

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSION

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Proposal Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
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### ABSTRACT

With the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, school systems must ensure students with disabilities receive instruction in general education classrooms. Implementing the inclusion model has been challenging for many school systems as the systems try to find ways to meet the needs of their diverse student populations. The purpose of this quantitative casual-comparative and correlational study is to identify high school teachers' perceptions of inclusion. One hundred seventy-three high school teachers from six school districts located in a southeastern metropolitan area completed a survey to allow the researcher to examine if a relationship existed between teachers' perceptions of inclusion in regards to certification field, degree level, years of experience, and classroom setting. The survey contained of four demographic/background and 27 Likert-type questions. Anova and Pearson-product moment tests were used to analyze data. The researcher found no statistically significant relationships between teachers' perceptions of inclusion in regards to certification field, degree level, and years of experience. However, the study did find a statistically significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of inclusion and classroom setting. The researcher concludes that teachers with experience teaching in inclusion classrooms hold more favorable attitudes toward inclusion than those teachers who do not teach in inclusion classrooms.

Descriptors: inclusion, co-teaching, special education, students with disabilities

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, friends, and supporters who were my cheerleaders throughout the entire dissertation process.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my entire dissertation committee, Dr. Carol Mowen, Dr. Rochelle Lamar, and Dr. Gregg Mowen for their patience, advice, and guidance.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Annual Yearly Progress (AYP)

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC)

Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers (ISHST)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Internal Review Board (IRB)

Least restrictive environment (LRE)

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHY)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)

Public Law (PL)

Statistical Software for Social Science (SPSS)

Students with Disabilities (SWD)

United States Department of Education (US DOE)

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Background

Throughout the history of public schooling in the United States, many educational theories have changed people's perspectives on how children should be schooled. The theories, depending on the era of history, have either positively or negatively impacted the ability of individuals with disabilities to receive an education. The opportunity for students with disabilities to be educated with their non-disabled peers has emerged since the turn of the twenty first century. Society's recognition and acceptance of disabilities paved the way to provide all children the opportunity to receive a free and appropriate public education (Colrusson & O'Rourke, 2004). Instead of being self-conscious of their differences, students with disabilities can now focus on their abilities rather than their disabilities (Thousand, Villa & Nevin, 2006). "Our nation's ability to compete successfully in the global community depends on the meaningful inclusion of all citizens in our educational system . . . . [and] every child is a precious resource whose full potential must be tapped" (USDOE, n.d., p.12). Inclusion of students with disabilities has paved the way for students to have an equitable opportunity for an education (Heward, 2002). As students with disabilities gain academic and social experiences in education, they are afforded the opportunity to become successful, productive citizens in society.

The constructivist theory of education has impacted the ability of disabled students in their journey to receive an equitable education. According to constructivists, people must independently discover and transform complex information for

understanding (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989). The sociocultural theory of cognitive development founded by Vygotsky and the social learning theory founded by Bandura infer that humans develop cognitively through social interactions (Henderson & Thompson, 2007; Leonard, 2002; Slavin, 2006; Wang, 2009). Vygotsky also introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) which is “the difference between what children can do with assistance and what they can do alone” (Kail & Cavanaugh, p. 149, 2010). Vygotsky believed learning occurs while children work within their ZPD (Slavin, 2006). Bandura (1977) asserted that people learn from observing others and modeling behavior. The concept of self-efficacy is a component of Bandura’s theory. Self-efficacy determines how much effort people contribute to overcoming obstacles (Bandura, 1997; Ellis, Abrams, & Abrams, 2009). Vygotsky and Bandura linked the importance of socialization to learning. Constructivists have laid a foundation for teaching practices used in contemporary inclusive classrooms today.

The United States lacked a public education system during the era in which America was founded (Katz, 1976). Formal education was available primarily through religious and charitable organizations. In addition, “schooling seldom extended beyond the elementary subjects; secondary schools were rare, and an extremely small percentage of the population went to college” (1976, p. 14).

Urbanization grew tremendously in the early nineteenth century (Osgood, 2008). Housing shortages, urban congestion, crime, and the immigrant population grew with the rise of cities (Katz, 1976). In 1850s, various groups of people advocated for a free public, nonsectarian common schools. Massachusetts passed the first compulsory school

attendance law in the United States in 1852 (Osgood, 2007). The act mandated that children between the ages of eight and 18 attend public school in their town for at least 12 weeks per year (Massachusetts, 1852). According to the law, parents and guardians who did not comply with the mandate would be fined twenty dollars unless they met exclusion requirements. An exclusion of the compulsory attendance law was directly related to students with disabilities. Parents and guardians who had children with bodily or mental condition(s) preventing them from attending school met the exclusion requirements and did not legally have to educate their children (1852). By 1918, all states in the Union had a compulsory attendance law (Katz, 1976).

The world wars of the nineteenth century drew international attention to individuals with disabilities. “World War I and World War II left thousands of individuals injured and disabled” (Colrusson & O’Rourke, 2004, p. 10). The massive amount of injury caused society’s attitude towards disabled veterans to change, and thus the perception of other people with disabilities changed as well (Colrusson & O’Rourke 2004).

As the century progressed, parents of students with disabilities began to advocate that educational services be provided for their children (Smith, 2000). In contemporary times, students with disabilities not only receive a formal education in the public school system, they are accepted just as their non-disabled peers and receive instruction in the same classroom with their non-disabled peers. Through inclusion, students with disabilities build their esteem, confidence, and knowledge to function in society (Walther-Thomas, 1997).

Court cases and legislation proved vital in the quest for students with disabilities to receive an equitable education. Though, an earlier federal mandate, the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, enacted in 1868, aided the plight of students to receive a free public education. The Fourteenth Amendment states:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws (The Library of Congress, 2010, para. 1).

According to the Fourteenth Amendment, states may not enact any law that deprives citizens' of civil rights. States must also provide equal protection to all citizens as prescribed by law. "The 14th Amendment greatly expanded the protection of civil rights to all Americans and is cited in more litigation than any other amendment" (Library of Congress, 2010, para. 1). Individuals with disabilities would have the same rights as all citizens and treated equally in publically in public places according to the Amendment. Nevertheless, it would be many years before those who were disabled had the ability to be equally protected and afforded the same rights as their non-disabled counterparts.

"Integrating children with disabilities has followed two paths---one in the area of civil rights, the other in education" (Deiner, 2010, p. 4). In the landmark Court case, *Brown vs. Board of Education (1954)*, plaintiffs argued that segregated schools were not

equal. The case stated that separate but equal laws damaged educational opportunities and violated the rights of African-American students under the Fourteenth Amendment (Yell, 2006). The Supreme Court ruled that *separate but equal* public schools for African-Americans and Caucasians violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. *Brown vs. Board of Education* opened many doors for minorities and individuals with disabilities because “the Court maintained state-required or state-sanctioned segregation solely on the basis of a person’s alterable characteristics (e.g., race or disability) was unconstitutional” (Yell, 2006, p. 66). *Brown* was instrumental in initiating the desegregation of public schools. The decision “not only guaranteed minority children the right to receive an equal education, but this court decision paved the way for children with disabilities to be treated equally in relation to their non-disabled peers” (Schraven & Jolly, 2010, p. 424).

In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was passed. The act, “[provided] money to states and local districts for developing programs for economically disadvantaged and disabled children” (Heward, 2002, p. 28). In order to obtain monetary gains, states and local school districts were mandated to comply with the provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act by gradually creating programs for disabled and disadvantaged children.

In *Pennsylvania Association for Retard Citizens vs. Pennsylvania (1972)*, plaintiffs argued that children with mental retardation were denied their right to equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment because the state neglected to provide the students with a publicly supported education (Yell, 2006). The Court ruled that children

with mental disabilities were entitled to receive a free and appropriate public education. “Placements in regular classrooms and regular public schools were preferable to segregated settings” (Heward, 2002, p. 16).

Plaintiffs argued in *Mills vs. Board of Education (1972)*, that students with disabilities were being denied their right of due process under the Fourteenth Amendment. The case was filed as seven students were excluded from public schools in Washington DC because the district could not afford to provide the students with special education services for their learning disabilities or behavior problems (Heward, 2002, p. 24). The Court ruled that “all children with disabilities [are entitled to] a publicly supported education and due process safeguards” (Yell, 2006, p. 60). The decision required the school to readmit the students and provide them appropriate services (Heward, 2002, p. 25).

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was a major accomplishment for the advocacy of individuals with disabilities. Section 504 of this act prohibits agencies receiving federal funding to discriminate against people with disabilities (Yell, 2006). Section 504 also insures that students with disabilities receive a “full range of special education accommodations and services needed to participate in and benefit from public education programs and activities” (Council of Administrators of Special Education, 1999, p. 1). The provisions in Section 504 include that all school related activities have outlined provisions for students with disabilities, “regardless of whether the specific program or activity involved a direct recipient of federal funds” (Council of Administrators of Special Education, 1999, p. 1).

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 “is the first in a series of laws focusing on the rights of children with disabilities to a free appropriate public education” (Denier, 2010, p. 6). The law required a “free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment” for all disabled children between the ages of five through 21 years old (Hunt & Marshall, 2002, p. 14). In 1986, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was amended and required states to educate all children ages three through five years old with disabilities (Heward, 2002). The act also provided, “incentive grants to encourage states to develop comprehensive interdisciplinary services for infants, toddlers (birth through age 2) and their families” (Heward, 2002, p. 29). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 also covers children protected by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. However, Section 504 includes disabilities that may not interfere with learning (Deiner, 2010).

In 1990, the Elementary for All Handicapped Children Act became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act required schools to “plan for transition of adolescents with disabilities into further education or employment, and replaced the term *handicapped* children with the term *children with disabilities*” (Heward, 2000, p. 412). Nineteen ninety was also the year that the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed (Denier, 2010). The Americans with Disabilities Act “extended civil rights and non discrimination requirements of section 504 to *all* settings” (Denier, 2010, p. 6), by protecting the civil rights of people with disabilities in regards to private sector employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications (Hunt & Marshall, 2002, p. 20).

To further improve educational opportunities for students with disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was amended in 1997. The amended act raised expectations for children with disabilities, increased parental involvement; ensured regular education teachers are involved in disabled students' academic progress; included students with disabilities in assessments, performance goals, and public reports; and supported professional development for personnel educating children with disabilities (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2003). The act also required an individualized education plan (IEP) for students with disabilities. An Individual Education Plan provides information on individual students' disabilities and outlines how the disabilities will be addressed within the school (Slavin, 2006).

Public Law (PL) 107-110, "commonly known as" No Child Left Behind was passed in 2001 to close the achievement gap between students with disabilities and those without disabilities. The act was drafted to ensure that all students achieve academically, and allow states and school districts more flexibility than they had previously had in regards to federal funding, choosing support programs that use proven education methods, and provide school choice options related to low achieving schools (US DOE, 2004). In addition, No Child Left Behind required "students with limited English proficiency, economic disadvantages, disabilities, and major ethnic groups to participate in standardized testing" (Slavin, 2006, p. 306).

In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was amended and became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. The amendment emphasized the early intervention of identifying disabilities, required states to monitor

and correct racial disparities in special education assignments, and coordinated Individuals with Disabilities Education Act with other reforms such as No Child Left Behind (Slavin, 2006, p. 412).

In contemporary times, the inclusive education movement has changed the framework of how both students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers learn. The acceptance of the inclusion model of teaching has been growing in popularity since the 1990s (Austin, 2001). Inclusion occurs when “students with disabilities receive their entire academic curriculum in the general education program” (Idol, 2006, p. 78). The inclusion process involves multiple components, including “a whole suite of provisions, including adapted curriculum, adapted teaching methods, modified assessment techniques and accessibility arrangements, all of which require support for the educator at the classroom level” (Mitchell, 2006, p. 27).

Collaboration is instrumental in helping teachers meet the academic needs of students with disabilities (DeSimone & Parmar, 2006). Collaboration requires the general education and special education teachers to work together to meet the needs of all students in their classroom. Friend and Cook state that the size of the school system, grade level, and school location dictate the amount of co-teaching that can be offered (2005). “Different boards, districts and educational institutions will achieve collaboration between their general educators and special educators in as many ways as there are people to collaborate” (Eccleston, 2010, p. 40).

Students and teachers need support in the collaborative process. “The laws mandating educational programs for exceptional children require that parents and

professionals work together, or collaborate, to meet the best interest of the child” (Hunt & Marshall, 2002, p. 99). According to Wilkins and Neitfield, a support network includes administrators, parents, classmates, occupational and physical therapists, and school psychologists (2000). A support network enables teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Murwaski suggests that teachers who are planning to co-teach should first assess the current environment, move slowly, involve an administrator, get to know their partner, and create a workable schedule. Components of true co-teaching teams are planning, instruction, and the assessment (2004). Little and Theker state that in order to create an effective inclusive environment, special education teachers should meet often, collaborate on the curriculum, communicate in regards to student progress, and support each other (2008). “The extent that teachers perceive themselves as being open to and successful with inclusion may be related to the extent their inclusion efforts are supported by members of the school community” (Lohrmann & Bambara, 2006, p. 1). According to Carter, Prater, Jackson, and Marchant (2009) planning time, effort, and administrative support are components needed for successful collaboration within the school day. Austin (2001) found most collaborative teachers felt they needed to meet daily to plan lessons, share instructional responsibilities, and maintain specific responsibilities. Time allocation is essential for the collaboration, support, discussion and planning for co-teachers. Austin also found that “most co-teachers stated they were satisfied with their present co-teaching assignment but not with the level of support received from the school, noting they needed more planning time” (2001, p. 251). Walther-Thomas states that teachers reported issues with a lack of scheduled planning time during school hours,

and coordinating schedules for students with disabilities, as well as with numbers in their case load (1997).

The opportunity for students with disabilities to be educated with their non-disabled peers has emerged since the turn of the twenty first century. Society's recognition and acceptance of disabilities paved the way to provide all children the opportunity to receive a free and appropriate public education (Colrusson & O'Rourke, 2004). Instead of being self-conscious of their differences, students with disabilities can now focus on their abilities rather than their disabilities (Thousand et al., 2006). "Our nation's ability to compete successfully in the global community depends on the meaningful inclusion of all citizens in our educational system . . . . [and] every child is a precious resource whose full potential must be tapped" (US DOE, n.d., p. 12). Inclusion of students with disabilities has paved the way for students to have an equitable opportunity for an education (Heward, 2002). As students with disabilities gain academic and social experiences in education, they are afforded the opportunity to become successful, productive citizens in society (Henderson & Thompson, 2011).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Currently Students with Disabilities are falling behind in the classroom (Lee, Griggs, & Dion, 2007). With the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB), the achievement gap has gained an increase of public attention (Katsiyannis, Zhang, Ryan, & Jones, 2007). English/language arts and math scores have been used to determine if students, schools, and districts are making sufficient progress according to federal standards (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007). The federal marker to

determine the educational sufficiency is called Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) (Eckes & Swando, 2009). Test scores must gradually rise each year and students are divided into subgroups based on ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status and English language learners. By disaggregating the AYP data, students with disabilities progress on the standardized tests has become very apparent, and the schools that have subgroups are more likely to not meet AYP than schools that do not have subgroups (Eckes & Swando, 2009).

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative, casual-comparative and correlational study is to expand the research field related to high school teachers' perceptions of inclusion. "Effective teaching is a vital component of the education process of both students without and, particularly, with disabilities. It is incumbent upon collaborative teachers to provide quality instruction for all students in their classrooms" (Austin, 2001, p. 245). Inclusion requires general education and special education teachers collaborate to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms. Researchers state that general and special education teachers are unaware of their collaborative roles in an inclusive environment (Monahan & Marino, 1996; Nichols & Nichols, 2010). Students with disabilities are to receive their education in the general education classroom setting unless the nature of their disability prevents them from being adequately serviced in a general education classroom setting (Service, 2008). With the push to move all students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms, the ability of teachers to give the opportunity for students with disabilities an equitable education in relation to their non-disabled peers is imperative. This study

extends existing research related to high school teachers' perceptions of inclusion at the high school level.

The special education teacher is essential in ensuring academic success for students with disabilities (McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008). Teachers have to spend more time with students with disabilities (Cook, Cameron, & Tankersly, 2007), which can often be trying to both the student and the teacher. However, without teacher perseverance and effectiveness, students are less likely to be successful in their academic endeavors (Sanders & Horn, 1998). Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) found that the greatest impacts on student achievement come from teacher quality. Research shows that teachers whom are positive about inclusion are more likely to try and implement the instructional strategies necessary for the Students with Disabilities (SWD) to be successful (Van Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2001). Teachers with a positive attitude about inclusion are also more likely to have a higher sense of efficacy and seek outside help (Bender, Vail, and Scott, 1995).

### **Research Questions**

The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: Do teachers' perspectives on inclusion differ based on whether they are certified in general education, special education, or both general and special education?

RQ2: Do teachers' degree levels play significant roles in their perspectives about inclusion?

RQ3: Do teachers' years of teaching experience have a significant role in their

perspectives about inclusion?

RQ4: Do the perspectives of inclusion classroom teachers differ from teachers who do not teach in an inclusion classroom?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to address the research questions:

H<sub>01</sub>: There will be no significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion based on whether the teacher is certified in general education, special education, or both general and special education as shown by the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers.

H<sub>02</sub>: There will be no significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion, as shown by the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers, and the following degree levels: (a) bachelor's degree, (b) master's degree, and (c) advanced degree.

H<sub>03</sub>: There will be no significant relationship between teacher perspectives about inclusion and years of teaching experience as shown by the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers.

H<sub>04</sub>: There will be no significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion and classroom setting as shown by the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers.

Quantitative casual-comparative and correlational research designs were used to conduct this study. A casual-comparative design “allows the researcher to study the relationship between one or more categorical independent variables and one or more

quantitative dependent variables (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p.43). A correlational design “allows the researcher to study the relationship between one or more quantitative independent variables and one or more quantitative dependent variables” (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p.44). Correlational and casual-comparative research designs are “highly useful for studying problems in education and in the other social sciences” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p.336). Therefore, the design is effective in the exploration of teacher perceptions of the inclusion in the general education classroom. Data was gathered from high school teachers working in six public school districts located in a southeastern metropolitan area located in a southeastern part of the country. The instrument used was a two-part survey containing 31 items. In the first part of the survey, participants responded to four demographic/background questions regarding certification field, degree level, years of experience and classroom setting. In the second part of the survey participants completed the ISHST, a self-report questionnaire with 27 questions. The Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers (ISHST) was chosen because the instrument was conducive and relevant so that the researcher could gather data on teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion. Participants were selected through a random sampling method. Participants were invited to participate in the study by email, and were able to access the survey electronically on SurveyMonkey by selecting a link in their invitation. The survey was accessible for completion on SurveyMonkey for two weeks. A week after the survey was made available, potential participants received a follow-up email that served as a reminder and to potentially increase the survey participation. Statistical Software for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the questionnaire

results to determine if a relationship existed between independent and dependent variables.

### **Identification of Variables**

The independent variables are field(s) of certification, years of experience, degree level, and classroom setting (special education or general education). The dependent variable is teachers' perspective. Teachers may be certified in the general education field, special education field or both the general and special education fields. Teachers certified to teach special education "provide educational services for students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) indicates instruction using the general education curriculum and participation in the general statewide assessment in grades" (Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC), 2010).

### **Research Plan**

Quantitative casual-comparative and correlational research designs were used to analyze contributing factors to high school teachers' perceptions of inclusion. Casual-comparative research designs are considered nonexperimental research because the variables being studied are not manipulated or randomly assigned to groups (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). In casual-comparative research the relationship between one or more categorical independent variables and one or more quantitative dependent variable is studied (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 43), whereas correlational research investigates two or more quantitative variables. (Frankel & Wallen, 2006). Participants were sent an email invitation to complete their surveys thorough SurveyMonkey. According to Sue and Ritter (2007), electronic surveys allow researchers to send questionnaires to large

samples and receive responses quickly. Furthermore, they are economical, convenient, user friendly (Sue & Ritter, 2007). SPSS was used to analyze survey data.

### **Significance of the Study**

Teachers' attitudes affect the academic successes of students in inclusive classroom settings (Alghazo, Dodeen, & Algaryouti, 2003). The study of teacher perception of inclusion is imperative teachers' attitudes and beliefs on inclusion are important to students' well being. Gaps in current research related to teacher perceptions of inclusion. "Overall, there are few studies on efficacy of inclusion. Those that do exist are generally conducted in elementary classrooms and focus on students with severe disabilities and social benefits" (Alexander & Hunter, 2004, p. 150). Much of the research has been done outside of the United States (Ernst & Rogers, 2009). Also very little of the research has focused exclusively on the high school level. Instead, research on inclusion has focused on lower levels or multi-levels (Alexander & Hunter, 2004; Ernst & Rogers, 2009). SWD are falling behind their general education peers (Lee, Griggs, & Dion, 2007). It is important that work is done to close this achievement gap so that these students can be more successful and prepared for life after high school. This study specifically involves teachers at the high school level because methods, procedures, and class sizes differ at every grade level. High schools have the greatest amount of students from the elementary, middle, and high school settings. However, there is less support at the high school level as the student-teacher ratio is higher than at the middle or elementary levels. Various studies regarding teachers' attitudes on inclusion have been conducted, but few have been conducted on high school teachers. This study extends

existing research regarding high school teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of special education students in general education.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following key terms are relevant to this study:

*Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*: ADA is a law passed that in 1990 to protect the civil rights of people with disabilities in regards to private sector employment, public services, public accommodations and telecommunications (Hunt & Marshall, 2002).

*Core academic subjects*: "Core academic subjects mean English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography". (NICHY, n.d.)

*Coteaching*: Coteaching occurs when a general education teacher and special education teacher work together to provide instruction students (Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols 2010).

*The Education for All Handicapped Children Act*: requires a "free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment" for all handicapped children between the ages of three through 21 (Hunt & Marshall, 2002, p. 14).

*Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)*: ESEA "provided money to states and local districts for developing program for economically disadvantage and disabled children" (Heward, 2002, p. 28).

*General education teacher*: A teacher who is well versed in the general education curriculum and provides feedback related to programming issues (Eccleston, 2010, p.10).

*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*: IDEA requires schools to “plan for transition of adolescents with disabilities into further education or employment, and replaced the term *handicapped* children with the term *children with disabilities*” (Heward, 2000, p. 412).

*Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)*: IDEIA legislation passed to emphasize prevention and early intervention, required states to monitor and correct racial disparities in special education assignments, and coordinated IDEA with other reforms such as NCLB (Slavin, 2006, p. 412).

*Individualized Education Plan (IEP)*: An IEP is plan for students with disabilities that provide information on the individual students’ disability and outlines how the problems will be addressed (Slavin, 2006).

*Inclusion*: Occurs when students with disabilities “receive their entire academic curriculum in the general education program” (Idol, 2006, p. 78).

*Least restrictive environment (LRE)*: LRE is an environment where children with disabilities are educated along with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible (NICHY, n.d.).

*No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*: NCLB refers to federal legislation enacted in 2001 in order to close the achievement gap of students of different ethnicities, socio-economic status, and disability by allowing states and school districts to more flexibility in regards to federal funds, support programs that use proven education methods, and school choice options related to low achieving schools (US DOE, 2004).

*Rehabilitation Act of 1973*: The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits agencies

receiving federal funding from discriminating against people with disabilities (Yell, 2006).

*Special education teacher:* Special education teachers adapt the general education curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities and monitor their progress (Eccleston, 2010).

## **Summary**

Studies have shown that teachers have mixed perceptions regarding inclusion. Landmark court cases and legislation have paved the way for students with disabilities to receive their education with their non-disabled peers. Major factors that contribute to teacher perceptions of inclusion include teacher support and training. Many teacher perception studies regarding inclusion focus on the elementary school level, but little research has been conducted on the high school level. In this study, casual-comparative and correlational, research methods were used to analyze contributing factors to high school teacher perceptions of inclusion. The Inclusion Attitude Scale High School Teachers (ISHST) was administered to collect and analyze teacher attributes and perception of inclusion. This ISHST was used because it was specifically designed to measure attitudes of high school teachers on inclusion. The computer software Statistical Software for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the survey results. The p-value of 0.5 was used to determine statistical significance. Tables, graphs, and text are used to report results.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Throughout history, students with disabilities have been looked upon as unequal to their peers. Through scientific study, case law, legislation, and reformists, advocates for students with disabilities have called for reform, so that students with disabilities have an opportunity to learn in an equitable environment as their non-disabled peers (Heward, 2002; Katz, 1976; Library of Congress, 2010; The Museum of DisABILITY History, 2007; Smith, 2000; Yell, 2006). “Progress has been made toward helping children with special needs become accepted, productive members of society” (Henderson & Thompson, 2011, p. 694). As the twentieth century ended and the twenty-first century began, new models of teaching students with disabilities in the same environment as their non-disabled peers have emerged. Though not perfect, the carefully skilled and balanced art of inclusive education has become commonplace in the contemporary classroom.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Modern teaching strategies are deeply rooted in theories of constructivism. According to constructivists, in order for learning to occur, people must independently discover and transform complex information for understanding (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989). Theories of constructivism proposed by Lev Vygotsky and Albert Bandura, have laid the foundation for teaching practices used in contemporary inclusive classrooms today.

Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, is best known for proposing the sociocultural theory of cognitive development (Wang, 2009). Vygotsky’s theory states that interacting with others is an important key in the learning process because human

minds develop through their interaction with society (2009). “Vygotsky considered cognitive growth as a collaborative process or the acquisition of knowledge through social interaction” (Henderson & Thompson, 2007, p. 35). Hence, children learn and develop critical thinking skills through the inter-relationships that they build with others. Vygotsky introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development from his research on sociocultural theory of cognitive development, which examined the effect of social interactions on children. The zone of proximal development is “the difference between what children can do with assistance and what they can do alone” (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2010, p. 149). Vygotsky’s zone occurs in two levels. The first level of development is referred to as the *real* level of development. In the *real* level, children work independently to solve problems. The second level of development is referred to as the *potential* level of development, where children solve problems with support from adults or interactions with higher functioning peers (Wang, 2009). Vygotsky believed that authentic learning occurs while children work within their zone of proximal development (Slavin, 2006). Wang suggests that Vygotsky’s theory of zone of proximal development may provide insight into special education based on the following: (a) cognitive development is shaped by social interactions; (b) aid and direction increases cognitive development; (c) consistent cognitive interaction is essential to identifying children’s potential; (d) cognitive assessment determines children’s initial learning level as well as their level of improvement from teaching; and (e) teaching provides students with material that inspires and is relevant to their learning level (2009).

Albert Bandura developed his social learning theory based on Vygotsky’s

research on the zone of proximal development and the sociocultural theory of cognitive development (Slavin, 2006). Bandura extended Vygotsky's research as Bandura states that his social learning theory recognized the importance of socialization in the learning process. According to Bandura, people learned by imitating others and learning from their experiences, whether they are good or bad (Slavin, 2006). He suggests that an exchange within the environment leads to knowledge. According to Leonard, the theory proposes that "human learning is a reciprocal interaction of cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors" (2002, p. 177). Observation and modeling are central to Bandura's theory, as "most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (Bandura, 1977, p. 22). The concept of self-efficacy is a component of Bandura's social learning theory. Self-efficacy can be defined as human belief in [students'] ability to achieve goals, form friendships, and/or gain status (Ellis, Abrams, & Abrams, 2009). Self-efficacy determines how much effort people will put in overcoming an obstacle (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura, if people cannot believe that they can produce desired effects, they will have no motivation to act on them (2000). Bandura, as Vygotsky, linked the importance of socialization to learning.

### **History of Inclusion in the United States**

For thousands of years, societies have acknowledged that human disability exists. In many eras of history, people with significant and obvious disabling conditions have been persecuted and killed because they were different than others (Osgood, 2007). "At

the time of its national origins, the United States found itself with no widespread system of public schooling” (Katz, 1976, p. 14). Instead there “was a patchwork of arrangements for schooling that included dame schools, academies, evening schools, Latin grammar schools, English grammar schools, pauper schools, and colleges” (p. 14). Formal education was mainly available through religious and charitable organizations, and since schooling was rare, very few people attended college (Katz, 1976).

Urbanization grew tremendously in the early nineteenth century (Osgood, 2008). Housing shortages, urban congestion, crime, and the immigrant population grew with the rise of cities (Katz, 1976). In 1850s, various groups of people advocated for a free public, nonsectarian common schools. According to Katz, advocates believed

. . . free publicly supported common schools would unite Christian morality with democratic patriotism; the common school would stamp out the evils of ignorance, crime, vice, and aristocratic privilege; and finally, the common school would not only assimilate the immigrants but also transform them into a virtuous, productive American citizens. (Katz, 1976, p. 15)

Institutions became widespread and were supported by most states (Osgood, 2008). “In 1817, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet established the nation’s first school in Hartford, Connecticut, to teach deaf-mutes to read and write, read lips, and communicate through hand signals” (Mintz, 2007, para. 4). Samuel Gridley Howe followed, establishing the first school for the deaf and blind in the United States during the 1830s. Howe later established the Massachusetts School for the Idiotic and Feebleminded Youth for students with mental retardation (Gargiulo & Kilgo, 2005). Due to Howe’s success,

“[he] became the country's leading expert on educating the disabled” (The Museum of DisABILITY History, 2007, para. 12). Dorothea Dix, a retired school teacher, advocated having the disabled removed from penitentiaries and poorhouses during the progressive era (The Museum of DisABILITY History, 2007). In 1841, “[Dix’s] efforts lead to the establishment of 32 state run mental institutions” across the United States (The Museum of DisABILITY History, 2007, para. 15). As late nineteenth century progressive reformers drew attention to the inadequacies and mal-treatment of individuals with disabilities, special education began appearing in public schools (Gargiulo & Kilgo, 2005). In 1848, Hervey Wilbur opened a private school for idiots in Barre, Massachusetts: His methods educating the mentally ill were adopted by other state institutions (The Museum of DisABILITY History, 2007, para. 17).

Massachusetts passed the first compulsory school attendance law in the United States in 1852 (Osgood, 2007). The act mandated that children between the ages of eight and 18 attend public school in their town for at least 12 weeks per year (Massachusetts, 1852). According to the law, parents and guardians who did not comply with the mandate would be fined twenty dollars unless they met exclusion requirements. An exclusion of the compulsory attendance law was directly related to students with disabilities. Parents and guardians who had children with bodily or mental condition(s) preventing them from attending school met the exclusion requirements and did not legally have to educate their children (1852). By 1918, all states in the Union had a compulsory attendance law (Katz, 1976).

Social reforms led to government expansion in the late twentieth century

(Osgood, 2007). “One vitally important and sweeping response to the problems of urbanization, industrialization and immigration came in the Progressive Era, usually defined as the period 1880-1920” (2001, p. 5). During the pre-Progressive Era of the United States, people with disabilities were often placed in institutions because there were few people to understand the nature of disabilities. However, as progressivism gained popularity, institutionalization and reforms to institutional conditions progressed, although many perceptions did not. “Social reformers sought to develop residential settings to place and instruct ‘idiots’” (Osgood, 2008, p. 25).

The world wars of the nineteenth century drew international attention to individuals with disabilities. “World War I and War II left thousands of individuals injured and disabled” (Colrusson & O’Rourke, 2004, p. 10). The massive amount of injury caused society’s attitude towards disabled veterans to change, and thus the perception of other people with disabilities changed as well (2004).

As the century progressed, parents of students with disabilities began to advocate that educational services be provided for their children (Smith, 2000). In contemporary times, students with disabilities not only receive a formal education in the public school system, they are accepted just as their non-disabled peers and receive instruction in the same classroom with their non-disabled peers. Through inclusion, students with disabilities build their esteem, confidence, and knowledge to function in society (Walther-Thomas, 1997).

### **Landmark Court Cases and Legislation**

The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, enacted in 1868, aided the plight

of students to receive a free public education. The Fourteenth Amendment states:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws (The Library of Congress, 2010, para. 1).

According to the Fourteenth Amendment, states may not enact any law that deprives citizens' of civil rights. States must also provide equal protection to all citizens as prescribed by law. "The 14th Amendment greatly expanded the protection of civil rights to all Americans and is cited in more litigation than any other amendment" (Library of Congress, 2010, para. 1). Individuals with disabilities would have the same rights as all citizens and treated equally in publically in public places according to the Amendment. Nevertheless, it would be many years before those who were disabled had the ability to be equally protected and afforded the same rights as their non-disabled counterparts.

"Integrating children with disabilities has followed two paths---one in the area of civil rights, the other in education" (Deiner, 2010, p. 4). In the landmark Court case, *Brown vs. Board of Education (1954)*, plaintiffs argued that segregated schools were not equal. The case stated that separate but equal laws damaged educational opportunities and violated the rights of African-American students under the Fourteenth Amendment (Yell, 2006). The Supreme Court ruled that *separate but equal* public schools for

African-Americans and Caucasians violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. *Brown vs. Board of Education* opened many doors for minorities and individuals with disabilities because “the Court maintained state-required or state-sanctioned segregation solely on the basis of a person’s alterable characteristics (e.g., race or disability) was unconstitutional” (Yell, 2006, p. 66). *Brown* was instrumental in initiating the desegregation of public schools. The decision “not only guaranteed minority children the right to receive an equal education, but this court decision paved the way for children with disabilities to be treated equally in relation to their non-disabled peers” (Schraven & Jolly , 2010, p. 424).

In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was passed. The act, “[provided] money to states and local districts for developing programs for economically disadvantaged and disabled children” (Heward, 2002, p. 28). In order to obtain monetary gains, states and local school districts were mandated to comply with the provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act by gradually creating programs for disabled and disadvantaged children.

In *Pennsylvania Association for Retard Citizens vs. Pennsylvania (1972)*, plaintiffs argued that children with mental retardation were denied their right to equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment because the state neglected to provide the students with a publicly supported education (Yell, 2006). The Court ruled that children with mental disabilities were entitled to receive a free and appropriate public education. “Placements in regular classrooms and regular public schools were preferable to segregated settings” (Heward, 2002, p. 16).

Plaintiffs argued in *Mills vs. Board of Education (1972)*, that students with disabilities were being denied their right of due process under the Fourteenth Amendment. The case was filed as seven students were excluded from public schools in Washington DC because the district could not afford to provide the students with special education services for their learning disabilities or behavior problems (Heward, 2002, p. 24). The Court ruled that “all children with disabilities [are entitled to] a publicly supported education and due process safeguards” (Yell, 2006, p. 60). The decision required the school to readmit the students and provide them appropriate services (Heward, 2002, p. 25).

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was a major accomplishment for the advocacy of individuals with disabilities. Section 504 of this act prohibits agencies receiving federal funding to discriminate against people with disabilities (Yell, 2006). Section 504 insures that students with disabilities receive a “full range of special education accommodations and services needed to participate in and benefit from public education programs and activities” (Council of Administrators of Special Education, 1999, p. 1). The provisions in Section 504 include that all school related activities have outlined provisions for students with disabilities, “regardless of whether the specific program or activity involved a direct recipient of federal funds” (Council of Administrators of Special Education, 1999, p. 1).

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 “is the first in a series of laws focusing on the rights of children with disabilities to a free appropriate public education” (Denier, 2010, p. 6). The law required a “free, appropriate public education in

the least restrictive environment” for all disabled children between the ages of five through 21 years old (Hunt & Marshall, 2002, p. 14). In 1986, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was amended and required states to educate all children ages three through five years old with disabilities (Heward, 2002). The act also provided, “incentive grants to encourage states to develop comprehensive interdisciplinary services for infants, toddlers (birth through age 2) and their families” (Heward, 2002, p. 29). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 also covers children who were protected by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. However, Section 504 includes disabilities that may not interfere with learning (Denier, 2010).

In 1990, the Elementary for All Handicapped Children Act became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act required schools to “plan for transition of adolescents with disabilities into further education or employment, and replaced the term *handicapped* children with the term *children with disabilities*” (Heward, 2000, p. 412). 1990 was also the year that the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed (Denier, 2010). The Americans with Disabilities Act “extended civil rights and non-discrimination requirements of section 504 to *all* settings” (Denier, 2010, p. 6), by protecting the civil rights of people with disabilities in regards to private sector employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications (Hunt & Marshall, 2002, p. 20).

To further improve educational opportunities for students with disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was amended in 1997, “to raise expectations

for children with disabilities, increase parental involvement, involve regular education teachers disabled students academic progress, include them in assessments, performance goals, support professional development for personnel involved in educating children with disabilities” (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2003). The act also required an individualized education plan for students with disabilities. An Individual Education Plan provides information on individual students’ disabilities and outlines how the disabilities will be addressed within the school (Slavin, 2006).

No Child Left Behind was passed in 2001 to close the achievement gap between students with disabilities and those without disabilities. The act was drafted to ensure that all students achieve academically, and allow states and school districts more flexibility than they had previously had in regards to federal funding, choosing support programs that use proven education methods, and provide school choice options related to low achieving schools (US DOE, 2004). In addition, No Child Left Behind required “students with limited English proficiency, economic disadvantages, disabilities, and major ethnic groups to participate in standardized testing” (Slavin, 2006, p. 306).

In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was amended and became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. The amendment emphasized the early intervention of identifying disabilities, required states to monitor and correct racial disparities in special education assignments, and coordinated Individuals with Disabilities Education Act with other reforms such as No Child Left Behind (Slavin, 2006, p. 412). In order to receive special education and related services children must meet one of the definitions for disabilities defined by Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act (2004). The following definitions were provided by the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHY):

1. Autism-...means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engaging in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term autism does not apply if the child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in #5 below.

A child who shows the characteristics of autism after age 3 could be diagnosed as having autism if the criteria above are satisfied.

2. Deaf-Blindness-...means concomitant [simultaneous] hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

3. Deafness-...means a hearing impairment so severe that a child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

4. Developmental Delay-...for children from birth to age three (under IDEA

Part C) and children from ages three through nine (under IDEA Part B), the term developmental delay, as defined by each State, means a delay in one or more of the following areas: physical development; cognitive development; communication; social or emotional development; or adaptive [behavioral] development.

5. Emotional Disturbance-...means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

(a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.

(b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.

(c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.

(d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.

(e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

6. Hearing Impairment-...means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but is not included under the definition of "deafness. "

7. Intellectual Disability-...means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently [at the same time] with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

8. Multiple Disabilities-...means concomitant [simultaneous] impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc. ), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

9. Orthopedic Impairment-...means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

10. Other Health Impairment-...means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that—

(a) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome; and

(b) adversely affects a child's educational performance.

11. Specific Learning Disability-...means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of mental retardation; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

12. Speech or Language Impairment-...means a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

13. Traumatic Brain Injury-...means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech.

The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

14. Visual Impairment Including Blindness-...means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance.

The term includes both partial sight and blindness. (NICHY, n.d. , para. 3)

In September 2011 the president of the United States announced that that states would soon have some relief from NCLB (White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2011). NCLB required all students to reach proficiency in reading and math by 2014. Although NCLB shed some light on the achievement gap, and increased accountability, a one-size model does not work well for everyone. Many argued that NCLB was flawed, therefore, hindering the educational reform initiatives. Effective the 2011-2012 school year states were able to begin to apply for ESEA flexibility. "States can request flexibility from specific NCLB mandates that are stifling reform, but only if they are transitioning students, teachers, and schools to a system aligned with college and career-ready standards for all students, developing differentiated accountability systems, and undertaking reforms to support effective classroom instruction and school leadership" (White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2011).

### **Achievement Gap for Students with Disabilities**

In regards to students with disabilities, a gap exists between these students' educational achievement when compared to that of their peers. With the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB), the achievement gap has gained an increase of public attention (Katsiyannis et al., 2007). English/language arts and math scores have been used to determine if students, schools, and districts are making sufficient progress according to federal standards (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007). The federal marker to

determine the educational sufficiency is called Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) (Eckes & Swando, 2009). Test scores must gradually rise each year and students are divided into subgroups based on ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status and English language learners. By disaggregating the AYP data, students with disabilities progress on the standardized tests has become very apparent, and the schools that have subgroups are more likely to not meet AYP than schools that do not have subgroups (Eckes & Swando, 2009).

### **Special Education Placement**

According the Office of Student and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), in order to qualify for special education or related services, a student must have an Individualized Education Plan (2000). “The development of an IEP is a collaborative effort between school personnel and parents to ensure that a student’s special education program will meet his or her individual needs and confer meaningful benefit” (Yell, 2006, p. 275). The OSERS outlines the basic steps to an Individualized Education Plan as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The first step in the Individualized Education Plan process occurs when a parent or school staff member identifies a student who may be in need of special education services and requests the student to be evaluated. Once parental consent has been received, the child is evaluated for areas of concern within a specific time frame. If the evaluator determines that the child has a disability, the Individualized Education Plan team will then draft the child’s Individualized Education Plan. Individualized Education Plan teams consist of the student, parents, teachers, and other appropriate school faculty. Upon parental consent,

the student is provided services according to his/her Individualized Education Plan. The Individualized Education Plan is reviewed at least once yearly and the student is reevaluated for special education services every three years to determine if they are still eligible for special education services (2000).

Several classroom placement options are available for students with disabilities within a regular school environment. Based on their Individualized Education Plan, students with disabilities may be placed in a regular classroom setting, resource classroom, or special education classroom. As reported by Henley, Ramsey, and Algozzine, when students are placed in regular education classrooms, they receive supportive services or are served in a collaborative environment (2008). In resource or pull-out programs special education students are served by special education teachers in a small group environment. Resource teachers help student with difficulties outlined in students' Individualized Education Plans. Many of the students who attend resource classes receive the majority of their instruction in regular education classrooms and only receive small group services for the areas in which they are the weakest. Special education or self-contained classrooms are settings where students with disabilities are grouped by the severity of their disability. The students who attend self-contained classes stay in that setting for the majority of the day, yet may attend inclusion classrooms for particular subjects for socialization purposes. Other options for serving students with disabilities include alternative school, homebound programs, hospitals, correctional facilities, and/or residential programs. Self-contained programs such as psycho-educational facilities are another placement option for students with disabilities (2002).

Desimone and Parmar found teachers had differing views on what classroom placement option would best meet the needs of students with learning disabilities (2006).

Colrusson and O'Rourke state that collaborative teams are necessary to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities (2004). Collaborative team members includes general education teachers, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, psychologists, audiologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech language pathologists, social workers, vocational rehabilitation counselors, medical personnel, and family members. Collaborative members play a critical role in student success.

The general education teacher is well versed in the general education curriculum and provides feedback related to programming issues. The special education teachers are well versed in making adaptations in for students with disabilities and monitoring their progress. The principal is responsible for scheduling classes and rooms fostering a collaborative environment. Aides attend to students and assist them with school activities. The Psychologist assesses cognitive and behavioral abilities of students with disabilities. The Audiologist evaluates students hearing and makes recommendations on any supports students with disabilities may need. Occupational therapist evaluates fine motor skills of students with disabilities, and provides therapeutic services, makes recommendations for support needed. The physical therapist evaluates and designs programs to help students to improve motor skills. The speech language pathologist assists students with communication deficits by providing therapy and the use of alternative forms of communication as needed. The social worker provides families' support needed

to help children with disabilities learn and develop. The vocational rehabilitation counselor assists students with disabilities with job training. Medical personnel diagnose, treat and monitor medical issues. Family members help by ‘know the child in important ways outside the classroom’ and provide insight in team decisions. (Colrusson & O’Rourke, 2004, p. 485)

### **Inclusion Teaching Models**

The acceptance of the inclusion model of teaching has been growing in popularity since the 1990s (Austin, 2001). Inclusion occurs when “students with disabilities receive their entire academic curriculum in the general education program” (Idol, 2006, p. 78). The inclusion process involves multiple components, including “a whole suite of provisions, including adapted curriculum, adapted teaching methods, modified assessment techniques and accessibility arrangements, all of which require support for the educator at the classroom level” (Mitchell, 2006, p. 27).

Collaboration is instrumental in helping teachers meet the academic needs of students with disabilities (DeSimone & Parmar, 2006). Collaboration requires that the general education and special education teachers work together to meet the needs of all students in their classroom. Friend and Cook state that the size of the school system, grade level, and school location dictate the amount of co-teaching that can be offered (2005). “Different boards, districts and educational institutions will achieve collaboration between their general educators and special educators in as many ways as there are people to collaborate” (Eccleston, 2010, p. 40).

Cook and Friend identified six elements of collaboration. The first element is

voluntarism. Collaboration is not something that people should be forced to do. Regardless of the law or mandate passed, people who do not want to collaborate will not do so. The second element is parity among participants. Each teacher should be seen as equals. If one person is seen as having more power, collaboration cannot occur. The third element is based on mutual goals, which are used to maintain shared attention. The fourth element is collaboration requires shared responsibility. When teachers collaborate, they are responsible for participating in decision-making. The fifth element is shared resources. Everyone stakeholder contributes resources to meet collaborative goals. The sixth element is shared accountability. All collaborative team members are ‘accountable for all outcomes.’ (1993)

Eccleston states that high abilities in four areas are needed for successful collaboration. The area of thoughtfulness involves educators utilizing self-reflection to identify strengths and weaknesses to improve oneself (Eccleston, 2010). The area of knowledge involves educators being educational specialists in their field. The area of compassion involves educators having sincerity in their feelings and respect towards students and team members. The area of leadership involves having the ability to effectively communicate with others, and having the organizational skills necessary to meet the time constraints of collaboration (Eccleston, 2010).

Nichols, Dowdy, and Nichols define co-teaching as “a collaboration effort between a general education teacher and special education teacher (2010). Several models of co-teaching exist. Cook and Friend outlined five approaches to co-teaching. These approaches include one teaching-one assisting, station teaching, parallel teaching,

alternative teaching and team teaching. In the one teaching-one assisting approach, one collaborative teacher takes the lead while the other teacher individually assists students. This approach requires limited planning, yet provides fundamental student support. Station teaching involves teachers designating different classroom locations as stations, with each station containing a separate lesson. In this approach, students are divided into groups and each group moves through stations where teachers deliver instruction independently. Station teaching requires teachers to independently plan for instruction. Parallel teaching requires teachers to plan for delivery of instruction collaboratively, yet teachers divide the class in half to create small group environments. Alternative teaching allows for small group instruction. This approach occurs when teachers divide students up into one small group and one large group to meet student needs and instructional objectives. In team teaching teachers collaboratively deliver instruction to students. The teachers may take turns leading discussions, demonstrating concepts, taking notes for students while the other one lectures (Cook & Friend, 1995).

Idol describes several different approaches to co-teaching models. The approaches include the consulting teacher model, cooperative teacher model, supportive resource programs, and the use of instructional assistants. In the consulting teacher model, special education students receive instruction by the general education teacher and the special education teacher works indirectly with special education students by consulting with the general education teacher. In the cooperative teacher model, special and general education teachers instruct students by working collaboratively using different instructional arrangements to provide instruction. In the supportive resource

program, general and special education teachers collaborate to designing an Individualized Education Program for resource room instruction in order to ensure student support within the general education program. Instructional assistants accompany special education students attending general education classes and remain with them throughout the entire school day (2006).

Rice, Drame, and Owen observe that better teaching occurs when co-teachers were strong in six areas. The areas include professionalism; ability to articulate and model instruction to meet student needs; ability to accurately assess student progress; ability to analyze teaching/teaching styles; ability to work with a wide range of students; and knowledge of, or interest in developing knowledge of, course content (2007).

Thousand, Villa, and Nevin described several approaches to co-teaching. In supportive teaching, one teacher provides delivery of instruction while the other teacher moves around the classroom providing support. With parallel teaching, co-teachers work with small groups of students in different areas of the classroom. In complementary teaching, co-teachers divide the responsibility of teaching the lessons. Team teaching is where co-teachers jointly plan, teach, assess, and assume responsibility for all of the students in the classroom (2006). Students who are used as collaborative partners “practice communication and interpersonal skills while jointly acquiring and demonstrating learning outcomes” (Thousand et al., 2006, p. 243-245).

Teachers use behavioral supports for students with disabilities that exhibit challenging behaviors. The behavioral supports are developed by teachers who are flexible, look for positive qualities of children, have an understanding of the student, and

set expectations for student participation (Lorhmann & Bambara, 2006). The supports used include modifying curriculum and academic tasks to promote student participation, encouraging peer relationships so students feel included, praising students, offering incentives for positive reinforcement, being consistent in behavior expectations, and allowing students to vent in private (2006). Teacher feedback maybe needed in order to provide students with quality instruction in an inclusive classroom (Austin, 2001).

### **Support for Inclusion**

Students and teachers need support in the collaborative process. “The laws mandating educational programs for exceptional children require that parents and professionals work together, or collaborate, to meet the best interest of the child” (Hunt & Marshall, 2002, p. 99). According the Wilkins and Neitifield, a support network includes administrators, parents, classmates, occupational and physical therapists, and school psychologists (2000). A support network enables teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Murwaski suggests that teachers who are planning to co-teach should first assess the current environment, move slowly, involve an administrator, get to know their partner, and create a workable schedule. Components of true co-teaching teams are planning, instruction, and the assessment (2004). Little and Theker state that in order to create an effective inclusive environment, special education teachers should meet often, collaborate on the curriculum, communicate in regards to student progress, and support each other (2008). “The extent that teachers perceive themselves as being open to and successful with inclusion may be related to the extent their inclusion efforts are supported by members of the school community” (Lohrmann & Bambara, 2006, p. 1). Planning

time, effort, and administrative support are components needed for successful collaboration within the school day (Carter, et al., 2009). Austin (2001) found most collaborative teachers felt the needed to meet daily to plan lessons, share instructional responsibilities, and maintain specific responsibilities. Time allocation is essential for the collaboration, support, discussion and planning for co-teachers. According to Austin (2001) “most co-teachers stated they were satisfied with their present co-teaching assignment but not with the level of support received from the school, noting they needed more planning time” (p. 251). Walther-Thomas states that teachers reported issues with a lack of scheduled planning time during school hours, and coordinating schedules for students with disabilities, as well as with numbers in their case load (1997).

School culture is important to the meeting the needs of special education students and supporting the collaboration among teachers (Wilkins & Neitfield, 2000). School culture must have a vision of inclusion that supports a collegial atmosphere where colleagues help each other, and that provides assistance that supports instruction and adaptations for students (Lohrmann & Bambara, 2006). Idol found that teachers felt that principals need to do a better job of balancing their administrative and instructional leadership duties (2006). Many collaborative teachers felt that support of inclusion was low (Desimone and Parmar, 2006). Lohrmann and Bambara observe that teachers needed school wide support and situational specific support to overcome challenges related to inclusion. School wide supports includes “(a) an articulated school vision of inclusion, (b) a collegial atmosphere, and (c) the provision of in-class support personnel” (2006, p. 163). Specific supports include interpersonal supports- people who will listen during

difficult times, opportunities to collaborate with professionals knowledgeable in their field, assistance from administrators, parental support, and disability awareness activities that will allow teachers the opportunity to gain awareness of student disabilities before the school year starts (2006).

As special education teachers are increasingly present in the general education classroom, it is imperative that general and special education teachers understand their roles in a collaborative environment. Nevertheless, many teachers are not clear of their rolls in collaborative settings. Voltz, Raymond, and Elliott (1994) conducted a study with a national sample of 83 elementary special education teachers and 64 general education elementary teachers to compare actual and ideal collaborative roles. The researchers found “significant differences between teacher perceptions of actual and ideal performance of collaborative roles” (para. 1). Austin also found that teachers are unaware of their own or each other’s roles in an inclusive setting. He states that general education teachers do most of the work in the inclusive classroom (2001). Many special education teachers believe that general education teachers are primarily responsible for educating special education students in an inclusive classroom setting; however, this is the responsibility of teachers in a collaborative environment (Monahan & Marino, 1996; Nichols & Nichols, 2010). Teachers cannot effectively meet the needs of students with disabilities or regular education students if they are unsure of what they should be doing themselves. A study by Desimone and Parmar revealed that many math teachers felt they were responsible for modifying instruction to ensure the academic success of students with disabilities in their class (2006).

## **Pros and Cons of Inclusion**

Co-teachers may deliver instruction collaboratively, however, this is not always a commonplace occurrence. Murwaski states, “secondary teachers by nature are often more territorial because of the subject-specific environment, and are often accustomed to teaching in isolation” (2004, p. 54). Austin discovered that general education co-teachers do more than special education co-teachers in an inclusive classroom (2001). An imbalance of instruction may occur if the general education teachers view special education inclusion teachers as visitors in their classroom, while the general education teachers views his/herself as content specialists (Austin, 2001)

Walther-Thomas observe that inclusive classrooms are beneficial for students with disabilities, general education students, as well as general and special education teachers (1997). Students with disabilities were found to have increased self-confidence and self-esteem in inclusion classrooms. Teachers reported that students with disabilities built self-confidence and self-esteem because they “developed better attitudes about themselves and others; were less critical and defensive, more motivated, and more capable of looking at their own strengths and weaknesses objectively” (Walther-Thomas, 1997, p. 399). Low-achieving general education students experienced an increase in academic performance in co-taught classes, an improvement occurred in the social skills of students without disabilities, and teachers were able to provide students more attention (1997). Students with disabilities often experienced increased academic performance in a collaborative classroom setting. In addition, students with disabilities learned appropriate

behaviors through modeling and imitating their peers while developing friendships (Walther-Thomas, 1997).

Students with disabilities and general education students learn from the same teaching methods. Idol found that most instructional strategies that work for at risk students also work for students with disabilities (2006). Austin states that teachers felt collaborative teaching strategies were beneficial for all students, and that the lower teacher-student ratio was a benefit (2001). Additionally, in an inclusive classroom, students “gain an understanding of the learning difficulties experienced by many students with disabilities” (Austin, 2001, p. 251). Students may receive more attention in an inclusive atmosphere because they have more than on teacher. Hunt and Marshall state, “the presence of more than one teacher . . . allows for more careful attention to and monitoring of student performance” (2002, p. 505). Walther-Thomas observe that teachers found a lower failure rate in inclusive classroom when analyzing all students (1997).

Leatherman and Niemeyer state that “when all children are totally included in the classroom, many benefits are realized” (2005, p. 23). In a collaborative setting, students with disabilities benefit because they receive support not only from teachers, but also from their peers. According to Austin, “inclusion socially beneficial for students with and without disabilities because it promoted tolerance for differences and general sense of acceptance, and it provided general education peer models for students with disabilities” (2001, p. 251). Monahan and Marino (1996) assert that the social skills of students with disabilities increase when they are placed in inclusive environment.

Walther-Thomas observed that special education students' benefit from two teachers through increased academic achievement, increased self-esteem and self-confidence and teachers benefit through professional growth, a sense of community and personal support (1997). The stigma of being special is removed when students with disabilities are placed in inclusive classroom environment. The removal of this stigma helps increase the students' self-esteem. Special education co-teachers cited an increase in content knowledge, and general education co-teachers noted the benefits to their skill in classroom management and curriculum adaptation (Thousand et al., 2006). According to Little and Thecker, "the real beneficiaries of co-taught classrooms are the students, not the principal, the teacher, or the parents"(2009, p. 46).

Teachers have mixed perceptions regarding inclusion (Austin, 2001). Leatherman and Niemeyer found that experiences in inclusive settings shape teachers' attitudes towards inclusion (2005). "Teachers with substantial training in special education held significantly higher positive attitudes than those with little or no training about inclusion" (Avramidis, Bayless & Burden, 2000, p. 201). Additionally, Ernst and Rogers (2009) found that teachers' with experience in inclusion settings were more positive about inclusion than teachers who had no experience with in an inclusion setting.

Idol states that teachers have generally favorable impressions of the impact of students with disabilities inclusive classrooms (2006). Teachers learn by working in an inclusive environment. Austin observed that "co-teaching was a worthwhile experience" (2001, p. 248). In Austin's research, he found that "co-teachers indicated that they generally considered co-teaching to have contributed positively to their professional

development: Special education-co teachers cited an increase in content knowledge, and general education co-teachers noted that benefits to their skill in classroom management and curriculum adaption” (Austin, 2001, p. 250).

Determining how to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general classroom may be challenging (Hunt & Marshall, 2002). “Good inclusive programs require immense commitment of time, energy, and resources by general and special educators” (Hunt & Marshall, 2002, p. 504). Co-teachers reported they needed more support to teach classes that included students with significant disabilities (Avramidis, et al., 2000).

While many special education teachers teach students with specific mild to moderate disabilities, other co-teachers are often concerned with the disruptiveness of those students with disabilities on the academic performance of general education students (Austin, 2001). Austin states that although co-teachers, “valued shared classroom management and instructional duties, they did not in practice share these responsibilities” (2001, pp. 248-249). Areas of expertise among teachers make it difficult to truly divide their responsibilities. This is supported by that fact that in his study Austin (2001) found more teachers agreed “co-teachers should establish and maintain specific areas of responsibilities than disagreed however most don’t practice this” (Austin, 2001, p. 249). In addition, teachers felt instructional assistants needed more professional development (Idol, 2006).

### **Teacher Training**

According to Idol, “practice enables teachers to develop the skills necessary to

deal with the challenges of students with disabilities and be effectively meeting their educational needs (2006, p. 94). Idol states that teachers feel that more professional development is needed regarding how to include modifications, and how to effectively support teachers (2006). Proper training means that, “all staff be guided to explore a variety of service delivery options” (2006, p. 92). Avramidis et al. (2000) observe that teachers felt that they needed more training as they complete their college preparation programs. College courses on teacher education are meant to provide pre-service teachers the knowledge they need to be successful in contemporary classrooms. Training pre-service teachers is a predominate factor that impacts teacher acceptance of inclusion (Wilkins & Neitfield, 2004). Leatherman and Niemeyer observe that pre-service teachers believe that hands-on experiences in inclusive classrooms are important during their training programs (2005). “Teacher training programs should require students to investigate resources for children with disabilities and their families” (Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005, p. 34). Austin (2001) states that many special education co-teachers felt that placing student teachers in collaborative settings for student teaching assignments, pre-service coursework in collaborative teaching, and pre-service special education courses for general education teachers was beneficial by preparing the pre-teachers to work in inclusive classrooms.

Professional development is important in the creation of successful inclusive environments. Many teachers are apprehensive about teaching special education students because they feel that they lacked training necessary to meet student needs, and that they had not learned appropriate skills in their career or at professional development

workshops (Lohrmann, & Bambara, 2006; Desimone & Parmar, 2006). In Idol's 2006 study, teachers wanted professional development in the areas of instructional and curriculum modifications, methods of supporting teachers in inclusive classrooms, professional development for instructional assistants, visiting schools practicing inclusion, disciplinary practices, and using reading tutor programs.

The roles of general and special education teachers have been redefined to meet the requirements of inclusion (Carpenter, & Dyal, 2007). Traditionally, special education teachers have been extensively trained to meet the needs of students with disabilities and provided instruction for content courses. Special education teachers are no longer qualified to teach core academic areas in which they have not proven competency in due to the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (U.S. Doe, n.d.). Teachers who had training outside of school were more confident in meeting Individualized Education Plan requirements more than teachers with school based training or no training at all (Avramidis, Bayless & Burden, 2000).

According to Avramidis et al. (2000), professional development increased teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion. When 81 primary and secondary teachers were questioned about inclusion, it was revealed that teachers with first-hand experience in inclusion were more positive than teachers who had little experience with inclusion. Teachers who have the proper training are confident in their ability feel they can meet the needs of students with disabilities. Teachers are overwhelmed when they are faced with challenges they do not feel they are equipped to handle. Monahan and Marino state that

many general education teachers do not have the instructional skills or background to teach special education students (1996).

### **Teachers' Attitudes and Teaching Practices**

One major supposition of implementing a successful inclusion program is teacher buy-in. If the teacher or teachers implementing the inclusion program are not supportive or positive about the program then it likely the program will not be effective (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Commitment of the teachers implementing an inclusion program can affect the effectiveness of the program (Norwich, 1994). Teachers who are more positive about inclusion are more likely to try new teaching techniques (Van Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2001). Teachers must be familiar with teaching strategies conducive to students' disabilities, and the more strategies used with students with disabilities, the more successful the student (McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008).

The special education teacher is essential in ensuring academic success for students with disabilities (McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008). Teachers have to spend more time with students with disabilities (Cook, Cameron & Tankersly, 2007), which can often be trying to both the student and the teacher. However, without teacher perseverance and effectiveness, students are less likely to be successful in their academic endeavors (Sanders & Horn, 1998). Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) found that the greatest impacts on student achievement come from teacher quality.

Teachers' use of instructional and self-coping skills have a great influence on the success of students with disabilities (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001). Van Reusen and colleagues (2001) completed research with 125 teachers in Texas. The researchers

collected data on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion as well as their practices in the classroom. They found that teachers with a more positive attitude towards inclusion were more likely to try and find additional help in order to help them implement inclusive practices in their classroom (Van Reusen et al., 2001).

Bender, Vail, and Scott (1995) had similar findings. One hundred and twenty-seven general education teachers from 11 different schools participated in the study. All 127 participants were general education teachers teaching in classrooms with both general and special education students. The participants completed three different instruments one designed to measure their attitude towards mainstreaming, a second instrument measured teacher efficacy and the final instrument measured the effectiveness of instructional strategies used. The researchers found that teachers with a more positive attitude towards working with students with disabilities also had a higher sense of efficacy and used more effective instructional strategies (Bender et al., 1995).

Another teacher trait that is linked to student success is teacher efficacy (Poulou, 2007). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) defined teacher efficacy as "a judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (p.783). Teacher efficacy is important for students with disabilities because of the sensitive and often challenging obstacles that students and teachers must face (McDaniel & Dibella-McCarthy, 1989). Teachers who have a lower self-efficacy often give up and blame the students when the students are not successful, which in turn reinforces the low self-efficacy in teachers (Bandura, 1997).

## **Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion**

There has been limited research on the attitudes of high school teachers towards inclusion (Ernst & Rogers, 2009). Ernst and Rogers (2009) developed and used the ISHST with 149 teachers from Connecticut. Eighty-nine percent of the participants were certified in general education and 11% were certified in special education. The researchers found that teachers who participated in in-service programs about inclusion had a more positive attitude about inclusion than those who had not participated in in-service programs. Teachers who had participated in inclusive programs also had a more positive attitude towards inclusion (Ernst & Rogers, 2009).

In 2002, Avramidis and Norwich examined a thorough review of the literature on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. They found that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion could be affected by several conditions. First a student's disability was negatively correlated with their teacher's attitude towards inclusion. Thus, a teacher who worked primarily with students who were not severely disabled, was likely to be more positive towards inclusion. The researchers also found that teachers with greater access to instructional supports have a more positive attitude towards inclusion.

Avramidis et al. (2000) explored the attitude of 81 primary and secondary school teachers. The researchers found that teachers who had experience working in an inclusion environment had a more positive attitude towards inclusion than teachers with no experience in an inclusion classroom. The researchers also found that teachers with a degree related specifically to special education, and with university based professional development, had a more positive attitude towards inclusion (Avramidis et al., 2000)

Research conducted by Jobe, Rust and Brissie (1996) found that most teachers had a relatively neutral attitude towards inclusion. One-hundred and sixty-two classroom teachers participated in the research. The researchers found teachers with more inclusion in-service training, and experience teaching special education students had a more positive attitude about inclusion. They found little correlation between a teacher's attitude about inclusion and gender or teaching experience (Jobe et al., 1996).

Van Reusen (2001) and colleagues studied the attitude of 125 teachers. The researchers found that teachers with a more experience teaching special education had a more positive attitude towards inclusion. The researchers also studied the effect of three other independent variables on attitude towards inclusion. These three factors were gender, years of experience, and subject area taught. The researchers found that these factors did not affect a teacher's attitude towards inclusion (Van Reusen et al., 2001).

### **Summary**

The opportunity for students with disabilities to be educated with their non-disabled peers has emerged since the turn of the twenty first century. Society's recognition and acceptance of disabilities paved the way to provide all children the opportunity to receive a free and appropriate public education (Colrusson & O'Rourke, 2004). Instead of being self-conscious of their differences, students with disabilities can now focus on their abilities rather than their disabilities (Thousand et al., 2006).

“Our nation's ability to compete successfully in the global community depends on the meaningful inclusion of all citizens in our educational system . . . . [and] every child is a precious resource whose full potential must be tapped” (USDOE, n.d., p. 12).

Inclusion of students with disabilities has paved the way for students to have an equitable opportunity for an education (Heward, 2002). As students with disabilities gain academic and social experiences in education, they are afforded the opportunity to become successful, productive citizens in society.

In order to close the current achievement gap between students with disabilities and their general education peers, it is important that their teachers have a more positive attitude towards working with students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom environment. Research has demonstrated that teachers with a more positive attitude towards inclusion are more likely to use more effective instructional strategies in the classroom (Bender et al., 1995). The use of specialized instructional strategies is critical when working with students with disabilities (McCormick, 2005; McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008). Teachers with a more positive attitude towards inclusion are also more likely to have a higher sense of efficacy (Bender et al., 1995). This is important since previous research has linked teacher efficacy with student achievement and effective use of instructional strategies (Poulou, 2007; Tournaki & Podell, 2005). In order to insure the success of students with disabilities, it is important that teachers have a positive attitude about working with inclusion students.

Previous research on teachers' perspectives on inclusion has demonstrated that those teachers working in an inclusive classroom are more positive about inclusion than students not working in an inclusion classroom. The research has also indicated that teachers who receive more in-service and professional development in the area of

inclusion are more positive about inclusion. However, the research has been inconclusive in the areas of years of experience as well as level of education.

Much of the research has been done outside of the United States (Ernst & Rogers, 2009). Also very little of the research has focused exclusively on the high school level. Instead it has focused on lower levels or multi-levels (Ernst & Rogers, 2009). The researcher could not find any research about level of education and attitude towards inclusion. Thus the researcher has chosen to explore the attitudes of high school teachers and their relationship to the independent variables: field of certification, setting, level of education, and years of experience.

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

According to the Georgia Department of Education's 2010-2011 Special Education Annual Report, the state of Georgia had a total of 176,962 students with disabilities (SWD) between the ages of three and 21 years old enrolled in public schools. There were approximately a total of; (a) 51,075 SWD in grades 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> (high school); (b) 42,043 SWD in grades 6<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> (middle school); (c) 65,618 SWD in grades 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> (grade school); (d) 18,247 SWD in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten combined. Totals are approximate because the Georgia Department of Education suppresses reporting subgroups with 10 or fewer students (GADOE, n.d.). Based on kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade placement, the state of Georgia missed its target of placing 65% of SWD in general education classes over 80% of the time. Only (a) 62.9 % of SWD were placed in general education classrooms over 80% of the time; (b) 19.6 % of the students were placed in the general education classrooms 40-79% of the time; (c) 15.1% of SWD were placed in the general education classroom less than 40% of the time; (d) 0.3 % with disabilities were placed in hospital/homebound; (e) 2% of SWD were placed in separate facilities

As students with disabilities are transitioned into regular education classes, greater demands are being placed on teachers because “within inclusive programs, the general education teacher is expected to make adaptations to provide a suitable environment for students with disabilities” (Alexander & Hunter, 2004, p137). Teacher perceptions of inclusion play a key factor in the academic achievement of students with disabilities. “Many schools in the US are implanting inclusion for all students with disabilities, but the current research base is not conclusive” (Hunter & Alexander, 2004,

p. 150). This research will add to existing research on inclusion at the high school level, as there is a lack of research on inclusion in secondary education (Alexander & Hunter, 2004).

Currently Students with Disabilities are falling behind in the classroom (Lee, Griggs, & Dion, 2007). With the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB), the achievement gap has gained an increase of public attention (Katsiyannis et al., 2007). English/language arts and math scores have been used to determine if students, schools, and districts are making sufficient progress according to federal standards (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007). The federal marker to determine the educational sufficiency is called Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) (Eckes & Swando, 2009). Test scores must gradually rise each year and students are divided into subgroups based on ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status and English language learners. By disaggregating the AYP data, students with disabilities progress on the standardized tests has become very apparent, and the schools that have subgroups are more likely to not meet AYP than schools that do not have subgroups (Eckes & Swando, 2009).

The special education teacher is essential in ensuring academic success for students with disabilities (McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008). Teachers have to spend more time with students with disabilities (Cook, Cameron & Tankersly, 2007), which can often be trying to both the student and the teacher. However, without teacher perseverance and effectiveness, students are less likely to be successful in their academic endeavors (Sanders & Horn, 1998). Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) found that the greatest impacts on student achievement come from teacher quality. Research shows that

teachers whom are positive about inclusion are more likely to try and implement the instructional strategies necessary for the Students with Disabilities (SWD) to be successful (Van Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2001). Teachers with a positive attitude about inclusion are also more likely to have a higher sense of efficacy and seek outside help (Bender, Vail, and Scott, 1995).

### **Research Design**

The study was conducted using casual-comparative and correlational research designs. The designs are “important to the field of education because many important educational variables cannot be manipulated or created in the laboratory, and it is difficult, if not possible, to create many real-life settings using experiments” (Johnston & Christensen, 2008, p. 341). Both designs seek to explain phenomena and explore causation (Frankel & Wallen, 2006). The method allowed the researcher to determine whether a relationship existed between teachers’ perceptions of inclusion in regards to the following: certification field, degree level, years of experience, and classroom setting.

The research is guided by the following questions:

RQ1: Do teachers’ perspectives about inclusion differ based on whether they are certified in general education, special education, or both general and special education?

RQ2: Do teachers’ degree levels play significant roles in their perspectives about inclusion?

RQ3: Do teachers’ years of teaching experience have a significant role in their perspectives about inclusion?

RQ4: Do the perspectives of inclusion classroom teachers differ from teachers who do not teach in an inclusion classroom?

The following null hypotheses were formulated to address the research questions:

H<sub>01</sub>: There will be no significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion based on whether the teacher is certified in general education, special education, or both general and special education as shown by the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers.

H<sub>02</sub>: There will be no significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion, as shown by the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers, and the following degree levels: (a) bachelor's degree, (b) master's degree, and (c) advanced degree.

H<sub>03</sub>: There will be no significant relationship between teacher perspectives about inclusion and years of teaching experience as shown by the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers.

H<sub>04</sub>: There will be no significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion and classroom setting as shown by the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers.

## **Population**

The population for this study includes high school teachers from school districts in a southeastern metropolitan area. The subjects for this study were drawn from an accessible population. "The accessible population is a group of research participants who are available to the researcher for participation in the research" (Johnson & Christensen,

2008, p.269). Since the target population is rarely available researchers generalize using the accessible population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007). The study used a simple random sampling technique to provide “each and every member of the population . . . an equal independent chance of being selected” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007, p. 95). All teachers from school districts that approved data collection within the timeframe that was conducive to that of the study were invited to participate in the study. Participants completed their questionnaire on a voluntary basis.

### **Setting**

The study was conducted in six public school districts located in a southeastern metropolitan area. The school systems used in the study were comprised of one city school and five county school systems. The number of high schools in participating districts ranged from one to six.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument used was a two-part survey containing 31 items. In the first part of the survey, participants responded to four demographic/background questions regarding certification field, degree level, years of experience and classroom setting. In the second part of the survey participants responded to 27 items on the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers (ISHST). The ISHST is a self-reported survey of teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion. The scale was developed by Ernst and Rogers in order to measure teachers’ attitudes towards including SWD in the general education classroom (2009). The researcher contacted the developers of the instrument to obtain permission for use. The instrument participants completed contained two sections. The first section

of the questionnaire captured demographic/background information. The second section of the instrument was a scale developed by Earnest and Rodgers (2009) to gather teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

To develop content for the ISHST, inclusion experts reviewed five existing inclusion attitude scales along with additional items that were reviewed (Ernst & Rogers, 2009, p. 311). The five inclusion scales contain 124 items that were analyzed and categorized into 11 categories by two trained raters based on Eagly and Chaiken's theory of attitude. "Eagly and Chaiken assert that attitudes are evaluations comprised of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Ernst & Rogers, 2009)." The resulting 51 scale items were reviewed by a panel of experts, resulting in a new scale of 43 scale items. A pilot test was conducted using randomly selected participants who rated answers on scale items using a seven-point Likert-type scale. Responses ranged from one to seven; where one represents strong agreement and seven represents strong disagreement. "Low scores indicated positive attitudes towards inclusion and high scores suggested negative attitudes towards inclusion" (Ernest & Rogers, 2009, p. 312). After a pilot study was completed, Ernest and Rogers used factor analysis to further refine the scale to a version that contained 27 items with a Cronbach alpha of .92. The scale ".represented 11 inclusion categories with each category containing at least one cognitive, one affective, and one behavioral item" (Ernst & Rogers, 2009, p. 312). On the scale items, 1-12 represents the cognitive component of attitude, 13-19 represent the affective component of attitude, and items 20-27 represent the behavioral component of attitude.

The study may contain sampling bias. “Sampling bias is the difference between what we observe in our sample and what we would have observed if we collected data for the entire population” (Kalof, Dan, & Dietz, 2008, p. 158). The researcher attempted to avoid sampling bias by ensuring that the sample drawn was representative of the accessible population. Views on the number of participants needed for correlational research differ. Gall, Gall, and Borg state, “a minimum of 30 participants is desirable” (2007, p. 176). Fraenkel and Wallen assert that, “a sample of least 50 is deemed necessary to establish the existence of a relationship” (2007, p. 104). Views on the number of participants needed for casual-comparative research differ. Gall, Gall, and Borg state, “there should be at least 15 participants in each group to be compared” (2007, p.176), where as Frankel and Wallen “recommend minimum of 30 individuals per group” (2007, p.104).

### **Procedures**

The researcher performed an internet search to find out what cities and counties were located in the metropolitan area targeted for the study. The information was available on the metropolitan area’s Chamber of Commerce website. Next, the researcher searched for the school systems available within the metropolitan area using the internet. There were a total of 36 school districts, 28 county school and eight city school systems, within the targeted metropolitan area. The researcher reviewed individual school district websites to find their guidelines for conducting research. When research guidelines were not available on-line, the researcher then called the school districts to seek the system contact for research guidelines. Based on district research

guidelines, four of the districts were not approving research during the requested timeframe. The researcher emailed documents requesting to conduct research in the remaining 32 school systems in accordance with individual school district requirements. Each research approval included information regarding the study, a copy of the consent form (See Appendix C), and/or letters for participants. Some districts had formal procedures while others just accepted and/or declined research request based on what the researcher emailed. The researcher requested district approval to collect data in 25 county and seven city school districts. Out of 32 research approval requests initiated by the researcher, eight school districts, one city school district and seven county school districts, approved the researcher's request at the district level, two city school districts and two county school districts declined the researcher's request, one school districts acknowledged receipt of the research request advising they would get back with the researcher although they never did, and 19 school systems never responded to the researcher's request.

The participants in the study are certified high school teachers from six public school districts in a southern metropolitan area. The instrument used was the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers (ISHST) (See Appendix A). The ISHST was loaded into SurveyMonkey to allow participants to complete their questionnaires electronically. The purpose of the ISHST was to gather teachers' attitudes including special education students in general education classrooms. Once district and/or principal approval was received and the Internal Review Board (IRB) (See Appendix D) approved data collection, the researcher gathered email addresses from school district websites and

email invitations (See Appendix B) were sent to potential study participants. The invitation emails contained the purpose of the study, information regarding the instrument, asked teachers for their participation in the study, and included a link to access the survey on SurveyMonkey. Once teachers selected the link for participation, they were able to read about informed consent before completing surveys. A follow-up email was sent via email within a week of the survey so that the researcher could remind teachers to complete the questionnaire if they had not already done so. The follow-up email also served as an opportunity for the researcher to receive additional participation. The survey closed two weeks after it was initially made available.

### **Response Rate**

The researcher sent 1,225 email invitations to six public school districts in a southeastern metropolitan area for this study. Although email addresses were publicly available, all districts did not specify titles. Therefore, after accessing the survey link and reading informed consent, subjects who selected they were not currently teachers were unable to access survey questions and were sent to a webpage that read “Thanks for your participation.” According to Frankel and Wallen (2006)

“The response rate is the percentage of people in a sample that participates in a research study” (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The number of responses received for the study was influenced by the number of teachers willing to partake in the study. A nonresponse occurs when some members of a sample do not respond (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007). There are disadvantages of using electronic surveys that affect response rate as well. Emails may ignored or filtered as spam (Sue & Ritter, 2007). Participant

email address were publicly available on district websites, but some invitations were returned undeliverable. The researcher intended to limit non-responses by sending a follow-up email asking non-respondents to complete their questionnaires. The response rate for this study is 14%.

### **Data Analysis**

Four research questions guided the investigation of high school teachers' perceptions of inclusion. Statistical analysis using Statistical Software for Social Science (SPSS) was used to address each research question quantitatively. Several statistical techniques were employed. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were used to answer research questions one, two, and four. A Pearson product-moment was used to answer three. The p-value of .05 was used to determine statistical significance. "The significance level of .05 has become a widespread convention among researchers in education and every other social and behavior science" (Christensen & Johnson, 2008, p. 529). The researcher failed to accept the hypothesis if the significance level is equal to or less than .05.

### **Reporting the Data**

The data results are reported in chapter four through tables, charts, and graphs.

### **Summary**

High school teachers from a southeastern metropolitan area were surveyed to gain their perception of inclusion using the ISHST. High school teachers were chosen rather because there is a lack of research regarding high school teacher's attitudes towards inclusion. After contacting all of the school districts within a southeastern metropolitan

area, 32 research approval requests were initiated by the researcher. From those 32 requests, eight school districts, one city school district and seven county school districts approved the researcher's request at the district level. An email containing a link to the electronic survey was sent to the high school teachers within the six approved school districts. After a two week survey timeframe, which included a follow up email one week after the invitation was sent, the researcher compiled, and analyzed survey results using SPSS software. Several statistical techniques were used to address the research questions guiding this study.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

One hundred and seventy-three teachers completed a self-report instrument, the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers (ISHST) to rate their attitudes and beliefs regarding including students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. This chapter will report on the results based on teachers' responses on the ISHST.

The purpose of this study was to find high school teacher perceptions of inclusion. Present day existing research focuses on inclusion at lower or multiple levels (Alexander & Hunter, 2004; Ernst & Rogers, 2009) rather than focusing on the high school level. Researchers also state that general and special education teachers are unaware of their collaborative roles in an inclusive environment (Monahan & Marino, 1996; Nichols & Nichols, 2010; Voltz, Raymond, & Elliott, 1994). "Effective teaching is a vital component of the education process" (Austin, 2001, p. 245) for all students. With a federal push towards inclusion due to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the ability of teachers to give the opportunity for students with disabilities an equitable education in relation to their non-disabled peers is imperative. This study extends existing research related to high school teachers' perceptions of inclusion at the high school level.

High school teachers from a southeastern metropolitan area were chosen as participants for the study. The high school level was chosen because most research on inclusion is conducted at multiple school levels or at the elementary school level. "High school teachers devote their instructional time to several groups of students in a day, whereas elementary teachers work with the same group of youngsters all day" (Ernst & Rogers, 2009, p 108). High school is an important level as it is important to

providing students the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need to becoming productive members of society (Pollard, 2002), and before moving on to the world of adulthood.

The ISHST is a self-reported questionnaire of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Participants responded to four demographic/background questions regarding certification field, degree level, years of experience, and classroom setting. The teachers then responded to 27 items on a Likert-type questionnaire, the ISHST. The ISHST used a Likert-type scale based on a 7-point rating system in which participants rated their responses to questions as: (1) strongly agree, (2) moderately agree, (3) mildly agree, (4) neither agree nor disagree, (5) mildly disagree, (6) moderately disagree, and (7) strongly disagree (Ernst & Young 2009). The independent variables are field(s) of certification, degree level, years of experience, and classroom setting (special education or general education). The dependent variable in this study is teachers' perspective.

### **Description of the Sample**

The researcher requested district approval to collect data in 25 county and seven city school districts. Out of 32 research approval requests initiated by the researcher, eight school districts, one city school district and seven county school districts, approved the researchers request at the district level; two city school districts and two county school districts declined the researcher's request; one school district acknowledged receipt of the research request advising they would get back with the researcher, but they never did; and 19 school systems never responded to the researcher's request. Of those eight districts that granted only six were used because although the district approved the study, their timeframe was not conducive to that of the survey. In one county, principals

never provided their approvals, and the other county responded less than a week before data collection was to end so the researcher decided not to use the two counties in the study. The six districts used for the study were comprised of one city school and five county school systems. The systems ranged from one to six high schools. In one district the researcher was only allowed to collect data two high schools.

A total of 192 certified teachers accessed the survey. One participant only completed the background/demographic survey questions. One hundred and ninety-one participants completed the background/demographic survey questions although only 173 (95%) of the teachers who accessed the survey ultimately completed the scale items. Information was discarded for participants who did not complete the scale items. Of those participants that completed the instrument, 4.6% ( $n = 8$ ) were certified to teach special education, 79.2% ( $n = 137$ ) were certified to teach general education, and 16.2% ( $n = 28$ ) were certified to teach both special education and general education. Field(s) of certification is reported in Table 1.

Table 1

*Certification Field(s)*

Certification Field(s)	Frequency	Percentage
Special Education	8	4.6%
General Education	137	79.2%
Special and General Education	28	16.2%
Total	173	100%

Degree level is reported in Table 2. 20.2 % ( $n = 35$ ) participants held a bachelor's degree, 49.7% ( $n = 86$ ) held a master's degree and 30.1% ( $n = 52$ ) participants held advanced degrees.

Table 2

*Degree Level*

Degree Level	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor's Degree	35	20.2%
Master's Degree	86	49.7%
Advanced Degree	52	30.1%
Total	173	100%

11.6% ( $n = 20$ ) participants had 0 - 3 years of teaching experience, 33.5% ( $n = 58$ ) had 4 - 10 years of teaching experience, and 54.9% ( $n = 95$ ) had 11 or more years of teaching experience. Number of years of teaching experience is reported in Table 3.

Table 3

*Years of Experience*

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
0 - 3 years	20	11.6%
4 - 10 years	58	33.5%
11 or more years	95	54.9%
Total	173	100%

61.8% ( $n = 107$ ) participants teach in an inclusion setting while, 38.2% ( $n = 66$ ) teach in a general education classroom setting. Classroom setting is reported in Table 4.

Table 4

*Classroom Setting*

Classroom Setting	Frequency	Percentage
Inclusion Setting	107	61.8%
General Education Setting	66	38.2%
Total	173	100%

**Data Analysis**

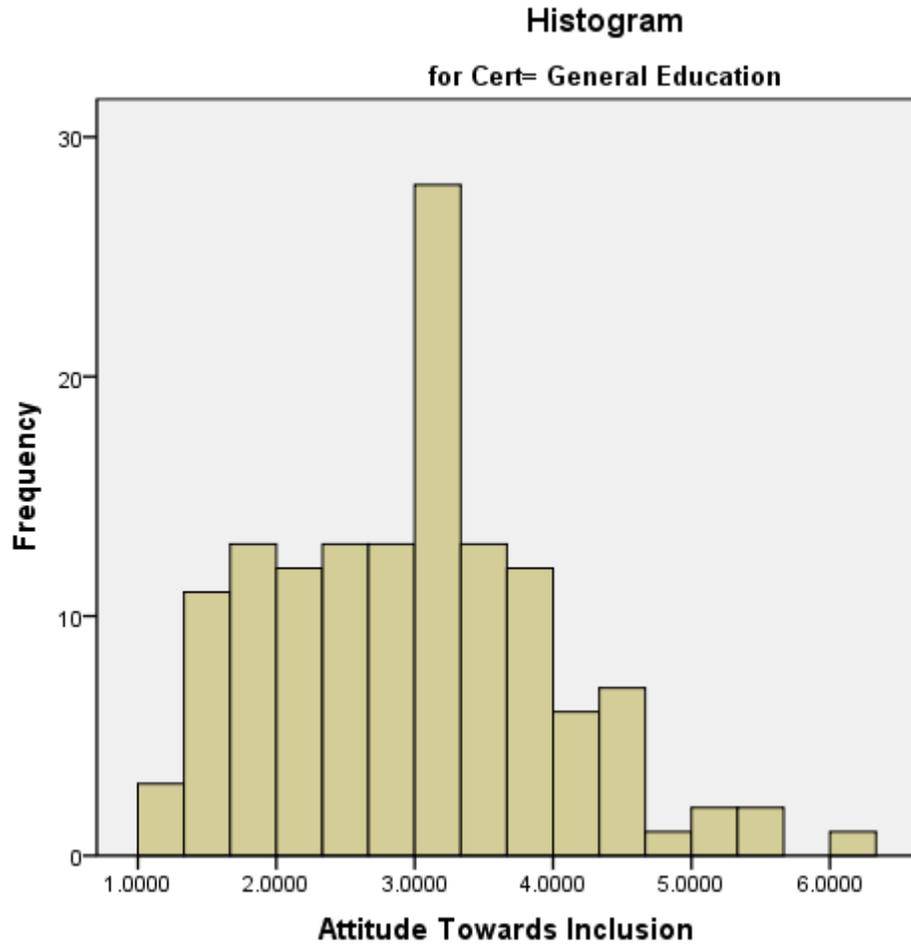
Four research questions guided the investigation of high school teacher perceptions of inclusion. Statistical analysis using Statistical Software for Social Science (SPSS) was used to address each research question quantitatively. Research findings are presented in tables, charts, and graphs. ANOVA's were used to address research questions one, two, and four. A Pearson product-moment correlation was used to answer research question three.

***RQ 1:** Do teachers' perspectives on inclusion differ based on whether they are certified in general education, special education, or both general and special education?*

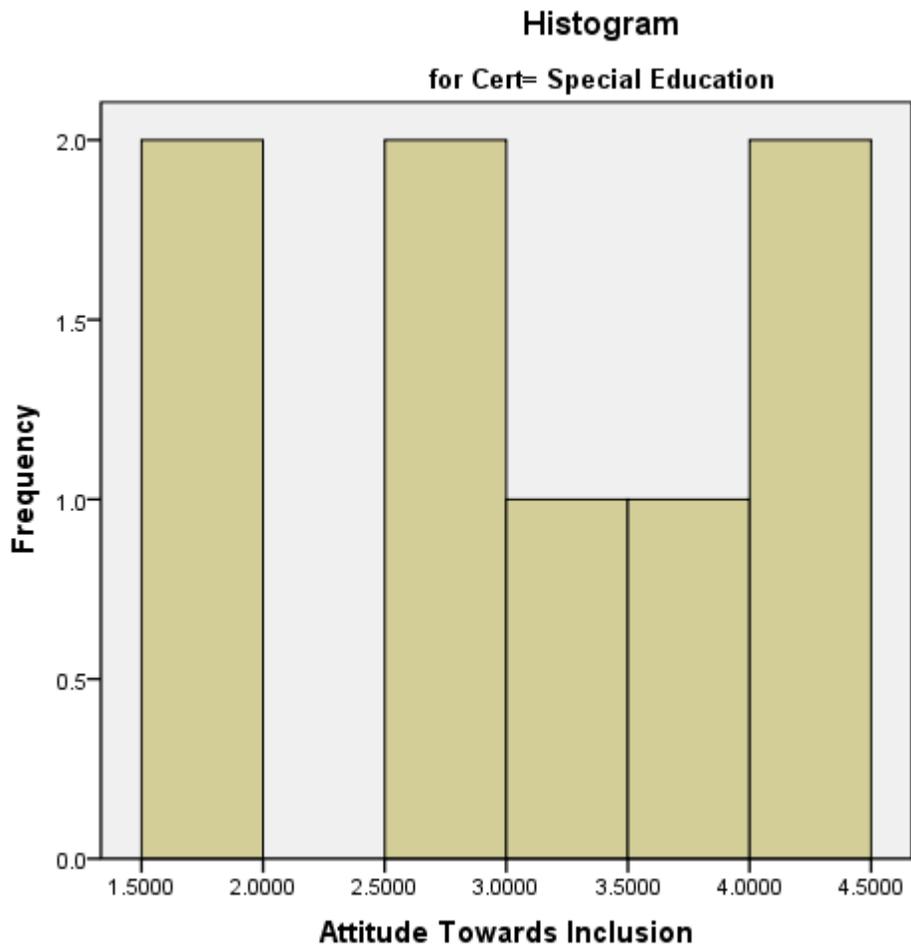
The following null hypothesis was tested to address this question: There will be no significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion based on whether the teacher is certified in general education, special education, or both general and special education as shown by the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers. An ANOVA was used to analyze the null hypothesis that there would not be a significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion based on whether the teacher is certified in general education, special education, or both general and special education. An ANOVA was chosen because the independent variable was divided into three groups that included those certified in special education, those certified in general education, and those certified in both special education and general education. ANOVA was the best statistically method for analyzing the difference in means when working with more than two groups (Field, 2009). The null hypothesis would be rejected if the  $p$  value for the  $F$  statistic was less than .05. Prior to completing the ANOVA, tests were completed in order to insure homogeneity of variances as well as normality of distribution within groups. Data was determined to be statistically independent since the answers of one participant did not influence the answers of another participant.

Homogeneity of variance can be assumed if Levene's test is not statistically significant at the .05 level. Levene's test indicted homogeneity of variance  $F(2, 170) = 0.04, p = .957$ . Field (2009) stated that normality can be assumed if any one of three conditions are met. Normality can be assumed if the individual histograms show visual

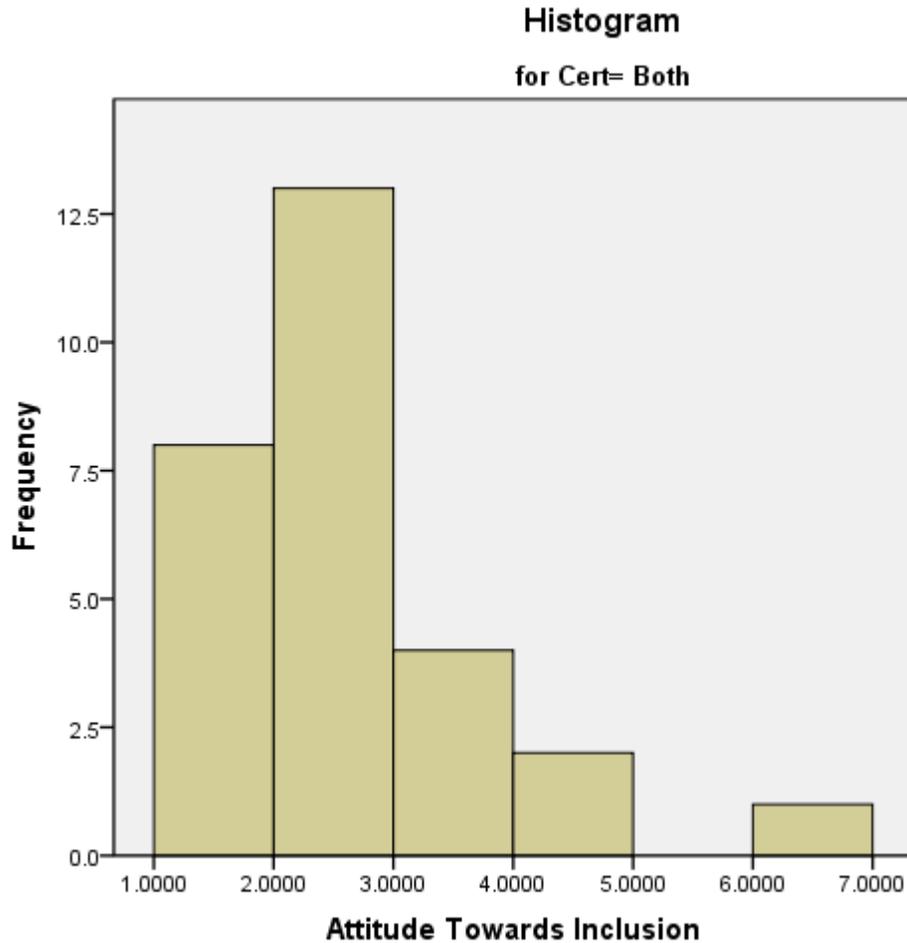
normality, if the Kolgorov-Smirnov test is not statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level, or if the sample size is greater than 30 participants. The histogram for teachers certified in general education indicated normality, however the histograms for special education teachers, and those teachers certified in both special and general education, were not conclusive. Therefore the Kolgorov-Smirnov test was used to determine normality. The Kolgorov-Smirnov test with Lilliefors significance indicated normality for all three groups: general education  $D(137) = .06, p = .200$ ; special education  $D(8) = .16, P = .200$ ; certification in both special and general education  $D(28) = .13, p = .200$ . Figure 1 shows the histogram for teachers certified in general education. Figure 2 is the histograms for those teachers certified in special education and those teachers certified in both special education and general education are represented in Figure 3.



*Figure 1.* Histogram for the independent variable teachers certified in general education and the dependent variable attitude towards inclusion. Scores on the inclusion scale range from 1.0000 (strongly agree) to 7.000 (strongly disagree).



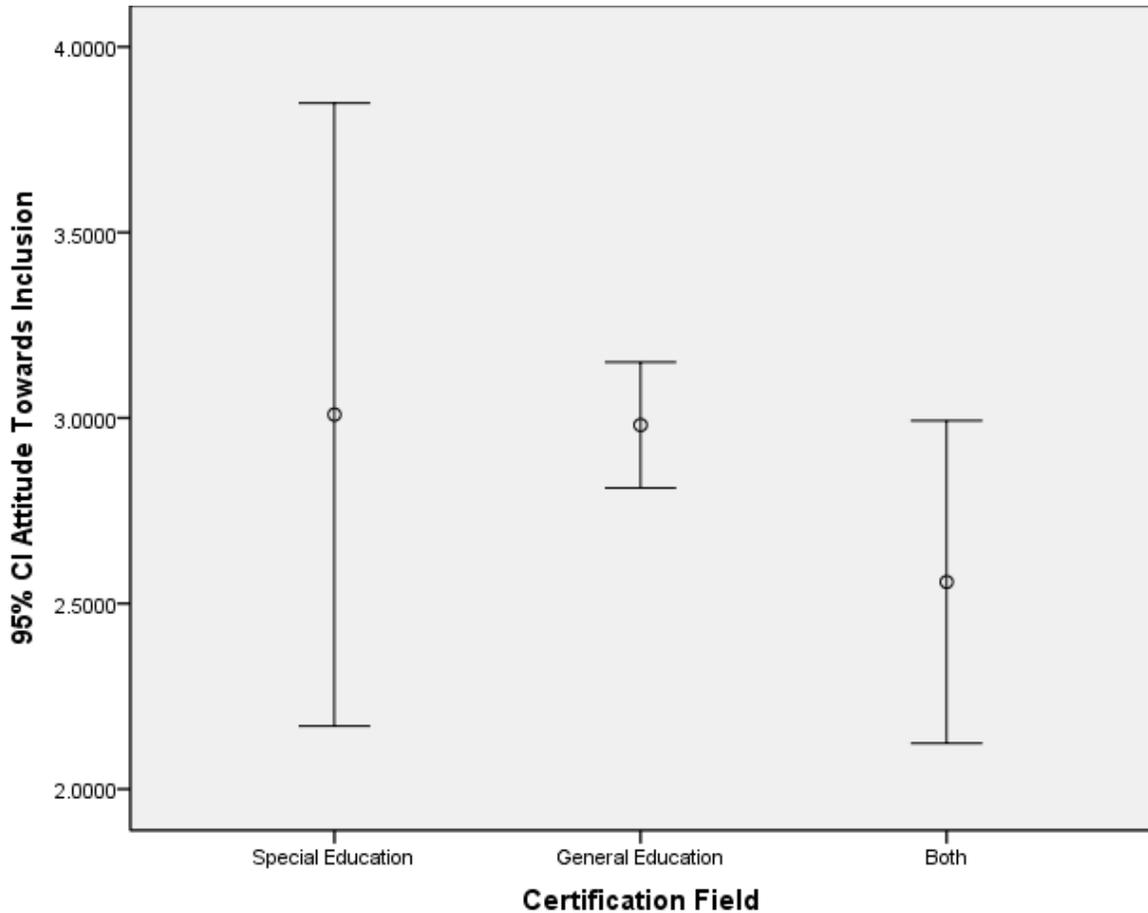
*Figure 2.* Histogram for the independent variable teachers certified in special education and the dependent variable attitude towards inclusion. Scores on the inclusion scale range from 1.0000 (strongly agree) to 7.000 (strongly disagree).



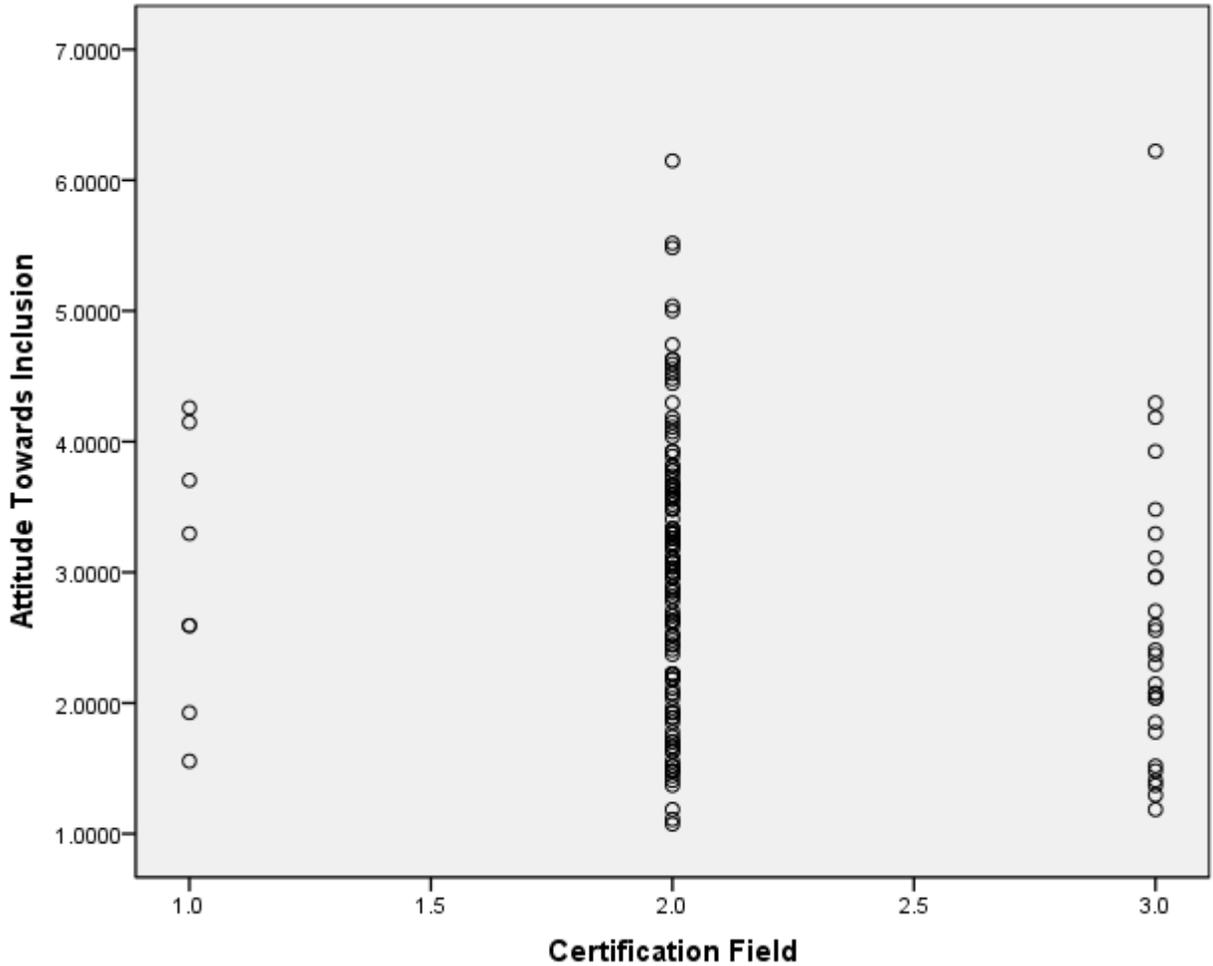
*Figure 3.* Histogram for the independent variable teachers certified in both general education and special education and the dependent variable attitude towards inclusion. Scores on the inclusion scale range from 1.0000 (strongly agree) to 7.000 (strongly disagree).

Once normality was established, the ANOVA was conducted to analyze the null hypothesis. There was not a statistically significant difference between teachers' attitudes towards inclusion based on whether the teacher was certified in general or special education,  $F(2, 170) = 2.03, p = .135$ . Since  $p > .05$ , the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis that there would be no significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion based on whether the teacher is certified in general

education, special education or both general and special education. Figure 4 illustrates a comparison of the means and the 95% confidence level. Figure 5 shows a scatterplot representing answers to the ISHST based on certification.



*Figure 4.* Comparison of means based on teacher's certification for the dependent variable teacher's attitude towards inclusion. Error bars represent the standard error of the means and the 95% confidence level. Scores on the ISHST range from 1.000: strongly agree (positive attitude) to 7.000: strongly disagree (negative attitude).



*Figure 5.* Scatterplot representing individual scores on the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers (ISHST) based on certification field. For certification, 1.0 represents those certified in special education only, 2.0 represents those teachers certified in general education only, and 3.0 represents those teachers represented in both general and special education. Scores on the ISHST range from 1.000: strongly agree (positive attitude) to 7.000: strongly disagree (negative attitude).

**RQ 2:** Do teachers’ degree levels play significant roles in their perspectives about inclusion?

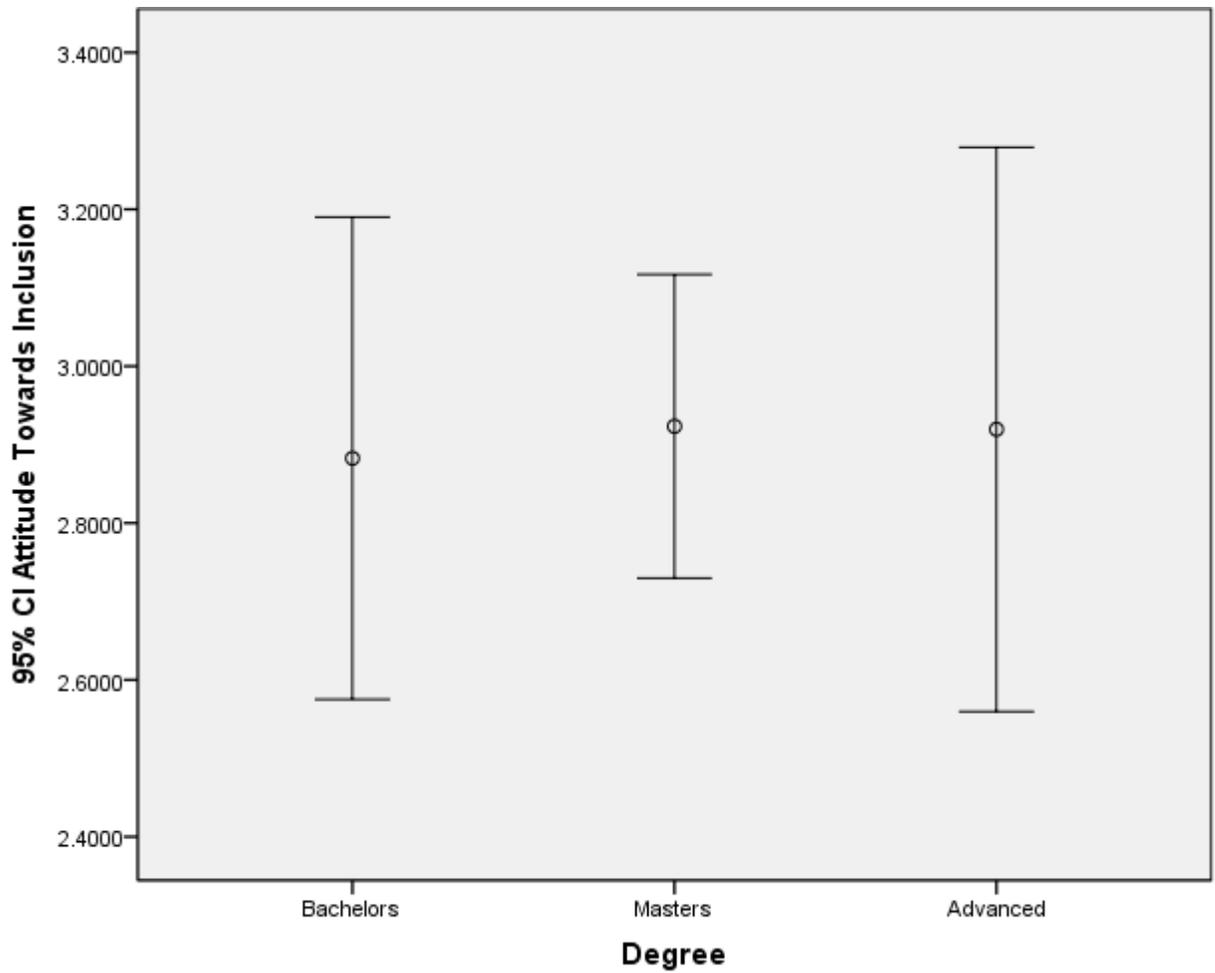
The following null hypothesis was tested to address this question: There will be no significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion, as shown by the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers, and the following degree levels: (a)

bachelor's degree, (b) master's degree, and (c) advanced degree. An ANOVA was used to analyze the null hypothesis that there would not be a significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion and degree level. An ANOVA was chosen because the independent variable was divided into three groups. The three groups included those with a bachelor's degree, a master's degree or an advanced degree. ANOVA was the best statistically method for analyzing the difference in means when working with more than two groups (Field, 2009). The null hypothesis would be rejected if the  $p$  value for the  $F$  statistic was less than .05. Prior to completing the ANOVA, tests were completed in order to insure homogeneity of variances as well as normality of distribution within groups. Data was determined to be statistically independent since the answers of one participant did not influence the answers of another participant.

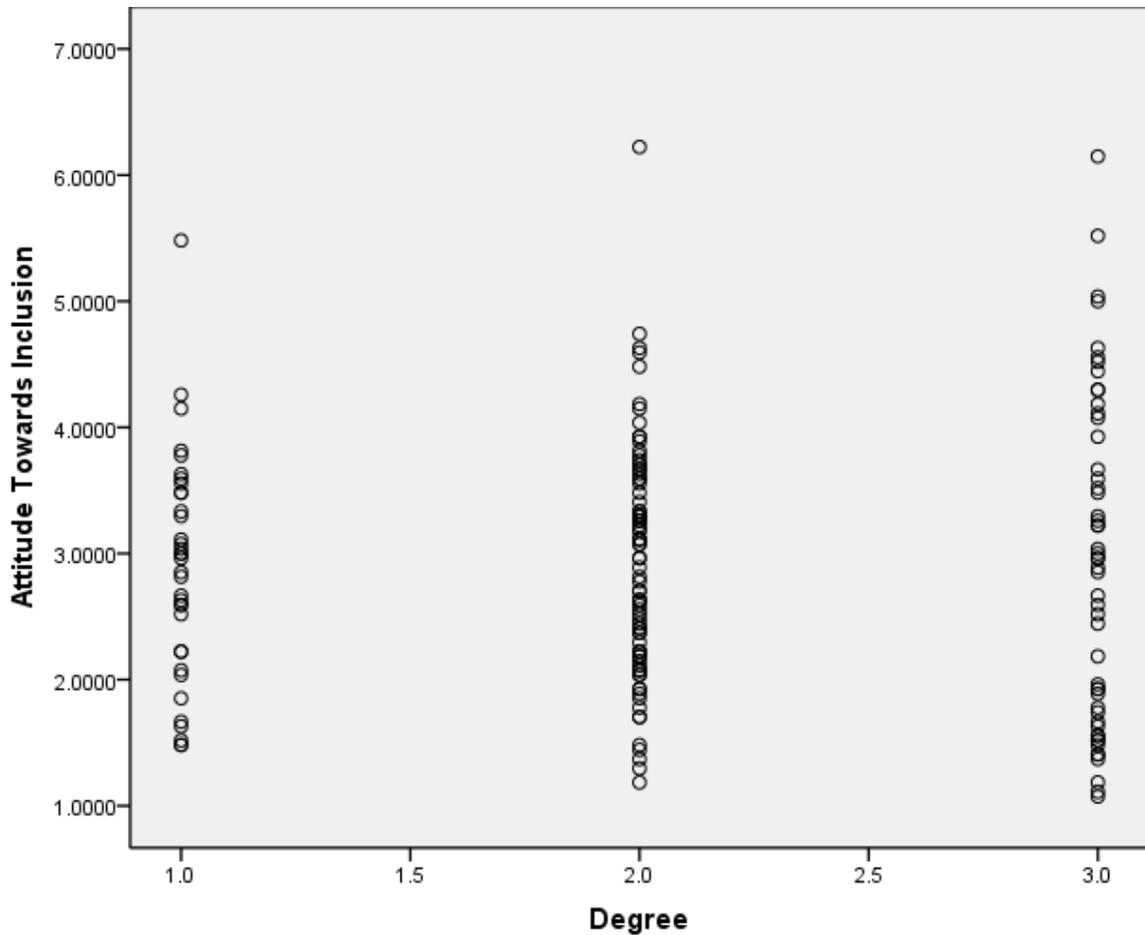
Normality can be assumed if the individual histograms show visual normality, if the Kolgorov-Smirnov test is not statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level, or if the sample size is greater than 30 participants. The histogram for teachers with a bachelor's degree as well as those with a master's degree indicated normality, however the histograms for teachers with an advanced degree was not conclusive. Therefore the Kolgorov-Smirnov test was used to determine normality. The Kolgorov-Smirnov test with Lilliefors significance indicated normality for the group of teachers with a bachelor's degree  $D(35) = .06, p = .200$ , as well as the group of teachers with a master's degree  $D(86) = .06, p = .200$ , however the Kolgorov-Smirnov test did not indicate normality for the teachers with an advanced degree  $D(52) = .14, p = .018$ . However since the group has over 30 participants normality can be assumed.

Homogeneity of variance can be assumed if Levene's test is not statistically significant at the .05 level. Levene's test did not indicate homogeneity of variance  $F(2, 170) = 6.87, p = .001$ . Levene's test is susceptible to larger sample sizes (Field, 2009), and this is one reason that it may have failed to show homogeneity of variances. Since homogeneity of variance was not indicated, a Brown-Forsythe test was used since it is more robust to a failed Levene's test (Field, 2009).

The ANOVA was conducted to analyze the null hypothesis. There was not a statistically significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion and degree level,  $F(2, 120.69) = .020, p = .980$ . Since  $p > .05$ , the researcher f the null hypothesis that there would be no significant difference in teacher perspectives about inclusion based on degree level. Figure 6 illustrates a comparison of the means and the 95% confidence level. Figure 7 shows a scatterplot representing answers to the ISHST based on certification.



*Figure 6.* Comparison of means based on teacher's level of education for the dependent variable teacher's attitude towards inclusion. Error bars represent the standard error of the means and the 95% confidence level. Scores on the ISHST range from 1.000: strongly agree (positive attitude) to 7.000: strongly disagree (negative attitude).

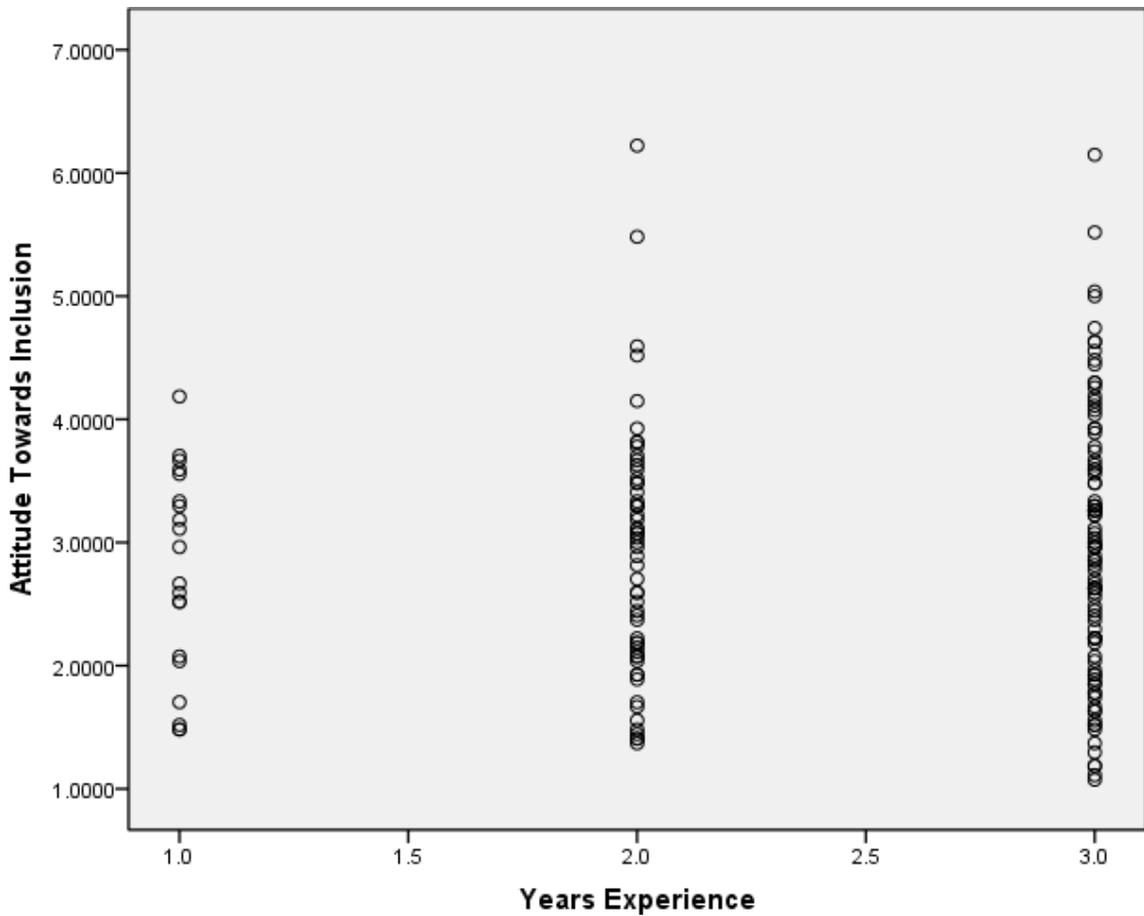


*Figure 7.* Scatterplot representing individual scores on the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers (ISHST) based degree level. For degree, 1.0 represents those teachers with a bachelor’s degree, 2.0 represents those teachers with a master’s degree, and 3.0 represents those teachers with an advanced degree. Scores on the ISHST range from 1.000: strongly agree (positive attitude) to 7.000: strongly disagree (negative attitude).

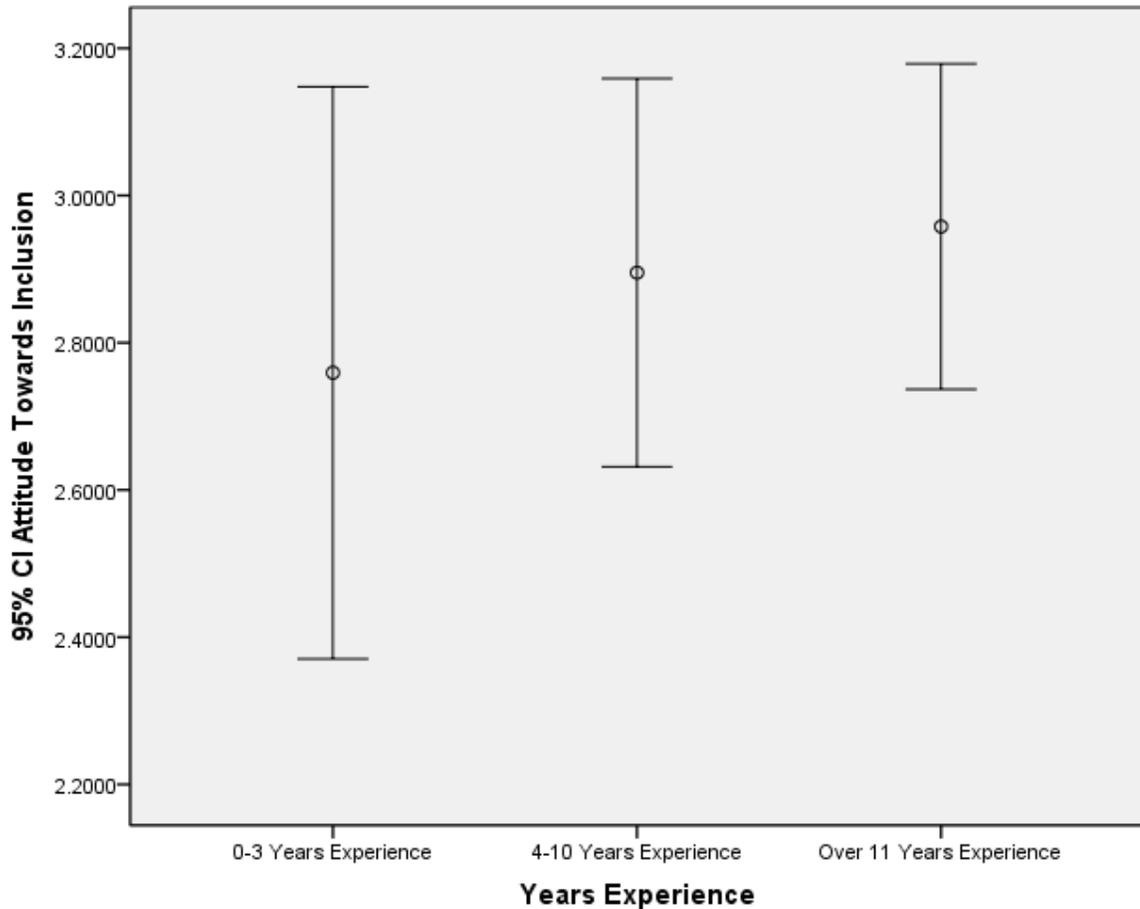
**RQ 3:** *Do teachers’ years of teaching experience have a significant role in their perspectives about inclusion?*

The following null hypothesis was tested to address this question: There would not be a significant relationship between teacher perspectives about inclusion and years of teaching experience as shown by the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers.

A Pearson product-moment correlation was computed in order to assess the relationship between years of teaching and teachers' perspectives about inclusion. A Pearson product-moment correlation is used when "both variables we wish to correlate are expressed as continuous scores" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p.347); years of teaching and teachers' perspectives are continuous variables. There was no correlation between the two variables  $r = .06$ ,  $n = 173$ ,  $p = .438$ . Thus the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis that there would be no significant relationship between teachers' perspectives about inclusion and years of teaching experience. Figure 8 shows a scatterplot representing this data. Figure 9 illustrates a comparison of the means and the 95% confidence level.



*Figure 8.* Scatterplot representing individual scores on the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers (ISHST) based on years of experience. For years of experience, 1.0 represents those teachers with 0 - 3 years of experience, 2.0 represents those teachers with 4 – 10 years of experience, and 3.0 represents those teachers with more than 11 years of experience. Scores on the ISHST range from 1.000: strongly agree (positive attitude) to 7.000: strongly disagree (negative attitude).



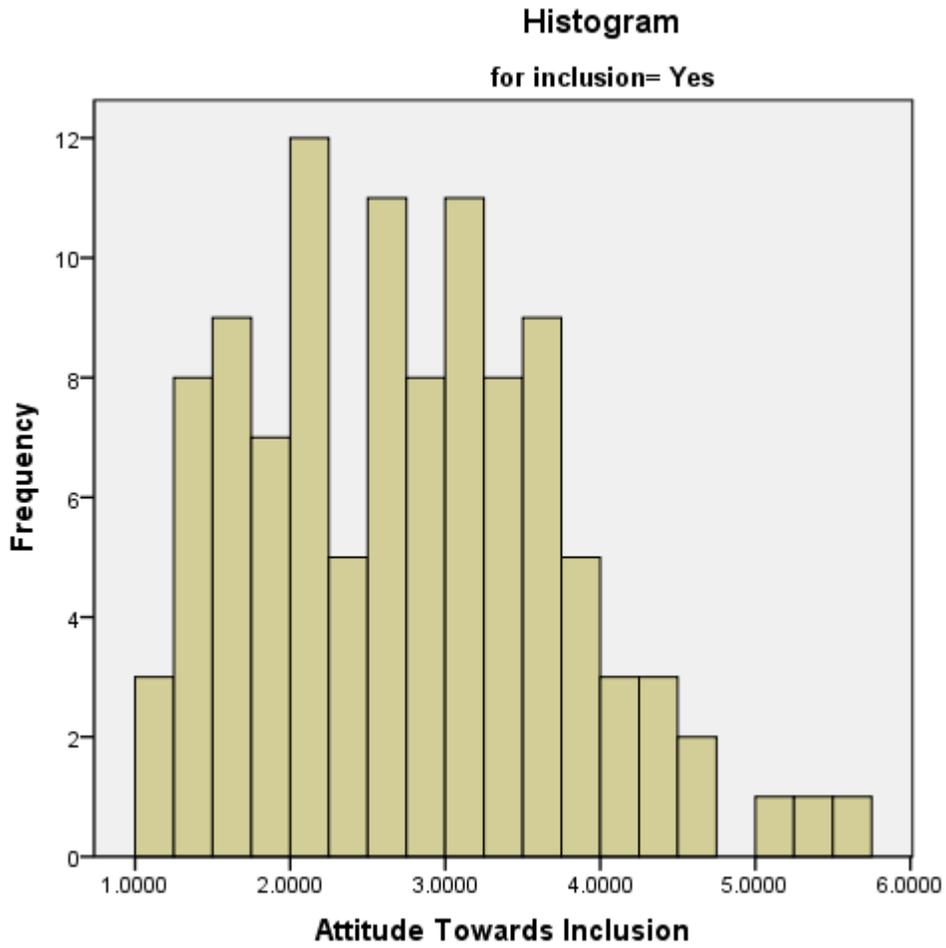
*Figure 9.* Comparison of means based on years of experience for the dependent variable teacher's attitude towards inclusion. Error bars represent the standard error of the means and the 95% confidence level. Scores on the ISHST range from 1.000: strongly agree (positive attitude) to 7.000: strongly disagree (negative attitude).

**RQ4:** *Do the perspectives of inclusion classroom teachers differ from teachers who do not teach in an inclusion classroom?*

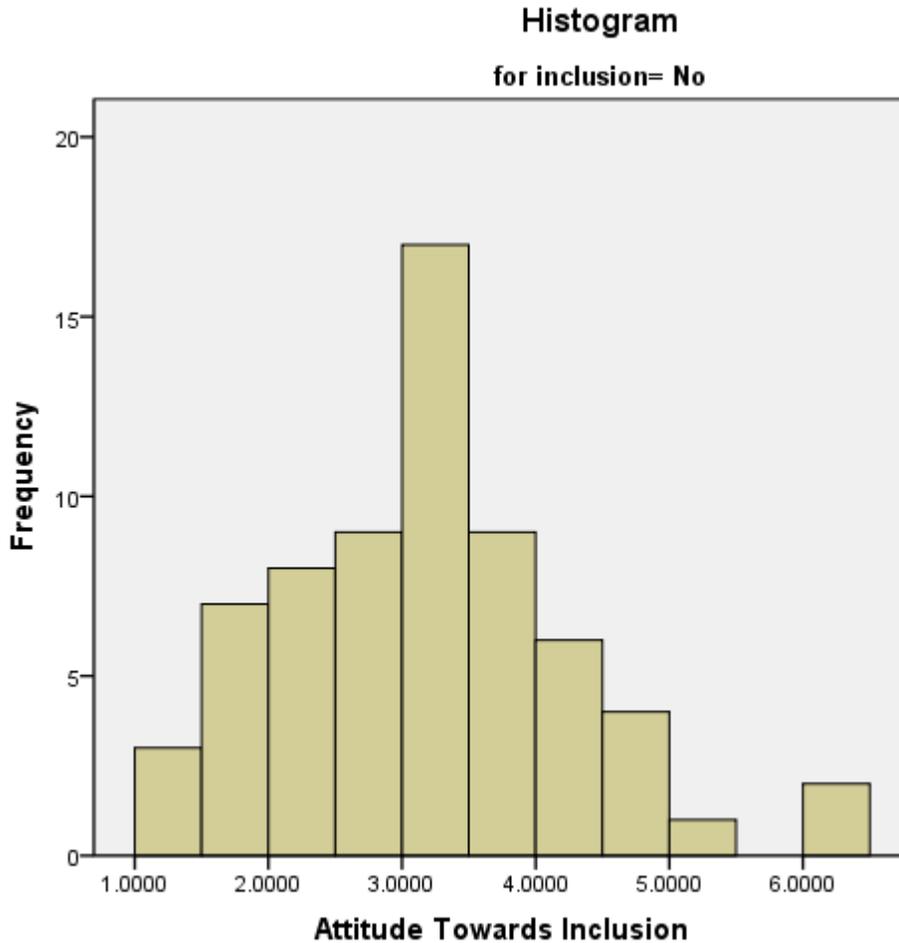
The following null hypothesis was tested to address this question: There will be no significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion and classroom setting as shown by the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers. An ANOVA was used to analyze the null hypothesis that there would not be a significant difference between teacher perspectives about inclusion and classroom setting as shown by the

Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers. An ANOV was used because the independent variable was divided into two groups. The two groups were teachers who teach in an inclusion classroom setting and teachers who do not teach in an inclusion classroom setting. The null hypothesis would be rejected if the  $p$  value for the  $F$  statistic is less than .05. Prior to completing the ANOVA, tests were completed in order to insure homogeneity of variances as well as normality of distribution within groups. The data was collected at the interval level and were determined to be statistically independent since the answers of one participant did not influence the answers of another participant.

Homogeneity of variance can be assumed if Levene's test is not statistically significant at the .05 level. Levene's test indicted homogeneity of variance  $F(1, 171) = 0.01, p = .932$ . Field (2009) stated that normality can be assumed if any one of three conditions is met. Normality can be assumed if the individual histograms show visual normality, if the Kolgorov-Smirnov test is not statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level, or if the sample size is greater than 30 participants. The histogram for teachers who currently teach in an inclusion setting as well as those who do not teach in an inclusion setting both indicated normality. Figure 10 shows the histogram those teachers who teach in an inclusion setting and figure 11 shows the histogram for those teachers who do not currently teach in an inclusion classroom. The results of the Kolgorov-Smirnov confirmed normality for both groups: teachers currently in an inclusion classroom,  $D(107) = .07, p = .180$ ; teachers who do not currently teach in an inclusion classroom.  $D(66) = .07, p = .200$ .



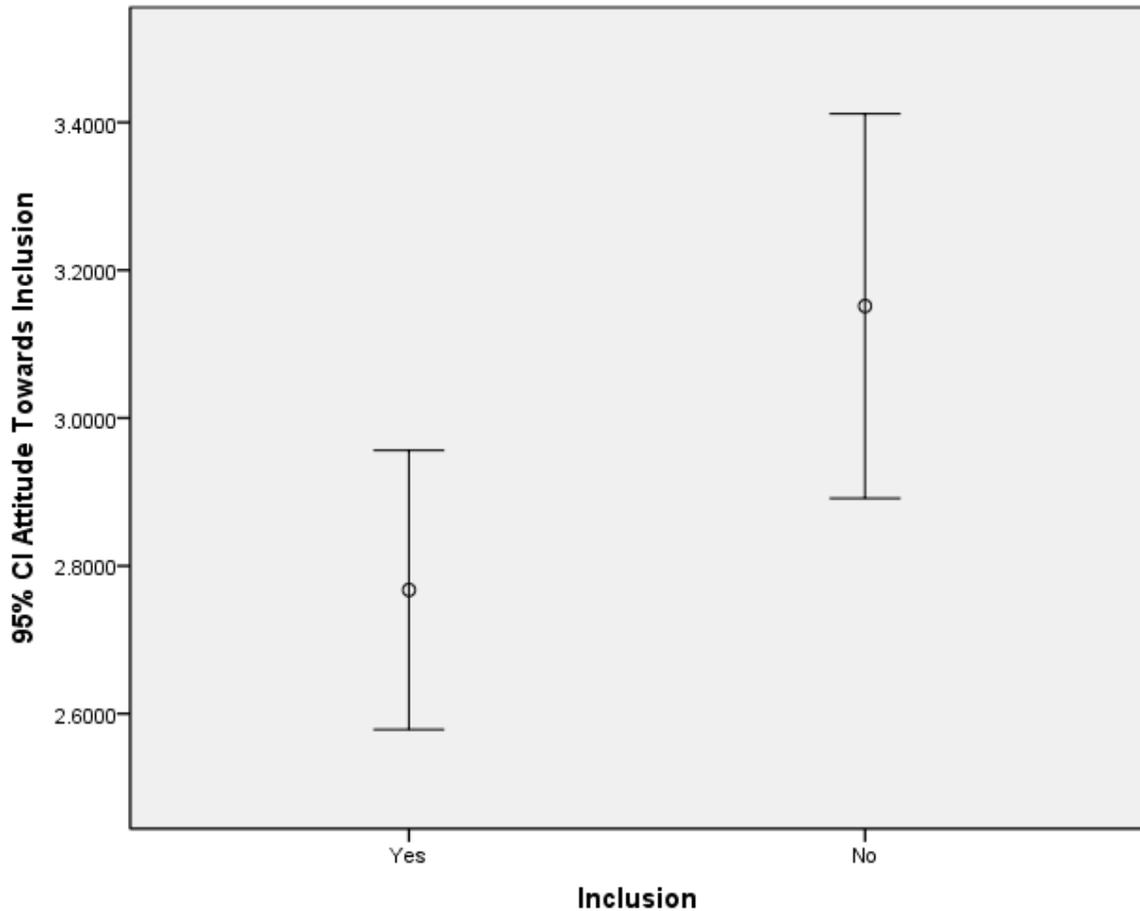
*Figure 10.* Histogram for the independent variable teachers who teach in an inclusion classroom and the dependent variable attitude towards inclusion. Scores on the inclusion scale range from 1.0000 (strongly agree) to 7.0000 (strongly disagree).



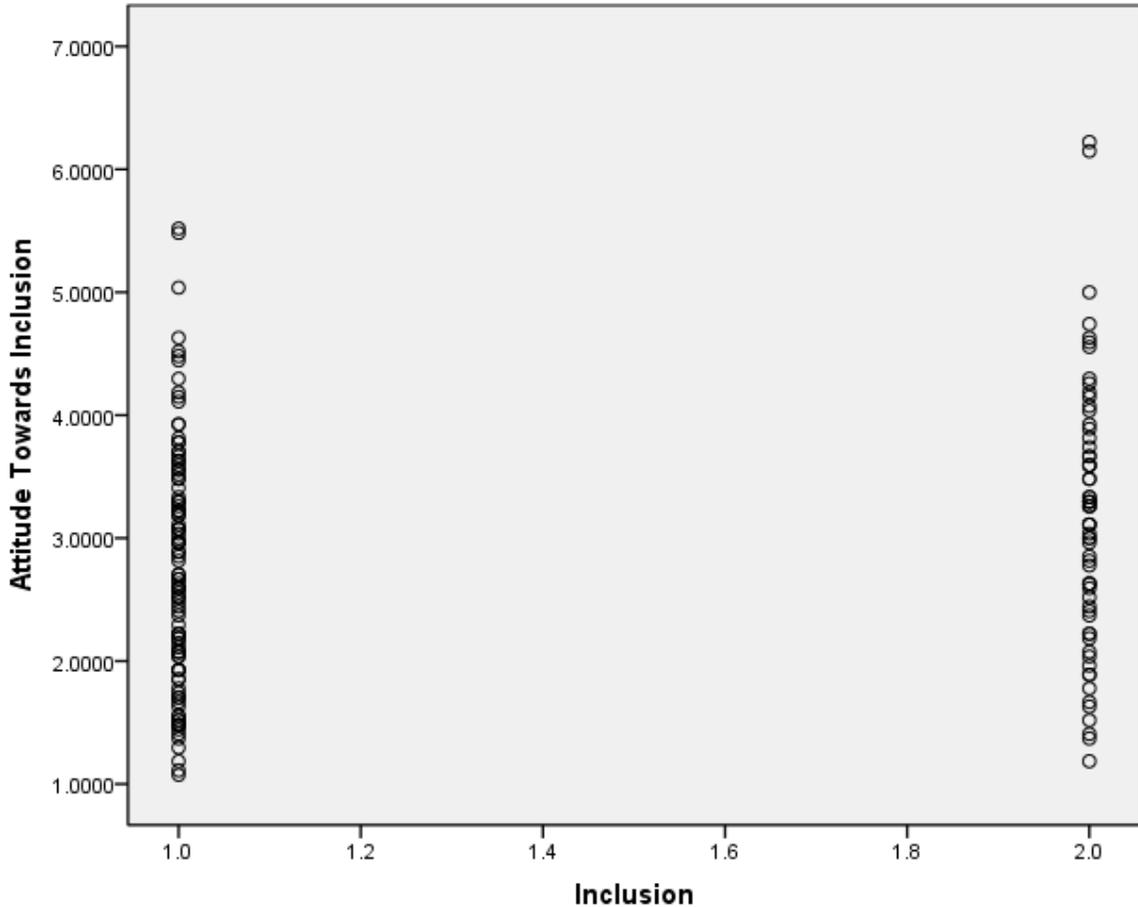
*Figure 11.* Histogram for the independent variable teachers who do not teach in an inclusion classroom and the dependent variable attitude towards inclusion. Scores on the inclusion scale range from 1.0000 (strongly agree) to 6.0000 (strongly disagree).

Once normality was established, the ANOVA was conducted to analyze the null hypothesis. On average, teachers who currently teach in an inclusion classroom had a more positive attitude towards inclusion ( $M = 2.77, SE = 0.10$ ) than teachers who do not teach in an inclusion classroom ( $M = 3.15, SE = 0.13$ ). This difference was found to be statistically significant,  $F(1, 171) = 5.86, p = .017$ . Since  $p < .05$ , the researcher failed to accept the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference in teacher perspectives about inclusion between teachers in an inclusion classroom and those who do not teach in

an inclusion classroom. Figure 12 illustrates a comparison of the means and the 95% confidence level. Figure 13 shows a scatterplot representing answers to the ISHST based on whether the teacher teaches in an inclusion classroom or not.



*Figure 12.* Comparison of means based on whether a teacher teaches in an inclusion classroom or not for the dependent variable teacher's attitude towards inclusion. Error bars represent the standard error of the means and the 95% confidence level. Scores on the ISHST range from 1.000: strongly agree (positive attitude) to 7.000: strongly disagree (negative attitude).



*Figure 13.* Scatterplot representing individual scores on the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers (ISHST) based on whether a teacher teaches in an inclusive environment or not. 1.0 represents those teachers who teach in an inclusion classroom, 2.0 represents those teachers who do not teach in an inclusive environment. Scores on the ISHST range from 1.000: strongly agree (positive attitude) to 7.000: strongly disagree (negative attitude).

### Summary

In this study, data were analyzed to determine teacher perspectives on inclusion. One hundred and seventy-three teachers completed an electronic survey. The survey was comprised of several demographic/background questions and the ISHST, a self-reported instrument in which teachers rated their attitudes and beliefs regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular education classroom.

In the first series of calculations, homogeneity of variances as well as normality of distribution within groups was conducted. Next, an ANOVA was used to assess the difference between teacher certification and teachers' perspectives about inclusion. There was no significant between degree level and teachers' perspectives about inclusion were not found to be significant. In the second series of calculations, homogeneity of variances as well as normality of distribution within groups was conducted. Next, an ANOVA was used to assess the difference between degree level and teachers' perspectives about inclusion. There was no significant difference between degree level and teachers' perspectives about inclusion were not significant. These finding suggests degree level has no bearing on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. In the third series of calculations, a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed in order to assess the relationship between years of teaching and teachers' perspectives about inclusion. There was no significant relationship between years of teaching experience and teacher perspectives on inclusion were not significant. These findings suggest that years of teaching experience have no bearing on teachers' attitude towards inclusion. In the fourth series of calculations, homogeneity of variances as well as normality of distribution within groups was conducted. Next, an ANOVA was used in order to access the difference between perspectives of teachers who teach in an inclusion classroom and teachers who do not teach in an inclusion classroom. There was a statistically significant difference between teacher perspectives and classroom setting. These findings suggest that teachers who have experience teaching in an inclusion classroom hold more favorable attitudes towards inclusion.

The analyses found that the relationship among classroom setting and teachers' perceptions of inclusion was statistically significant, concluding that exposure to inclusion has a major role in shaping teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The finding was positive, as it demonstrates that teachers who work with students that have disabilities in the inclusion setting have a good attitude about their role. The disproportion of the certification fields of participants was a limitation.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between characteristics of high school teachers and their perceptions of inclusion. “Many schools in the US are implementing inclusion for all students with disabilities but the current research base is not conclusive” (Alexander & Hunter, 2004, p. 150). Research shows that teachers in an inclusion setting hold a more positive attitude than those with no inclusion experience. Research shows that inclusion settings are academically and socially more beneficial for students with disabilities (Austin, 2001; Monahan & Marino; 1996; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Most research studies conducted on inclusion focus on inclusion at the elementary school level or multiple levels and therefore, “...more research on inclusion is needed at the secondary level” (Alexander & Hunter, 2004).

Advocates and individuals with disabilities have spent years advocating for the right of the disabled to be treated fairly and have the same opportunities as those without disabilities. Least restrictive environment (LRE) played a major role in the birth of inclusion as it provides students with disabilities the right to receive their education with their non-disabled peers. As students with disabilities gain academic and social experiences in education, they are afforded the opportunity to become successful, productive citizens in society (Henderson & Thompson, 2011).

Researchers explain that teachers hold a direct impact on the achievement of students with disabilities, as “attitudes acquired through direct personal experience are likely to be strongly held and to affect behavior” (Borders & Horowitz, 201, p. 169). Understanding teachers’ attitudes is important to ensuring that teachers are acquiring

their attitudes through positive experiences.

### **Summary of the Findings**

High school teachers from a southeastern metropolitan area were chosen as participants for this study. The high school level was chosen based on the following criteria: methods, procedures, and class sizes differ at every grade level; high school settings have the greatest amount of students from the elementary, middle, and high school setting, although there is less support at the high school level as the student-teacher ratio is higher; and various studies regarding teachers' attitudes on inclusion have been conducted in lower or multiple school levels, few have been conducted on high school teachers in particular. This study extends existing research regarding high school teachers' attitudes towards including special education students in general education.

The researcher requested district approval to collect data in 25 county and seven city school districts. Out of 32 research approval requests initiated by the researcher, eight school districts, one city school district and seven county school districts approved the researchers request at the district level, two city school districts and two county school districts declined the researcher's request, one school districts acknowledged receipt of the research request advising they would get back with the researcher although they never did, and 19 school systems never responded to the researcher's request. Of those eight districts that granted approval, data was collected in six districts because the timeframe in which two districts granted approval, the timeframe was not in conjunction with that of the survey. In one county, none of the principals responded to the researchers request to collect data in their school, and the other county responded less

than a week before data collection was to end so the researcher decided not to use the county. The six districts used for the study were comprised of one city school and five county school systems. The systems ranged from having one to six high schools. In one district, the researcher was only allowed to collect data two high schools.

The instrument for this study contained 31 questions. Participants responded to four demographic/background questions regarding certification field, degree level, years of experience, and classroom setting. Participants then responded to 27 items on a Likert-type questionnaire, the ISHST. The ISHST is a self-reported questionnaire of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The ISHST used a Likert-type scale based on a 7-point rating system where participants rated their responses to questions as: (1) strongly agree, (2) moderately agree, (3) mildly agree, (4) neither agree nor disagree, (5) mildly disagree, (6) moderately disagree, and (7) strongly disagree (Ernst & Young, 2009). The independent variables gathered field(s) of certification, years of experience, degree level, and classroom setting. The dependent variable is teacher perception.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The review of literature shows that teachers have a mixed perspectives on inclusion (Austin, 2001; Avramidis et al., 2000; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005, Monahan & Marino, 1996; Thousand et al., 2006; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Research was conducted and data was analyzed and compiled to determine what teacher characteristics have an impact on teacher perspectives on inclusion.

Within the data analysis, the first series of calculations was examined using an ANOVA to assess the difference between teacher certification and teachers' perspectives

about inclusion. Differences between certification field and teachers' perspectives about inclusion were not significant. These findings suggest that although programs are specifically designed to prepare educators to teach students with disabilities, the programs do not necessarily impact the attitude that future educators have towards students with disabilities. Programs may need to expose pre-service educators to inclusion within their programs. This coincides with the fact that pre-service teachers felt that they needed more training and exposure to inclusion in their college preparatory program (Austin, 2001; Avramidis et al., 2000; Leatherman & Niemyer, 2005).

In the second series of calculations, an ANOVA was used in order to assess the difference between degree level and teachers' perspectives about inclusion. Differences between degree level and teachers' perspectives about inclusion were not significant. These finding suggests that degree level has no bearing on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The finding shows that although a person holds an advanced degree, the degree does not necessarily make them a better teacher because their attitude is what impacts student achievement. In addition, anyone with at least a bachelor's degree in any field may pursue a teacher certification. Although the finding is not statistically significant, the question of whether or not teachers get paid for performance or degree level may need to be further researched.

In the third series of calculations, a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed in order to assess the relationship between years of teaching and teachers' perspectives about inclusion. Correlations between years of teaching experience and teacher perspectives on inclusion were not significant. These findings suggest that years

of teaching experience have no bearing on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Although not significantly significant these, findings are still important. "Direct experience continues to form and shape our attitudes throughout our life" (Bordens & Horowitz, 2001, p. 169). This leads the researcher to conclude that school districts may need to find methods to review what type of training, ongoing professional development, and support being provided to teachers. According to the literature, teachers felt that they lacked the knowledge and skills they needed to teach students with disabilities (Lohrmann, & Bambara, 2006; Desimone & Parmar, 2006; Idol, 2006). Teachers also believed that they lacked support needed to be successful (Austin, 2001; Walther-Thomas, 1997).

In the fourth series of calculations, an ANOVA was used in order to access the difference between perspectives of teachers who teach in an inclusion classroom and teachers who do not teach in an inclusion classroom. Differences between teacher perspectives and classroom setting were found to be statistically significant. These findings suggest that teachers who have experience teaching in an inclusion classroom hold more favorable attitudes towards inclusion than those teachers who do not teach in an inclusion classroom. These findings are consistent with the review of literature in this study, in which the researcher indicates that teachers are favorable towards inclusive students when they had experience working in an inclusive classroom environment (Austin, 2001; Avramidis et al., 2000; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005, Monahan & Marino, 1996; Thousand & Nevin, 2006; Walther-Thomas, 1997).

## **Study Limitations**

With any research there are threats to validity. The researcher took the necessary steps to ensure validity in the study. The researcher ensured validity of the sample by drawing a random sample. The instrument used in the study had an alpha of .92. Also homogeneity of variances, as well as normality of distribution within groups were confirmed prior to conducting ANOVA tests for research questions one, two, and four.

Every research study will be subject to limitations. Unfortunately, the number of districts that declined to participate in the study shows failure to acknowledge the importance of teachers' attitude on inclusion and the impact it has on student success. Also, the disproportion of teacher certification fields was a limitation. Out of 173 respondents, eight were certified to teach special education, 137 were certified to teach general and special education, and 28 were certified to teach general education. This leads the researcher to believe that either most special education teachers hold general education certifications as well, or that more general education teachers were open to participating in the study. Another limitation in the study was the instrument. Scale responses may have differed if special education categories were broken down. The majority of participants who responded were general education teachers.

Several implications may be drawn from this study. One implication is that the small sample size caused limitations to the research. In drawing that implication, the researcher believes that many school districts that declined to participate in the study because special education could possibly be a sensitive topic. Only eight school districts out of 32 school districts granted the researcher approval for the study. One school

district had questions regarding questions on the instrument. When the researcher informed the school district that the researcher did not create the survey and that the validity of the instrument had been established, the researcher received a rejection notice without explanation. Bias was also a limitation, as well as the limitation that of what time of the year that they survey was to be conducted. Some school districts only allow research during certain times of the school year.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The researcher has recommendations for future research. Recommendations for future research include sampling a population of co-teachers in an inclusion setting. This would include only focusing on a selection of co-teachers and their views and attitudes towards inclusion. The researcher would also recommend developing and implementing professional development programs on inclusion that teachers would have to attend every year to make sure that they gain exposure to inclusion, even if they do not currently work in the environment, so that they may help new and veteran teachers that are teaching inclusive classes. Another recommendation would include a program for principals to ensure that they are capable of supporting needs of teachers who work in inclusion environments. Principals are responsible for the collaborative planning of co-teachers. Since special education teachers often do not have the same planning as their general education counterparts, it is the principals understanding of the importance of collaborative planning for the co-teaching model that is of great priority and the principals responsibility. Districts may also survey teachers annually to see if they have made progress towards changing their attitudes towards inclusion, and if not, what

additional resources that the teachers may need.

When hiring new teachers and training veteran teachers, school districts may want to require that all teachers have the opportunity to shadow other teachers who teach in inclusion classrooms. Most collegial educational programs require teachers to take a class on exceptional children. However, during students' observation fieldwork and student teaching experiences, students may not necessarily be exposed to an inclusion setting. Districts may provide special education in-service training also for special education teachers, but for general education teachers as well. "Attitudes acquired through direct personal experience are likely to be strongly held and to affect behavior" (Borders & Horowitz, 201, p. 169). The more positive exposure that teachers have to an inclusion setting, the more positive their attitudes will be towards inclusion. Teachers' attitudes in inclusion environments do not only impact special education students, but rather the attitudes affect all of the students' attitudes within the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

Several conclusions may be drawn from this study regarding teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. One conclusion is that many special education teachers also hold certifications in general education subjects, and certification fields may play a role in teacher perspectives on inclusion. The researcher found that teachers who are certified in both general education and special education have a more positive perspective on inclusion than their counterparts. In addition, most respondents were dually certified, and therefore the results may have differed if teacher certification fields were more proportionate.

In this study, neither teacher degree level nor years of experience were found to have any impact on teachers' perceptions of inclusion. Many states pay teachers for pursuing advanced degrees, however the research does not support that teachers with advanced degrees have any impact on teacher perception in inclusion, and therefore states may choose to rethink the reasoning of why teachers deserve salary increases for advanced degrees. Though the literature review reveals that teachers need training on inclusion, the researcher made no assumption on the types of training that veteran teachers may have had over the course of their careers.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between characteristics of high school teachers and their perceptions of inclusion. The research indicates that teachers in an inclusion setting hold a more positive attitude than those with no inclusion experience and that inclusion settings are academically and socially more beneficial for students with disabilities (Austin, 2001; Monahan & Marino; 1996; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Most research studies conducted on inclusion focus on inclusion at the elementary school level or multiple levels and therefore, "more research on inclusion is needed at the secondary level" (Alexander & Hunter, 2004). Researchers explain that teachers hold a direct impact on the achievement of students with disabilities, as "attitudes acquired through direct personal experience are likely to be strongly held and to affect behavior" (Borders & Horowitz, 201, p. 169). Understanding teachers' attitudes is important to ensuring that teachers are acquiring their attitudes through positive experiences.

High school teachers from a southeastern metropolitan area were chosen as participants for this study. The high school level was chosen based on the following criteria: methods, procedures, and class sizes differ at every grade level; high school settings have the greatest amount of students from the elementary, middle, and high school setting, although there is less support at the high school level as the student-teacher ratio is higher; and various studies regarding teachers' attitudes on inclusion have been conducted in elementary and multiple grade levels, but few have been conducted on high school teachers in particular. Eight school districts granted approval for the researcher to conduct the study within their district. The six districts used for the study were comprised of one city school and five county school systems. The systems ranged from having one to six high schools. In one district, the researcher was only allowed to collect data two high schools.

The instrument used was a two-part survey containing 31 items. In the first part of the survey, participants responded to four demographic/background questions regarding certification field, degree level, years of experience and classroom setting. In the second part of the survey, the ISHST, a self-report questionnaire with 27 questions, gathered teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Within the data analysis, the first series of calculations was examined using an ANOVA to assess the difference between teacher certification and teachers' perspectives on inclusion. These findings suggest that although programs are specifically designed to prepare educators to teach students with disabilities, the programs do not necessarily impact the attitude that future educators have towards students with disabilities. In the second series of calculations, an Anova was

computed in order to assess the difference between degree level and teachers' perspectives on inclusion. Differences between degree level and teachers' perspectives on inclusion were not significant. These finding suggests that degree level has no bearing on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. In the third series of calculations, a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed in order to assess the relationship between years of teaching and teachers' perspectives on inclusion. Correlations between years of teaching experience and teacher perspectives on inclusion were not significant. These findings suggest that years of teaching experience have no bearing on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. In the fourth series of calculations, an ANOVA was used in order to access the relationship difference between perspectives of teachers who teach in an inclusion classroom and teachers who do not teach in an inclusion classroom. Differences between teacher perspectives and classroom setting were found to be statistically significant. These findings suggest that teachers who have experience teaching in an inclusion classroom hold more favorable attitudes towards inclusion than those teachers who do not teach in an inclusion classroom.

With any research there are threats to validity. The researcher took the necessary steps to ensure validity in the study. Limitations included the number of teachers and districts that declined to participate in the study. Many conclusions and recommendations were made by the researcher regarding future research in hopes of expanding the understanding of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. As students become the future of our world, it is the responsibility of educators to give all students

the most appropriate opportunity to receive an education, and this includes those students who are educated within inclusive classrooms.

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7. Including students with disabilities in the classroom helps foster an understanding of differences.
8. I have high expectations that all students, including students with disabilities, can learn and achieve in the general education classroom
9. Including students with disabilities in the general education classroom facilitates advancements in teaching methods that benefit all students
10. Students with disabilities exhibit the same level of behavioral difficulties as their peers within the general education classroom
11. I will give the same amount of academic attention to all students when including students with disabilities in the general education classroom
12. I believe that I can be effective in teaching all students in the general education classroom
13. As a result of my training, I feel comfortable teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom
14. I feel emotionally prepared to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom
15. I have adequate preparation time in my schedule to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom
16. I am comfortable with the level of safety in the general education classroom when students with disabilities are included
17. I feel confident with my ability to teach students with disabilities effectively in the general education classroom
18. I received adequate training to teach students with disabilities in the general education classroom
19. I am satisfied with the amount of preparation time I have for including students with disabilities in the general education classroom
20. I am open to changing my teaching methods to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom

21. I will work to ensure the safety of all students when including students with disabilities in the general education classroom
22. I will foster the social/emotional independence of students with disabilities in the general education classroom
23. I accept responsibility for teaching students with a variety of learning differences in the general education classroom
24. I help students with disabilities employ appropriate behaviors in the general education classroom
25. I will change the amount of time I spend on preparation in order to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom
26. I effectively adapt materials to the core curriculum in order to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom
27. I am pleased when classmates socially accept students with disabilities

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Reply Reply All Forward Chat 

**Re: Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers (ISHST)**

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 **Cathy Ernst** [cathy.ernst@gmail.com]  
 Tuesday, September 21, 2010 8:06 PM

To:  Wiggins, Carmen

- You replied on 9/23/2010 7:36 AM.

Hi Carmen- Thanks for being patient. If you send me your mailing address, I would be happy to copy the article which includes the scale for you. My only request is that if you use it and collect any data with it, you share the results with me.

Once I get your address, I will get a copy in the mail to you right away.

Thanks.

Cathy Ernst

On Fri, Sep 17, 2010 at 6:20 PM, Wiggins, Carmen <[cwiggins@liberty.edu](mailto:cwiggins@liberty.edu)> wrote:  
 Ms. Ernst,

Thanks for your response. I would love to find out how to get a copy of the ISHST when you get a chance.

---

**From:** Cathy Ernst [[cathy.ernst@gmail.com](mailto:cathy.ernst@gmail.com)]  
**Sent:** Friday, September 17, 2010 1:38 PM  
**To:** Wiggins, Carmen  
**Subject:** Re: Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers (ISHST)

Hi- Just wanted to send a quick receipt of your phone call and email. I don't have time to respond fully this minute but will get back to you.

Thanks.  
 Cathy Ernst

On Wed, Sep 15, 2010 at 8:58 AM, Wiggins, Carmen <[cwiggins@liberty.edu](mailto:cwiggins@liberty.edu)> wrote:  
 Good Morning Ms. Ernst,

My name is Carmen Wiggins. I am currently a doctoral student at Liberty University. I am interested in researching teacher perceptions on inclusion. I am looking for surveys to administer to conduct my research. I have read about the development of the ISHST. I would like to know how I can get a copy of it so I can see if it meets my needs.

## **Appendix B: Participant Email Invitation Letter**

Hello,

My name is Carmen Wiggins. I am a graduate student in Liberty University's doctoral program. I have received approval from your school district to invite you to participate in my study. For my dissertation, I would like to seek high school teachers' perspectives on inclusion by inviting you complete my questionnaire on SurveyMonkey so I can collect data to complete my dissertation research.

My research will not identify any teachers, schools, or counties. All data collected will remain confidential, and data will be collected anonymously. The questionnaire will not ask you for any sensitive information and will consist of two parts: The first section of the questionnaire collections background information such as teacher certification field, level of education, years of teaching experience, and educational setting (general education classroom or inclusion classroom). The second section of the questionnaire requires you to respond to 27 questions using a Likert-type rating scale.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you have any questions about this study or regarding the rights of research participants, you may call or email me.

Here is a link to the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q9CSF5R>

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Carmen Wiggins  
Liberty University Graduate Student  
cwiggins@liberty.edu  
(757) 477-7765 Cell  
(770) 651-6486 Work

## **Appendix C: Consent Form**

You are invited to participate in a study for my dissertation research on high school teacher perceptions on inclusion. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a high school teacher in the county being used for the study. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Carmen Wiggins, Education Department (Doctoral student at Liberty University)

### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to determine if perceptions high school general education teachers and special education teachers on inclusion differ. It is hoped that this study will help us determine high school teacher perceptions on inclusion and factors that may contribute to their perceptions.

### **Procedures:**

Participation in this study will take no more than 10 minutes of your time. If you agree to be in this study, you will only need to click on the attached email link to access and complete a survey.

### **Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:**

The risks are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life. Your participation in this study will add to existing research on teacher perceptions of inclusion at the high school level. This study will provide school leaders with information to address teacher needs regarding inclusion. Addressing teacher needs will enhance student learning.

### **Compensation:**

Participants will not receive any compensation for their participation.

### **Confidentiality:**

The data collection for this this study will be completed anonymously. No one, including the researcher, will have any way of identifying who actually participated in the study. The researcher is the only person who will have access to collected data. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Liberty University, the Douglas County School System, or the school that you work at. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Carmen Wiggins. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [cwiggins@liberty.edu](mailto:cwiggins@liberty.edu), or her committee chair Dr. Mowen at [cmowen@liberty.edu](mailto:cmowen@liberty.edu) if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1582, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at [fgarzon@liberty.edu](mailto:fgarzon@liberty.edu).

## Appendix D: Liberty Internal Review Board Approval



The Graduate School at Liberty University

May 11, 2012

Carmen Wiggins  
IRB Exemption 1323.051112: High School Teacher Perceptions on Inclusion

Dear Carmen,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and that no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101 (b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
  - (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
  - (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption, or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fernando Garzon".

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.  
Professor, IRB Chair  
Counseling

(434) 592-4054



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