposed by advocates who sought to end once and for all the segregation of students with disabilities. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was one such law. The initial law was meant to increase academic achievement among low-income students, but it was not designed to specifically address the needs of students with disabilities (Evins, 2015). In subsequent years, legislators made several amendments to the law to address those needs. For example, the ESEA Amendments of 1965 allowed public schools to use federal funds to educate students with disabilities (Evins, 2015). The ESEA Amendments of 1966 allowed local schools to use federal funds to educate students and not just state-operated
schools (Murphy, 2015). Then came the ESEA Amendments of 1968, which created programs to improve and grow education services for students with disabilities (Evins, 2015). The ESEA Amendments of 1970 created Title VI, a federal grant program that is still in effect today (Osgood, 2008). ESEA and the subsequent amendments profoundly impacted students with disabilities, but those students still needed additional support to achieve a level of academic success comparable to their typically developing peers.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments passed in 1990. The federal legislation required schools to include students with disabilities in general-education classrooms whenever possible while also ensuring that they continued to receive the accommodations or services that they might require in addition to their education in general-education classrooms (Murphy, 2015). The IDEA Amendments of 1997 provided students with disabilities a higher-quality education than they had previously received because the amendments required states to measure the academic progress of students with disabilities (Evins, 2015). Those 1997 amendments yielded significant improvements in the education of students with disabilities (Murphy, 2015). They also initiated a shift in the way that people inside schools and in the general public think and talk about people with disabilities.

All told, these various pieces of legislation promised students with disabilities and the families of those students that their education would be a priority for public schools. However, as history has demonstrated time and again, the passage of laws is not a guarantee that the implementation of those laws will adhere to the original intent of the lawmakers. Too often students with disabilities struggle in full-inclusion classrooms in spite of the best intentions of the legislators who enacted those laws. A 2017 study found that:
National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) results show that the majority of students with learning disabilities are not proficient in reading and math. In mathematics, 91% of fourth graders and 96% of eighth graders with learning disabilities were not proficient. In reading, 97% of fourth graders and 96% of eighth graders with learning disabilities were not proficient. (Galiatsos et al., 2019)

It is, thus, up to administrators to develop new strategies to help their schools keep the promises made through those various pieces of legislation.

While there are few studies that specifically examine the differences between implementing full-inclusion programs in primary schools and implementing such programs in secondary schools, teachers in secondary schools do face certain challenges that teachers in primary schools do not face. For example, “At the secondary level, not only will teachers have to provide instruction that addresses the general education curriculum, but they also will have to include instruction that addresses transition to adulthood” (Hamill & Dever, 1998, p. 18). Those added challenges may negatively affect the attitudes of the teachers providing the education in those full-inclusion classrooms, and those negative attitudes may negatively impact their students with disabilities.

**Teachers’ Attitudes Toward Inclusion**

Current educational research reveals that there are many benefits of a full-inclusion education for students, parents, and schools. Researchers have found that full-inclusion classrooms lead to greater social and academic opportunities, more friendships, enhanced community involvement, and increased acceptance among their typical peers (Greene, 2017). The positive effects for students with disabilities in those classrooms are profound both inside and outside of the classroom.
Many people are responsible for the implementation of full-inclusion requirements, but arguably the most important people in the education of students with disabilities in full-inclusion classrooms are the general-education teachers providing the instruction. Administrators charge teachers with creating a positive and productive experience for students with disabilities (Brookes Publishing, 2017), and teachers’ ability to accomplish that goal plays a huge role in the likelihood of success in school and beyond for those students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who participate in full-inclusion programs tend to be more involved in their communities and to form friendships outside of school (Hurt, 2012), which increases their overall confidence, improving their chances of a successful entry into the workforce (Hurt, 2012). If the goal of education is to prepare children for life beyond school, then it is essential for the teachers providing instruction to students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs to have a positive attitude and the pedagogical abilities necessary to provide effective instruction.

Teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements are paramount to the successful implementation of those requirements (Evins, 2015), but a review of the existing literature reveals that there is scant information available about teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements, especially at the secondary level. However, there have been studies about how prepared teachers feel to provide effective instruction to students with disabilities, and those studies reveal that the teachers studied do not feel that they are receiving adequate education and/or training. A study by the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) found that, “Only 17% of teachers surveyed feel very well prepared to teach students with mild to moderate learning disabilities” (Galiatsos et al., 2019, p. 11). The study also revealed that, “Only 30% of teachers surveyed feel strongly that, when they try their best, they can be successful” (Galiatsos et al., 2019, p. 13) in teaching students in full-inclusion classrooms. Like the other studies
examined through this literature review, this NCLD study did not differentiate between primary teachers and secondary teachers. It was for this reason that I undertook a study that specifically explored the attitudes of high school teachers.

**Professional Development**

Teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements are likely shaped by a variety of factors but perhaps none more so than the training that they receive in preparation for instruction in full-inclusion programs. Researchers in the area of inclusion believe that teacher education and training play significant roles in the success or failure of inclusion education (Pearce & Forlin, 2016). Teachers in full-inclusion programs have to meet the needs of students with a broad range of physical and mental disabilities as well as behavioral and emotional disorders, all of which require a great deal of training in preparation for teaching. In spite of the need for such training, many teachers feel that they have not been adequately trained to instruct students with a broad range of needs (Evins, 2015). Given the importance of training for instruction in full-inclusion classrooms, it is likely the case that teachers with the least amount of training will have the most negative attitudes about teaching in such classrooms. If the results of this study prove that presupposition to be true, then it should be clear that ongoing, substantive professional development courses are critical to the success of a full-inclusion program and to the positivity of teachers’ attitudes about those programs (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2015). Given what researchers know about the under-training of general-education teachers in full-inclusion programs at other levels of school, it seems likely that under-training could be a problem in high schools as well.
Administrative Leadership

When asked about the most critical requirements of a successful full-inclusion program, teachers routinely indicate that a capable principal is one of the most essential components (Evins, 2015). That lack of support is one of the key factors that inhibit teachers from successfully implementing full-inclusion programs (Suleymanov, 2015). Furthermore, teachers identified their administration as the key factor in eliminating barriers to effective instruction in full-inclusion classrooms (Suleymanov, 2015). Administrative leaders in American schools have the very important role of shaping teacher development, and a leader who personally invests in teachers, promotes professional development, and protects staff from external pressure is likely to see positive results in the full-inclusion programs in their schools.

Part of the job of the principal in preparing general-education teachers for full-inclusion programs is to admit honestly the challenges that such teachers will face in full-inclusion classrooms. First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge the difficulty of teaching in full-inclusion classrooms. There is simply no denying that full-inclusion education is more difficult for general-education teachers than non-inclusion education. Full-inclusion programming asks teachers to take on the education of a much broader range of students, who sometimes have significantly greater physical, mental, and social-emotional needs. One way for principals to explain to new teachers the realities of full-inclusion education is for those principals to speak with teachers who are currently teaching in full-inclusion programs in order to learn precisely what they face on a daily basis.

In addition to depending on their principals for support, teachers also need to rely on their school systems and community (Pearce & Forlin, 2016). In order to effectively instruct students with disabilities in full-inclusion program, teachers must collaborate with others, including
colleagues, specialists, and other members of school communities (Ofori, 2018). Special-education teachers are obviously among the most important members of the education team. Their specialized education and training equip them with the skills most useful to providing effective instruction to students with disabilities. School psychologists are one of the most vital members of a school community for developing programming for full-inclusion classrooms (Ewing et al., 2017). For schools with sufficient funding, paraprofessionals like tutors and special-education aides can offer important supplemental, one-on-one instruction for students with disabilities. Parental participation is also an important part of the inclusive model (UDOBA, 2014). A school community working toward the common goal of inclusion is imperative for providing effective instruction to students with disabilities (UDOBA, 2014). As noted in a famous African proverb, it takes a village to raise [and educate] a child, and that is especially true of a child with disabilities.

Inclusion practices need to prioritize the social, emotional, and behavioral development of students with disabilities (Ferguson, 2014). They must also ensure that full-inclusion programs are meeting these same needs for students without disabilities so that the inclusion experience benefits all students (Mihai, 2017). Teaching inclusion practices, therefore, requires the use of many resources to increase the quality of education. These will ensure that all students can learn at their own developmental level and succeed academically.

**Teaching and Learning**

The full-inclusion model that teachers use in so many classrooms today was “ushered in with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 reauthorization” (Goodrow, 2016, p. 54). The 2004 IDEA stresses school accountability to ensure that students with disabilities in full-inclusion classrooms have an
equitable opportunity to achieve academic success with the curriculum that the teachers are using for typically developing students (Evins, 2015). These two laws entitle all students to participate in general-education classrooms, albeit with accommodations that help students with disabilities work toward achievable learning outcomes (Goodrow, 2016). It is the responsibility of administrators in schools with full-inclusion programs to ensure that students with disabilities receive the support they need in full-inclusion classrooms, especially given that students with disabilities are required to participate in assessments at the district and state levels (O’Rourke, 2015). Because those assessments are the metric by which lawmakers and voters measure the success of a school and its principal, it is sensible for administrators to take the steps necessary to ensure that their students with disabilities are receiving the support they need so they can succeed on those assessments.

As a result of the passage of laws like NCLB and IDEA, roughly three-quarters of students with disabilities spend either part or the whole of their school days in full-inclusion classrooms with their typically developing peers (Evins, 2015). Those students with disabilities are benefitting from full-inclusion education, but the benefits of full inclusion are not limited to students with disabilities. Teaching styles that are designed with a broader range of students in mind help students without disabilities to appreciate the diversity of learning styles. In ideally planned and well-executed full-inclusion programs, students without disabilities also receive an effective education from teachers trained to offer a more personalized form of instruction. Additionally, full-inclusion education offers students without disabilities greater exposure to their peers with disabilities, which helps students without disabilities understand better the daily classroom struggles facing students with disabilities.
**Teaching Methods.** Teachers in full-inclusion classrooms have a key role in creating a classroom atmosphere conducive to the learning that may be related to student outcomes. Teachers can also make their full-inclusion classrooms more attuned to their students’ needs by using child-centered pedagogical methods that encourage all students to learn together and to share responsibilities, by reducing the severity of some of the difficulties facing students with disabilities, and by making it easier for teachers to attend to the need of students’ diverse needs (Gervais, 2015). To ensure that teachers have the skills necessary to put these methods into practice, it is incumbent on the administration of schools with full-inclusion programs to provide their general-education teachers with adequate training.

**Curricula.** According to Gervais (2015), inclusion works best within a flexible curriculum that includes experimentation and the use of different teaching methods. In fact, a curriculum that does not “recognize different styles of learning hinders the school experience for all students, even those not traditionally recognized as having physical or mental challenges” (Murphy, 2015, para. 7). The ideal method for full-inclusion environments seems to necessarily involve much adaptation in order to meet the needs of a wide range of students with disabilities. General-education teachers in full-inclusion classrooms must embrace the fact that children—especially those with disabilities—learn at different paces, and those teachers must create their lesson plans to meet the diversity needs of the students in those full-inclusion classrooms.

**Staffing Models.** Full-inclusion education involves several different staffing models. One such model is the collaborative or co-teaching model, through which a general-education teacher is paired with a special-education teacher within the full-inclusion classroom. Schools that use the collaborative model ask teachers to share equally the responsibilities for managing the classroom, from discipline and instructional delivery to planning and grading (Solis et al., 2012).
Although the special-education teacher is the educational specialist and the general-education teacher is the content specialist, the special-education teacher must also be knowledgeable about the curriculum (Solis et al., 2012). Again, training is an essential tool for ensuring that teachers—both special education and general education—have a firm grasp of the curriculum.

General-education teachers bear the brunt of providing services to students with disabilities in the flexible model of the full-inclusion classroom, which allows teachers to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities (Gervais, 2015). Likewise, teachers who manage classrooms that employ the flexible model can also modify tests according to a student’s IEP. The role of the special-education teacher in this model is that of a case manager who handles the paperwork associated with special education, who consults with the general-education teacher to uncover the needs of students with disabilities, and who provides support in the instruction of students with disabilities (Gervais, 2015). Although special-education teachers in this model take a secondary role to general-education teachers, their work is no less important to the education of the students with disabilities in their classrooms.

A third model of full-inclusion education, which could be termed the paraprofessional model, relies on support from competent paraprofessionals to provide invaluable one-on-one instruction in such classrooms. While general-education teachers in full-inclusion classrooms have expressed a need for teacher aides in classrooms, the available literature also suggests that some teacher aides have negative attitudes about general-education teachers’ ability to attend to the needs of children with disabilities in full-inclusion classrooms (Specht, 2016). Some teacher aides reported that they thought that teachers lacked the knowledge and training necessary to provide effective instruction in full-inclusion classrooms; others indicated that they thought that teachers did not value the expertise of the teacher aides (McKenzie, 2010). Additionally, teacher
assistants do not always agree with teachers’ lesson plans for students with disabilities in full-inclusion classrooms. It may be challenging for teachers and teacher assistants to collaborate to provide instruction that equips students with disabilities in full-inclusion classrooms with the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond, but such relationships are well worth the effort when they work well.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to examine high school general-education teachers’ attitudes about the full-inclusion requirements in their urban, Title 1 schools. This study examined this topic through the lens of three research questions: 1) What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms? 2) How do teachers describe their qualifications/preparation to provide appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms? 3) How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools?

This review of literature began with an examination of the history of special-education inclusion in the United States. Students with disabilities have historically been excluded from participation in public education in the United States. The passage of Public Law 94-142 of 1975, mandated that all states must provide all children, including children with disabilities, with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 demanded that states educate students with disabilities in the “least restrictive environment possible.” For many schools, inclusion education was the way to meet those new requirements. Researchers, educators, and administrators agree about the need to
provide students with disabilities with a FAPE, but schools have adopted different versions of inclusion programs to meet their obligations.

The two main branches of this approach to meeting FAPE requirements are inclusion and full inclusion. Inclusionists, or those who advocate for inclusion, believe that students with disabilities should receive instruction from both special-education teachers and general-education teachers in both special-education classrooms and general-education classrooms. Full inclusionists, meanwhile, advocate for a form of inclusion that incorporates all students with disabilities into general-education classrooms. Full-inclusion education requires a greater paradigm shift than inclusion education, but advocates of full inclusion believe that in the long run, it will yield greater results for students, for schools, and for society at large.

The teachers providing instruction in those inclusion environments are of paramount importance to the education of students with disabilities (Evins, 2015), and it seems reasonable to begin the exploration of inclusion education with the teachers providing instruction in inclusion classrooms. This study was designed to measure teachers’ attitudes in the hope that a better understanding of their attitudes about full-inclusion education will help schools improve their ability to serve students with disabilities. General-education teachers in full-inclusion programs play a major role in the education of students with disabilities because those students spend so much time in the classrooms of those general-education teachers. Thus, the attitudes of the general-education teachers responsible for implementing the full-inclusion practices are paramount to the success of those programs (Evins, 2015; Greene, 2017).

One way to view teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements is through the lens of the Kubler-Ross model. Kubler-Ross (1969) developed her theory to explain the grief process following the death of a loved one, but the model can also be used to describe the stages of grief
that can accompany any emotionally painful experience, including a teacher’s transition into the full-inclusion model for the education of students with disabilities. Those teachers who have made that transition must work through the five stages of the Kubler-Ross model in order to arrive at acceptance of full-inclusion. Those teachers who have not worked their way to acceptance may have negative feelings about full-inclusion requirements, which are likely to have a negative impact on the academic achievements of the students with disabilities in their classrooms.

Research has indicated that the attitudes of teachers are paramount to the successful implementation of full-inclusion requirements at all educational levels (Evins, 2015). It is hard to imagine a teacher with a negative attitude about full-inclusion requirements providing effective instruction in a full-inclusion classroom. In spite of the reported importance of teachers’ attitudes, researchers have paid too little attention to the attitudes of teachers, especially teachers in high schools. Many of the general-education teachers responsible for the implementation of full-inclusion requirements feel that they do not receive the training necessary to provide effective instruction to students with learning disabilities in full-inclusion classrooms (Galiatsos et al., 2019). Those ill-prepared teachers might have negative attitudes about those programs, and those attitudes likely impact the students receiving that education, especially the students with disabilities in those full-inclusion classrooms.

In addition to training in preparation for instruction in full-inclusion classrooms, general-education teachers in full-inclusion programs have also indicated through several studies that teachers need support from capable principals and from other partners within schools, including special-education teachers, teacher assistants, psychologists, and other learning strategists (Evins, 2015). Additionally, teachers must have the training and the support necessary from their
collaborators to develop lesson plans that are suited to a wide range of learning abilities because full-inclusion education works best when teachers use an adaptable curriculum that allows for a high degree of experimentation and encourages the use of a variety of teaching methods (Gervais, 2015). Full-inclusion education can have a profoundly positive impact on the students with disabilities and the typically developing students who receive that education, but the teachers providing that education require significant support, training, and freedom to make that education effective.

Chapter Three is a discussion of the study’s methodology, including a review of the details of the research design, the survey instrument, and the data analysis. The purpose of that discussion is to offer a technical description of the methods that determined the conclusions to be made from the STATIC survey results. Chapter Four is an overview of the STATIC survey results collected to answer the three research questions. Chapter Five is a summary of conclusions and recommendations about how schools might improve full-inclusion education.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Full-inclusion programs are a way for schools to meet their obligation to provide a free and appropriate education (FAPE) to students with disabilities in their least restrictive environment (Clark, 2016). According to the director of the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), a full-inclusion program “means that all students, regardless of handicapping condition or severity, will be in a regular classroom/program full time” (Stout, 2001, para. 9). In a full-inclusion program, teachers provide in the general-education classroom setting any specialized services that students with disabilities might need (Stout, 2001). The philosophy underpinning full-inclusion programs is drastically different from the philosophy that underpinned the old segregation model of special education.

Those full-inclusion programs have proven to be beneficial to students with disabilities. According to the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (n.d.), “Students with intellectual disabilities that were fully included in general education classrooms made more progress in literacy skills compared to students served in special schools” (p. 1). In spite of those gains, students with disabilities placed in full-inclusion programs often show lower levels of academic achievement than their typically developing peers (Clark, 2016). Students with disabilities can struggle academically and behaviorally in full-inclusion classrooms due to various challenges they face that are specific to their learning needs (Clark, 2016). Indeed, a National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) study of public high school graduation rates between 2010 and 2014 revealed that, during the 2013/2014 school year, students with disabilities graduated at much lower rates than their typically developing peers in every state in the United States and in the
District of Columbia (NCES: Digest of Education Statistics, 2016). The laws that legislators designed to uplift students with disabilities have had a positive effect on special-education students in full-inclusion classrooms, but those programs are still failing to adequately meet the needs of those students.

Many factors contribute to the success or failure of a student with disabilities in a full-inclusion classroom, but the attitude of the general-education teacher in that classroom could be a major factor. It may be the case that students with disabilities are struggling in full-inclusion classrooms partially because of the unconscious bias and the resulting negative attitudes of their teachers (Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, 2020). Conversely, if students with disabilities in full-inclusion classrooms are succeeding, it is no doubt largely because of the attitudes of the teachers providing the education in those classrooms (Cochran, 1997). For this reason, teachers’ attitudes toward full-inclusion education must be assessed in order to ascertain their beliefs about their roles and their capacity to include students with disabilities and about the resources and support that they receive from their administration to implement full-inclusion requirements.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of general-education teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding the ability of those teachers to provide effective academic instruction to students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs in those schools. Most American high schools with full-inclusion programs either lack the resources or the technical knowhow to offer effective academic instruction to students with disabilities. This study sought insights into this challenge by surveying secondary teachers in four regions of the United States. There are currently 46,969 Title 1-eligible schools in the United States (National Center for
Education Statistics, 2020), which makes the collection of individualized data difficult, so it was necessary to survey teachers who represent all of the regions with large numbers of Title 1 schools. I chose large urban areas across the United States which served as the four regions where the survey was conducted. I invited a selection of secondary teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools in California, New York, Ohio, and Texas to participate in the study.

Because the attitudes of teachers are paramount to the successful implementation of inclusion education (Evins, 2015), my goal in undertaking this study was to learn more about teachers’ beliefs about their ability to provide effective instruction in full-inclusion classrooms. This study used a descriptive research survey to examine teachers’ attitudes toward full-inclusion requirements. The survey included a demographic questionnaire and a 20-item, Likert-type instrument called the Scale of Teachers’ Attitudes toward Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC) (Cochran, 1997). Cochran’s STATIC 20-item survey proves that it is possible to measure teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements, as defined by the STATIC survey (see Appendix A for survey instrument). In order to allow participants to fully express and explain their attitudes about the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms, the survey protocol was modified to include two additional questions: (1) “Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you pick the two statements that you most agreed with?” and (2) “Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you choose the two statements you most disagreed with?” (Note: I tried multiple times to contact the creator of the STATIC survey instrument, but he no longer works for the university, and I was unable to secure his contact information. Because I was unable to get permission to reprint question 7, I modified the question so that it was similar but not identical to the original question from the STATIC tool). By surveying teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements in their high schools, I hoped to bring to
light some problems that can be rectified to improve the delivery of full-inclusion practices. This study may provide school administrators with needed insights about their teachers’ concerns about full-inclusion education, which can help them close a gap between instructional practice and student outcomes (Clark, 2016). My ultimate goal was to help schools improve their delivery of instruction in full-inclusion programs so that the students with disabilities in those classrooms are likelier to graduate from high school and flourish in the workplace.

Implementing full-inclusion requirements in high schools is more of a challenge than implementing full-inclusion requirements at other levels of schooling (Monje, 2017), in part because students change classes throughout the day, there is less teacher support and more individual accountability, and learning material is more involved and more difficult in general. By surveying teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements in their high schools, this study documented some problems that, if addressed, may improve the delivery of full-inclusion education so that students with disabilities can graduate at rates comparable to their typically developing peers.

**Research Questions**

The main objective of this study was to examine the factors that may influence the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding full-inclusion requirements in those schools. More specifically, this study examined how professional development, experience with the inclusion of students with disabilities, and administrative support might impact the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs in those schools.
This study sought to answer the following questions:

RQ1. What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms?

RQ2. How do teachers describe their qualifications/preparation to provide appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms?

RQ3. How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools?

**Population and Sampling Method**

This study surveyed teachers from urban, Title 1 high schools in California, New York, Ohio, and Texas. The goal was to get a small sample from four regions of the United States in order to have a representative sample of teachers from school districts across the country. The focus of this study is unique in that it surveyed teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools exclusively.

I chose urban, Title 1 high schools because of my personal affiliation with Title 1 schools as a director of a full-inclusion program. I also chose Title 1 schools because the Title 1 program provides “supplemental funds to school districts to assist schools with the highest student concentrations of poverty to meet school educational goals” (U.S. Legal, 2019, para. 1). Schools are designated as Title 1 because they meet the parameters laid out by the federal government, which are based on the demographics of the student body and the neighboring community. It is essential to recognize that these defining features of Title 1 schools help researchers understand a
school’s learning environment. These aspects of the Title 1 program may make fully including all students with disabilities in general-education classrooms even more challenging for teachers.

Before recruiting teachers for this study, I identified eight regions of the United States for possible inclusion, then narrowed those down to four regions. After identifying those four regions, I identified large teacher groups whose members are on Facebook or other social media platforms in those four regions. Social media provided many possible participants from a range of backgrounds. The selected Facebook groups were not affiliated with any school district. Per Facebook’s data policy, participation by teachers in these groups and in their related discussions is completely voluntary (Facebook, 2020). The members of the targeted Facebook groups were primarily high school teachers likely to work in the urban, Title 1 schools in the four regions identified for this study. I also targeted ACCEL charter schools across Ohio using school email Listserve and my personal LinkedIn contacts. I am an administrator for ACCEL, so in order to avoid possible conflicts of interest, I did not include in this study the ACCEL schools that I oversee or support. I emailed select ACCEL schools the criteria and an invitation to participate in the study (see Appendix C for invitation to participate). In order to be eligible, participants must have been high school teachers who work at Title 1 schools in an urban area or at select ACCEL schools in Ohio. This type of sampling, known as purposeful sampling, was useful not only because it was convenient but also because of the variety of possible participants. According to Palinkas et al. (2016), “Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest” (para. 1).

After the teachers returned their surveys, I performed an analysis of the descriptive responses to examine the information collected. As was the case with Cochran’s study, the
information was “gathered with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school environment (and educational practices in general), and improving student outcomes and the lives of those involved” (Painter, n.d., para. 3). The survey focused on factors that influence positive and negative teacher attitudes toward inclusion, such as levels of administrative support, years of teaching experience, levels and breadth of professional development, and training in the area of full-inclusion education. Identifying these factors should be helpful for implementing changes to improve instructional practices and student outcomes within full-inclusion education.

The study sample included teachers from Title 1, urban high schools who accepted the invitation to participate in this study and consented to the conditions of the study delineated via the invitation to participate form. Because participation in this survey was entirely voluntary, many of the teachers who received invitations via Facebook and LinkedIn did not complete the surveys. After receiving the completed surveys, I provided descriptive statistics derived from the teachers’ answers on those surveys.

**Instrumentation**

This study used a descriptive research survey to examine teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements in high schools. The descriptive survey instrument has been used in previous studies. The instrument is Cochran’s (1997) Scale of Teacher’s Attitudes toward Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC), which surveys teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion education. Cochran used the 20-item survey to evaluate teachers’ attitudes in 32 schools across five school districts. The 516 respondents consisted of general-education teachers and special-education teachers in elementary schools and secondary schools in a variety of settings—including urban, suburban, and rural areas—in a southeastern state (Cochran, 1997).
Cochran (1997) reported a return rate of 36% and a consistent Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .89, which held consistent for the total group and for individual groups of elementary/secondary teachers and general/special-education teachers. In Cochran’s (1997) study, the STATIC data suggested more positive attitudes among first-year teachers than among teachers with more than four years of teaching experience. Also, primary education teachers scored higher on the STATIC and had more positive attitudes toward inclusion education than did secondary education teachers (Cochran, 1997). For this study, the survey protocol was modified to include two additional questions: (1) “Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you pick the two statements that you most agreed with?” and (2) “Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you choose the two statements you most disagreed with?” Overall, Cochran (1997) proved that it is possible to measure teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion through the STATIC instrument. Cochran’s (1997) study provided enough evidence to warrant the use of this instrument for the purpose of measuring high school teachers’ attitudes in this study.

STATIC is a 20-item survey instrument that consists of statements regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in general-education classrooms. The teachers surveyed indicate their agreement level for each statement using a six-point Likert-type scale that offers the following options: 0 = Strongly Disagree; 1 = Disagree; 2 = Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree; 3 = Not Sure, but Tend to Agree; 4 = Agree; and 5 = Strongly Agree (see Appendix A for survey instrument).

**Validation of Instruments**

Teachers’ attitudes toward full-inclusion education were measured via the Scale of Teachers’ Attitudes toward Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC), Cochran’s (1997) validated survey
instrument. STATIC consists of 20 items that use a Likert-type scale to measure attitudes toward the following aspects of inclusion education: (a) advantages and disadvantages of inclusion education, (b) professional aspects pertaining to inclusion education, (c) philosophical aspects pertaining to inclusion education, and (d) logistical concerns of inclusion education. The instrument measures attitudes in each dimension along a five-point Likert-type scale of agreement (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

**Data Collection**

The data collection process began after I transmitted invitations through Facebook, LinkedIn, and Listserves to prospective participating teachers within the four regions (see Appendix C for invitation to participate). The invitation to participate in this study survey started with an electronic consent form that detailed the rights of the study participants and the voluntary nature of the study. The consent form included the options of accepting or declining an invitation to participate (see Appendix D for consent to participate). Participants indicated their consent to participate in the study by selecting “I accept.” Those who chose the “I accept” option received a link to the survey.

Data for this study was obtained through the STATIC instrument administered via the REDCap electronic survey platform. Upon selecting “I accept” on the electronic consent form, participants received access to the survey platform, which opened in a new window. The survey platform guided study participants through the survey instrument and directed them to select “submit” upon completion of the survey items, which then returned the survey instrument to the hosting platform.

The survey contained questions on several demographic background variables, including gender, age, teaching category, main subject area, formal qualifications, present occupation, and
years of teaching experience. Additionally, the survey included questions designed to ascertain the make-up of teachers’ classrooms, such as the ratio of special-education students to general-education students, the average number of students with IEPs, the average number of ESL students, and the socio-economic demographics of the students in their classrooms.

This study used the Q-sort method of data collection and analysis (see Appendix E for survey data). “Q-methodology (also known as Q-sort) is the systematic study of participant viewpoints. Q-methodology is used to investigate the perspectives of participants who represent different stances on an issue, by having participants rank and sort a series of statements” (BetterEvaluation, 2014, para. 1). This study’s Q-sort process allowed the participants to fully express and explain their perceptions and attitudes about the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms (Monje, 2017). For this reason, the survey protocol was modified to include two additional questions: (1) “Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you pick the two statements that you most agreed with?” and (2) “Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you choose the two statements you most disagreed with?”

**Data Analysis**

Data analyses was conducted on the responses to the survey prompts to discover patterns and frequencies. A preliminary analysis, an item and scale analysis, and factor analysis were then completed. The STATIC questions were divided into the five sub domains integral to teachers’ attitudes: student variables, peer support, administrative support, collaboration, and training (Greene, 2017). The sub domains were not used in any calculations because they did not have any statistical strength on their own; however, their frequencies were listed in the results so that individual responses within each sub domain could be examined in relation to the literature. The analysis of the data was entirely descriptive in that it only described the results of the survey in
graphic or tabular form. No inferential statistics were used because this study made no attempt to make predictions about teacher populations based on the data collected via the surveys.

**Limitations and Delimitations of the Research Design**

Although there are many important advantages to descriptive survey research, it is also important to note the limitations of such research. For instance, these types of surveys cannot possibly answer every question that a researcher may have about teacher attitudes in classrooms that have implemented full-inclusion programs. Additionally, many of the surveys were not returned, which affected the study’s sample size. Moreover, random, participatory studies do not guarantee that all participants will respond, and such surveys can yield low response rates.

In addition to a low response rate, the study may also have yielded results that are not truly indicative of teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements because teachers may not have offered honest responses to the survey questions. For instance, if a general-education teacher who teaches students with disabilities in a full-inclusion classroom had negative attitudes about full-inclusion requirements, they may have felt uncomfortable expressing such attitudes in a survey, even though the survey was anonymous. Such discomfort might have been born of a fear of owning one’s negative thoughts about full-inclusion education, or teachers might have worried that the expression of negative attitudes about full-inclusion education might somehow have deleterious effects on their careers as educators. Such concerns might have led to skewed data.

Given the possibility that teachers might have chosen not to participate if they had some of the fears or worries mentioned above, then the respondents might have been primarily teachers who have positive attitudes about their full-inclusion requirements, which might have also skewed the data. Thus, the sample might not be representative of all teachers in urban, Title
I high schools. The survey results might also have been affected by teachers’ attitudes toward education in general, which can be swayed by such factors as their attitudes about their administrative leaders, their levels of stress, or their degree of general professional burn-out. In short, satisfaction with their jobs might have influenced teachers’ attitudes about inclusion programs (Boyle et al., 2013). One of the limitations of this study was that the survey did not ascertain teachers’ levels of overall job satisfaction, and the study did not explore the impact that job satisfaction might have on attitudes about full-inclusion requirements.

The main delimitation of this study was that it focused exclusively on urban, Title 1 high schools within the United States. Only recruited high school teachers whose schools have full-inclusion programs were recruited. This study only included the 20 questions of the STATIC survey and the two questions needed for the Q-sort method in order to contain the scope of the survey and to narrow the responses.

**Internal and External Validity**

In order to increase the likelihood of obtaining data that is internally valid, I took a variety of steps meant to avoid problems that might make other researchers question the study’s results. The invitation was brief and based on objective research about teacher attitudes about educating students with disabilities. Any teacher who self-described meeting the qualifications had an equal opportunity to take part in the study. While a study that involves self-selection is not typically as internally valid as a study that involves randomization, the fact that the survey allowed the participating teachers to remain anonymous increased the chances of obtaining results that are representative of the attitudes of teachers at urban, Title 1 schools with full-inclusion programs. Finally, I also made sure to supply the instructions in the same manner for all participating teachers.
In order to increase the likelihood of obtaining data that was externally valid, I chose for participation teachers in states in four regions of the country (California, New York, Ohio, and Texas). Had I chosen states that were clustered in a certain region (e.g., only New England states), the study would have been less representative of the attitudes of teachers across the U.S. and, thus, less externally valid throughout the U.S. Also, by asking teachers in the field to participate rather than, for example, college students studying to become teachers or even student teachers, the external validity of the study was increased.

It is important to note here that because the study focused on urban, Title 1 schools, the results might be less applicable to public high schools in districts in the country’s wealthiest zip codes. Schools in such areas typically have more resources at their disposal, which can drastically change the way that teachers in such schools’ full-inclusion programs provide instruction to their students with disabilities. That said, because Title 1 schools often rank among the lowest-performing schools in a district, it is possible that the findings of a study of Title 1 schools might have yielded results that are applicable to all schools, no matter the level of resources they have at their disposal. If administrators at the lowest-performing schools can find solutions that equip students with disabilities with the tools they need to flourish, then it may be that those solutions are even likelier to succeed at schools with a greater number of resources.

**Ethical Issues in the Proposed Study**

In order to maintain ethical integrity, I followed the guidelines set forth in this study by including the consent form to each study participant at the beginning the survey (see Appendix D for consent to participate). The REDCap format had an “I accept” button that a respondent pushed to signify consent. This was done to ensure that the participants were aware that their information would be kept confidential, that they could discontinue participation at any time, and
that the information collected would be used only for the purpose stated. Participants were informed that the information shared would be kept in a safe place and destroyed upon completion of the study. Thus, study participants were safe from harm and malicious intent. The names of the schools and participants were also kept confidential. Each school was assigned a code, and names were never collected or used. These efforts ensured that this study was carried out ethically.

It should also be noted that I received the necessary training as specified by the University of New England to conduct this study, including certification on ethical approaches to research (see Appendix B for IRB approval). Also, I have worked in urban, Title 1 schools for more than 20 years as a teacher, coach, school board member, assistant principal, principal, executive director, and chief administrative officer.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of the study was to examine factors that influence teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements in urban, Title 1 high schools in districts around the United States. This study sought to determine the effects of specific variables on the attitudes of those teachers through a descriptive survey designed to gain insights about the factors influencing those teachers’ attitudes. The descriptive approach allowed for a small sample size and for the collection of several variables, all in a short span of time, making for an efficient and effective study. This approach also allowed for the generation of descriptive tables for the items on the survey and for the variables that were tested.

The goal of this study was to obtain a small sample of teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools from regions across the United States. I asked participating teachers to complete the Scale of Teachers’ Attitudes toward Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC) survey. Ultimately, my
goal with this study was to help improve support for high school teachers’ attitudes toward full-inclusion requirements by discovering possible flaws in the current American approach to the implementation of full-inclusion education. I wanted to equip administrators with the knowledge necessary to take actionable steps to craft full-inclusion programs that better serve the specific needs of the students with disabilities in full-inclusion classrooms. To be clear, the study will not necessarily lead to improvements in the classrooms of participating teachers. Rather, administrators can use the findings of this study to guide their future decisions about the professional development, resources, and administrative support they need to supply to teachers in full-inclusion classrooms to ensure that students with disabilities are receiving a quality education.

Chapter Four is an overview of the survey results collected in relation to the research questions. Chapter Five is a summary of the conclusions that can be drawn from this study. The final chapter also includes recommendations to administrators about improving full-inclusion education.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of general-education teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding the ability of those teachers to provide effective academic instruction to students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs in those schools. As noted above, most American high schools with full-inclusion programs struggle to offer effective academic instruction to students with disabilities. The purpose of this study was to seek insights about this challenge by surveying secondary school teachers in four regions of the United States.

This study addressed the lack of studies on teacher attitudes regarding full-inclusion requirements within urban, Title 1 secondary schools. The studies to date have primarily focused on full-inclusion requirements at the elementary school level (Boyle et al., 2013). Teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements are paramount to the successful implementation of these programs (Evins, 2015), so the lack of information available concerning teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion requirements at the secondary level is problematic. This makes it difficult to diagnose the ineffective approaches that high school teachers are using in their classrooms to instruct their students with disabilities. Appropriately meeting the needs of secondary school students with disabilities most likely requires solutions that differ from the solutions that teachers use at the primary level, so secondary educators must be studied so that researchers have data specific to secondary schools.

This chapter contains an overview of the results of the STATIC descriptive research survey, which was conducted to answer these three research questions:
RQ1. What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms?

RQ2. How do teachers describe their qualifications/preparation to provide appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms?

RQ3. How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools?

This chapter also includes a presentation and analysis of data, a discussion of the data’s alignment with the Kubler-Ross model, and an examination of the data as they relate to the research questions. Lastly, it will include a summary of the major findings of this study.

**Analysis**

The plan was to survey teachers from urban, Title 1 high schools in California, New York, Ohio, and Texas. The goal was to collect surveys from a small sample of teachers from these four regions of the United States to have representation from urban, Title I school districts across the country. After identifying the four regions, large teacher groups whose members were on Facebook or other social media platforms were sent an open invitation to participate in the survey (see Appendix C for invitation to participate). The invitation to participate in the survey came through an electronic consent form that detailed the rights of the study participants and the voluntary nature of the study. Participants in the study were required to teach at an urban, Title I high school. The consent form gave each invitee the option of accepting or declining an invitation to participate (see Appendix D for consent to participate). Participants then indicated their consent to participate in this study by selecting “I accept.” Those who chose the “I accept” option received a link to the survey.
This study made use of a demographic questionnaire and a 20-item, Likert-type survey called the Scale of Teachers’ Attitudes toward Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC) (Cochran, 1997), as well as two open-ended questions (see Appendix A for survey instrument). The survey started with 12 demographic questions, followed by the STATIC questions and the two open-ended questions. The survey was administered through REDCap, a secure web instrument designed to manage online surveys.

Contacting the survey participants through social media facilitated access to a diverse population of teachers from across the United States. The members of the groups were high school teachers who worked in urban, Title 1 schools. I also targeted ACCEL charter school teachers and qualified teachers in my personal LinkedIn contacts. Invitations occurred in two rounds over a two-week period, and I successfully obtained a small sample of teachers who work in urban, Title 1 high schools from four regions across the United States. A small number of participants completed the consent form but then did not complete the demographic or STATIC survey. I knew none of the respondents, and I could not identify any of those teachers who participated. Those completing the survey were kept anonymous and identified only by a number through the REDCap system.

**Presentation of the Data**

Of the teachers who were contacted through social media, 99 signed up to complete the survey and completed the consent form. Of those 99 teachers, 80 (80.8%) completed the demographic portion of the survey, which consisted of 12 multiple choice questions. Fifty-six (56.5%) of the teachers who signed up to participate in the survey also completed the STATIC survey. Given that only 56 of the 99 participants who completed the demographic portion of the survey also completed the 20-question STATIC portion of the survey, it is possible that teachers
who do not value inclusion or who do not feel prepared to provide effective inclusion education chose not to participate in the STATIC portion. Thus, the respondents might have been primarily teachers who have positive attitudes about their full-inclusion requirements.

The STATIC survey consisted of 20 questions in which respondents picked a number between 1 and 5 to correspond with the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statement described. Of those 56 teachers who completed the STATIC survey, 55 (98%) of them also completed the final two open-ended questions, which asked for further clarification regarding their answers to the STATIC survey.

Figures 4.1–4.12 represent a detailed profile of the study participants acquired from the demographic research questions. The 12 questions depicted in the figures below are based upon the answers of 80 teachers who completed the demographic sections of the survey.

**Figure 4.1**

Demographic Question 1: What Year Did You Obtain Your Teacher Certification?

Legend

Blue: 0-1 year ago (7, 8.8%)
Red: 2-3 years ago (10, 12.5%)
Orange: 4-5 years ago (11, 13.7%)
Green: 6-10 years ago (10, 12.5%)
Purple: More than 10 years ago (42, 52.5%)
More than half (65.0%) of the teachers who participated in the survey indicated that they had received their teacher certification more than 10 years ago.

Figure 4.2

Demographic Question 2: What Is Your Gender?

Legend

Red: Female (62, 77.5%)

Blue: Male (18, 22.5%)

White: Other (0, 0.0%)

More than three-quarters (77.5%) of the participants indicated their gender as female, whereas just under one-quarter (22.5%) of the respondents indicated their gender as male.
**Figure 4.3**

Demographic Question 3: What Subject Area Do You Teach?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less than half of the teachers who participated (32.6%) indicated “other” as the content area that they teach. For the majority of respondents, the subject matter they teach is known.
**Figure 4.4**

Demographic Question 4: What Is Your Highest Level of Education?

**Legend**

Bachelor's (23, 28.8%)
Master’s (44, 55.0%)
Specialist (7, 8.8%)
Doctorate (5, 6.3%)
Other (1, 1.3%)

The majority of participants (55.0%) hold a master’s degree, and nearly two-thirds of all respondents (70.1%) hold a postgraduate degree. The second largest group holds a bachelor’s degree (28.8%).
**Figure 4.5**

Demographic Question 5: How Many Students With Special Needs Do You Currently Have in Each of Your Classes?

Legend

Not sure (5, 6.3%)

0 (2, 2.5%)

1-4 (24, 30.0%)

5-9 (25, 31.3%)

10-14 (10, 12.5%)

15+ (14, 17.5%)

Nearly all of the teachers (91.2%) indicated that they currently have at least 1 student with special needs in their classes. The most common response (31.3%) was 5-9 special education students, followed by 1-4 special-education students (30.0%). Only two respondents had no special-education students in their classes.
Figure 4.6

Demographic Question 6: How Many ESL Students Do You Have in Each of Your Classes?

Legend

Not sure (8, 10.0%)
0 (12, 15.0%)
1-4 (34, 42.5%)
5-9 (10, 12.5%)
10-14 (5, 6.3%)
15+ (11, 13.8%)

The largest group of respondents (42.5%) answered that they had 1-4 ESL students in their class. Eight respondents (10.0%) were unsure if/how many ESL students they had, whereas 12 respondents (15.0%) said they had none.
Figure 4.7

Demographic Question 7: How Many Title 1 Students Do You Have in Each of Your Classes?

Legend

Not sure (19, 23.8%)
0 (4, 5.0%)
1-4 (8, 10.0%)
5-9 (9, 11.3%)
10-14 (8, 10.0%)
15+ (32, 40.0%)

Because this was a survey of teachers at Title 1 schools, the responses for this question were expected to be high. The top response to this question (40.0%) was 15+ Title 1 students. Surprisingly, 23.8% of respondents answered “unsure.”
**Figure 4.8**

Demographic Question 8: How Many Title 1 Students Do You Have Who Are Also Designated as Special Needs in Your Classes?

Legend

Not sure (22, 27.5%)
0 (5, 6.3%)
1-4 (23, 28.8%)
5-9 (18, 22.5%)
10-14 (7, 8.8%)
15+ (5, 6.3%).

The majority of the participants (66.2%) noted that they have students who are both Title 1 and special needs in their classes. However, many (27.5%) also responded that they did not know if/how many special needs and Title 1 students they have in their classes.
Figure 4.9

Demographic Question 9: Which Response Best Identifies the Number of Years’ Experience You Have Including Students With Special Needs in Your Classroom?

Legend

- 0-1 year (9, 11.3%)
- 2-3 years (9, 11.3%)
- 4-5 years (10, 12.5%)
- 6-10 years (22, 27.5%)
- More than 10 years (30, 37.5%)

Most teachers (37.5%) indicated that they have more than 10 years teaching students with special needs. This correlates with the answer to the question that asked how many years of teaching experience the participants have.
**Figure 4.10**

Demographic Question 10: Which Best Describes the Amount of Pre-Service Coursework You Completed That Focuses on Including Students With Special Needs in the General Education Classroom?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Courses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 courses</td>
<td>0 courses (11, 13.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 courses</td>
<td>1-2 courses (35, 43.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 courses</td>
<td>3-4 courses (17, 21.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more courses</td>
<td>5 or more courses (17, 21.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend

0 courses (11, 13.8%)

1-2 courses (35, 43.8%)

3-4 courses (17, 21.3%)

5 or more courses (17, 21.3%)

The majority of teachers (57.6%) indicated that they had only completed two or fewer pre-service courses that focused on students with special needs in their general-education classrooms. Although the majority of the respondents hold a master’s degree and have 10+ years of experience, they have little training specific to inclusion.
Figure 4.11

Demographic Question 11: Which Best Describes the Amount of Professional Development Workshops You Have Completed That Focus on Including Students With Special Needs in the General Education Classroom?

Legend

0 workshops (12, 15.0%)
1-2 workshops (33, 41.3%)
3-4 workshops (17, 21.3%)
5 or more workshops (18, 22.5%)

The majority of teachers (56.3%) indicated that they had only participated in two or fewer professional development workshops that focused on including students with special needs in their general-education classroom. Approximately one-fifth (22.5%) of respondents answered with 5 or more workshops, and 15% have completed none.
Figure 4.12

Demographic Question 12: What Part of the Country Do You Live In?

Legend

West (25, 31.3%)
South (35, 43.8%)
East (11, 13.8%)
North (9, 11.3%)

Respondents were sought from across the four geographic regions; however, the majority of respondents (75.1%) were located in the South and West.

Figures 4.13–4.32 provide detailed findings of the study participants from the STATIC research questions. These include responses to 20 multiple-choice questions plus two open-ended questions to which 56 educators responded.
**Figure 4.13**

STATIC Question 1: I Am Confident in My Ability to Teach Children With Special Needs.

Legend

Dark Blue: Strongly Disagree (1, 1.8%)

Red: Disagree (3, 5.4%)

Orange: Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (2, 3.6%)

Green: Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (10, 17.9%)

Purple: Agree (23, 41.1%)

Blue: Strongly Agree (17, 30.4%)

Fifty of the 55 participants (90.9%) who took the STATIC survey indicated that they are confident in their ability to teach children with special needs.
**Figure 4.14**

STATIC Question 2: I Have Been Adequately Trained to Meet the Needs of Children With Special Needs.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (4, 7.1%)
1 - Disagree (8, 14.3%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (4, 7.1%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (15, 26.8%)
4 - Agree (13, 23.2%)
5 - Strongly Agree (12, 21.4%)

Forty of the participants (71.0%) felt that they have been adequately trained to meet the needs of children with special needs. This is an interesting result given how few courses and professional development workshops the majority of the respondents have completed.
**Figure 4.15**

STATIC Question 3: I Become Easily Frustrated When Teaching Students With Special Needs.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (14, 25.0%)
1 - Disagree (21, 37.5%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (11, 19.6%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (6, 10.7%)
4 - Agree (4, 7.1%)
5 - Strongly Agree (0, 0.0%)

A large majority (82.1%) of respondents disagreed that they become easily frustrated when teaching students with special needs.
Figure 4.16

STATIC Question 4: I Become Anxious When I Learn That a Student With Special Needs Will Be in My Classroom.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (18, 32.1%)
1 - Disagree (18, 32.1%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (6, 10.7%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (7, 12.5%)
4 - Agree (6, 10.7%)
5 - Strongly Agree (1, 1.8%)

Forty-two of the 56 respondents (75.0%) disagreed, to varying degrees, that they become anxious when they learn that a student with special needs will be in their classroom.
**Figure 4.17**

STATIC Question 5: Although Children Differ Intellectually, Physically, and Psychologically, I Believe That All Children Can Learn in Most Environments.

Fifty-two of the 56 respondents (92.8%) agreed that all children can learn in most environments.
Figure 4.18

STATIC Question 6: I Believe That Academic Progress Is Possible in Children With Special Needs.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (0, 0.0%)
1 - Disagree (0, 0.0%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (0, 0.0%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (2, 3.6%)
4 - Agree (25, 44.6%)
5 - Strongly Agree (29, 51.8%).

All the participants agreed that academic progress is possible for children with special needs. The respondents were almost in complete agreement on this question.
**Figure 4.19**

STATIC Question 7: I Believe That Children With Special Needs Should Be Placed Exclusively in Special Education Classes Rather Than Mainstreamed Into General Education Classes.

Of the 56 respondents, 75.0% disagreed that children with special needs should be placed exclusively in special education classes rather than mainstreamed into general-education classes. Once again, the vast majority of respondents are in agreement.
Figure 4.20

STATIC Question 8: I Am Comfortable Teaching a Child That Is Moderately Physically Disabled.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (1, 1.8%)
1 - Disagree (0, 0.0%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (4, 7.1%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (4, 7.1%)
4 - Agree (34, 60.7%)
5 - Strongly Agree (13, 23.2%).

Fifty-one of the 56 respondents (91.0%) indicated that they are comfortable teaching a child who is moderately physically disabled. Only five respondents disagreed to any degree.
Figure 4.21

STATIC Question 9: I Have Problems Teaching a Student With Cognitive Deficits.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (10, 17.9%)
1 - Disagree (23, 41.1%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (11, 19.6%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (8, 14.3%)
4 - Agree (2, 3.6%)
5 - Strongly Agree (2, 3.6%)

Respondents were mostly in agreement with this statement. Forty-four of the 57 (77.1%) respondents disagreed that they have problems teaching a student with a cognitive deficit. There is slightly more differentiation in answers with this question in that 12 respondents indicated that they agreed with the statement to some degree.
Figure 4.22

STATIC Question 10: I Can Adequately Handle Students With Mild to Moderate
Behavioral Problems.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (0, 0.0%)
1 - Disagree (0, 0.0%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (5, 8.9%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (4, 7.1%)
4 - Agree (36, 64.3%)
5 - Strongly Agree (11, 19.6%)

Respondents were almost unanimous (91.0%) in agreeing that they can adequately handle
students with mild to moderate behavioral problems. Nearly all of the respondents seem
confident in their ability to handle behavior issues.
**Figure 4.23**

STATIC Question 11: Students With Special Needs Learn Social Skills That Are Modeled by Regular Education Students.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (0, 0.0%)

1 - Disagree (3, 5.4%)

2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (3, 5.4%)

3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (15, 26.8%)

4 - Agree (24, 42.9%)

5 - Strongly Agree (11, 19.6%)

Fifty of the 56 respondents (89.2%) agreed that students with special needs learn social skills that are modeled by regular education students. Only six respondents (10.8%) disagreed to some degree with this statement.
Figure 4.24

STATIC Question 12: Students With Special Needs Have Higher Academic Achievements When Included in the Regular Education Classroom.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (2, 3.6%)
1 - Disagree (3, 5.4%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (9, 16.1%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (14, 25.0%)
4 - Agree (21, 37.5%)
5 - Strongly Agree (7, 12.5%).

Forty-two of the 56 respondents (75.0%) agreed that students with special needs have higher academic achievements when included in the regular education classroom. Five respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.
Figure 4.25

STATIC Question 13: It Is Difficult for Children With Special Needs to Make Strides in Academic Achievement in the Regular Education Classroom.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (7, 12.5%)
1 - Disagree (20, 35.7%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (10, 17.9%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (10, 17.9%)
4 - Agree (8, 14.3%)
5 - Strongly Agree (1, 1.8%).

The participants were split as to whether it is difficult for children with special needs to make strides in academic achievement in the regular education classroom. Surprisingly, 19 respondents (33.9%) think that it is difficult for special education students to achieve in the regular education classroom.
Figure 4.26

STATIC Question 14: Self-Esteem of Children With Special Needs Is Increased When Included in the Regular Education Classroom.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (1, 1.8%)

1 - Disagree (3, 5.4%)

2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (5, 8.9%)

3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (12, 21.4%)

4 - Agree (24, 42.9%)

5 - Strongly Agree (11, 19.6%)

Forty-seven of the 56 respondents (83.9%) agreed that the self-esteem of children with special needs is increased when they are included in the regular education classroom. Only eight respondents (14.3%) disagreed with this statement.
Figure 4.27

STATIC Question 15: Students With Special Needs in the Regular Education Classroom

Hinder the Academic Progress of the Regular Education Student.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (14, 25.0%)
1 - Disagree (19, 33.9%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (6, 10.7%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (8, 14.3%)
4 - Agree (8, 14.3%)
5 - Strongly Agree (1, 1.8%)

Participants were split on whether students with special needs in the regular education classroom hinder the academic progress of the regular education student. Almost 70.0% of respondents disagreed with the statement in some form.
Figure 4.28

STATIC Question 16: Special In-Service Training in Teaching Special Needs Students

Should Be Required for all Regular Education Teachers.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (0, 0.0%)
1 - Disagree (1, 1.8%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (1, 1.8%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (5, 8.9%)
4 - Agree (12, 21.4%)
5 - Strongly Agree (37, 66.1%)

Fifty-four of the 56 respondents (96.4%) agreed that special in-service training in teaching special needs students should be required for all regular education teachers. This was almost a unanimous answer.
Figure 4.29

STATIC Question 17: I Don’t Mind Making Special Physical Arrangements in My Room to Meet the Needs of Students With Special Needs.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (0, 0.0%)
1 - Disagree (1, 1.8%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (1, 1.8%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (4, 7.1%)
4 - Agree (23, 41.1%)
5 - Strongly Agree (27, 48.2%)

Fifty-four of the 56 respondents (96.4%) do not mind making special physical arrangements in their room to meet the needs of students with special needs.
Figure 4.30

STATIC Question 18: Adaptive Materials and Equipment Are Easily Acquired for Meeting the Needs of Students With Special Needs.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (4, 7.1%)
1 - Disagree (16, 28.6%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (8, 14.3%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (9, 16.1%)
4 - Agree (16, 28.6%)
5 - Strongly Agree (3, 5.4%)

Participants were evenly split (28 to 28) on whether adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for meeting the needs of students with special needs.
Figure 4.31

STATIC Question 19. My Principal Is Supportive in Making Needed Accommodations for Teaching Children With Special Needs.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (2, 3.6%)
1 - Disagree (7, 12.5%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (3, 5.4%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (7, 12.5%)
4 - Agree (17, 30.4%)
5 - Strongly Agree (20, 35.7%)

Forty-four of the 56 respondents (78.5 %) agreed that their principal is supportive in making the necessary accommodations for teaching children with special needs.
Figure 4.32

STATIC Question 20: Students With Special Needs Should Be Included in Regular Education Classrooms.

Legend

0 - Strongly Disagree (0, 0.0%)
1 - Disagree (0, 0.0%)
2 - Not Sure, but Tend to Disagree (8, 14.3%)
3 - Not Sure, but Tend to Agree (6, 10.7%)
4 - Agree (20, 35.7%)
5 - Strongly Agree (22, 39.3%)

Forty-eight of the 56 respondents (85.7%) agreed that students with special needs should be included in the regular education classrooms. No respondents selected disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.
A thorough analysis reveals many noteworthy themes. The overall results of the study were organized into eleven themes. Below are the four themes developed from the survey data as they related to the STATIC survey, as well as seven themes developed from the open-ended questions.

**Theme 1: Materials**

This theme correlates to Research Question 3: “How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools?” The STATIC survey showed split results on whether adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for supporting special needs students in their classrooms.

**Theme 2: Attitudes of Teachers**

This theme correlates to Research Question 1: “What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms?” All of the participants who took the survey indicated that they agreed that academic progress is possible in children with special needs. Of the survey participants, 87.7% agreed that students with special needs should be included in regular classrooms and disagreed that children with special needs should be placed exclusively in special-education classrooms. Approximately 82.1% indicated that they disagree that they become easily frustrated working with special needs students, and 96.4% of the teachers surveyed do not mind making special arrangements in their room to meet the needs of students with special needs. Although children differ intellectually, physically, and psychologically, many of the participants believe that all children can learn in most environments. They also supported the statement that “academic progress” is possible for children with special needs. The
respondents were split when answering the STATIC questions that asked whether students with special needs in the regular classroom hinder the academic process of students without special needs. Many of the participants agreed that special needs students should be included whenever possible. Exactly 75.0% of the survey teachers agreed that students with special needs have higher academic achievement when included in the regular classrooms. Of the surveyed respondents, 90.0% agreed that students with special needs learn social skills that are modeled by regular education students. Approximately 92.8% of the participants agreed that all children can learn in most environments, while 83.9% agreed that the self-esteem of children with special needs is increased when they are included in a mainstream classroom.

**Theme 3: Administrative Support**

This theme correlates with Research Question 3: “How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools?” Many of the participants disagreed that they have adequate materials, training, and support to teach students with special needs. Approximately 96.4% of the teachers indicated that special in-service training for teaching students with special needs should be required of all regular education teachers. Finally, 78.5% agreed that their principal is supportive in making accommodations for teaching students with special needs, but many also disagreed that they are receiving the proper administrative support.

**Theme 4: Qualifications and Ability**

This theme correlates with Research Question 2: “How do teachers describe their qualifications/preparation to provide appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms?” Approximately 91.0% of the survey participants agreed that they are comfortable teaching a moderately physically disabled student, and 90.0% indicated that they are
confident in their ability to teach children with special needs. Around 77.1% of the participants disagreed that they have problems teaching a student with a cognitive deficit. The majority of the participants agreed that they have been adequately trained to meet the needs of the special-education students, including students with behavioral problems.

After answering the 20 STATIC survey questions, respondents received two open-ended questions:

1. Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you pick the two statements that you most agreed with?
2. Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you choose the two statements you most disagreed with?

These two open-ended questions at the end of the STATIC survey gave participants the opportunity to expand on their survey answers (see Appendix E for survey data on open-ended questions). The information gained from these final two questions was classified as Anecdotal Responses. A summary is posted under the themes below.

Themes (Agreement)

Theme 5: Inclusion

This theme correlates with Research Question 1: “What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms?” The majority of the respondents indicated that question 20 was the one that they agreed with most. Question 20 read: “Students with special needs should be included in regular education.” They noted that students with special needs should be included in general-education classrooms. Respondent 1 stated that, “Students with special needs should be included in the general education classroom,” while respondent 92 stated
that, “Special education students need opportunities for inclusion.” Respondent 62 stated that, “All special education students should be placed in regular classrooms. Special education students learn best when in regular classrooms.” According to respondent 27, “Special needs children have as much to offer socially as typical children. We all learn in different ways and many of my special needs students offer insight into the struggles others may face, for me and other students.” Respondent 94 noted that, “All special education students are capable of learning in a regular classroom regardless of their circumstances.” According to respondent 65, “I think all students can learn and grow in the traditional classroom regardless of any disabilities.” Respondent 34 wrote that, “Students with special needs need to be educated along with general education students when possible. It teaches much needed social skills and can increase self-esteem when done correctly.” One of the respondents stated that, “SWD should be included and only provided special education services for specific skills vs. replacement of entire curriculum.” Respondent 89 wrote that, “I believe that inclusion is the best way to teach special needs students. It is good for the special needs students as well as the rest of the students. I find that the rest of the class learned humility and patience from having special needs students.” Respondent 87 stated that, “All students - regardless of need - deserve to interact and learn with their peers (unless IEP/ability is not permissible).” Respondent 66 wrote that, “General education teachers make a bigger impact than they may realize in a SWD.” Another teacher, respondent 43, said that, “Inclusion is so important on so many levels, but it needs to be done right. I am not even sure if the general education teachers at my school understand person first language.” Respondent 49 wrote that, “I choose to put agreed option because students with special needs deserve the right of getting proper education as like what the regular students receive. Not only that, with providing proper care, teaching and support, we, the teachers, can help to make certain
diamonds out of them.” Respondent 47 stated that, “I believe special education students can achieve success based on their disability and I think they need to be mainstreamed when possible.”

**Theme 6: Preparation**

This theme correlates with Research Questions 2 and 3: “How do teachers describe their qualifications/preparation to provide appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms?” and “How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools?” One of the most common responses to the open-ended questions pertained to question 16, with which they agreed. Question 16 read, “Special in-service training in teaching special needs students should be required for all regular education teachers.”

Respondent 88 said that, “All teachers should have training on how best to educate students with special needs.” Respondent 42 wrote that, “More training is needed.” Many of the respondents strongly agreed that training was essential. Respondent 84 wrote that, “In general, I believe that teachers need to be better trained and more educated to best handle all students, special needs, and general population. Standards must be much stricter for the welfare of our students.”

Another teacher, respondent 81, wrote that, “Training for teachers and students’ input.”

Respondent 38 responded that, “General education teachers have no idea what to do with special education kids. Principals usually do not know either because they have not taught special education kids.” Lastly, respondent 71 noted that, “By law, my principal must be supportive of accommodations. Also, more training would be helpful.”
Theme 7: Student Learning

This theme aligns with Research Question 1: “What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms?” In the open-ended questions, many of the respondents agreed most with question 5, which read, “Although children differ intellectually, physically, and psychologically, I believe that all children can learn in most environments.” Respondent 88 wrote, “6. All children can learn.” Respondent 69 echoed that response, saying, “All children can learn.” Another teacher, respondent 73, stated that, “I have observed successes with these students.” Respondent 34 noted that, “I believe all students have the capacity to learn in the least-restrictive environment.” Respondent 7 responded that, “All children can excel academically if the proper tools and environment are provided as well as the proper diagnosis.” Respondent 12 wrote, “Of course, I think all students can learn -- I could hardly be a teacher otherwise!” Respondent 35 responded that, “I do believe everyone can learn – just not in the same ways or in the same capacity. The focus should be on the learner’s growth and progress over time.” Respondent 76 noted that, “All students deserve an education.” Respondent 37 said that, “Special education students can learn and achieve.” Respondent 47 wrote that, “I believe special education students can achieve success based on their disability.”

Themes (Disagreement)

Theme 8: Academic Progress

This theme aligns best with Research Question 1: “What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms?” The largest number of the respondents chose question 15 as the question that they disagreed with most. Question 15 read, “Students with
special needs in the regular education classroom hinder the academic progress of the regular education student.” Respondent 1 stated that, “15. Students with special needs in the regular education classroom hinder the academic progress of the regular education.” Respondent 5 stated that, “Special needs students hindered with academics when placed in regular class. Difficult for special kids to achieve academic success by being in regular class.” Another responded that, “Students with special needs are human beings. Like all children they learn differently. Consistency and respect are the primary tools for all students to be successful.” Respondent 10 stated simply, “Number 15.” Respondent number 13 noted that, “Special education students not able to perform in regular class.” Respondent 16 added that, “Students with special needs in the regular education classroom DO NOT hinder the academic progress of the regular education student.” Respondent 19 replied similarly, writing, “Special education kids do not hinder general education kids.” Respondent 20 said that, “Special needs students hinder the learning of others. It is difficult for special needs students to make strides in mainstream classes.” Respondent 27 stated that, “When offered opportunities on their level, all children, including special needs children, can learn. They do not hinder others academically.” Respondent 31 stated that, “If the teacher has the necessary tools and knowledge, having special needs students in a class will not affect the rigor of the rest of the students. Depending on the academic level of the special need’s student, that may require additional support.” Respondent 84 furthered that point, saying, “On some of the initial questions, I notated ‘Strongly Disagree’ because I believe that all students can learn.” Lastly, respondent 43 added, “15. A good teacher who is strong at differentiating can meet the needs of their students who require increased support and those who are autonomous.”
**Theme 9: Placement**

This theme aligns best with Research Question 1: “What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms?” Many of the respondents noted that they disagreed with question 7, which read, “I believe that children with special needs should be placed in special education classes.” Respondent 25 stated that, “I disagreed about keeping the disabled students in the special classroom. Some disabled students can perform well in the regular classroom.” Respondent 57 noted that, “The special needs students do not have high academic achievement because nobody is teaching them at their own rate and level. I would agree with a model where the special needs student joins for PE, art, but not academic core content.” Respondent 71 stated that, “I do not think there should be exclusively special education classes for most kids.” Respondent 72 stated simply, “7.” Respondent 84 wrote that, “On some of the initial questions, I noted ‘Strongly Disagree’ because I believe that all students can learn. Having a special education student does not make me nervous because I see them as people, like you and I. Special treatment that isolates and/or coddles these students are the reason for their unfortunate failure in most cases. Teachers who are not comfortable with all students for any reason do not have what it takes to be a teacher and should leave the profession so that their students are not failed by them.” Respondent 88 wrote, “7. Students with special needs should be placed in the environment that is best suited for their learning. Sometimes that is in the general education classroom, sometimes it is in the special education classroom.” Lastly, respondent 94 stated that, “All students deserve to experience the same education and have the same opportunities.”
Theme 10: Resources

This theme aligns with Research Question 3: “How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools?” Many of the respondents wrote that they disagreed with question 18, which read, “Adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for meeting the needs of students with special needs.” Respondent 66 noted that, “Budgets and accessibility of material may not exist.” Another teacher, respondent 24, stated that, “Materials are needed to help ensure the success of all students.” Respondent 65 wrote that, “I feel teachers are not given enough training and resources on how to respond to students with special needs.” Respondent 54 stated that, “It is not easy to get help with supplies or supports. They are often left to the teacher to buy with personal money.” Lastly, respondent 62 noted that, “Materials and training are not always available.”

Theme 11: Training

This theme aligns to Research Questions 2 and 3: “How do teachers describe their qualifications/preparation to provide appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms?” Respondents disagreed about this question: “How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools?” Respondent 35 noted that, “The fact that I have had pretty much no training and there are special education teachers who have a whole degree in it – yet I am supposed to know how to do it without any training or education. It is frustrating and makes me feel insecure.” Respondent 43 stated that, “I believe most general education teachers lack the training to facilitate the same growth for a student with a disability in their classroom.” Respondent 47 responded that, “Teachers are not adequately trained or
supported to support special education students.” Respondent 55 stated that, “General education teachers are not taught to help special education students or even read an IEP. We would be better teachers if we were all required to get a special education endorsement.” Respondent 62 stated that, “Materials and training are not always available.” Lastly, respondent 65 stated that, “I feel teachers are not given enough training and resources on how to respond to students with special needs.”

**Summary of the Findings**

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of general-education teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding those teachers’ perceptions of their ability to provide effective academic instruction to students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs. The objective of the study was met by the STATIC survey. Multiple themes emerged from the STATIC data, including materials, attitudes of teachers, administrative support, qualifications/ability, inclusion, preparation, student learning, academic progress, placement, resources, and training. The themes reflect data from the demographic survey, the STATIC questions, and the two open-ended questions. Some teachers have negative attitudes about full-inclusion education, which will undoubtedly have a negative effect on the students they teach. These teachers may not have worked their way through the five stages of the Kubler-Ross model to arrive at acceptance of full-inclusion.

Chapter Five will provide an interpretation of the study findings. It will also include implications and recommendations for school administrators. Finally, Chapter Five will offer recommendations for further study.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of general-education teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding the ability of those teachers to provide effective academic instruction to students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs. This chapter includes a discussion of major findings related to inclusion at urban high schools and what implications may be valuable for use by administrators who work in urban education. Also included is a review of recommendations for further study and a conclusion.

This chapter contains discussion and future research possibilities to help answer the research questions:

RQ1. What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms?

RQ2. How do teachers describe their qualifications/preparation to provide appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms?

RQ3. How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools?

Multiple themes emerged from the data, including materials, attitudes of teachers, administrative support, qualifications/ability, inclusion, preparation, student learning, academic progress, placement, resources, and training. All of these themes combine to offer comprehensive answers to the three research questions.
Interpretations of Findings

More than half of the teachers who participated in the study received their teacher certification more than 10 years ago, which indicates that most of the respondents were veteran teachers. The majority of the participants indicated their gender as female. About a third of the respondents indicted “other” as their area of instruction, which could mean that they are special-education teachers because that category was not on the list of teaching areas. Half of the respondents hold a graduate level degree. One-third of the respondents indicated that they have 5-9 special-education students in their classes. The largest group of respondents answered that they had 1-4 ESL students in their classes. Almost half of the respondents indicated that they have 15 or more Title 1 students in their classes. Surprisingly, almost one-fourth of the respondents responded “unsure” about that question.

Many of the respondents reported that they have both Title 1 and special needs students in their classes. Many of the respondents also indicated that they did not know if or how many special needs and Title 1 students they have in their classes. Most of the teachers reported that they have more than 10 years teaching with special needs students. Thus, the respondents are experienced both with education in general and with inclusion specifically. Most teachers indicated that they only completed a few pre-service courses that focused on students with special needs in their general-education classrooms. The majority of the respondents hold a master’s degree and have more than 10 years of experience, but they have little training specific to inclusion. Approximately one-fifth of respondents answered that they had participated in 5 or more workshops related to special-education preparation, and 15.0% have completed none. Lastly, most of the survey respondents were located in the South and the West.
The first research question in this study was this: What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms? The survey included 15 questions, and five themes emerged that provided data for this research question. The 15 questions were:

1. I become easily frustrated when teaching students with special needs,
2. I become anxious when I learn that a student with special needs will be in my classroom,
3. Although children differ intellectually, physically, and psychologically, I believe that all children can learn in most environments,
4. I believe that academic progress is possible in children with special needs,
5. I believe that children with special needs should be placed in special education classes,
6. I am comfortable teaching a child that is moderately physically disabled,
7. I have problems teaching a student with cognitive deficits,
8. I can adequately handle students with mild to moderate behavioral problems,
9. Students with special needs learn social skills that are modeled by regular education students,
10. Students with special needs have higher academic achievements when included in the regular education classroom,
11. It is difficult for children with special needs to make strides in academic achievement in the regular education classroom,
12. Self-esteem of children with special needs is increased when included in the regular education classroom,
13. Students with special needs in the regular education classroom hinder the academic progress of the regular education student,
14. I don’t mind making special physical arrangements in my room to meet the needs of students with special needs,
15. Students with special needs should be included in regular education classrooms.

The five themes that developed from the data that align with this research question are attitudes of teachers, academic progress, inclusion, student learning, and placement.
The responses to these 15 questions indicated the majority of the respondents believe that: a) They do not get easily frustrated when teaching students with special needs, and b) they do not get anxious when they learn that a student with special needs will be in their classroom. Approximately 92.8% of the respondents agreed that all children can learn in most environments. All of the participants indicated that they agree that academic progress is possible in children with special needs. Exactly 75.0% of the respondents believe that special-education students should be mainstreamed into general-education classes. Many of the respondents noted that they disagreed with question 7: “I believe that children with special needs should be placed in special education classes.” Of the respondents, 91.0% indicated that they are comfortable teaching a child who is moderately physically disabled. Finally, 77.1% of the respondents noted that they do not have any problems teaching a student with a cognitive deficit.

All respondents indicated that they feel confident in their ability to handle behavior issues. Three quarters of the respondents agreed that students with special needs have higher academic success in a regular classroom. A strong majority of the respondents agreed that self-esteem of students with special needs increases when they are included in the regular education classroom. A large percentage (70.0%) of the respondents do not believe that students with special needs in the regular classroom hinder the academic progress of the regular education students. Almost all of the respondents indicated that they do not mind making special physical arrangements in their classroom to meet the needs of students with special needs. Most of the respondents agreed that students with special needs should be included in the regular education classroom.

Data from the open-ended responses indicated that a majority of the respondents believe that students with special needs should be included in regular education classes. Respondents
also indicated that “student learning” is another important theme to them. The student learning theme focuses on all students learning in most environments. Another theme that aligns with this research question is academic progress, which centers on students with special needs hindering the academic progress of regular education students. Respondents strongly disagreed that students with special needs hindered academic progress of regular education students. Although the size of this national sample was small, the data still address the research question, and the data align well with the literature review of teacher attitudes, which showed that the attitudes of teachers are paramount to the successful implementation of full inclusion (Evins, 2015).

The second research question in this study was this: How do teachers describe their qualifications/preparation to provide appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms? Two themes developed from two survey questions and three demographic questions, which provided data for this research question. The demographic questions were these: 1) What year did you obtain your teacher certification? 2) What is your highest level of education? 3) Which response best identifies the number of years’ experience you have including students with special needs in your classroom? Of the participating teachers, 65.0% indicated that they had received their teacher certification more than 10 years ago. The majority of the teachers who answered the survey were veteran teachers. Almost half of all respondents hold a graduate degree. Most of the respondents indicated that they only have a few hours of pre-service courses focused on students with special needs in their general-education classrooms. The majority of the respondents hold a master’s degree and have more than 10 years of experience, but they have little training specific to students with special needs.

These were the two aligned questions on the STATIC survey: 1) Special in-service training in teaching special needs students should be required for all regular education teachers,
and 2) I don't mind making special physical arrangements in my room to meet the needs of students with special needs. The responses to the first question indicated that almost all teachers agreed that special in-service training for teaching special needs students should be required for all teachers. Also, almost all respondents noted that they do not mind making special physical arrangements in their classrooms to meet the needs of students with special needs.

The three themes developed from the data (specifically, the STATIC questions and the two open-ended questions that align with this research question) are preparation, training, and qualifications/ability. Respondents agreed with question 16, which related to preparation: “Special in-service training in teaching special needs students should be required for all regular education teachers.” Many of the respondents mentioned training in their open-ended questions and referred to question 16. Along with preparation, training was another theme that developed. Many of the respondents noted that they were not properly trained to instruct students with special needs. The last theme that aligned with this research question was qualifications/ability. The majority of the participants agreed that they have been adequately trained to meet the needs of the special-education students, including students with behavioral problems, but data from the open-ended questions noted otherwise. Just as a study performed by NCLD indicated, only a small percentage of teachers feel prepared to instruct students with disabilities (Galiatsos et al., 2019). Finally, teachers indicated that support is one of the keys for successfully implementing full inclusion (Suleymanov, 2015).

The third research question in this study was this: How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools? Through two demographic questions and three STATIC survey questions, five themes developed that provided data for this research question. These
were the two demographic questions: 1) Which best describes the amount of pre-service coursework you completed that focuses on including students with special needs in the general education classroom? 2) Which best describes the amount of professional development workshops you have completed that focus on including students with special needs in the general education classroom? Most of the respondents indicated that they have only completed a few pre-service courses focused on students with special needs in their general-education classrooms. Many of the respondents hold a master’s degree and have more than 10 years of experience, but not many of the respondents have much training specific to teaching students with special needs. According to the demographic survey data, approximately one-fifth of respondents answered that they had participated in 5 or more workshops that focused on students with special needs in the general-education classroom, and 15.0% of the respondents have completed none. The majority of the respondents have taken two or fewer workshops that focused on students with special needs.

In addition to the two demographic questions that aligned with this research question, there were three STATIC questions: 1) Special in-service training in teaching special needs students should be required for all regular education teachers, 2) Adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for meeting the needs of students with special needs, and 3) My principal is supportive in making needed accommodations for teaching children with special needs. The responses to these questions by all of the respondents indicated that nearly all agreed that special in-service training focused on teaching special needs students should be required for all regular education teachers. However, respondents were split on whether or not adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for meeting the needs of students with special needs.
Three quarters of the respondents noted that the principal was supportive in making needed accommodations for students with special needs.

The four themes developed from the data (specifically, the STATIC questions and the two open-ended questions that align with this research question) are materials, resources, training, and administrative support. The STATIC survey showed a split on whether adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for meeting the needs of special needs students in their classrooms. Many of the teachers disagreed with question 18, which said, “Adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for meeting the needs of students with special needs.” Many of the respondents disagreed that they have the necessary training or resources. Of the respondents, 78.5% agreed that their principal is supportive in making accommodations for teaching students with special needs, but many also disagreed that they are receiving the proper administrative support. The lack of support is a key factor in a teacher’s inability to successfully implement full inclusion in their classroom (Suleymanov, 2015).

Implications

The respondents of this study, by and large, agreed with the foundation of the theoretical framework of this study. They largely agreed with every statement regarding the rights of a student with special needs to participate in the general-education classroom, and they also mostly agreed that inclusion education increases students’ chances of success in college and/or the workplace. That said, respondents’ opinions about inclusion education were not unanimously positive.

Chapter Two included a discussion of two models of inclusion in the classroom: “inclusion” and “full inclusion.” While the approaches have some overlap, they also have important differences in their goals and objectives. “Inclusionists,” who advocate for “inclusion,”
argue that students with disabilities should receive instruction from special-education teachers and from general-education teachers in special-education classrooms and in general-education classrooms (Fuchs, D. & Fuchs, L. S., 1998). Inclusionists are in favor of a limited type of inclusion, what might be termed “hybrid inclusion,” wherein special-education classrooms continue to exist. The goal of the inclusionist is not to eliminate special-education classrooms, but that is precisely the goal of the “full inclusionist.”

The full inclusionist argues for a form of inclusion that incorporates all students with disabilities into general-education classrooms (Fuchs, D. & Fuchs, L. S., 1998). In the full-inclusion model, students receive one-on-one instruction from special-education teachers in general-education classrooms. Fuchs, D. and Fuchs, L. S. (1998) explained that full inclusionists believe that all special-education instruction should occur in general-education classrooms because, “First, only full-time placement confers legitimacy on special-needs children’s membership and place in regular classrooms. Second, as long as special-education placements exist, educators may use them as dumping grounds for the difficult-to-teach student” (p. 80). Full inclusion demands a more significant paradigm shift than inclusion, but supporters of full inclusion argue that it will benefit children with special needs more in the long run. They also believe that such programs will benefit society as a whole.

The results of this study indicate that the vast majority (75.0%) of secondary education teachers surveyed believe that special-education students should be mainstreamed into general-education classes. In other words, 75.0% of the respondents are full inclusionists. If one assumes that teachers fall into only two inclusion categories (i.e., inclusion and full inclusion), then one can conclude that 25.0% of the respondents are inclusionists, which is another way of saying that 25.0% of the respondents believe that students with disabilities should receive at least some of
their instruction in special-education classrooms. Again, if one assumes that teachers only fall into two inclusion categories, it could be the case that 25.0% of the respondents who are not full inclusionists have a generally positive attitude about hybrid inclusion, which involves special-education instruction both in general-education classrooms and in special-education classrooms. However, there is no compelling reason to assume that the 25.0% of respondents who are not full inclusionists are inclusionists at all.

It might be the case that some of the 25.0% of respondents who are not full inclusionists are segregationists, meaning that they believe that students with disabilities should only receive instruction in special-education classrooms. Such teachers could be hostile toward inclusion education, whether it be full inclusion or hybrid inclusion. If any of the respondents in this group work at schools that are still employing the segregationist model of special education, then it is possible that such teachers are relieved that they do not have to teach students with disabilities in their general-education classrooms. If, however, the respondents in this category work at schools that have implemented inclusion practices, then it is possible that these respondents have negative attitudes about the students with special needs in their general-education classrooms. If those teachers do not believe in the benefits of inclusion education, then it seems likely that they will not be effective instructors for students with disabilities.

A closer examination of the results reveals that the respondents are largely undertrained in teaching students with disabilities in general-education classrooms. Many of the teachers who participated in this study indicated that they had little to no formal education and/or training before they began teaching students with disabilities or while they were teaching such students. Approximately 13.8% of the respondents said that they had completed no pre-service coursework that focused on including students with disabilities in the general-education
classroom, and 43.8% said that they had only completed one or two such courses prior to beginning teaching. In other words, 57.6% of respondents indicated that they clearly lack a meaningful formal education relevant to including students with disabilities in their classrooms. Additionally, 15.0% of the study respondents said that they had participated in no professional development workshops that focused on including students with disabilities in the general-education classroom, and 41.3% said that they had only participated in one or two such workshops. That means that 56.3% of respondents received only a bare minimum or no professional development training related to including students with disabilities in their classrooms. The majority of teachers who participated in this study perceived they were ill-prepared by their colleges and by the schools in which they work to provide effective education to students with disabilities. That factor may contribute to that findings indicating that many of the teachers hold what can reasonably be called negative attitudes about inclusion education and about their ability to provide effective instruction to students with disabilities in general-education classrooms.

The majority of the respondents of this study revealed that they have generally positive attitudes about the value of inclusion education, but a small number of teachers indicated that they have generally negative attitudes about inclusion education. Of the 56 respondents, 14.3% said that they tended to disagree when asked if they believe that students with special needs should be included in general-education classrooms. Approximately 34% of the respondents said that they thought, to varying degrees, that it is difficult for children with special needs to make strides in academic achievement in the general-education classroom. Roughly 25.1% of the study respondents said that they disagreed, to varying degrees, when asked if they believe that students with disabilities have higher academic achievements when included in the general-education
classroom. Nearly 30.4% of respondents said that students with disabilities in the general-education classroom hinder the academic progress of the general-education student. Taken together, these answers reveal that a significant minority of the respondents of this study have negative attitudes about inclusion education. While it is impossible to know the exact cause of that negativity, if a teacher says that they do not believe that students with disabilities should be included in general-education classrooms, then it is hard to imagine them providing effective instruction to students with disabilities in their general-education classrooms.

In addition to generally negative attitudes about inclusion education, some of this study’s respondents also reported negative attitudes about their ability to provide effective instruction to students with disabilities in general-education classrooms. Of the 56 respondents, 10.8% disagreed, to varying degrees, when asked if they were confident in their ability to teach children with disabilities. Approximately 17.8% of respondents said that, to varying degrees, they become easily frustrated when teaching students with special needs. Exactly 25.0% of the study respondents said that, to varying degrees, they become anxious when they learn that a student with special needs will be in their classroom. Finally, roughly 21.5% said that, to varying degrees, they have problems teaching a student with cognitive deficits. These responses show that a sizable minority of this study’s respondents have negative attitudes about their ability to provide effective instruction to students with disabilities in their general-education classrooms. These negative attitudes might be caused by a number of factors, including a lack of training, a lack of administrative support, or a lack of the requisite materials; however, they might also be caused by a philosophical opposition to inclusion education. Taken in conjunction with the answers that reveal negative attitudes about inclusion education, these answers may indicate that some of the study’s participants have not moved to acceptance of inclusion education.
The ultimate goal of educators and administrators is to provide students with disabilities with the instruction and the support that they need to improve their academic performance and their likelihood of graduation so that they graduate at rates comparable to those of typically developing students. Even before this research was conducted, it seemed likely that certain factors—including the length of time the teachers have been teaching in full-inclusion classrooms and the age of a school’s full-inclusion program—could influence general-education teachers’ attitudes. For those teachers who transition to a full-inclusion program from a special-education program that separated students with disabilities from their typically developing peers, one might hypothesize that teachers may experience negative feelings similar to the feelings experienced by people who have lost a loved one or who have experienced an unforeseen change in personal or professional circumstances. For this reason, the Kubler-Ross model seemed like the ideal lens through which to examine teachers’ attitudes about full-inclusion education.

I used the Kubler-Ross (1969) model as a conceptual framework for the study and as a method for analyzing the attitudes of the teachers who participated. Teaching children with disabilities in general-education classrooms poses challenges that can frustrate teachers, especially teachers who have previously taught in schools that formerly used the old model of teaching children with disabilities, which segregated those students into special-education classrooms. In order to provide effective education, general education teachers who are resistant to the inclusion of students with disabilities in general-education classrooms may need to work through the five stages of the Kubler-Ross model to arrive at acceptance of inclusion. If a teacher has not worked through the stages, they may have a negative attitude about full-inclusion education, which could impact students with disabilities in their classroom.
The results of this study reveal that the majority (75.0%) of the participating teachers approve of the inclusion of students with disabilities in general-education classrooms, but that means that 25.0% of the participating teachers do not believe that students with disabilities should be included in general-education classrooms. Because the STATIC survey did not offer participants a way to indicate whether or not they are special-education teachers, it is impossible to know why those teachers believe that children with disabilities should be placed exclusively in special-education classes rather than mainstreamed into general education classes. It could be the case that those teachers are primarily special-education teachers who believe that students with disabilities are better served by a special-education teacher in a special-education classroom than by a general-education teacher in a general-education classroom. Special-education teachers are accustomed to the unique challenges posed by teaching students with disabilities, and they have far more special-education training than do general-education teachers. Thus, the Kubler-Ross model is likely not relevant to participants who fall into this category.

There is, however, no compelling reason to assume that these participants—who indicated that they believe that students with disabilities should be taught exclusively in special-education classrooms rather than mainstreamed into general education classes—have positive attitudes about students with disabilities. The 25.0% of the participants who said that, to varying degrees, they were opposed to inclusion education might be primarily general-education teachers who believe that the inclusion of student with disabilities in general-education classrooms is detrimental to students without disabilities. In other words, these participants could have negative attitudes about students with disabilities, in which case the Kubler-Ross model would be a useful tool that could help them understand how they can arrive at a place of acceptance of inclusion education. Those teachers who have not worked their way to acceptance are likely to
have a negative impact on the academic achievements of the students with disabilities in their general-education classrooms.

Because it is impossible to know whether the participants who indicated their opposition to inclusion education have negative or positive attitudes about students with disabilities, there are limits to the usefulness of the Kubler-Ross model as a conceptual framework for this study. In order to gauge the effectiveness of the Kubler-Ross model, future researchers should design their studies in such a way that they can better determine the cause of a teacher’s opposition to inclusion education.

While the Kubler-Ross model could prove highly effective in helping teachers who oppose the inclusion of students with disabilities in general-education classrooms, it has little practical value for teachers who already have a positive attitude about inclusion education, as was the case for 75.0% of the participants of this study. For teachers who already have a positive attitude about inclusion education, the influence of professional development would have far more practical value than a study of the Kubler-Ross model. Indeed, the vast majority of the participants (96.4%) agreed that general-education teachers need additional in-service training in teaching students with disabilities in general-education classrooms. Approximately 56.3% of participants indicated that they had participated in two or fewer professional development workshops centered on the inclusion of students with disabilities in general-education classrooms, and 15% of participants had completed no such workshops. Additionally, 57.6% indicated that they had only completed two or fewer pre-service courses that focused on students with special needs in their general-education classrooms. The majority of the participants hold a master’s degree and have 10 or more years of teaching experience, but they have little training specific to the inclusion of students with disabilities in general-education classrooms. The results
of this study clearly demonstrate a need for professional development at the schools at which the
participants teach.

There exists a variety of professional development theories that seek to explain the link
between teachers’ attitudes about inclusion education and the in-service training that they receive
specific to inclusion education, but an analysis of those theories is beyond the scope of this
study. It is, however, worth noting here that Halvorsen and Neary’s Inclusion Professional
Development Model (IPDM) could be an effective practical approach to training teachers in the
instruction of students with disabilities in the general-education classroom (Royster et al., 2014).
The IPDM uses as its foundation an inclusion-specific professional development curriculum
called *Building Inclusive Schools: Tools and Strategies* (Royster et al., 2014). According to
Royster et al. (2014):

The major areas [of the IPDM] had training activities and knowledge assessment
questions. The areas were (a) inclusion defined, (b) planning for individual student needs
in the inclusive classrooms, (c) systematic instruction in inclusion classrooms, (d) peer
relationships and support, (e) collaborative inclusive service delivery, and (f) evaluation.

(p. 2)

There is tremendous value—both for the participating teachers and for the students with
disabilities in their general-education classrooms—in professional development specific to
inclusion education. As Royster et al. (2014) noted, earlier studies about inclusion-specific
professional development showed that “teachers who participated in effective training programs
to increase their knowledge of what should be going on in inclusive classrooms and acquired the
teaching skills, classroom management skills, confidence, and time management skills, have
significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusion” (p. 3). An IPDM-specific study
conducted by Royster et al. (2014) found that “the IPDM increased the knowledge and improved the attitudes of general education teachers in inclusive classrooms who participated in the study” (p. 7). If the IPDM is as successful as the study suggests, then education leaders would do well to incorporate it into their schools’ professional development training in order to improve their teachers’ ability to provide effective instruction to students with disabilities in general-education classrooms.

The value of the IPDM in the context this study is that the model seems to be an effectual method for supporting both teachers who have positive attitudes about inclusion education and teachers who have negative attitudes. Virtually all of the teachers who participated in this study indicated that they want more professional development specific to inclusion education, which means that teachers with positive and negative attitudes about inclusion education agree about value of professional development specific to inclusion. Teachers with positive attitudes about inclusion education who lack the knowledge and skills that they need to help their students with disabilities flourish can gain that knowledge and those skills through the IPDM. Teachers with negative attitudes about inclusion education can also gain through the IPDM the knowledge and the skills they need to provide effective instruction to their students with disabilities, but they might also change their minds about inclusion education so that their attitudes switch from negative to positive. In other words, the IPDM could potentially complement the Kubler-Ross model because the IPDM can help teachers with negative attitudes about inclusion education work their way to acceptance of inclusion.

**Recommendations for Action**

In this study, I explored high school teachers’ attitudes about the academic and behavioral challenges of educating high school students with disabilities in general-education
classrooms. The results of this research provided teachers with data regarding Title 1, urban, high school teachers’ attitudes about full inclusion. Nearly all of the teachers who participated in this study indicated that special in-service training for teaching students with special needs should be required of all general-education teachers. It is for that reason that I recommend that administrators provide general-education teachers with ongoing and specific training related to strategies for accommodating students with disabilities within the regular education classroom. Administrative support and ongoing professional development can help general-education teachers of students in full-inclusion classrooms overcome any challenges they may face (Clark, 2016). According to Clark (2016), ongoing training could positively contribute to teachers’ performance related to addressing the learning challenges that students with disabilities encounter in full-inclusion classrooms. Parents, teachers, and policy makers should pay attention to the nature and frequency of inclusion-related training opportunities for general-education teachers.

Teachers who participated in this survey also stressed the importance of administrative support, adequate materials, and training for teaching students with disabilities. Therefore, I recommend that administrators increase access to materials and learning supports, increased time for professional collaboration and support from administration, and increase time to plan for the needs of students with disabilities in general-education classrooms. Established time for professional collaboration can be an effective tool for general-education teachers in full-inclusion programs (Clark, 2016). Collaboration can provide opportunities for general-education teachers to work with various stakeholders to address the unique challenges posed by students with disabilities (Salvia et al., 2013). Further, there should be ongoing opportunities for general-
education teachers to communicate with their administrations about the specific needs related to educating students with disabilities in general-education classrooms.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

This study has highlighted a number of topics for which future research would be beneficial. There are several ways that future researchers interested in full-inclusion education could enhance the findings of this study: 1) Explore the role of school administrators in supporting teachers in urban, Title 1 secondary schools with full-inclusion programs, 2) Conduct a quantitative study rather than a qualitative study, 3) Increase the pool of applicants surveyed, 4) Use school emails with a full IRB approval, and 5) Continue to research the causes of the low graduation rates of students with disabilities in urban secondary schools.

**Conclusion**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 mandated that states provide “every student with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in his or her least restrictive environment,” (Clark, 2016, p. 1). Inclusion programs are one of the chief ways for schools to fulfill their legislated obligations to provide a FAPE to all students, regardless of their abilities (Clark, 2016). Although many school districts implemented inclusion programs decades ago, there is an achievement gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities. A study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2016) found that during the 2013/2014 school year, students with some form of disability graduated at a much lower rate than students without a disability, in every U.S. state and in Washington, D.C. A variety of factors contribute to that disparity in graduation rates, but one of the primary culprits is likely the attitudes of the teachers who instruct students with disabilities in general-education classrooms in schools with inclusion programs.
Researchers who have studied inclusion education have found that too often general-education teachers lack the training and the requisite resources to offer effective instruction to students with disabilities in classrooms that have implemented full-inclusion education programs (Pearce & Forlin, 2016). Given that lack of preparation and resources, it is reasonable to believe that, in many cases, students with disabilities are struggling in full-inclusion classrooms because of the negative attitudes and unconscious biases of their general-education teachers (Noreen et al., 2019). As is true in virtually any educational setting, a teacher’s attitude plays a significant role in student achievement, which means that addressing the factors that contribute to a teacher’s negative attitudes and unconscious biases could improve student achievement in that teacher’s classroom.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to evaluate the attitudes of general-education teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools about their ability to provide effective instruction to students with disabilities in full-inclusion classrooms in those schools. This study was motivated by three research questions: 1) What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms? 2) How do teachers describe their qualifications/preparation to provide appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms? 3) How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools? To answer those questions, this study used a modified Scale of Teachers’ Attitudes toward Inclusion (STATIC) survey, which included the original 20 multiple choice STATIC questions plus two open-ended questions created specifically for this research. Fifty-six teachers from four regions in the United States (i.e., North, East, South, and West) anonymously completed the survey over a two-week
period. The STATIC survey, which was created by another researcher for a separate study, was used because it is a validated instrument built on the theoretical framework that this study was designed to examine.

During the 1960s and 1970s, activists began advocating for changes in the segregationist model that schools used to separate students with disabilities from students without disabilities (Ferguson, 2014). That model proved academically ineffective, and many also argued that it was morally corrupt. In place of the old segregationist model, education leaders implemented inclusion programs designed to integrate students with disabilities into general-education classrooms, but the ideal degree of integration differed depending on whether a person fell into the “inclusion” camp (also referred to as “hybrid inclusion” in parts of this study) or the “full-inclusion” camp. While there are similarities in the objectives of the two approaches to inclusion, there are also significant differences.

Those who argue for “inclusion” or “hybrid inclusion” believe that students with disabilities should be integrated into general-education classes to some extent, but inclusionists also believe that students with disabilities should spend at least part of their school days in special-education classrooms. The goal of the inclusionist is not to eliminate special-education classrooms. That is the goal, however, of those who argue for “full inclusion.” They want all special-education instruction to happen within a general-education classroom because, “First, only full-time placement confers legitimacy on special-needs children’s membership and place in regular classrooms. Second, as long as special-education placements exist, educators may use them as dumping grounds for the difficult-to-teach student” (Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S., 1998, p. 80). Full-inclusion requires a more significant paradigm shift than inclusion, but supporters
argue that it will have greater benefits for children with disabilities, for children without
disabilities, and for society at large.

The majority (75.0%) of the respondents of this study’s survey fit within this
theoretical framework. In other words, three-quarters of the respondents believe in either one or
the other forms of inclusion. This means, however, that one-quarter of the respondents do not fit
within this framework. Before undertaking this study, I assumed that there was no longer any
debate among teachers about the value of inclusion education. I thought segregationist teachers
were a relic of a bygone era. Surprisingly, 25.0% of respondents replied that they strongly agreed
(1.8%), agreed (8.9%), or tended to agree (14.3%) with STATIC survey question 7, which read,
“I believe that children with special needs should be placed exclusively in special-education
classes rather than mainstreamed into general education classes.” This was perhaps the most
significant piece of data to come out of this study because it invalidated my belief that the debate
between the segregationists and the inclusionists was resolved. The truth is that researchers,
administrators, and educators should not be talking strictly about the debate between the hybrid
inclusionists and the full-inclusionists. Rather, education researchers and leaders should be
talking about the debate among three camps. It is essential to speak of this reality when
discussing teachers’ attitudes about inclusion education because it is difficult to imagine a
teacher who believes in the segregation of students with disabilities into separate special-
education classrooms having a positive attitude about full inclusion and about their roles in the
education of students with disabilities in general-education classrooms.

It should be noted, however, that there is no way to know whether the teachers who
replied that they agreed to some degree that students should be segregated into special-education
classrooms teach in special-education classrooms given that there was no category specific to
“special education” in demographic question 3, which asked, “What subject area do you teach?” It is possible that some or even all of the teachers who believe that students with disabilities should be segregated into special-education classrooms hold such a belief because they feel that it is in the best interests of the students to instruct them only in special-education classrooms. In other words, because it cannot be determined whether the teachers who believe in segregation are general-education teachers who may or may not teach students with disabilities or are special-education teachers who work exclusively with special-education students, it is impossible to know how this belief influences classroom instruction or the academic achievement of students with disabilities in those teachers’ schools.

Although it is impossible to know one way or another whether the 25.0% of respondents who replied that they believe in some level of segregation have negative feelings about inclusion education, it is possible that they are general-education teachers who teach students with disabilities, that they do have negative attitudes about inclusion education, and that those attitudes are affecting their students with disabilities. Approximately 21.5% of respondents replied that they strongly agreed (3.6%), agreed (3.6%), or tended to agree (14.3%) with STATIC survey question 9, which read, “I have problems teaching a student with cognitive deficits.” The word “problems” is subjective, and it can mean “difficulties” or “opposition to.” Thus, it is not safe to make too many assumptions about the mindsets of these respondents, but it is certainly possible that they meant “opposition to” when they replied that they agreed with this statement. If that is the case, then it is also possible that these respondents have not worked their way through the five stages of the Kubler-Ross model, which helps people progress from shock and denial to anger to resentment and guilt to depression and, finally, to acceptance. Teachers who have negative attitudes about inclusion education might benefit from a careful study of the
Kubler-Ross model, which is the second half of the theoretical framework used in this study. The students of those teachers who have negative attitudes about inclusion education might also see academic improvement if their teachers can work their way to full acceptance of full inclusion.

The study data revealed several other themes relevant to teachers’ attitudes about inclusion education. Many of the respondents reported that they did not feel that they had adequate materials, training, and support to teach students with disabilities. Exactly 50.0% of the respondents reported that they disagreed, to some degree, that, “Adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for meeting the needs of students with special needs.” Roughly 96.4% of the teachers indicated that they believe that schools should require in-service training for general-education teachers who teach students with disabilities in general-education classrooms. Finally, 21.5% disagreed, to some degree, that their principals are supportive in making accommodations for teaching students with special needs. A lack of materials, training, and support undoubtedly affect the attitudes of teachers who offer instruction to students with disabilities in general-education classrooms. While it is true that teachers with negative attitudes could help modify their attitudes about inclusion education by working their way through the Kubler-Ross model, school districts and individual schools can also help improve teachers’ attitudes about inclusion education by providing them with greater access to the materials necessary to provide effective education to students with disabilities in general-education classrooms, with more training specific to the instruction of special needs students, and with more support from principals and other administrators. Based on the data collected through this study, I make the following recommendations to education leaders in order to help their schools provide more effective instruction to students with disabilities: 1) School administrators must provide general-education teachers with ongoing, specific training related to strategies for
accommodating students with disabilities within general-education classrooms. 2) School administrators must increase access to materials and learning supports. 3) School administrators must provide more time for professional collaboration. 4) School administrators must provide greater support to their teachers. 5) School administrators must provide teachers with more time to plan for the needs of the students with disabilities. 6) School administrators must provide ongoing opportunities for general-education teachers to communicate with their administration about the specific needs related to the education of students with disabilities in general-education classrooms.

In summary, too many education leaders in America are failing our students with disabilities. We are providing them with ineffective education, which yields poor graduation rates and, potentially, life-long struggles in the work world. We can do so much more than we are currently doing to turn that tide, and we know what must be done. Classroom materials, teacher training, and teacher support—they are the key ingredients to academic success for students with disabilities. We can meet those needs if we can find the will. We can change the lives of countless students for the better if we can be better.
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Appendix A

Survey Instrument

The purpose of this survey is to examine the factors that may influence Title 1, urban high school teachers’ attitudes toward including students with special needs within full inclusion programs. All data collected will be confidential and used for the researcher’s dissertation project. Please know that participation is voluntary and there is no penalty for choosing not to participate. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Please fill in the blank and/or circle the response that best describes you.

1. What year did you obtain you teacher certification? ________
2. What is your gender? __________
3. What is your job title? _____________
4. What subject area do you teach? __________
5. What is your highest level of education? _________
6. How many students with special needs do you currently have in each of your classes? ______________
7. How many ESL students do you have in each of your classes? ________________
8. How many Title 1 students do you have in each of your classes? ________________
9. How many Title 1 students do you have who are also special needs in your classes? ______________
10. Which response best identifies the number of years’ experience you have including students with special needs in your classroom.

- 0-1 year
- 2-3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

11. Which best describes the amount of pre-service course work you completed that focuses on including students with special needs into the general education classroom.

- 0 courses
- 1-2 courses
- 3-4 courses
- 5 or more courses

12. Which best describes the amount of professional development workshops you completed that focus on including students with special needs into the general education classroom.

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5 or more

STATIC

0 Strongly Disagree
1 Disagree
2 Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3 Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4 Agree
5 Strongly Agree

Please circle the appropriate number for your response.
1. I am confident in my ability to teach children with special needs.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree

2. I have been adequately trained to meet the needs of children with special needs.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree

3. I become easily frustrated when teaching students with special needs.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
4. I become anxious when I learn that a student with special needs will be in my classroom.

5. Although children differ intellectually, physically, and psychologically, I believe that all children can learn in most environments.
6. I believe that academic progress is possible in children with special needs.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree

7. I believe that children with special needs should be placed in special education classes.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree

8. I am comfortable teaching a child that is moderately physically disabled.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree

9. I have problems teaching a student with cognitive deficits.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree

10. I can adequately handle students with mild to moderate behavioral problems.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree
11. Students with special needs learn social skills that are modeled by regular education students.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree

12. Students with special needs have higher academic achievements when included in the regular education classroom.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree
13. It is difficult for children with special needs to make strides in academic achievement in the regular education classroom.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree

14. Self-esteem of children with special needs is increased when included in the regular education classroom.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree
15. Students with special needs in the regular education classroom hinder the academic progress of the regular education student.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree

16. Special in-service training in teaching special needs students should be required for all regular education teachers.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree
17. I don’t mind making special physical arrangements in my room to meet the needs of students with special needs.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree

18. Adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for meeting the needs of students with special needs.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree
19. My principal is supportive in making needed accommodations for teaching children with special needs.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree

20. Students with special needs should be included in regular education classrooms.

0-Strong Disagree
1-Disagree
2-Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree
3-Not Sure, But Tend to Agree
4-Agree
5-Strongly Agree

Q-Sort Method Questions

1. Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you pick the two statements that you most agreed with?
2. Out of the 20 questions you just answered, why did you choose the two statements you most disagreed with?

Note: From Differences in Teachers’ Attitudes toward Inclusive Education as Measured by the Scale of Teachers’ Attitudes toward Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC) by H.K. Cochran, retrieved from ERIC Institute of Education Services. Copyright 1998 by H. K. Cochran. Unable to get permission to reprint. Question #7 was modified.
Appendix B

IRB Approval

To: Jeff Spaletta
Cc: Michelle Collay, Ph.D.
From: Brian Lynn, J.D.
Date: June 2, 2020
IRB Project # & Title: 060220-02; Examining the Challenges and Benefits of Inclusion in Urban Secondary Schools

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects has reviewed the materials submitted in connection with the above captioned project and has determined that the proposed work is exempt from IRB review and oversight as defined by 45 CFR 46.104(d)(2).

Additional IRB review and approval is not required for this protocol as submitted. If you wish to change your protocol at any time, including after any subsequent review by any other IRB, you must first submit the changes for review.

Please contact me at (207) 602-2244 or irb@une.edu with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Brian Lynn, J.D.
Director of Research Integrity
Appendix C

Invitation to Participate

Invitation to Participate in Research Study

June 8, 2020

Study Title: Examining the challenges and benefits of inclusion in urban secondary schools.

Principal Investigator: Jeff Spaletta, Doctoral Candidate, University of New England

Dear Potential Study Participant,

I am inviting you to participate in a qualitative study discussing teachers’ attitudes about inclusion in urban secondary schools. To participate in this study, you must: 1) be a secondary teacher in an urban high school and 2) currently teach in a Title 1 school. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Furthermore, your participation is anonymous.

Study's Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes of general-education teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding the ability of those teachers to provide effective academic instruction to students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs in those schools.

Research Questions: The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What are the attitudes of teachers working in urban, Title 1 secondary schools about full-inclusion programs that integrate students with disabilities into general education classrooms?
2. How do teachers describe their qualifications/preparation to provide appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms?
3. How do teachers describe the influence of professional development, resources, and administrative support on their attitudes about the inclusion programs in their schools?

Procedures: Teachers who meet the criteria will be selected based on their interest. An invitational post will be created by the researcher on teacher Facebook group platforms, LinkedIn and through email listserves. A secure link will be sent to those that confirm they meet the criteria and are interested in participating.
Confidentiality: Confidentiality of all participants will be protected in compliance with the University of New England's research with human participants policies and procedures. Names of the participants will not be recorded, nor identified through the study.

Compensation: No monetary or non-monetary compensation will be provided for your time or responses.

Questions: If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and your participation, please do not hesitate to contact me, the researcher, via email at jspaletta@une.edu, or via phone at (303) 709-9783. You may also contact the researcher's advisor at the University of New England at mcollay@une.edu or by telephone at (207) 602-2010.

Thank you for your valuable time and willingness to participate in this research study. Your contribution not only supports my dissertation study but also informs the current research on the study of inclusion.

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Click on the link below to start the consent and survey.

You may open the survey in your web browser by clicking the link below:

Consent for Participation

If the link above does not work, try copying the link below into your web browser:
https://redcap.une.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=FCY4LR8TCK

Sincerely,

Jeff Spaletta
Doctoral Candidate, Educational Leadership
University of New England
Appendix D

Consent to Participate

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION
IN ANONYMOUS SURVEY RESEARCH

Project Title: Examining the Challenges and Benefits of Inclusion in Urban Secondary Schools.

Principal Investigator(s): Jeff Spaletta

Introduction:

- Please read this form. The purpose of this form is to give you information about this research study.
- You are encouraged to ask any questions that you may have about this study, now, during or after the project is complete. Your participation is voluntary and your identity is not recorded.

Why is this research study being done?

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes of general-education teachers in urban, Title 1 high schools regarding the ability of those teachers to provide effective academic instruction to students with disabilities in full-inclusion programs in those schools.

Who will be in this study?

To participate in this study, you must: 1) be a secondary teacher in an urban high school and 2) currently teach in a Title 1 school.

What will I be asked to do?

Complete a survey about inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Prior to the survey, you will be asked to give your consent at the beginning of the survey. You will not be asked to place your name on the survey. At the beginning of the survey, you review the consent form to ensure you are aware of your rights.
What are the possible risks of taking part in this study?

There are no foreseeable psychological, social, physical, legal, or economic risks associated with participation in this study. There is no risk of group harm since your survey will be conducted through a secure data collection dashboard. The survey will be administered through REDCap, a secure web instrument for managing online surveys. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may choose to end your participation in this study at any time.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study.

What will it cost me?

There are no costs to the participants of this study. The study can be completed at your time and convenience.

How will my privacy be protected?

This study is confidential and anonymous. I will not collect any information about your identity. The records of this study will be kept confidential. Any physical research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password-protected file. Only the researcher, the researcher’s advisor and the IRB committee at UNE will have access to these records and they will only be used for educational purposes. Upon conclusion of the study, all records will be destroyed. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you. **PLEASE NOTE: THE UNE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD MAY REVIEW THE RESEARCH RECORDS.**

How will my data be kept confidential?

All notes, data, and digital transcriptions will be kept on password protected files in my home office and would only be accessible to me, my committee, and the Institutional Research Board. All computer files will be kept on a password-protected computer located in my home office, accessible only to me, my committee, and the UNE Institutional Research Board. **PLEASE NOTE: THIS SURVEY IS ANONYMOUS, PLEASE DON’T INCLUDE ANY INFORMATION THAT CAN IDENTIFY YOU.**

What are my rights as a research participant?

- Your participation is voluntary. Your decision to participate will have no impact on your current or future relations with the University.
- Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with University of New England.
- You may skip or refuse to answer any question for any reason.
• If you choose not to participate there is no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.

• You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time, for any reason.
  o If you choose to withdraw from the research there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.

• If you sustain an injury while participating in this study, your participation may be ended.

What other options do I have?

• You may choose not to participate.

Whom may I contact with questions?

• The researchers conducting this study is Jeff Spaletta.
  o For more information regarding this study, please contact 303-709-9783.

• If you choose to participate in this research study and believe you may have suffered a research related injury, please contact the researcher's advisor at the University of New England, Dr. Michelle Collay via email at mcollay@une.edu.

• If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may call Mary Bachman DeSilva, Sc.D., Chair of the UNE Institutional Review Board at (207) 221-4567 or irb@une.edu.

Will I receive a copy of this consent form?

• You print and keep a copy of this consent form.

Participant Consent Statement:

I understand the above description of the research and the risks and benefits associated with my participation as a research subject. I understand that by proceeding with this survey I agree to take part in this research and do so voluntarily.
Researcher’s Statement:

The participant had sufficient time to consider the information, had an opportunity to ask questions, and voluntarily agreed to be in this study.

__________________________________________    __________________________
Researcher’s signature                          Date

__________________________________________
Printed name
Appendix E

Survey Data

*Open-Ended Questions Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Q_Sort_Agree</th>
<th>Q_Sort_Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students with special needs should be included in general education classroom.</td>
<td>15. Students with special needs in the regular education classroom hinder the academic progress of the regular education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I believe special education students develop higher self-esteem when included in a regular classroom with their peers because of the removal of stigma associated with designated special education classrooms and therefore, should be included in those classrooms.</td>
<td>I was not adequately prepared to meet the needs of my special needs’ students through traditional training or professional development preparation, so finding the appropriate materials is a continuous challenge.</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sometimes the general education kids are horrible role models and have impacted my ESL/special education kids for the worse. Also, with serious literacy issues we need time to intervene and build skills. 4 adults in a classroom of 34 students is a waste. Smaller groups would be better for pacing and stop humiliation and bullying. When kids are all on the same path and no one is taking out the obstacles some are going to stumble. Good intentions of ICT have led to the kids who need small group instruction being tossed into a class with others and they suffer while the 4 adult team scrambles to be</td>
<td>I am speaking from experience in a small school of under 400 students in NYC. The ones I have worked in were not able to meet the needs of their special education and ELL students. It is a function of the loss of large school departments, experienced teachers, resources acquired over time, and dedicated space. The reality is some of these kids in these environments are better served in small classes for specific subjects, not for all. We have had general education students complain when a 2nd teacher walks in and loudly asks 'Is this an Ed class?' We have had parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
heard and instruct. For every outlier dream team with a large classroom and space to do coteaching well, there is the team falling apart struggling in a small classroom to be heard and the kids suffer. There are specialized trainings and programs for kids like Wilson that are pushed to the side because of bureaucracy and programming needs. I have seen IEPs changed to fit the school not the kids.

demand changes of their general education child from ICT classes. To fill the AP for all classes, all the kids that could be transferred were taken and the ICT ELA class was left with ELLs and SWD. The ELLs were used as backfill for general education students for ratio purposes. The whole purpose of ICT was then subverted, and our class impacted. To be able to even hear ourselves we pulled groups out to unused classrooms so they could speak freely and read aloud and make mistakes, mispronounce, or do an alternative activity, without being bullied or humiliated, mocked or having their paper snatched. The reality of regent’s exams for our students impact our evaluations and drive most teachers’ instruction. This impacts the pace and focus of curricula and is not fair to many SWD who are along for the ride no matter how bumpy. So, where my heart understands including students, I also see how in practice, under the politics and funding, staffing and parental influence, it does not always work out and the kids suffer. The kids who cut class, got suspended, and fought were often students who had literacy issues, were humiliated in class, could not keep up, and were not having their needs met. We were able to get home schooling
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<td>4</td>
<td>for one kid, but the others, fell through the cracks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Special needs kids placed in regular classes. Principal being cooperative in collaboration.</td>
<td>Special needs students hindered with academics when placed in regular class. Difficult for special kids to achieve academic success by being in regular class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I believe special needs students can flourish in any environment with the right support.</td>
<td>Students with special needs are human beings. Like all children they learn differently. Consistency and respect are the primary tools for all students to be successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>All children can excel academically if the proper tools and environment are provided as well as the proper diagnosis. Also, I have had physically challenged students and I did not have a problem making sure they had the proper accommodations.</td>
<td>In my experience, I have watched special needs students fail because they do not want the extra help required. They are afraid their peers will find out. I do not like that severely special needs and behavioral students are in the general education classroom. Some of them are disruptive, others take more time from the classroom flow by having to reteach when it is already hard to keep attention. Differentiation is at so many levels and very time consuming when you are faced with 35 brains to teach. Inclusion/co-teachers can help or hinder but they are a sure sign that there is a special education student present, and that lowers self-esteem dramatically.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>I am a special education teacher.</td>
<td>Depends on the disability the child has.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>My principal is always supportive in getting the necessary resources for special needs students. Also,</td>
<td>I do not have a problem with teaching a child with cognitive deficit. I also never become anxious seeing a</td>
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<td>adaptive materials are easily acquired for special needs students.</td>
<td>special needs kid in my classroom.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Of course, I think all students can learn -- I could hardly be a teacher otherwise!</td>
<td>I do not become easily frustrated in general, and I prefer my classes with more special needs students because it means I get a co-teacher (and I work very well with her).</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Yes, I always have a positive attitude that every child has a right to learn.</td>
<td>Special education students not able to perform in regular class.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Students with special needs can make higher gains if included in regular education classrooms.</td>
<td>Students with special needs in the regular education classroom DO NOT hinder the academic progress of the regular education student.</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Some of the questions did not pertain to all schools, like high school and middle school. Some kids with special needs are forced to go into regular classes without support.</td>
<td>Some students do not get support in regular classes and they need help with typing on computers and answering questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>General education kids are good role models for special education kids. Special education kids can thrive in a general education class.</td>
<td>Special education kids do not hinder general education kids.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Students with disabilities can succeed in mainstream classes, and it raises the self esteem of special needs students to be included in mainstream classes.</td>
<td>Special needs students hinder the learning of others. It is difficult for special needs students to make strides in mainstream classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I have been trained in special education. I have my ED/BD, LD, EMH/TMH, and severe/profound.</td>
<td>You generalize too much when you say should someone be in general education classes. Not all students fit in one</td>
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<td>environment. I have a learning disability myself and I know I did much better in my specialized English class in college compared to the general college class. They could help work with my disability better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Student should be included when possible.</td>
<td>It is not hard to include special education students if you have the staff and funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I believe that special education students do learn better in a regular education class.</td>
<td>Materials are needed to help ensure the success of all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I agree about keeping the disabled students in the regular classroom.</td>
<td>I disagreed about keeping the disabled students in the special classroom. Some disabled students can perform well in the regular classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Special needs children have as much to offer socially as typical children. We all learn in different ways and many of my special needs’ students offer insight into the struggles others may face, for me and other students.</td>
<td>When offered opportunities on their level, all children, including special needs children, can learn. They do not hinder others academically.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>6 &amp; 7. Academic progress can be achieved if the special children are kept in special classrooms because they need extra help, support, time &amp; individual care.</td>
<td>I did not disagree with any of the questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Students with special needs need to be educated along with general education students when possible. It teaches much needed social skills and can increase self-esteem when done correctly.</td>
<td>If the teacher has the necessary tools and knowledge, having special needs students in a class will not affect the rigor of the rest of the students. Depending on the academic level of the</td>
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<td>special need’s student, that may require additional support.</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>I believe all students have the capacity to learn in the least-restrictive environment. I have taught students with special needs for 18 years and they want to be included. They want to belong.</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>I feel extremely comfortable working with all types of learners. I think diversity is what makes us stronger as a community. We can all learn from each other.</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>I do believe everyone can learn – just not in the same ways or in the same capacity. The focus should be on the learner’s growth and progress over time.</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>The fact that I have had pretty much no training and there are special education teachers who have a whole degree in it – yet I am supposed to know how to do it without any training or education. It is frustrating and makes me feel insecure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>That special education students can learn and achieve.</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>That any students would be unable to learn. That is disappointing and just not true.</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>#16. General education teachers have no idea what to do with special education kids. Principals usually do not know either because they have not taught special education kids.</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>#15. If you know how to teach all levels, have a good mentor, and explicitly taught how to teach all levels, then everyone can excel in the same classroom.</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>More training is needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Not sure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>16. Possibly the hardest part of my job is facilitating the behavioral success for my students in inclusion classes, without being able to attend the class. 20. Inclusion is so important on so many levels, but it needs to be done right. I am not even sure if the</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>15. A good teacher who is strong at differentiating can meet the needs of their students who require increased support and those who are autonomous. Also, general education students with behavioral concerns can be empowered in a role</td>
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<tr>
<td>general education teachers at my school understand person first language.</td>
<td>supporting their peers with disabilities. I believe most general education teachers lack the training to facilitate the same growth for a student with a disability in their classroom as a resource room. Also, a resource room probably has more resources for the students with disabilities, which is also a problem with inclusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I believe special educations students can achieve success based on their disability and I think they need to be mainstreamed when possible.</td>
<td>Teachers are not adequately trained or supported to support special education students.</td>
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<td>I choose to put agreed option because students with special needs deserve the right of getting proper education as like what the regular students receive. Not only that, with providing proper care, teaching and support, we, the teachers, can help to make certain diamonds out of them.</td>
<td>I put the disagreed option because students with special needs require special care and support by putting them in a controlled environment. Once they improve there, then we may transfer them to the regular students' classroom. This phase by phase option will give the space of adaptation to the student with special needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education consists of more than academic achievement. Students with special needs gain a better whole person education when included in the classroom environment. Teachers should be comfortable teaching all children in their classrooms no matter what their needs.</td>
<td>Materials are not made with special needs children in mind for the regular education classroom. Time and effort are added onto teachers to make the necessary modifications for students with special needs to learn at their level. All students benefit in the classroom environment. When students leave school and enter the working world,</td>
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<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>they will need to have the skills to work with all types of people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>I believe students with special needs can learn in mainstream classes!</td>
<td>Some special needs children are not at all special needs. They are simply misdiagnosed and or lazy because of their parents!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Most special education students work harder than regular education students and are a joy to have in class.</td>
<td>It is not easy to get help with supplies or supports. They are often left to the teacher to buy with personal money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Students with special needs have superpowers that they can learn to harness in the general education classrooms. General education students can learn a lot from special education students.</td>
<td>General education teachers are not taught to help special education students or even read an IEP. We would be better teachers if we were all required to get a special education endorsement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>I can work with students with special needs if I have the support of the family. The supplies and school resources support are what I will need.</td>
<td>The support system must be.</td>
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<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>I am a third-grade classroom teacher and while there may be social and emotional benefits to inclusion, the expectation that I can serve the special academic needs student while managing a full classroom of third graders is not realistic. They may absorb a thing or two, but I'm there to teach third grade, not third grade and a side of whatever level the special needs student needs. We are human. The illusion that we can teach to individual levels is just that... an illusion.</td>
<td>The special needs students do not have high academic achievement because nobody is teaching them at their own rate and level. I would agree with a model where the special needs student joins for PE, art, but not academic core content.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>All special education students should be placed in regular classrooms. Special education students learn best when in regular classrooms.</td>
<td>Materials and training are not always available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>15. Students with special needs in the regular education classroom hinder the academic progress of the regular education student.</td>
<td>Adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for meeting the needs of students with special needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>I think all students can learn and grow in the traditional classroom regardless of any disabilities.</td>
<td>I feel teachers are not given enough training and resources on how to respond to students with special needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>All students - regardless of need - deserve to interact and learn with their peers (unless IEP/ability is not permissible). General education teachers make a bigger impact than they may realize in a SWD.</td>
<td>Not all administrators agree with inclusion (especially those that buy into the politics rather than the academics). Budgets and accessibility of material may not exist.</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>All children can learn, and I can make physical environment accommodations very easily. Those are both things we learn to do for general education. I do not have specific courses for special education children.</td>
<td>I do not believe students that have severe special needs belong in a general education classroom. I have seen the distraction and slowing down the general education students. I also did not feel I was responsible for those students. The teachers that specialize in that area want those students. Most general education classes are too large and too much of a distraction for special education students.... it is not fair to either group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>By law, my principal must be supportive of</td>
<td>I do not become easily frustrated with special education kids. I do not think</td>
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<td></td>
<td>accommodations. Also, more training would be helpful.</td>
<td>there should be exclusively special education classes for most kids.</td>
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<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>14 &amp; 17</td>
<td>7 &amp; 19 (my principal is a narcissist- he does not care about staff or students - thankfully, we have amazing teachers and paraprofessionals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>I have observed successes with these students. Questions were somewhat challenging as there is such a large range of special needs.</td>
<td>Lack of available support due to financial issues in the school system.</td>
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<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>All students deserve an education.</td>
<td>I do not know how much administration is involved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>I believe all children should be treated equally &amp; therefore be given the same opportunities as any other child.</td>
<td>All children are not the same; therefore, they do not learn the same. I believe all children require some special way of instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Training for teachers and students input.</td>
<td>Cannot broad stroke all disabilities.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>In general, I believe that teachers need to be better trained and more educated to best handle all students, special needs, and general population. Standards must be much stricter for the welfare of our students.</td>
<td>On some of the initial questions, I notated 'Strongly Disagree' because I believe that all students can learn. Having a special education student does not make me nervous because I see them as people, like you and I. Special treatment that isolates and/or coddles these students are the reason for their unfortunate failure in most cases. Teachers who are not comfortable with all students for any reason do not have what it takes to be a teacher</td>
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and should leave the profession so that their students are not failed by them.

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<tr>
<th>85</th>
<th>I felt most confident in those answers.</th>
<th>Last of current training for special needs students.</th>
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<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>I believe that inclusion is the best way to teach special needs students. It is good for the special needs students as well as the rest of the students. I find that the rest of the class learned humility and patience from having special needs students.</td>
<td>The only possible reason that a special needs student may hinder the rest of the class, is if they make excessive noise that is hard to control. However, students need to be able to learn in a variety of environments. Additionally, having an aide for special needs students depending on the severity of their handicap is also essential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>6. All children can learn. 16. All teachers should have training on how best to educate students with special needs.</td>
<td>7. Students with special needs should be placed in the environment that is best suited for their learning. Sometimes that is in the general education classroom, sometimes it is in the special education classroom. 13. If a teacher is any good at teaching, all students can learn in the general education classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>SWD should be included and only provided special education services for specific skills vs. replacement of entire curriculum.</td>
<td>Principals are not supportive of SWD and therefore do not advocate for needed teaching tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Special education students need opportunities for inclusion.</td>
<td>However, it is difficult to manage their academic and emotional needs with such high-class numbers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Because all special education students are capable of learning in a regular</td>
<td>All students deserve to experience the same</td>
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classroom regardless of their circumstances. education and have the same opportunities.

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*Blank spaces in the above table indicate participants that didn’t complete the survey.*