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Core Content Teachers' Preparedness and Perception of Inclusive Education in Central Ohio Schools

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CORE CONTENT TEACHERS'
PREPAREDNESS AND PERCEPTION
OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN CENTRAL OHIO SCHOOLS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

By

CHRISTINE ANN CRUMBACHER
B.S., Wright State University, 2005

2007
Wright State University

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WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
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May 14, 2007

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Christine Ann Crumbacher ENTITLED Core Content Teachers' Preparedness and Perceptions of Inclusive Education in Central Ohio Schools. BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Crumbacher, Christine Ann. M.A., Department of Teacher Education, College of Education and Human Services, Intervention Specialist Program, Wright State University, 2007. Core Content Teachers' Preparedness and Perceptions of Inclusive Education in Central Ohio Schools.

The purpose of this study was to survey core content teachers' (CCTs) perceptions of working with children with disabilities in the subject areas of English, math, science and social studies in two school districts (referred to as school district 1 and 2). The survey consisted of 3 subscales: internal, external and social and were formatted in a Likert-type scale. The research questions in this study are: 1.) Do CCTs feel prepared to teach students with disabilities across districts and buildings based on the internal subscale? 2.) Do schools prepare CCTs to teach students with disabilities across districts and buildings based on the external subscale? 3.) Do CCTs see social improvements in students with disabilities across districts and buildings based on the social subscale? 4.) Does subject taught by the CCT have an overall effect on how inclusion is perceived based on the internal and external subscales? 5.) Do age, gender, degree awarded and district influence the way CCTs perceive inclusion based on the external subscale.

With a significance level $\alpha = .05$, the perceptions of CCTs regarding how their school districts prepare them to teach students with disabilities are influenced by gender (p-value = .0149) and marginally by school district (p-value = .0804). Degree, age or building types did not have important influences on these perceptions. No other significant results were observed.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine core content teachers' (CCTs) perceptions of inclusion in two central Ohio school districts. This research compares the perceptions of inclusion between teachers and between school districts considering teacher preparation for inclusion. Much work has been attributed to the study of inclusion, but little research accounts for interactions between CCTs and children with disabilities placed in their classrooms. A background questionnaire and survey assessed CCTs' beliefs concerning inclusion. The survey assessed personal beliefs, relationships with co-workers and preparation for inclusive education. The researcher is interested in seeing significances and differences between teachers, schools and between districts.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas in 1954 ended separate but equal facilities in school systems. A major defense for this decision is the fourteenth amendment declaring segregation by race illegal; as a result schools could not discriminate by ability or disability (Pierangleo & Guliani, 2006). Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 1997, schools across the United States must enforce the rules and regulations that support this message of including children with disabilities in the general education classroom whenever possible. In fact, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) states that all teachers have a duty to include children with disabilities (Burke & Sutherland, 2005). Attitude studies concerning inclusion have been done and replicated prior to this, but examiners can't

forget important factors such as teacher/student interactions, communication skills, job training-skills, teacher's age and interpersonal conflicts in order to fully understand why people hold beliefs about inclusion.

Significance of the Study

There is a need to focus on CCTs' knowledge concerning inclusion, as it exists within the classroom. The CCTs are doing successful inclusion instruction, modifications, and socialization practices between students and these areas deserve a closer inspection. The survey results will be paired with the CCTs background information and the following areas will be addressed: 1.) preparedness 2.) social aspects concerning inclusion 3.) subject areas taught by the CCTs and how that relates to their perceptions concerning inclusion and 4.) how gender, degree, age and district affect perceptions.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to survey the perceptions of CCTs concerning inclusion in two central Ohio school districts. The dependent variables in this study are the perceptions of the CCTs. The independent variables include teacher preparedness, subject taught, gender, age, degree awarded and school district.

Definition of Terms

Core Content Teachers (CCTs): Any certified teacher in math, English, science, or social studies teaching from grades K-12.

External: A subscale on the survey that provides information on qualities outside of the CCTs control such as administrator support, financial support, time to modify lessons, gender and age.

Full inclusion: Allowing children with disabilities full access to general education classrooms and curriculum all day.

General education classroom- A content classroom containing typically developing children.

General education teachers: All CCTs including the rest of the buildings' certified teachers, for example, business teachers and health teachers.

IEP: Individualized Education Plan devised for all children with disabilities that describes their skill, cognitive ability, past abilities and future goals. This plan describes goals and objectives for those children that are specific, measurable, and obtainable.

Internal: A subscale on the survey that provides information on qualities such as self-confidence, preparedness, and comfort.

Inclusion: The act of including children with disabilities regardless of their physical, mental, or social ability into a general education classroom in the least restrictive environment possible.

In-service teacher: A person already in the field of education, currently working as a certified teacher.

Intervention Specialist: A certified teacher that works with children with disabilities.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): Teaching children with disabilities in a setting that is most conducive to their academic/social needs.

Multi-factored evaluation (MFE): A process to determine if a student qualifies for special education by testing the child in more than one area of learning.

NCLB: A law passed in 2002 by Congress that stands for No Child Left Behind. This law protects minorities, poor children, and children with disabilities to ensure that they get a free and appropriate education.

Perceptions: How CCTs' view and formulate ideas concerning themselves, typically developing students and students with disabilities based on the internal, external and social subscales.

Preparedness: How well a CCT feels, acts, and displays confidence and teaching ability in their subject area.

Pre-service teacher: A person enrolled in a university studying to become a certified teacher.

Resource room: A classroom designed for students with disabilities to receive guided help, usually with an intervention specialist as the head teacher.

Social: A subscale on the survey that provides information on behaviors displayed by the students and how they interact with others, for example, how typically developing students communicate with students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities: Any student that has been identified by a multi-factored evaluation (MFE) as having a specific learning need or accommodation.

Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

- 1) Do CCTs feel prepared to teach students with disabilities across districts and buildings based on the internal subscale?
- 2) Do schools prepare CCTs to teach students with disabilities across districts and buildings based on the external subscale?

- 3) Do CCTs see social improvements in students with disabilities across districts and buildings based on the social subscale?
- 4) Does subject taught by the CCT have an overall effect on how inclusion is perceived based on the internal and external subscales?
- 5) Do the following factors influence the way CCTs perceive inclusion based on the external subscale?
 - age
 - gender
 - degree awarded
 - district

Assumptions

The researcher assumes that all participants in the study will answer all questions to the best of their ability and that they will follow specific directions in the survey and questionnaire packet provided. The researcher also assumes participants will not change their answers after reading the debrief page. Furthermore, all participants will turn in their survey and background information in the week provided.

Scope

The researcher chose to survey two school districts. Both districts employ a large number of CCTs to survey. There is no control over the respondents' backgrounds, subject(s) they teach, or years of teaching experience. In this study, the researcher developed all testing materials.

Summary

While some CCTs view inclusion as beneficial to the well-being of all children, others find inclusion as time consuming and distracting. Why inclusion works in some classrooms and not others is still a mystery as much as a debate. Since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, schools across the United States enforce the rules and regulations that go along with its message of including children with disabilities whenever possible. In this study, the researcher is surveying CCT's perceptions concerning inclusion. First, the researcher will assess the background and teacher preparedness of each participant. Then the CCTs will fill out an opinion questionnaire concerning inclusion, which will assess a baseline on their opinions regarding inclusion. The last page of the packet will debrief the participants. The researcher will compare the background questionnaire to the survey addressing inclusion for the results section.

Overview

Chapter 1 explained the laws and expectations set upon CCTs to educate and include children with disabilities. It discussed the need for knowledge concerning inclusion, as it exists within the classroom. Chapter 2 reports prior knowledge from research on attitudes and perceptions concerning inclusion. Chapter 3 discusses the population of the study and the methods. It will also divulge the design, analysis procedures and data collection procedures. Chapter 4 revisits the hypotheses, discusses the null hypotheses and provides graphics of the study. Chapter 5, the final chapter, will highlight the present study, draw conclusions, and provide recommendations for future studies.

II. BACKGROUND THEORY

All forms of mainstreaming or integration will be referred to as inclusion from this point forward. In 2004, Burke and Sutherland stated, “Successful implementation of an inclusion program depends on the attitudes of those who will work most closely with the students involved” (p. 164).

At this point, nearly every teacher in the United States is aware of efforts to include students with disabilities into the general education classroom. What some teachers don't fully understand are the complexities surrounding the design, instruction, and communication of teaching and learning between special educators and general educators in classrooms. Teachers face fears, inadequacies, aggravation, and hope about inclusion (Shade and Stewart, 2001). The laws of special education began in 1975 with Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This law stated that all children should be educated with a free and appropriate education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment as possible. Prior to this law children with disabilities were educated, mostly in segregated settings or separate buildings. Public funds were not available for students with disabilities and only those children with moderate/intense educational needs received instruction and services. Despite the growing trend to educate all students, many parents and teachers felt that their children were not receiving all the necessary provisions to prosper in the educational system. Public Law 94-142 was reauthorized and acquired the change to Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1990. This old law with a new name reinforced education for all but also brought ideas

concerning inclusion for all children in general education classes. Schools around the country began adopting inclusion models, even though many schools do not practice full inclusion (Snyder, 1999).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Inclusive Practices

Children with disabilities benefit socially from inclusion (Schneider & Leroux, 1994). In a 1988 study, D.S. Huefner revealed there was a reduction in the stigma associated with students with disabilities. He also discovered greater collaboration and encouragement between CCTs and special educators, and increased interaction between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. In 1994, Schneider and Leroux found lowered self-esteem but higher academic achievement among students with emotional/behavioral disorder (EBD) in inclusive classrooms. Not all educators agree that inclusion should be used for social morale boosters and past court cases support this notion. In *Board of Education v. Rowley* (1982), the court stated that students must receive some sort of educational benefit to inclusion other than social implications. The court in *Mark Hartmann v. Loudoun County Board of Education* (1997) ruled that socialization alone was an insufficient reason for inclusion (Heflin & Bullock, 1999).

Many administrators want to know what academic implications inclusion has to provide children with disabilities. The lack of research concerning inclusion, according to Feiler and Gibson (1999) should not make us question the art of inclusive practices but speculate on its educational implications and values. The four principles that Feiler and Gibson question are: the definition of inclusion, the merciless labeling of children with disabilities, performance competition between schools, and the lack of conclusive

evidence for inclusion. Feiler and Gibson state: “If inclusion is to work it must be defined from the beginning” (p. 148).

CCTs comment on the disadvantages of inclusion by expressing these concerns: there is insufficient support and training, there are too many students with disabilities in comparison to other students, there is not enough time to talk with other team members or to make curriculum modifications, the CCTs are unable to meet the needs of other students in the classroom, and that there is no time to correctly implement behavior modifications (Heflin & Bullock, 1999). Robertson, Chaberslain, and Kasari (2003) agree, stating not only is there not enough time to meet the needs of other children, but CCTs working with students with disabilities may treat them less favorably if their disability is more severe. Research reveals there is some disconnect between the CCT and a child with disabilities if the child shows characteristics of having lower cognitive capabilities. Severe mental disabilities and multiple disabilities are seen less favorably, while medical disabilities are seen as more manageable (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000).

Many examiners ask if the universities that teachers are enrolled in change the way they feel concerning inclusion versus teachers that already have experience. A study by Burke and Sutherland in 2004 assessed pre-service and in-service teachers positive beliefs concerning inclusion. These examiners hypothesized that pre-service teachers would lack the necessary experience due to a new career and would tend to believe what they were currently studying in school. On the flip side, Pennell & Firestonem (1996) said that in-service teachers’ education and experience would, in some way, change their perceptions concerning inclusion (as cited in Burke & Sutherland, 2004). Burke and Sutherland’s study (2004) took pre-service teachers who attended a private college in

Brooklyn, New York and in-service teachers from a Queen's elementary school and compared their perceptions concerning inclusion. The results of this study indicate that pre-service teachers had more positive attitudes when it came to inclusion than in-service teachers. The in-service teachers felt that their preparation programs for working with children with disabilities enhanced their preparedness while pre-service teachers didn't feel adequately prepared. In addition, pre-service teachers were more agreeable about working with children with disabilities than in-service teachers. Pre-service teachers believed that children with disabilities would benefit academically, more than in-service teachers. Lastly, pre-service teachers felt that all students with disabilities should be included while in-service teachers were slightly less optimistic about inclusion (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). Note that even though pre-service teachers were more willing to adapt and include students with disabilities, in-service teachers had more experience and may have been in a situation where they felt inclusion was not the right answer for all children. Burke and Sutherland (2004) mentioned that pre-service teachers were generally more positive about inclusion; however this didn't mean that in-service teachers were negative.

Teamwork and District Support

When working with students with disabilities, examiners found that working in a team setting increased approval. Malone, Gallagher, and Long (2001) completed a study in southern Ohio asking 148 early childhood/elementary CCTs to fill out three separate teamwork surveys. All of the CCTs were members of a team that assisted students with disabilities. These examiners found an overall acceptance from the CCTs regarding use of teamwork in serving students with disabilities.

District and administrator support could affect the way CCTs' perceive inclusion. A qualitative study done by Rebecca Snyder in 1999 was designed to collect information regarding CCTs' attitudes concerning the amount of support and assistance provided to general education teachers. Although total inclusion was not enforced in the schools surveyed in this study, the study showed a majority of teachers thought administrators, teachers, and Intervention Specialists needed to be more aggressive when preparing the CCTs for the impact of inclusion. When the CCTs were asked about the amount of administrator support they received, 75% felt that they were not supportive while 25% thought they were getting the support they needed. When it came to what kind of support the CCTs needed, teachers noted the administrators didn't offer enough training for the faculty. Another question Snyder (1999) polled was the percent of CCTs who attended in-service workshops focused on the topic of teaching students with disabilities. Of the people polled, 70% said that they had not received any in-service workshop training. Interestingly, 13.3% of people had only taken one graduate course in working with students with disabilities and 25% took one course in their undergraduate degrees.

Having an Intervention Specialist in the classroom with the CCT didn't necessarily equate support. In a study by Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, and MacFarland (1997) when CCTs were asked about support from their own Intervention Specialists, 55% thought that the Intervention Specialists were not supportive, while 45% were considered supportive. Having a paraprofessional in the classroom has greatly decreased the likelihood of teacher-child stress in that the paraprofessional will act as a buffer

between the teacher and the child, thus decreasing or limiting teacher/student interaction (as cited in Robertson, Chabernain, & Kasari, 2003).

The CCTs complained, in Snyder's study, that there was not enough time to communicate properly and hold meetings. Some even mentioned that the Intervention Specialists were overworked and underpaid, and that some were at their maximum capacity for classroom size. The teachers who answered that their schools were supportive of inclusion efforts commented that there was constant communication between Intervention Specialists and CCTs (Snyder, 1999).

In regard to confidence factors or internalizing, some CCTs revealed a lack of comfort working with children with whom they had little contact throughout the day or if the disability was more challenging (Snyder, 1999). A survey by Snyder revealed CCTs' confidence in working with students with disabilities and found that 84.4% of teachers were not confident when working with students with disabilities, while 15.6% were confident (1999).

Snyder's study indicates CCTs and Intervention Specialists should take the initiative in understanding each other's viewpoints and must constantly communicate in order to meet the needs of all students. Snyder reveals that administrators need to facilitate collaboration by developing in-service workshops and providing updated information on workshops. Furthermore, administrators should encourage local universities to change the college curriculum to emphasize children with disabilities so that there is more awareness about disabilities among future CCTs (Snyder, 1999). The meta-analysis in 1996 from Scruggs and Mastropieri accounted for 28 survey reports on inclusion across 43 years. In this study, two-thirds of the 10,560 teachers surveyed

agreed to the concept of inclusion, but only 40 percent believed it was a realistic goal due to the severity of certain disabilities. Scruggs and Mastropieri's findings suggest that attitudes on inclusion produced no correlations between positive attitudes of inclusion and date of publication, suggesting that the attitudes of teachers didn't change substantially throughout the years (as cited in Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Some studies suggest that the severity of the disability can influence whether or not a core content teacher is comfortable teaching that student. Garvar-Pinhas and Schmelkin's study indicates that people who are more distant from the student with disabilities: the administrators and advisors, are more likely to express positive attitudes for inclusion than people who are closer to the students with disabilities, for example, the CCTs and the Intervention Specialists. This supports some theories that CCTs are uncomfortable with students with disabilities. Yet, the CCTs were found to have the most negative attitude towards inclusion (as cited in Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). In a similar study in 1995, Forlin found teachers who teach at Education Support Centers (ESN, centers that cater to children with disabilities) were more accepting to students that had physical and intellectual disabilities than teachers who were at typical schools. Forlin concluded that resource room teachers had a more positive attitude when it came to inclusion than their conventional co-workers, which seems to target the issue of inclusion to as an internal issue and not an external issue. (as cited in Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Moreover, Public Law 94-142 was presented to the United States in 1975, so any teacher over a certain age would most likely have differences of opinion concerning inclusion. Age appeared to have an impact in Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs, and Mastropieri's study. People receiving their schooling before these dates were not

subjected to inclusion firsthand, therefore older teacher's opinions would be different than younger teachers' opinions. In an attitude study by Leyer, Kapperman and Keller (1994), teachers with 14 years or less teaching experience had higher positive scores compared to teachers who had 14 years or more of teaching experience.

In conclusion, research reports teachers agree that all teachers need more training, support, resources and assistance when teaching children with disabilities.

Subject Taught and Degrees Awarded

Additionally, many studies have investigated the relationships between grade levels and subject matter taught. In a 1993 study by Rojeweski and Pollard, secondary CCTs were found to strongly believe that inclusion was needed for social reasons, rather than academic achievement. In this study, the principals of each individual school chose the best CCTs to be sampled for this survey so that the researchers could pinpoint the reasons why inclusion was working in their classrooms. Rojeweski and Pollard found that the characteristics of good CCTs depended on three things: different attitudes concerning inclusion, awareness of obstacles to inclusion, and teachers who accept accountability for students with disabilities (as cited in Olson, Chalmers & Hoover, 1997).

Besides grade levels taught, examiners wanted to know if subject area taught made a difference on the opinions concerning inclusion and Ellins and Porter (2005) found that it did. Ellins and Porter's study separated teachers in Pine Grove School according to their subject level taught and surveyed how each person felt about inclusion and then recorded positive and negative comments by department. With a total of 61 people consisting of teachers of nine subject areas, including staff and administrators,

Ellins and Porter found significant differences of opinion concerning inclusion using a Likert-type questionnaire. These examiners found that English had the highest positive scores, science had the lowest scores and math was in the middle. Ellins and Porter also measured the progress of students with disabilities and those that did not have disabilities. They found that the progress of students with disabilities was lower in science and mathematics, but not in English classes.

Other variables considered in this study by Porter and Ellins found people with a higher degree, such as a Certificate of Education or Bachelor of Education degree, were more positive towards children with disabilities. For special education, the higher the degree the teacher had obtained, the more positive they were about inclusion (Ellins & Porter, 2005). Another variable considered was the gender of the teachers. Even though gender was not as significant, it was established that females were more positive in their views about inclusion than males. Training was another variable studied that had an effect on perceptions. In Ellins and Porter (2005) more training didn't affect the teacher's answers when it came to inclusion. In fact, 50% of all teachers polled had negative or neutral opinions of continued training in special education. Leyser, Kapperman and Keller found that training positively influences attitudes (as cited in Ellins & Porter, 2005).

Being confident in teaching students with disabilities can contribute to a better approach in preparing for teaching. Ellins and Porter (2005) suggested that the level of completed education made an impact on CCTs perceptions concerning inclusion, but Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick and Sheer disagree (1990). In a state-wide study, Intervention Specialists were mailed out a survey and asked to distribute the material to

CCTs in the building inquiring about the relationships between Intervention Specialists and CCTs. With participants mean age of forty-two and 47% completing their masters or above, Buell et. al. found some remarkable differences in relationship perceptions. One major difference was the lack of confidence that CCTs felt in their ability to write IEPs and participate in IEP conferences. Other implications in this study were CCTs feeling uncertain when modifying curriculum, attending to behavior issues, and providing individual assistance. Buell et. al. findings were significant because, according to the examiners, all CCTs should have these skills, not just those in unfamiliar territory (as cited in Avramidis et. al, 2000). Ellins and Porter (2005) also suggested that buying “subject-specific consultant time” could be an option for CCTs in their study.

Secondary Education

According to research, secondary education seems to pose greater social involvement than any other grade level for children with disabilities (Hibbert and Sprinthall, 1995). Inclusion is about a supporting and accepting environment and it should start early in a child’s life, according to Hibbert and Sprinthall. These examiners suggest that before middle school education begins, students should have a firm understanding of their learning abilities. All counselors, administrators and subject area teachers, as well as staff members, aids, and Intervention Specialists should have a fixed understanding and definition of inclusion in their school system. In a study done by Hibbert and Sprinthall, three groups of children were categorized in a nine-month study comparing a full inclusion group to a partially included group, and then a group with no children with disabilities (1995). These examiners called the groups: the “inclusive preschool program,” the “mainstream preschool program,” and the “regular education

classroom,” respectively. These children were instructed typically and aids were provided to oversee the special education classrooms. The 3 to 5 year old kids were given a pretest by the following two scales: McCarthy Scales of Children’s Abilities and the Burks’ Behavior Rating Scale. The post-test generated surprising results for most educators. All three groups showed a positive growth in affective development. The children who were included showed a positive growth on both standardized tests. On the Dupont Test of Affective Development, the children with disabilities scored a 28.3 to a 39.4 on the Social Skills Rating System (Hibbert and Sprinthall, 1995).

Preparedness

“Inclusion is a challenge for regular education teachers because most have not been adequately prepared” (Rekkas, 1998, p. 168). One study by Norman, Caseau and Stefanich (1998) studied the relationship between science teachers feeling of preparedness in teaching students with disabilities. It was apparent from research previously mentioned that science teachers were low on preparedness and attitudes when it came to bonding, teaching, and erasing stereotypes about children with disabilities. Norman et. al. surveyed 386 teachers on their grading policies, instruction, and perceptions on inclusion. The examiners found that one-third of science teachers felt that too much money was spent tailoring to the needs of students with disabilities. They also revealed that one-half of the teachers felt that the students’ disability was used as a crutch for failure. One-tenth of respondents, approximately thirty-eight people, felt they would be better off not teaching science to students with disabilities. According to Kirch, Bargerhuff, Turner and Wheatly (2005) being unprepared to teach students with disabilities can hinder teachers’ ability to teach effectively. Kirch et. al. mention many

possibilities for science teachers to feel more prepared for teaching students with disabilities such as attending more workshops, doing distance learning, and creating webquests for those learners who may be visual.

Contrary to Kirch et al., Ellins and Porter (2005) believe that even though more training in special education is associated with positive attitudes, the qualification/degree of the subject-based teacher was more indicative of their actual feelings than just measuring training or number of workshops attended. It should be mentioned that the attitude would have been more positive in the Kirch et. al. study had the administrators put forth a greater effort to classify the misconceptions of students with disabilities. However, it has also been shown that people more removed from students with disabilities, such as administrators and counselors, have expressed more positive perceptions concerning inclusion than those who attend to students with disabilities on a daily basis (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Not all examiners believe in inclusion. Giangreco, Yuan, McKenzie, and Fialka (2005) believe that full inclusion limits the ability of the core content teacher to fully bond with a child with disabilities. Because most students will either have an Intervention Specialist or a paraprofessional attending the classroom as well, the examiners feel their presence will impede the student's ability to feel included into the social climate of the classroom. They argue that busy teachers will be more likely to work with the students that don't have a paraprofessional or aid sitting near. Instead of excluding paraprofessionals altogether, Giangreco et. al. suggest coming up with alternate approaches to teaching, like co-teaching or peer mediation.

Summary of Research

Previous research has justified advantages and disadvantages to implementing inclusion within the school system. Some theories of successful teacher/student interaction are molded upon younger educators, triumphant administrators, distinct districts, and more time in the day to communicate and collaborate with coworkers, to name a few. Burke and Sutherland's (2005) study analyzed pre-service and in-service teachers and found that pre-service teachers were more optimistic about inclusion than in-service teachers. Moreover, the various examiners believe that inclusion is somewhat beneficial for children with disabilities (Schneider & Leroux, 1994; Malone, Gallagher & Long, 2001; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Olson, Chalmers, & Hoover, 1997; Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick & Sheer, 1999; Hibbert & Sprinthall, 1995; Hammil & Geer, 2000). These examiners studies centered on positive inclusive practices that influenced teacher attitudes concerning inclusion and facilitated healthy staff relations.

On the other hand, a significant number of examiners find inclusion more difficult to implement (Shade & Stewart, 2001; Snyder, 1999; Feiler & Gibson; 1999; Heflin & Bullock, 1999; Robertson, Chaberlain, & Kasari, 2003; Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, & MacFarland, 1997; Ellins & Porter, 2005; Rekkas, 1998; Norman, Caseau, & Stefanich, 1998; Giangreco, Yuan, McKenzie, & Fialka, 2005; Reeves, 2006). These authors agree that full-inclusion should be done on a case-by-case basis. These studies focused on lack of resources, poor district and self-preparedness, gender and subject taught of the CCTs. Rebecca Snyder's (1999) study didn't ostracize one particular group of teachers. Snyder stated administrators, teachers and Intervention Specialists should become more prepared to work with students with disabilities. Ellins

and Porter (2005) looked at subject taught and highest degree obtained as factors influencing inclusion perception. English teachers had the most favorable opinion while science teachers had the least and the higher the degree; one was unlikely to have a negative view concerning inclusion.

III. METHODS AND DESIGN

Research and Design

This study is a quantitative, descriptive research design. The researcher in this study started gathering materials concerning inclusion and initially thought of doing a survey about the relationship of CCTs and Intervention Specialists. After researching the prior studies concerning inclusion, the researcher was surprised to find that there were few tools out there to assist collecting data concerning relationships between CCTs and students with disabilities. Because of the limited survey tools available, the researcher decided to create one that realistically collected information on CCTs and their feelings concerning students with disabilities. This tool was tested by teachers in a school district in Dayton, Ohio and was corrected for accuracy.

Sample

Two school districts agreed to the data collection process. For this study, the school districts will be identified as school district 1 and school district 2 for security and analysis purposes. School district 1 and school district 2 contained schools that were identified by letters 'A' through 'J' and then by numbers, depending on the number of CCTs per building. School district 1 had five schools: 2 primary elementary, 1 middle school, 1 intermediate, and 1 high school. School district 2 had six times the number of schools in their district, so the researcher chose five that were consistent with the pattern found in school district one. District 1 was labeled 'A' through 'E' and school district 2

was labeled 'F' through 'J.' Data were taken one week from school district 1 and the following week from school district 2.

School district 1 is located southeast of Columbus. This school district is considered suburban and it has 2,771 students: 40.6% coming from families with economic disadvantages, according to the Ohio Department of Education in 2005-2006. Students with disabilities represent 11.5% of the student population. The median household income is approximately \$34,287 according to the Public School Review (2006). All teachers are certified and 51.7% of the teachers in school district 1 have their master's degree. School district 2 is located in southern Columbus and is suburban. It has approximately 20,336 students: with the median household income at \$52,064 in 2000, according to the Census. All teachers were certified.

Permission to Collect Data

Permission to collect data was granted by the Office of Research and Sponsored Program's Institutional Review Board at Wright State University.

Description of Measuring Instrument

The 26 item survey is based on a Likert-type scale, where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. The researcher was interested in collecting information concerning internal and external reasons why CCTs felt either prepared or unprepared to teach students with disabilities. The survey was divided into 3 sections: internal implications, external implications and social implications. The internal implications refer to the CCTs and their ability to teach students with disabilities on a personal level (i.e. preparedness, confidence levels and their communication skills). The questions in the survey that pertain to the internal implications were 1-7, one being the

precursor to 2-7. The questions in the survey that corresponded to external implications were 8-17 and dealt with implications that were not easily controlled by the CCTs (i.e. the individual schools' offering classes/workshops to learn about students with disabilities, emotional support from either the administrators or special education teachers, and receiving adequate time to adjust lesson plans for students with disabilities) with question 8 being the precursor. Lastly, the social implications involved the CCTs perceptions concerning students with disabilities and the role they have in their general education classes. These questions were found in 18-23 in the survey and represented the rights of students with disabilities to benefit socially and academically in general education classes (i.e. measuring social benefits from both the typically developing student and the students with disabilities and measuring academic benefits for all students) with question 18 being the precursor. Questions 26 and 27 ask the CCT to rate the most important quality between themselves and the Intervention Specialists, question 26, and then what the most important quality about themselves was as a teacher, question 27. This was to measure the consistency between answers pertaining to personal quality ratings, basically if the CCT rated external relations between co-workers and internal qualities the same. Also provided was the opportunity to comment on the survey and the teacher's own experiences teaching students with disabilities.

The final page of the packet is the debrief page where teachers learn more about the study, some history concerning inclusion, and how the data will be analyzed. All the teachers received the five-page packet in their mailboxes on a Monday and were given a 5 days to complete the information to return to their secretaries in a sealed envelope by Friday. The researcher retrieved the packets.

Collection of Data

A packet, consisting of 5 pages, was provided to the CCTs via their work mailboxes. The first page was a greeting letter, which stated the study and the purpose of collecting data. Here the CCTs found detailed directions for filling out the packet. The steps in completing the survey were to fill out the background information first, answer the survey questions, and then to read the debrief page. The CCTs were instructed not to put their names on the packet. The background page had identification numbers according to district and schools to keep their answers anonymous. The second page, the background information page, asked general questions about the teachers' gender, age, and subject taught, as well as number of years taught, highest degree awarded, and workshops or classes attended concerning children with disabilities. The teachers were instructed not to change their answers after reading the debrief page. They were given the date to return the packet and they were told to return the packet to the secretary, who collected all the packets which were then picked up by the researcher. If the CCTs didn't use the packet, the teachers were asked to return the packet anyway to the secretary to make sure other people in the building didn't see the packets. The teachers were asked not to discuss the study during the week of data collection.

Data Analysis Procedures

Descriptive statistics were run using SAS version 9.1. The mean internal subscale was interpreted using the mean response to survey items 1-7. Items 5 and 6 were reverse scored so that a higher internal score represents a higher level of agreement with inclusion from a personal perspective. Mean external score justified using the mean response to survey items 8-17. A higher external score represents a higher level of

agreement with inclusion from one's school district setting. Mean social subscale is interpreted using the mean response to survey items 18-24. Item 24 was reverse scored so that a higher social subscale represents a higher level of agreement that there are social benefits to be obtained by practicing inclusion. A level of significance $\alpha = .05$ was used for all tests of the null hypotheses. Three separate ANCOVAs were used to analyze the internal, external, and social categories for research questions 1, 2, 3 and 5. The research questions for the ANCOVAs' asked about internal preparedness, district preparedness, social implications and if age, gender, or degree awarded had any significance. Full factorial models were run to test the possibilities of interactions between the factors: district, gender, degree and age with the covariate being continuous age. Research question 4 had a separate one-way ANOVA. Research questions 1, 2 and 3 were tested separately for building level significance (high school, middle school, and elementary school) using an ANOVA. Research question 4 asked if the subject material taught had an influence on the way CCTs perceived inclusion. Data collected from the instrument were entered and analyzed by the researcher and by the Statistical Consulting Center at Wright State University.

Summary

The instrument that the researcher used was a questionnaire. A Likert scale asked CCTs to rate statements concerning students with disabilities as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. The researcher separated the survey into three categories: internal implications, external implications, and social implications. These outcomes were analyzed using SAS 9.1 to determine if there is any significance. Three separate ANCOVAs were used to analyze data concerning the internal, external and

social implications. A one-way ANOVA determined if subject taught had any influence on the perceptions concerning inclusion. Another set of ANOVAs was used to test if the internal outcomes differed significantly by districts and buildings for research questions 1, 2 and 3. The researcher was interested to find if the CCTs were prepared to teach students with disabilities and if their schools prepared them to teach students with disabilities. Gender, degree, and age were tested to see if there were any significant findings between the building and district.

IV. RESULTS

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

These were the research questions for this study:

- 1) Do CCTs feel prepared to teach students with disabilities across districts and buildings based on the internal subscale?
- 2) Do schools prepare CCTs to teach students with disabilities across districts and buildings based on the external subscale?
- 3) Do CCTs see social improvements in students with disabilities across districts and buildings based on the social subscale?
- 4) Does subject taught by the CCT have an overall effect on how inclusion is perceived based on the internal and external subscales?
- 5) Do the following factors influence the way CCTs perceive inclusion based on the external subscale?
 - age
 - gender
 - degree awarded
 - district

The null hypotheses for each research question is as follows:

- 1) CCTs do not feel prepared to teach students with disabilities across districts and buildings based on the internal subscale?

- 2) Schools do not prepare CCTs to teach students with disabilities across districts and buildings based on the external subscale?
- 3) CCTs do not see social improvements in students with disabilities across districts and buildings based on the social subscale?
- 4) Subject taught by the CCT will not have an overall effect on how inclusion is perceived based on the internal and external subscales?
- 5) The following factors will not influence the way CCTs perceive inclusion based on the external subscale?
 - age
 - gender
 - degree awarded
 - district

Introductory Analysis

A total of 209 packets were distributed and 70 were returned, creating a 34 % response rate. The sample in this study consisted of 15 males and 55 females for a total N=70. All CCTs in this study taught math, science, English, and/or social studies. Some teachers taught 2 subjects, while the kindergarten teachers taught all subjects.

Background information collected on the participants can be found in table 1. School district one had 31 (44.29% of the sample) respondents and school district two had 39 (55.71% of the sample) respondents. Most teachers considered their school district as suburban, sixteen (51.61%) in school district 1 and thirty-one (79.49%) in school district 2. There were seven male respondents and twenty-four female respondents in school

district 1 and eight male and thirty-one female respondents in school district 2. Figure 1 in Appendix B shows the gender and the ages of the respondents.

All responding teachers in school district 1 have a teaching certificate recognized by the Ohio Department of Education and only one responding teacher in school district 2 didn't have a teaching certificate.

The subject currently taught by teachers can be found in table 1 in appendix A. There were more kindergarten teacher respondents than any other group. Between both school districts, the most common subject area taught was English and then math. Individually, the most common subject area taught was English in school district 1 and math in school district 2. The district and subject area taught can be seen in figure 2 in Appendix B.

The mean number of years taught, number of workshops attended, number of graduate credits, and number of continuing education credits received are shown in table 2 in appendix A and also in figure 3 in Appendix B. The mean number of graduate credits is twice the number in school district 1 than in school district 2, but the number of continuing education credits is half as many for school district 1 than school district 2.

Analysis

A separate ANCOVA was used to determine if age, gender, or degree were important in explaining the outcomes: internal, external, and social with the covariate age. These three outcomes were the same scales used in the setup for the survey. A level of significance $\alpha=.05$ was used for all tests of significance. Among all three outcomes, only the mean external subscale was marginally significant (p-value = .0529). The mean internal and social subscales were not significant (p-values = .2275 and .3243,

respectively). For the mean external subscales, gender was found to be significant (p-value = .0149). The males mean external subscale (3.0214) was larger than the mean external subscale for females (2.6473). District was also found to be marginally significant, (p-value = .0804) but was not a significant finding found in table 3 in Appendix A. The means external subscale for district two (2.8132) is larger than the mean external subscale for school district one (2.6129). The means external subscale for district 2 (2.8132) is larger than the mean external subscale for school district 1 (2.6129). Degree and age did not have an effect on the perception of inclusion.

A complete table of means broken down by factor combinations is found in table 4 in Appendix A and shows school district, gender, and highest degree awarded. Here school district was investigated individually. Although no significant findings were found amongst degree or age, there were interesting patterns depending on highest degree obtained. This table shows that the male mean external subscales are higher than the females mean external subscales. Furthermore it should be noted, although not significant, that the social mean subscales gets higher as the rank degree increases in every category regardless of gender as seen in table 4. Table 4 shows the means of each subscale, which compares with degree and gender. Table 5 in Appendix A shows gender and degree by means for district 1 and 2 combined. Here males with MED/MA/MS were higher in all three subscales.

To determine if subject taught had any influence on CCTs and their perceptions on inclusion, a one-way ANOVA was performed. The internal subscale was used as outcome and the single factor was subject taught (six levels). For this data set, subject taught was found to have no effect on teacher's perceptions concerning inclusion (p-value

= .2594). The means for the internal subscale are shown in table 6 Appendix A. Figure 4 in Appendix B shows the mean internal subscale for subjects taught. Here, math and teachers that teach all subjects show the highest scores for the internal subscale. Even though there was no effect on subject taught, math and teachers that teach multiple subjects agreed more to comments in the survey that pertained to preparedness and confidence.

Additionally, table 7 in Appendix A represents the p-values for research questions 1 in reference to building preparedness. A full-factorial ANOVA was run to determine if building type and district had an effect on the three outcomes in research question 1. Two factors in each of these analyses were district and building type. Table 7 represents the p-values for these analyses. The buildings were categorized into elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. The results were clear that no significance was found for any of the models. The lowest p-value occurred for the external outcome (p-value = .168).

Lastly, questions twenty-five, twenty-six, and twenty-seven deal with questions that were not directly related to the questions of this study so they were investigated separately. Question twenty-five asked if other places such as Germany, Canada, England and/or Italy are more advanced when it comes to practicing inclusion. All of these places are successful with inclusion. Sixty-seven out of seventy answered this question. Four people (6%) said that they agreed with the statement, but a large amount of people, 63 (94%) were neutral about the comment. Question twenty-six asked what quality is most important for CCTs and Intervention Specialists to possess. The options were communication, friendship, flexibility, or trust. The same options were given for

question twenty-seven, with the question being, what is the single most important quality you possess as a teacher? Sixty-nine people responded to question twenty-five and twenty-six. One teacher circled all of the options for both questions. For question twenty-six, forty seven (68%) people chose communication, zero (0.00%) chose friendship, fifteen chose flexibility (21.74%), and seven chose trust (10.14%). Question twenty-seven produced different results. Nineteen people chose communication (27.54%); two people chose friendship (2.89%), thirty-eight chose flexibility (55.07%), and ten chose trust (14.49%).

Summary

In conclusion, seventy core content teachers participated in this study pertaining to inclusion. The perceptions of CCTs regarding how their school districts prepare them to teach students with disabilities are influenced by gender of the teacher and marginally by school district. Preparedness, degree, age and subject taught did not have important influences on these perceptions. No other significant findings were found.

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Study

This study revealed perceptions CCTs had towards teaching students with disabilities. The outcomes measured from the survey were internal, external, and social implications. CCTs were asked to fill out a questionnaire and a survey describing their background in teaching and their perceptions of teaching students with disabilities. The survey tool assessed CCTs' internal ability and preparedness towards teaching students with disabilities, externalizing conditions, and social implications found within ones' own classroom. Three separate ANCOVAs were used for each outcome: internal, external, and social. The factors between these outcomes were gender, degree and district with age as the covariate. Between all three outcomes, the external subscale was significant with the factor gender. The external subscale is the only evidence that the predictors and the covariate (age) can explain the outcome variation. The external subscale was compared and gender was found significant. School district was found marginally significant. Gender was found significant (p-value = .0149) with the males (mean ext = 3.0214) being larger than the external subscale for females (mean ext = 2.6473). District was found marginally significant (p-value = .0804) although was not significant. The external subscale for district two (mean ext = 2.8132) is larger than the external subscale for school district one (mean ext = 2.6129). Degree and age did not have an effect on the perception of inclusion. No other findings found were significant.

Conclusions

Previous literature contains valuable information relevant to the current study. Snyder (1999) did a survey on CCTs' confidence in working with students with disabilities and found that 84.4% of teachers were not confident when working with students with disabilities while 15.6% were confident. Burke and Sutherland's study (2004) took pre-service teachers (teachers still in college) who attended a private college in Brooklyn, New York and pre-service teachers (teachers already in the field) from a Queen's elementary school and compared their perceptions concerning inclusion. The results of Burke and Sutherland's study indicate that pre-service teachers had more of a positive attitude when it came to inclusion than in-service teachers. The pre-service teachers also felt that their preparation programs for working with children with disabilities benefited them more than in-service teachers who didn't feel adequately prepared. Pre-service teachers were more agreeable to work with children with disabilities than in-service teachers. Pre-service teachers believe that children with disabilities will benefit academically, more so than in-service teachers. Lastly, pre-service teachers felt that all students with disabilities should be included while in-service teachers were slightly less optimistic about inclusion (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). Burke and Sutherland's study showed that district and experience had an effect on preparedness of teachers working with students with disabilities. Also, the opinions of inclusion by the pre-service teachers versus the in-service teachers may unlock the mystery of the benefits of full inclusion. Maybe what Burke and Sutherland wanted people to see is that full inclusion may not be the perfect system if the people implementing it don't fully support inclusion (Burke & Sutherland, 2004).

External factors such as support for school districts was pertinent to Rebecca Snyder's study. Snyder's study in 1999 found that when the CCTs were asked about the amount of administrator support they received, 75% felt that they were not supportive while 25% thought they were getting the support they needed. When it came to what kind of support the CCTs needed, it was noted that the administrators didn't offer enough training for the faculty. When asked about the percent of CCTs who attended in-service workshops in working with students with disabilities, 70% of the people polled said that they had not received any in-service workshop training. Interestingly, 13.3% of people had only taken one graduate course in working with students with disabilities and 25% took one course in their undergraduate.

Seeing social benefits for students with disabilities is debatable among examiners. Although many ascertain that remarkable social gains are made, it's difficult to determine if the students with disabilities are making the most beneficial gain socially or if the typically developing students are gaining or losing from the presence of students with disabilities. Hibbert and Sprinthall's study in 1995 tested three groups including typically developing and children with disabilities: the "inclusive preschool program," the "mainstream preschool program," and the "regular education classroom," respectively. These examiners found that all three groups had positive affective development.

Factors such as age, subject taught, degree awarded, and gender continue to fuel the interests of many examiners. Ellins and Porter (2005) found significant differences of opinion concerning inclusion using a Likert-type questionnaire. These examiners found the following results from the three core subjects; English had the highest positive scores

and science had the lowest scores with math in the middle. Ellins and Porter also measured the progress of students with disabilities and those that did not have disabilities. They found that the progress of students with disabilities was lower in science and mathematics, but not in English classes. Age appeared to have an impact in Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs, and Mastropieri's study (1994). People receiving their schooling before 1975 were not subjected to inclusion firsthand; therefore older teachers' opinions were different than younger teachers' opinions.

Pertaining to gender, Ellins and Porter (2005) looked at gender and found no significance. They established that females were more positive in their views about inclusion than males.

Degree awarded did not have an effect on the perceptions concerning inclusion. For special education, the higher the degree the teacher had obtained the more positive they were about inclusion (Ellins & Porter, 2005).

Preparedness (Self)

In the current study, the first hypotheses question asked if CCTs felt prepared to teach students with disabilities across districts. The internal scale, based on the survey, was used to determine if teachers felt confident when teaching students with disabilities. The results in the present study were that internally and across districts, preparedness was not significant when teaching students with disabilities.

Preparedness (District)

In hypotheses 2, the external subscale was the only outcome that was found marginally significant larger when compared to district preparedness (p-value = .0804). The external subscale for district 2 was marginally larger than that of the external

subscale for district 1. The external subscale consisted of variables that could make the teachers feel more prepared to teach children with disabilities, for example, workshops, graduate classes, and administrator involvement. In this study, it might be that school district 2 had more support by way of workshops than school district 1 as seen in figure 3 in Appendix B. Also, larger districts may have more funding to bring in guest lecturers and have more opportunities within the school to rally support for students with disabilities. District 2 was larger in size than district 1. It appears district 2 showed more effort to prepare their teachers. School district 2 is six times larger, which might explain why there is more awareness and district accountability.

Social Benefits

Hypothesis 3 asked about the social achievement of including children with disabilities. No significant findings were made with regards to social or academic benefits. Again, age of the teacher, seen in table 3 in Appendix A, was the only outcome even close to being significant ($p\text{-value} = 0.0980$) in the social subscale. Having no significance in research question 3 could mean that the schools are already seeing social benefits for children with disabilities.

Subject Taught

Hypotheses 4 asked if subject taught had an overall effect on how inclusion is perceived. In the current study, subject taught was found to have no effect ($p\text{-value} = .2594$). For this study, table 5 shows the subject taught with the lowest mean being English (2.7380) and the highest mean being math (3.2380). Since this was based on the internal score, it can be acknowledged that English tends to be the most challenging subject for children with disabilities in district 1 and 2, so it is no surprise that teachers

struggle internally teaching English. Math on the other hand (mean ext = 3.238) does not usually require as much abstract thinking as English and can be taught with formulas. When students understand the repetitious patterns in math, it may boost the teachers' confidence in teaching the material.

Age, Subject Taught, Degree Awarded and Gender (External Subscale)

Hypotheses 5 asked if age, gender or degree awarded had an overall effect on how CCTs perceive inclusion. This study showed that district, gender, degree, and age were not significant when it came to internal preparedness. Again, table 4 presents these findings. Age was close (p-value .0570), which would suggest that age was significant in people's confidence teaching students with disabilities.

Gender did have a significant effect (p-value = .0149) in this study. When comparing gender to the external subscale, the external subscale for males (mean ext = 3.0214) is significantly larger than the external subscale for females (mean ext = 2.6473). The external subscale focused on the outside factors that could influence the perceptions of working with children with disabilities. For example, some questions on the survey that dealt with the external subscale were questions about the schools supporting CCTs, receiving financial support, extending personal education, and having enough time to do lesson plans to teach children with disabilities. Males seemed to agree more with receiving enough support. Females were lower in the external subscale and felt that they did not receive enough support externally. If the male external subscale is higher than females, then in this study, females felt that external implications hindered their perceptions of their ability to teach students with disabilities.

In district 2, internal subscales for males versus females by degree are lower in females than in males regardless of degree. In district 1, when comparing the males BA/BS degree to the females BA/BS, internal subscales are slightly larger for the females. However when comparing the Med/MA/MS degree for males, the internal subscale is much larger for males (mean = 3.786) than females (mean = 2.821). This internal increase can be interpreted as females being slightly less confident than their male counterparts when perceiving their ability to teach students with disabilities.

Researcher's Opinions

The researcher was surprised to see that age was not significant in relevance to preparedness. Perhaps if the mean age categories were much younger teachers or much older teachers, the results for age in this research question 5 would have been different. However, not finding results on research question 1, feeling prepared was acceptable. It could mean that the teachers did feel prepared to teach students with disabilities.

Subject material taught was not significant. The widespread acceptance of students with disabilities and their self-sufficient Intervention Specialists in the 2 school districts researched in this study could have lessened the impact of prejudice amongst subjects. The researcher was concerned about not getting significant findings since inclusion is such a debatable topic. The results in this study were interesting because the researcher thought that subject taught would have an impact like the previous studies demonstrated.

Yet, these results showed that we could not conclude that subject taught had an effect on teachers' perceptions of inclusion. This is not necessarily disappointing; it

could just mean that the teachers feel comfortable teaching children with disabilities in their classroom regardless of the subject being taught.

The researcher was surprised to find gender on the external subscale significant in the study. This may be attributed to females internalizing their perceptions more than males instead of asking for external support from the school and administrators. The males scored higher on the external subscale so they agreed more to the survey questions that pertained to having enough support through administrators and Intervention Specialists, time to modify curriculum, and to being financially supported by their district. The researcher was surprised to see that age was not significant in relevance to preparedness. Some of the more detailed special education laws were passed in the nineties and thus would have affected the opinions of teachers before that date and after that date.

Question twenty-five on the survey had to do with inclusion in other countries. The researcher asked this question because to learn about inclusion and how it works, we must know how other people are successful. It was interesting that communication was the most important quality between teachers and Intervention Specialists on question twenty-six and twenty-seven, yet when asked what top quality they possessed as a teacher it was different: flexibility.

Limitations

In this study, there is a lack of previous material concerning CCTs and students with disabilities. Creating a background questionnaire and survey to accommodate information needed by the CCTs was necessary. Also limiting was only having seventy participants in the study; having a larger number might have changed the results. Lastly,

most teachers already had a higher-level education. In the nineties, some districts didn't require teachers to have their masters to teach nor was NCLB a factor. Another contributing factor to the awareness and accountability of teachers is becoming highly qualified in the subject area they teach. All of this new accountability required might have shifted the way CCTs perceive inclusion, which might have changed the results. In summary, it seems that the more educated CCTs become concerning inclusion, the more they accept it into their classrooms.

Recommendations

The accountability of teaching students with disabilities is at the forefront of inclusionary practices. Schools are being held responsible and research is now being done not only on the relationships that Intervention Specialists and children with disabilities have, but what the CCTs and administrators contribute to the education of children with disabilities.

Based on the results of this study, future research will focus on why CCT gender was a significant factor for educating children with disabilities. Male and female teachers' relationships with students with disabilities are a growing interest as the trend of male teachers entering into education rises. Another avenue of future research could examine why there are differences in districts when teaching students with disabilities. One district may do a sensitivity training workshop versus another schools general workshop. Dissecting the districts' internal practices would be a very interesting study. Ten years ago, studies produced results saying that the subject teachers taught had significance in the way they perceived students with disabilities. A future study could be

re-testing CCTs' opinions concerning inclusion and subject taught, but with a larger population of teachers.

This study also asked CCTs to provide comments about inclusion and some took advantage of this offer. The recommendations and comments of these teachers express the joy, frustration and worry of what is to come next for inclusion. Since the researcher is an Intervention Specialist, this study is concluded with her fellow co-workers experiences and feelings. One science teacher expressed, "I feel that all students in a class benefit from inclusion, especially in a core class such as science that makes use of group work. In group work, students must learn to put differences aside and entertain other people's ideas, while dealing with the real-world aspect of group members working at various speeds." One science teacher mentioned that her inclusion experience wasn't as much as co-teaching as she thought and that, "Instead of working together to plan and modify lessons, the inclusion teacher became a glorified aide." An English teacher is concerned with her job and reporting test scores, she states, "I enjoy working with disabled students and find it rewarding; the stakes are too high professionally with my skills being judged on test scores. These students are in special education for a reason-to expect them to get the same results as a typical is unrealistic and frustrating for teachers and students." The researcher thinks the key to successful inclusion is recognizing that it is everyone's responsibility to teach all students, whether they are in special education or not. The researcher agrees with what one math teacher said, "The success of the program varies greatly with the students and staff involved."

APPENDIX A

Table 1. Background Information.

		District 1	District 2	Total
# Participants		31 (44.29%)	39 (55.71%)	70
By School Size	1000+	0 (0.00%)	8 (20.51%)	8
	600-999	15 (48.39%)	11 (28.21%)	26
	249-599	15 (48.39%)	19 (48.72%)	34
	Missing	1 (3.23%)	1 (2.56%)	2
By Geographical Classification	Urban	2 (6.45%)	5 (12.82%)	7
	Rural	7 (22.58%)	0 (0.00%)	7
	Suburban	16 (51.61%)	31 (79.49%)	47
	Missing	6 (19.35%)	3 (7.69%)	9
By Gender	Male	7 (22.58%)	8 (20.51%)	15
	Female	24 (77.42%)	31 (79.49%)	55
By Age Category	20-29	15 (48.39%)	14 (35.90%)	29
	30-39	1 (3.23%)	2 (5.13%)	3
	40-49	9 (29.03%)	9 (23.08%)	18
	60-69	5 (16.13%)	9 (23.08%)	14
	70-79	1 (3.23%)	5 (12.82%)	6
Teaching Certificate Recognized by ODE	Yes	31 (100.00%)	38 (97.44%)	69
	No	0 (0.00%)	1 (2.56%)	1
Subject Currently Taught	English	8 (25.81%)	6 (15.38%)	14
	Math	4 (12.90%)	8 (20.51%)	12
	Science	4 (12.90%)	3 (7.69%)	7
	Social Studies	2 (6.45%)	4 (10.26%)	6
	All	2 (6.45%)	12 (30.77%)	14
	Kindergarten	11 (35.48%)	5 (12.82%)	16
	Missing	0 (0.00%)	1 (2.56%)	1

Table 2: District External Traits.

Mean (Standard Deviation)	External	District 1	District 2
	# Yrs Taught	9.35 (9.11)	12.31 (8.99)
	# Workshops	1.30 (2.04)	2.71 (3.41)
	# Graduate Credits	3.61 (6.50)	1.40 (2.09)
	# of CE Credits	0.41 (1.13)	1.23 (1.92)

Table 3: P-values for RQ 1 (preparedness) and RQ 5 (external subscales).

OUTCOME	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	SOCIAL
Model	.2275	.0529	.3243
District	.4043	.0804	.7075
Gender	.0995	.0149	.3956
Degree	.6742	.5817	.1186
Age	.0570	.1619	.0980

Table 4: Gender and degree verses district

School District	Gender	Highest Degree	N Obs	Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev
#1	male	BA/BS	5	internal	4	2.929	0.915
				external	5	2.700	0.548
				social	5	3.314	0.790
		MEd/MA/MS	2	internal	2	3.786	0.101
				external	2	3.150	0.071
				social	2	4.000	0.202
female	BA/BS	9	internal	9	3.079	0.585	
			external	9	2.589	0.601	
			social	9	3.540	0.514	
		Med/MA/MS	15	internal	12	2.821	0.414
				external	15	2.527	0.615
				social	15	3.648	0.531
#2	male	BA/BS	2	internal	2	3.143	0.202
				external	2	3.250	0.212
				social	2	3.714	0.404
		Med/MA/MS	5	internal	4	3.250	0.270
				external	5	3.200	0.500
				social	5	3.743	0.326
female	BA/BS	9	internal	9	3.000	0.378	
			external	9	2.722	0.311	
			Social	9	3.397	0.439	
	Med/MA/MS	22	internal	21	3.020	0.638	
			external	22	2.723	0.624	
			social	22	3.500	0.685	

Table 5. Degree and gender by means with corresponding subscales.

	Internal	External	Social
Males with BA/BS	6.072	5.95	7.028
Females with BA/BS	6.079	5.311	6.937
Males with MED/MA/MS	7.036	6.35	7.743
Females with MED/MA/MS	5.841	5.25	7.148

Table 6: Level of subject taught using the internal subscale.

Level of Subject Taught	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Math	12	3.238	0.536
All	14	3.14	0.459
Social Studies	6	3.00	0.361
K	14	2.929	0.633
Science	5	2.86	0.650
English	12	2.738	0.513

Table 7: p-value for RQ 1 (building preparedness) and RQ 2 (district preparedness).

OUTCOME	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	SOCIAL
Model	0.882	0.170	0.908
District	0.801	0.168	0.556
Building Type	0.758	0.223	0.626

APPENDIX B

Figure 1. Background Questionnaire Information.

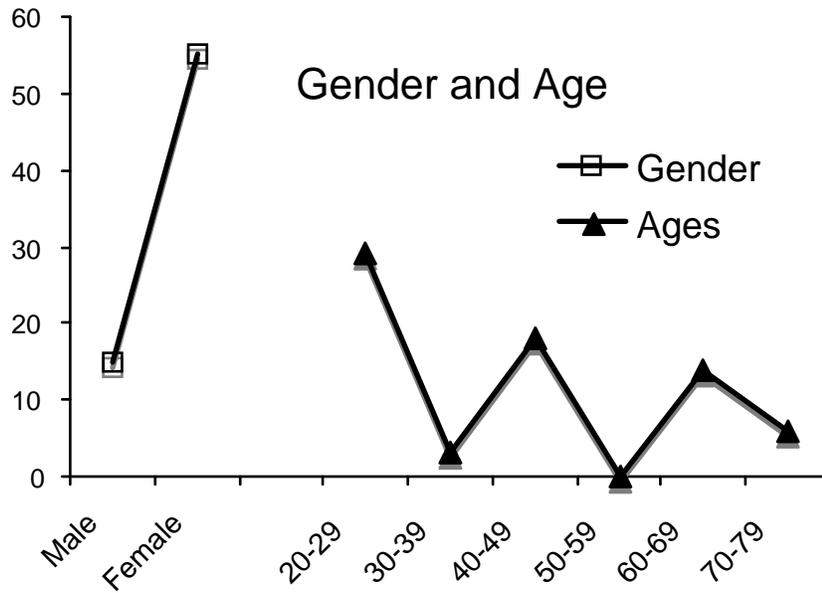


Figure 2. Subject Currently Taught

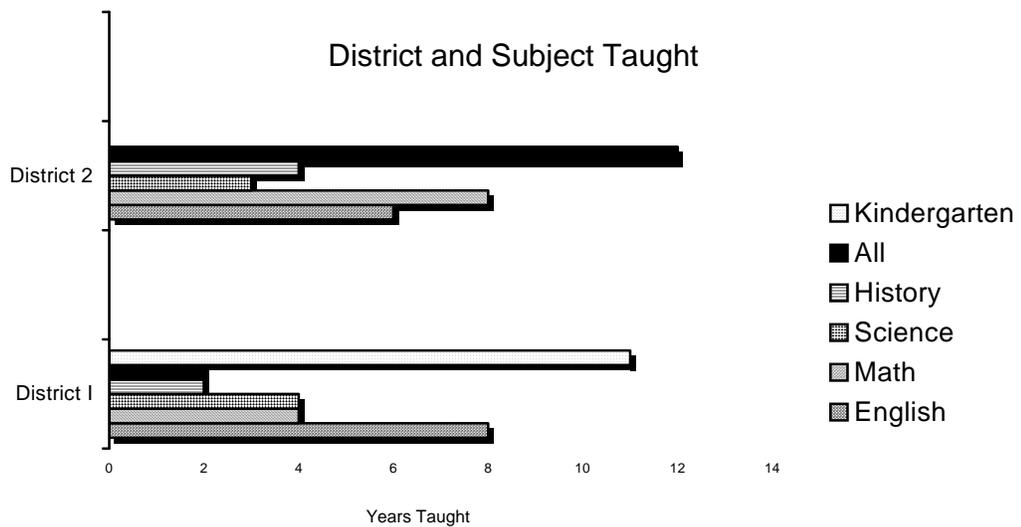


Figure 3: External Subscale Paired with the districts

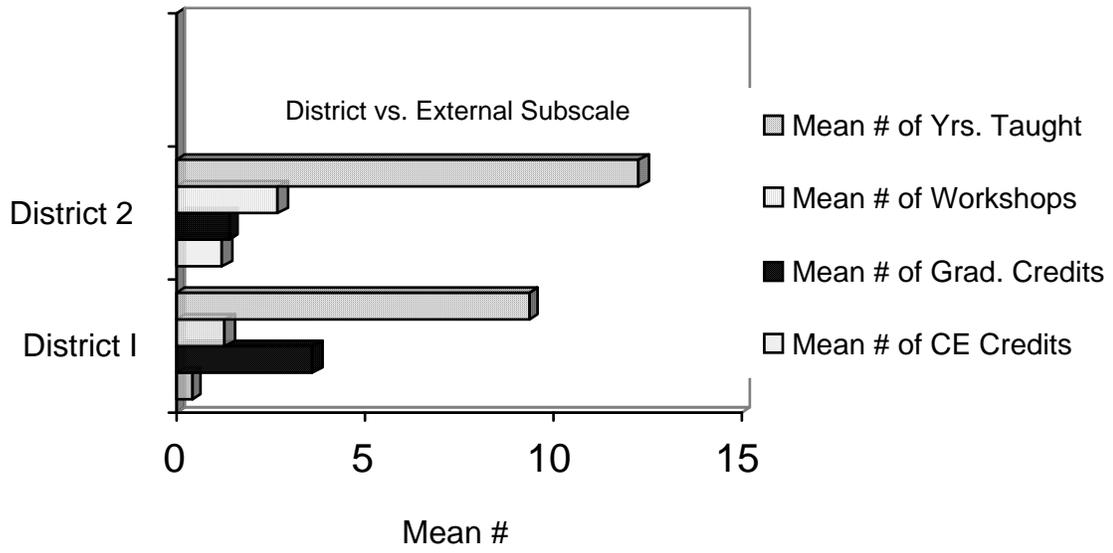
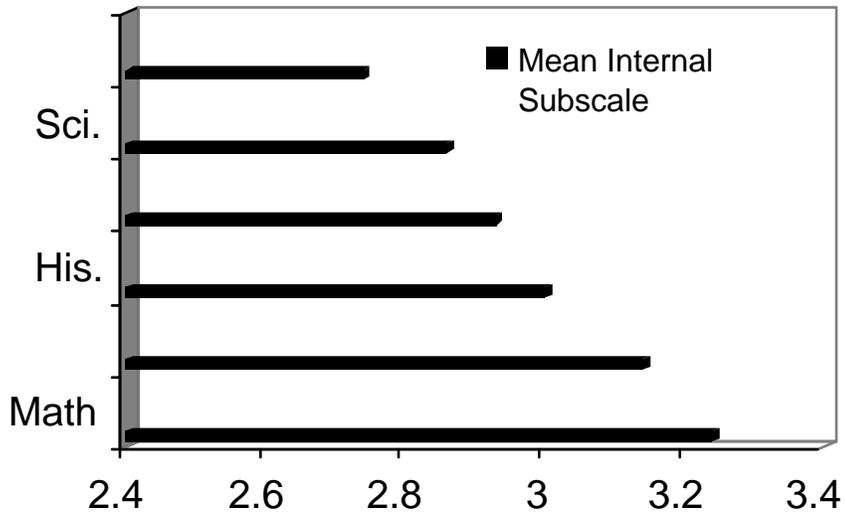


Figure 4. Internal subscale (means) by level taught.



APPENDIX C

Dear Core Content Teachers (Math, Science, English, and Social Studies):

Hello! My name is Christine Crumbacher and I am a Wright State Graduate student. I am currently an Intervention Specialist. I am asking for your help in completing a research study to fulfill the requirements for my Masters in special needs education. I can use your help for my data collection. It is of great importance to collect my data in a timely manner. I am doing a survey of core content teachers' perceptions on inclusion in central Ohio and that is the name of the study. The survey should only take 10 minutes to fill out and your input can contribute to a successful thesis project. If you are not interested in filling out the survey, please return this survey packet to the secretary at the front desk. By filling out the survey you have consented to participate. Please follow these steps in order. **Do not** put your name on the packet. An identification number will be on top of the background information page and this will be used to identify you.

- Open the packet to the page that says, "Background Information" and proceed filling out the page completely.
- Turn to the second page entitled, "Survey for Core Content Teachers Concerning Inclusion" and begin.
- Read the last page entitled, "Debrief" to learn more about my study and the survey you just filled out. Do not go back and change your answers after reading the "debrief" page.
- When you are finished, please return the entire packet to the secretary at the office of your school and I will pick it up. Please seal the survey in an envelope provided.
- You will have the week of January 15th-19th to complete the background information and survey.
- Please do not speak to the other teachers about this survey until the week is finished and your survey has been turned in. All information will be kept anonymous and privacy measures will be in place to protect your identity.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey. Your opinions are important to me. I appreciate your input and will incorporate your opinions into my project. Please contact me or my thesis chair with questions or concerns at anytime.

Sincerely,
Christine Crumbacher

Dr. Patricia Renick (Thesis Chair)
Wright State University
937-775-2679

If you have general questions about giving consent or your rights as a research participant in this research study, you can call the Wright State University Institutional Review Board at 937-775-4462.

By filling out this survey, you understand that you are under no obligation to do so and no compensation will be awarded. This study has little to no risk involved and no direct benefit will be associated with your participation.

Identification Number:

Background Information

1. What is the name of your school? _____
2. What is the size of your school? (*Please check one*)
 A (1,000 or more) C (599-250)
 B (600-999) D (249 or less)
3. Please check the geographical classification your school is considered. (*Check one*)
 Urban Suburban Rural
4. Please indicate your gender: M F
5. What is your current age? _____
6. Do you have a teaching certificate recognized by the ODE? No Yes
7. Please answer the following according to your teaching career:
 - i. Total number of years you have taught. _____
 - ii. Subject you currently teach. _____
 - iii. Number of years you have taught secondary education (if applicable)

8. Indicate your highest degree awarded: B.A. B.S. M.Ed. M.A.
 M.S. Ph.D. Other
9. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability:
 - i. Number of workshops attended concerning children with disabilities.
 - ii. _____
 - iii. Number of graduate credits received concerning children with disabilities.

 - iv. Number of continuing education credits concerning children with disabilities.

Survey for Core Content Teachers Concerning Inclusion

1= strongly disagree

2= disagree

3= neutral

4=agree

5=strongly agree

- _____ 1. I feel prepared, as a teacher, to teach students with disabilities.
- _____ 2. I feel confident working with children with disabilities in my classroom.
- _____ 3. I am highly qualified to teach students with disabilities.
- _____ 4. I am comfortable with the number of students with disabilities in my classroom.
- _____ 5. It is easier for me to teach students with disabilities that have a higher cognitive capability.
- _____ 6. Teaching children with severe cognitive needs would be very difficult for me.
- _____ 7. I feel there is adequate communication and collaboration between myself and the Intervention Specialists.
- _____ 8. My school has prepared me to teach students with disabilities.
- _____ 9. My school has adequately provided workshop-training opportunities concerning special education.
- _____ 10. My school has adequately provided continuing education concerning special education training.
- _____ 11. I have taken graduate credit(s) in topic areas discussing students with disabilities.
- _____ 12. I am supported by administrators to teach students with disabilities.
- _____ 13. I am financially supported by my school to teach students with disabilities.
- _____ 14. I am emotionally supported by the Intervention Specialists to teach students with disabilities.

1= strongly disagree

2= disagree

3= neutral

4=agree

5=strongly agree

- _____ 15. I am supported by the Intervention Specialists while I am teaching students with disabilities.
- _____ 16. I have an aid/paraprofessional in my classroom, other than the Intervention Specialist, that supports me while I am teaching children with disabilities.
- _____ 17. I have adequate time to adjust my lesson plans for students with disabilities.
- _____ 18. I see social benefits of inclusion for all children in my classroom.
- _____ 19. Placing students with disabilities into the general education classroom will improve their social skills.
- _____ 20. Typically developing children benefit socially from the children with disabilities in my classroom.
- _____ 21. Typically developing children benefit academically from the children with disabilities in my classroom.
- _____ 22. I have seen social improvements in children with mild/moderate needs in my classroom.
- _____ 23. I have seen social improvements in children with moderate needs in my classroom.
- _____ 24. I have seen social improvements in children with intense needs in my classroom.
- _____ 25. Other places such as Germany, Canada, England or Italy are more advanced when it comes to practicing inclusion.
- _____ 26. Circle your answer. What quality is most important for core content teachers and Intervention Specialists? (Please chose one)
- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| A) Communication | B) Friendship |
| C) Flexibility | D) Trust |

- _____ 27) What is the single most important quality you possess as a teacher?
- A) Communication
 - B) Friendship
 - C) Flexibility
 - D) Trust

Comments: Feel free to use the back of this paper for further comments.

Debrief

The researcher in this study is interested in measuring core content teachers' perceptions of inclusion in Ohio. Due to the popularity and debate concerning the issues surrounding inclusion, the researcher sought out answers as to why inclusion works in some school districts in Ohio and not others.

Inclusion has long been a debate since the 1950s; however, not until the last 10 years do many studies show individual differences in perceptions on successful inclusion versus unsuccessful inclusion. It can be said that inclusion is teacher, student, and building specific. New studies are moving beyond the lack of resources for successful inclusion and looking at the dynamic personality traits, years of experience, and communication and collaboration skills between the core content teachers and special educators. Although new data will be collected long after this study, it is important to pinpoint certain facts within this time frame so that we may advance our understanding of the complexities surrounding inclusion.

This study asks specific questions to core content teachers about students with disabilities. The survey questions are broken down into categories: internal, external, and social implications. I am interested to see if inclusion is successful by individuals, by buildings, or if it is successful because the children are promoting social acceptance of students with disabilities. The background information you filled out will be paired with the survey answers and will be interpreted for the results section of the thesis. The completed thesis will be available for viewing on the second floor of the Dunbar Library at Wright State University by the summer of 2007.

APPENDIX D

Research and Sponsored Programs: Human Testing Approval.

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