

PREDICTORS OF ATTITUDES OF PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARD  
INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN NEW MEXICO

by

Debra O'Hara

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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## ABSTRACT

Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs affect communication with students, curricular decisions, selection and implementation of teaching strategies, and professional development needs. Most research in the United States has focused on the attitudes of public school teachers who must follow federal special education law and regulations, though international research on inclusion has included studies of both public and private school teachers' attitudes. Private school teachers experience differing conditions (legal, economic, organizational, philosophical, etc.) and may hold differing attitudes toward inclusion from those of their public school peers. Determining these attitudes will help private school personnel to address inclusion needs in their schools. This predictive correlation study of private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion used the *Opinions Relative to the Integration of Students with Disabilities* (ORI) instrument and a demographic survey of years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, and training in addressing special education needs. The instrument was distributed to teachers at 17 private schools in New Mexico. The final sample size was 69 teachers, a convenience sample of teachers responding. A multiple regression analysis assessed the comparative strength of relationship of each predictor variable to teacher attitude as measured by the ORI and found significant effect from teacher level of education.

*Keywords:* teacher attitudes, inclusion, private schools, special education, special needs, disability

### **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to those who encouraged me to pursue this research. For many years, I have listened to debates about whether students with special needs can profit from private school placement. Teachers, parents, and others have asked if the benefits of private schools can outweigh a lack of training, experience, and resources to help these students learn and live to their full potential. I have not answered those questions here, but I have worked to inform the debate by gathering information about the teachers in private schools and their attitudes toward students with special needs in their classrooms.

My fellow teachers, my husband, my children, and my friends have said that, of course, this is an important area to pursue, although some others have said the numbers of teachers and students in private schools is too small to concern researchers. We who teach in private schools, though, understand that we and our students matter. I hope this dissertation encourages others to gather information to help us in our calling.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my doctoral committee chair Dr. Phyllis A. Booth for her guidance and encouragement throughout the dissertation process. Her edits and suggestions for improvement were invaluable. She helped me to negotiate my way through the dissertation process. She prayed for me and my family and reminded me of God's compassion and guidance when life became a bit rocky during the past few years.

My thanks also goes to Dr. Kathy Keafer for serving on my committee and contributing her knowledge about special education terminology and processes. Dr. Kurt Michael added to this study and dissertation through his challenging questions and his guidance in applying statistics to my analysis. I also greatly appreciate help from my friends Dr. Karen Loveland, Dr. Brian Ormand, and Dr. John Loveland who each contributed valuable insight and support along the way.

Special thanks goes to Dr. Terry Adler, a member of my committee, who encouraged me before I even began this study. As I considered what I believed was important to learn, conversations with Dr. Adler helped me to focus my study. He continued to mentor me throughout the years it has taken to complete this process. His prayers, knowledge, and enthusiastic confidence in my abilities helped to push me past obstacles. I am truly grateful for his leadership and help.

Most importantly, I am thankful for God's work in my life to strengthen and encourage me as I have pursued the goal of examining how private school teachers can improve services for those who are most in need of the acceptance, nurture, and instruction that we who teach in private schools can give.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Local Education Agency (LEA)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

New Mexico Association of Non-Public Schools (NMANS)

Opinions Relative to the Integration of Students with Disabilities (ORI)

Quick Response Code (QR)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United States (U.S.)

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Background

Over 300,000 students with special needs are taught in private school classrooms in America (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013; Ramirez & Stymiest, 2010; Wolf, Witte, & Fleming, 2012). Their parents have chosen an alternative placement to the public school system where the majority of students with special needs are served; or, for some of these students, the public school system has determined that a private placement is the most appropriate (Beales, 1997). According to Ewert (2013), “Private schools represent a significant part of the education sector and provide an opportunity for children to attend schools, at cost, that may offer benefits unavailable in the public school system” (p. 1). These schools choose curriculum, instruction strategies, and other aspects of schooling that best fit their mission and values (Boerema, 2006, pp. 182-183). Boards and administrators in private schools create their own policies about supporting students with special needs apart from the federal mandates public schools must follow (Vantine, 2008). Although public schools promote inclusion of students with special needs in the general classroom to meet federally-defined, least restrictive environment requirements, private schools are free to place students as they wish, or to not enroll them at all. They are not required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) to provide accommodations or special education programs to serve students with special needs in their classrooms (Daggett, 2014).

Non-refereed journals published for the private school community have frequently discussed factors related to identifying and providing services to students with special needs, but most peer-reviewed research in the United States has focused on special education efforts in public schools, without considering how private schools address special education needs in their

less regulated environments (Eigenbrood, 2005). The absence of accurate information and focused research about special education services and inclusion in private schools in the United States is conspicuous (Doran, 2013; Eigenbrood, 2010; Taylor, 2005a; Wolf et al., 2012). Because so little has been discovered specifically about inclusion of students with special needs in private schools in the United States, stakeholders investigating inclusion practices and policies should look at a broad range of research that includes both public and private schools in the United States and internationally.

Like many nations, the United States differentiates in law between publicly funded schools... and private schools, which operate under a less rigorous set of requirements with respect to students who have disabilities. The United States' special education system, particularly with respect to the differences between public and private education, is worthy of examination as one example of how laws and trends may differ within and outside the publicly funded system. (Doran, 2013, p. 80)

One factor recognized internationally as contributing to the successful inclusion of students with special needs in general classrooms is teachers' attitudes toward inclusion as a practice and toward students with special needs being placed in general classrooms. Teacher attitudes toward inclusion have been studied extensively internationally and in United States public schools (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2010; Dupoux, Wolman, & Estrada, 2005; Ernst & Rogers, 2009; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Studies have associated positive attitudes toward inclusion with effective instruction and appropriate accommodations in the general classroom for students with special needs. In the United States and many other countries, educational policy has been to promote inclusion in public school systems and to influence general education teachers to develop positive attitudes toward

inclusion (Blecker & Boakes, 2010; Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Emam & Mohamed, 2011). Because private school systems in the United States are neither regulated nor funded by the federal government, the national promotion of inclusion may have bypassed private school teachers. On the other hand, it is possible that these teachers have assimilated a pro-inclusion perspective of the public school system through pre-service and in-service training, previous public school service, or through other education and societal exchanges. As in public school systems, ascertaining teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and predictors of these attitudes in private schools may be useful to parents, administrators, board members, and other private school stakeholders formulating inclusion policies and determining professional development needs (Doran, 2013).

Until the 1970s, only students with easily accommodated disabilities were served in public schools. Parents had few placement choices outside of caring for a child with special needs at home. According to the President's Commission (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), only 20% of students with special needs received a public education. "More than a million students were excluded from public schools, and another 3.5 million did not receive appropriate services" (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 15). Then, in 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) guaranteed federal support and resources for children with special needs. EAHCA required all public schools to provide every student a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment that would serve that child's needs. In 1990, this act was reauthorized and renamed as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, 2000). IDEA required placement in a general classroom be considered before any other placement options and it promoted inclusion as equitable treatment for students with special needs (Blecker & Boakes,

2010).

International policy also began to support inclusion. In 1994, representatives from 92 governments and 25 international organizations met in a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conference to promote inclusive education throughout the world. The conference issued *The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education*, calling for inclusion of all children in all classroom and out-of-classroom school activities regardless of disability (Monsen, Ewing, & Kwoka, 2014; Spasovski, 2010).

In 1996, a review of 28 studies found a majority of public school teachers agreed with the concept of inclusion, but significantly fewer were willing to implement inclusion practices themselves (Scruggs & Mastropieri). Later studies showed general education teachers felt they were not adequately prepared by pre-service or continuing education programs to support students with special needs in their classrooms (Kilanowski-Press, Foote, & Rinaldo, 2010). Additionally, the severity of students' disabilities affected teachers' attitudes toward inclusion in their classrooms (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Cook 2001).

Although few studies have examined the attitudes of private school teachers toward inclusion, research into private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion is important for many reasons. Teacher attitudes affect communication with students, curricular decisions, selection and implementation of teaching strategies, and professional development needs (Logan & Wimer, 2013). Importantly, attitudes can affect one's information processing and judgment and can be predictive of behavior (Ajzen, 2001). Attitude theory considers attitude to be a form of knowledge related to memory and experience (Fazio, 2007; Logan & Wimer, 2013); thus, the context in which a person experiences an object may influence a subject's opinion about that



object. A lack of research exists as to how the distinctive context of a private school or how previous public school teaching might influence teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Eigenbrood, 2010). Understanding private school teachers' attitudes toward students with special needs in their classrooms can help parents, administrators, board members, and other private school stakeholders to formulate or clarify inclusion policies and to determine professional development needs for these teachers in the private school setting.

Public school personnel can also benefit from an understanding of private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. What affects students with special needs in private schools can affect public schools and their programs. Obviously, students with special needs in private schools may leave those schools to enroll in public schools and vice versa (Wolf, 2014). How well students were served by teachers in one system may affect how the students perform in the other. Furthermore, "It is, of course, only normal that various people should prefer either public or private schools, but to simply not care whether one or the other sector does well or not is to wish ill on America's children" (Jeynes, 2012, pp. 169-170). While federal law requires that public schools provide equitable services to students with special needs enrolled in private schools, these students are not considered individually entitled to the free and public education of their publicly-enrolled peers (Drang & McLaughlin, 2008; IDEIA, 2004). Each local education agency (LEA) is responsible for determining the proportion of federal funds for IDEIA programs that is to be spent for qualifying, privately-placed students with special needs, and how those funds will be spent for special education and related services (Daggett, 2014; Eigenbrood, 2010). According to Doran (2013), over 40% of private schools in the United States have at least one student who is served under IDEIA provisions. Their teachers may be entitled by IDEIA proportionate spending requirements to participate in some public school professional

development programs to assist in meeting students' special needs (Eigenbrood, 2005; Sopko, 2013). Public school personnel may be able to design more effective programs if participants' attitudes toward inclusion are known (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Hsieh & Hsieh, 2012).

### **Problem Statement**

International advocacy for inclusion of students with special needs into general education classrooms has been effective in establishing inclusion as the primary placement for these students in public schools in many countries, including the United States. Accurate information and focused research about special education services and inclusion in United States private schools, however, is lacking (Taylor, 2005a; Wolf et al., 2012). This author found only two studies specifically focused on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion in private schools: those in Dubai (Gaad & Khan, 2007) and in international schools in Turkey (Pursley, 2014).

Recognizing a gap in the literature, Ross-Hill (2009) and Anwer and Sulman (2012) specifically recommended future research into attitudes of teachers toward inclusion of students with special needs in private schools. In addition, Ernst and Rogers (2009) recommended future research examine "educational climate and context" (p. 320) on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, a call that would be partially met by research involving United States private school teachers. They noted that most research into teachers' attitudes toward inclusion had been conducted outside the United States and most recently focused on pre-service teachers. The problem is a lack of research measuring teachers' attitudes toward inclusion in private schools in the United States. This study will contribute to the body of knowledge needed to understand inclusion efforts in private schools by measuring the attitudes of private school teachers in a southwestern state in the United States in regard to inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this predictive correlation study was to determine the best predictors (years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, training in addressing special education needs) of private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion in New Mexico. Years of teaching experience refers to the years a teacher has spent regularly teaching "scheduled classes to students in any of grades K-12" (Goldring et al., 2013, p. B-4). Previous public school teaching experience refers to any experience as a full or part-time teacher while employed in a public school setting. Teacher level of education refers to the highest level of education attained and corresponds to those measured by the U.S. Department of Education and reported in its *Digest of Education Statistics, 2012* (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Training in addressing special education needs refers to college or university coursework (university-based) and training provided at the workplace or through other professional organizations (auxiliary). With the exception of previous public school teaching experience, these variables were selected to correspond with previous research on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; De Boer et al., 2010; Ernst & Rogers, 2009; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001; MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013). Data obtained from a convenience sample of private school teachers in New Mexico were evaluated using a multivariate regression analysis to assess the comparative strength of relationship of each predictor value to the criterion variable teacher attitude as measured by the *Opinions Relative to the Integration of Students with Disabilities* instrument (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study built upon research conducted by Hammond and Ingalls (2003) in a rural

southwestern region of the United States. Hammond and Ingalls' study used an author-created questionnaire to study the attitudes toward inclusion of rural public school educators in an area with a high number of teachers on emergency certification to serve children with disabilities. This condition, as well as the geographic location of the study, was similar to the setting of the current study of private schools in New Mexico where teachers are not required by state law to hold teaching certificates of any kind (Sharkey & Goldhaber, 2008). Hammond and Ingalls (2003) reported that a "high percentage" (p. 28) of teachers participating in their study had negative or uncertain attitudes toward inclusion. The authors' recommendation for further study was to examine the relationships between attitudes toward inclusion and various predictor variables such as age, teacher level of education, teaching experience in general, and teacher experiences in special education. "We need specific data which reflect the attitudes of the educators who are in the position of implementing inclusionary programs" (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003, p. 25). The current study conducted correlative research, as Hammond and Ingalls recommended, though with a different population, private school rather than public school teachers.

Another contribution of this study was to the somewhat dichotomous understanding of the United States school system. According to Jeynes (2012), "Those in the public schools tend to limit solutions to educational challenges to the public sector" (p. 166). Instead, researchers should examine similarities and differences in public and private schools, learning from each other to improve their education systems. Employment in the education industry is not static. Some private school teachers first served in public schools and others may leave the private sector to teach in public schools (Scheopner, 2010). Ingersoll (2001) reported that small private schools (under 300 students) comprise about 83% of all private schools in the United States and

56% of private school teachers. These schools have large turnover rates (23%). In his review of several studies of teacher attrition, Scheopner (2010) found that internationally, although Catholic school teachers express higher degrees of job satisfaction than public school teachers, approximately half moved to public school systems when they left. Ingersoll (2001) wrote, “Private school teachers are far more likely to switch to public school jobs than public school teachers are to switch to private school jobs” (p. 526). It may be that public and private school environments affect teachers’ attitudes differently.

This study fills a gap in current research by examining relationships between private school teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion of special needs students in general classrooms and various predictive variables, including whether private school teachers’ attitudes are affected by past teaching experience in public schools and under federal regulation. This study forms a basis for further research comparing private and public school teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion in the same region through assessment of the predictor variables years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, and training in addressing special education needs.

### **Research Question**

The following research question was proposed:

**RQ1:** What are the best predictors (*years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, training in addressing special education needs*) of attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs for private school teachers in New Mexico?

### **Null Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis was proposed:

**H01:** There will be no significant predictive relationship between the criterion variable teachers' attitude toward inclusion scores (*teacher attitude*) as measured by the *Opinions Relative to the Integration of Students with Disabilities* (ORI) and the linear combination of predictor variables (*years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, training in addressing special education needs*).

### Definitions

The following definitions were used for this study:

1. Attitude – “Attitude refers to the interest that the individual has in the task and its perceived value” (Burden, 2009, p. 189).
2. Inclusion – Also known as integration and mainstreaming. According to Cook (2001), inclusion means the physical placement of students with special needs in general education classrooms. Internationally, the term inclusion has generally replaced the terms integration and mainstreaming (Lindsay, 2007). Although it can be used internationally to refer to inclusion of students of diverse race, socio-economic background, sexual preference, etc., for purposes of this study, *inclusion* will refer only to placement of students with special needs.
3. Special needs – Also known as disability and exceptionality.

The term ‘child with a disability’ means a child — (i) with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as ‘emotional disturbance’), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and (ii) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004)

4. Private school – Non-public schools excluding home schools. (Although home schools are considered private schools in New Mexico, they would not easily be identified and contacted by this researcher.)

5. Public school – Schools “funded by tax revenue and administered by publicly elected government bodies. Public schools are required to admit all students and must follow state guidelines for funding, program development and curriculum” (Eason, Giannangelo, & Franeschini, 2009, p. 131).

6. Teacher - Employees “who teach regularly scheduled classes to students in any of grades K-12” (Goldring et al., 2013, p. B-4).

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

In the United States, private schools enroll over 5,000,000 students (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Among those students, more than 300,000 (an estimated 6-10%) are students with special needs (Goldring et al., 2013; Ramirez & Stymiest, 2010; Wolf, Witte, & Fleming, 2012). Private schools are free from federal requirements that public schools must follow for reporting numbers of students with special needs and types of special education services, thus many more students with special needs may be enrolled in these schools (Perie, Vanneman, & Goldstein, 2005). According to Wolf et al. (2012), even official statistics on the prevalence of students with special needs in private schools “can be misleading” (p. 16) and probably under count the actual number.

### Private Schools

Internationally, private school enrollments vary. In some countries, private schools enroll only a small portion of students, generally from affluent families; in others, nearly two-thirds of students are enrolled in private schools (Kenny, 2014; Ryan & Sibieta, 2011). In the United States, private school enrollment was nearly 4.5 million students in 2011; 80% of these students were enrolled in schools with a religious orientation (Broughman & Swaim, 2013; Daggett, 2014). By 2014, approximately 5 million students were enrolled in U.S. elementary and secondary private schools (Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2016). The parents of students in private schools have chosen these placements for diverse reasons. In the United States, Crawford and Freeman (1996) and Goldring and Phillips (2008) found that parents chose private schools on the basis of religion, discipline, curriculum, safety, and academic rigor. According to Bosetti and Pyryt (2007), parents in Canada chose private schools for academic reputation, special programs,



shared values and beliefs about education, and religious content in curriculum (pp. 100-101).

Private schools design programs independent of government regulation and in accordance with the values of their stakeholders. “Private schools are able to choose the aspects of schooling that are linked to their mission, giving them a tighter coupling of curriculum, instruction, the socialization experiences, and the school community’s values” (Boerema, 2006, p. 182-183). School missions may emphasize religious training, cultural traditions, academically rigorous instruction, college preparation, language immersion studies, pedagogical approach, special education services, or other educational elements (Alt & Peter, 2002; Boerema, 2006; Taylor, 2005a). While it is true that some private schools exist solely to meet the special education needs of students with particular disabilities and private school enrollment of students with mild cognitive disabilities is increasing, Glendinning (2009) found that “the mission and focus of most independent schools preclude them from regularly providing the kinds of services needed by students with serious disabilities” (p. 98).

Enrollment of students with special needs in private schools varies between countries. In India, for example, these students most often attend special schools rather than general education programs (Parasuram, 2006). In most African countries, non-governmental organizations and private religious charities run most special education programs (Bayat, 2014). In Sweden, on the other hand, all but 1% of intellectually disabled students attend general education programs, but many schools are becoming reluctant to enroll students with some special needs (Michailakis & Reich, 2009; Mitchell, 2010).

In the United States, most students, including those with special needs, attend highly regulated and taxpayer-funded public schools. Private schools are considerably less controlled by government regulations concerning students with special needs. If a private school is secular,

its programs fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990), but religious-affiliated schools are specifically exempted from its provisions. While public schools must enroll students with special needs, private schools may choose whether to admit or deny admittance to students based on academic standards. If they accept federal funds, though, they must adhere to antidiscrimination laws in providing access to education (Section 504, 34 C.F.R. § 104.39(a); Wilson & Gold, 2013), which means that they must provide some accommodations to students who qualify as disabled according to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Under this regulation, private schools must follow the least restrictive environment mandate and must provide access to facilities comparable to those provided for other students by making minor adjustments (Daggett, 2014; Schweinbeck, 2001). Students must be given equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities.

Private schools are not required to abide by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) that regulates public schools and defines their responsibilities to parentally-placed private school students (Daggett, 2014; IDEIA, 2004). Private schools, therefore, are not required by federal law to provide special education programs, but may choose to do so. In 2011, only 6% of private schools in the United States emphasized a special education orientation or specialization (Broughman & Swaim, 2013). Private schools create their own policies about supporting students with special needs and may rely on “small class sizes, low student teacher ratios, and dedicated teachers willing to provide individualized instruction as needed” (Vantine, 2008, p. 50).

According to Eigenbrood (2005), "There is a lack of information in the traditional special education literature regarding the types of services available to students with disabilities enrolled in faith-based schools" (p. 17). This lack of information extends to other types of private schools

and their teachers who are responsible for creating and administering special education programs. They require information, including results of research on the attitudes of teachers in private schools toward inclusion of students with special needs, in order to establish successful inclusion programs (Ross-Hill, 2009).

### **Private School Teachers**

Private school teachers may differ from their public school peers in demographics and attitudes. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), teachers in private schools are comparable to their public school counterparts in gender, age, and years of teaching experience (Goldring et al., 2013). Private school teachers, however, have earned fewer graduate degrees (43%; 2.3% held doctorates) than public school teachers (56%; 1.1% held doctorates) and were less likely to have participated in special education coursework in college and in-service and professional development programs (Doran, 2013; Eigenbrood, 2005; Goldring et al., 2013).

Private school teachers in the United States may not hold the same certification (or licensure) as public school teachers. Certification rules for public and private school teachers differ in the United States from state to state. Many public school districts have hired uncertified or alternatively certified teachers (Angrist & Guryan, 2008; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2008), a practice that has been regularly debated in scholarly publications (Darling-Hammond, 2002; Shuls & Trivitt, 2015). Research into the effect of certification on teacher ability and student outcomes has shown that certification is not necessary for effective teaching. Angrist and Guryan (2008) found no correlation of public school teacher certification and quality of teaching. Writing about New York public schools, Kane et al. (2008) concluded, “We find little difference in the average academic achievement impacts of certified, uncertified and alternatively certified

teachers” (p. 629).

In private schools, students perform equally, regardless of whether their private school teachers are fully certified or not (Sharkey & Goldhaber, 2008). Schools should have authority in determining whether a teacher is qualified to teach, according to Shuls and Trivitt (2015), rather than relying on “arbitrary cut scores on licensure exams” (p. 665). This is the case in New Mexico, the site of this study, where private school teachers are not required by law to be certified or licensed, so determining teacher qualifications is left up to private school boards and administrators (U. S. Department of Education, 2009). Still, arguments to the contrary continue, especially in regard to special education-related teaching. According to Daggett (2014), private school teachers “lack the expertise to modify curricula, provide special education instruction, or provide related services to students with disabilities” (p. 322). This statement was based on court cases in which parties argued that private schools had not hired state-certified teachers.

Besides differing in certification requirements, private school teachers may differ in attitude toward their students and toward their own employment. Liu and Meyer (2005) found that private school teachers generally express greater job satisfaction than their public school peers, in part because they face fewer student behavioral issues. They have reported greater freedom and responsibilities in “selecting teaching techniques, evaluating and grading students, disciplining students, choosing course content and skills to teach, and selecting textbooks and materials” than their public school peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 13). Eason, Giannangelo, and Franceschini (2009) found that private school teachers rate their students as more creative and that these teachers value creativity more than public school teachers do. These researchers suggested this may be because public school teachers “seemed much more burdened with paper work, record keeping, and most importantly, the safety and welfare of every student”

while “the organization and delegation of duties in the private sector appear to keep everyone balanced and less overburdened” (p. 132-3). In a 2014 study of public, charter, and private schools participating in the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program, the U.S. Department of Education (2016) found that private school principals rated their teachers more than 20 points higher in instructional skills and abilities as well as in content-area expertise than public school principals. Teacher punctuality, attendance, and turnover rates were also rated more favorably. In addition to more favorable teaching conditions, private school teachers may also receive reduced tuition or free enrollment for their children, a benefit many find attractive (Ballou & Podgursky, 1998; Choy, 1998). On the other hand, the attrition rate of private school teachers is higher than that of public school teachers, perhaps because private school teachers earn 21% less than public school teachers on average (Allegretto & Tojerow, 2014).

Several studies of public school teachers have indicated that general education teachers felt inadequately prepared for inclusion demands (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Kutash, Duchnowski & Lynn, 2009; LaBarbera, 2011; Swain, Nordness, & Leader-Janssen, 2012). Similarly, in a study of principals’ perceptions of inclusion of students with special needs in their private schools, Taylor (2005a) found the most common perceived weakness of private school inclusion efforts is a lack of appropriately trained staff. The National Catholic Education Association reported that fewer than half of the parochial secondary schools it reviewed had any staff with formal special education training or certification (Doran, 2013). According to Avramidis and Norwich (2002), university-based special education training positively correlates with positive attitudes toward inclusion. If private school teachers feel unprepared for inclusion requirements, similar to their public school peers, they may hold negative attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in their classrooms. Additional research into private

school teachers' beliefs about their preparedness and into teacher training in addressing special education needs as it relates to private school teachers' attitudes is needed to determine inclusion program effectiveness and strategies for improvement.

### **Private School Students**

Private school students in the United States collectively differed from their public school peers in race and ethnicity. Goldring et al. (2013) reported that more private school students were White (72%) compared to public school students (54%) and fewer were Black (9%) compared to public school students (15%). Both types of schools included the same percentage of Asian (1%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (1%), American Indian/Alaska Native (1%), and bi- or multi-racial students. As to ethnicity, 9.5% of private school students identified as Hispanic, regardless of race, compared to 22% of public school students.

Private school students in the United States also differ from their public school counterparts in educational needs. Approximately 3% of private school students were identified as English-language learners or students of limited-English proficiency compared to 9% of public school students. According to Goldring et al. (2013), 4% of private school students receive Title I services (a federally-funded program providing educational services to students who live in areas with a high concentration of low-income families) compared to 37% in traditional public schools and 49% in public charter schools. Some of this difference may be attributed to the economic status of student families, but some also may be caused by the many private schools that choose not to participate in this program (Wolf, 2014). This reticence to participate may also be a reason 7.1% of private school students have an individual education or service plan because of an identified disability compared to 11.6% of public school students. "By and large, private schools have not developed the capacity to identify children with

disabilities, and many of them are reluctant to do so, as they believe it leads to stigmatization of the children” (Wolf et al., 2012, p. 17).

### **Historical Background**

Until the 1970s, only students with easily accommodated disabilities were served in public schools in the United States. Most parents had few placement choices outside of caring for a child with special needs at home because private residential institutions and day schools designed to serve specific disabilities were expensive options (Dorn, 2002; Hensel, 2010). The mission of these schools was usually custodial to provide relief from care to families rather than instructional (Osgood, 2008). According to the President’s Commission (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), “Only about one in five children with disabilities received a public education. More than a million students were excluded from public schools, and another 3.5 million did not receive appropriate services” (p. 15).

In the 1960s and 1970s, Wolfensberger (2011) promoted the concept of *Normalization*, later known as *Valorization*, that encouraged total integration of all people with disabilities in every aspect of community living. Wolfensberger said that people would be treated poorly or well in accordance with the value others placed on them and on their abilities or disabilities. He wrote, “How a person is perceived and treated by others will in turn strongly determine how that person subsequently behaves” (Wolfensberger, 2011, p. 436). His research and advocacy influenced United States policies in housing and education of those with special needs (Mann & van Kraayenoord, 2011).

Organizations such as the National Association for Retarded Citizens and the Council for Exceptional Children participated in the Disability Rights Movement to promote policies improving the welfare of people of all ages with disabilities (Osgood, 2008). The Rehabilitation

Act of 1973 included Section 504 that provided equal access to programs and services for people with disabilities throughout American communities. This was followed in 1975 by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) that guaranteed federal support and resources for children with special needs. EAHCA required all public schools to provide every student a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment that would serve that child's needs. In 1990, this act was reauthorized and renamed as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, 2000). IDEA promoted student placement in the least restrictive environment that would meet a student's needs and required placement in a general classroom, full inclusion, to be considered before any other placement (Blecker & Boakes, 2010). Students with special needs were no longer restricted to private schools or to separate facilities in public schools.

International policy also embraced inclusion. In 1994, representatives from 92 governments and 25 international organizations met in a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conference to promote inclusive education throughout the world. The conference issued *The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education*, calling for inclusion of children with special needs in all classroom and out-of-classroom school activities (Monsen, Ewing, & Kwoka, 2014; Spasovski, 2010; UNESCO, 1994). *The Salamanca Statement* discouraged exclusion of students from schools based on gender, religion, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or disability, but its focus was on inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms. Its "Framework for Action on Special Needs Education" said, "Schools have to find ways of successfully educating all children, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities" (UNESCO, 1994, p. 6).



The degree to which students will be included varies across a continuum of placements. This continuum is recognized by special education literature as providing choices for the least restrictive environment that will best serve a student's needs (IDEIA, 2004; Kilanowski-Press, Foote, & Rinaldo, 2010). Sailor and McCart (2014) supported elimination of "silos" (p. 61) and establishment of a fully-integrated school system that supports students and teachers without regard to physical location in the school. In the United States, McLeskey, Landers, Williamson, and Hoppey (2012) found that school systems are moving toward this ideal; placements are becoming less restrictive for the majority of students, though those with emotional or behavioral disorders and intellectual disabilities are still more likely to be segregated for most of the day. Worldwide, however, this idea is not as popular. Bines and Lei (2011) reported that many students worldwide are still excluded from schooling altogether or are segregated within their school systems or buildings. Separate schooling has actually increased for students with some special needs, such as emotional and behavioral disabilities. In some countries, the limited resources and societal resistance to any schooling at all for various people (based on gender, ability, race, etc.) must be overcome before full inclusion of students of special needs can occur. The continuum of placements available may be of more importance throughout this process than an absolute insistence on full inclusion as a philosophy and over-riding policy.

Even in schools practicing inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms, some teachers did not change their pedagogy to meet student needs but, instead, relegated students with special needs to the fringes of learning activities (Freire & César, 2003; Sailor & Blair, 2005; Singal, 2008). Although these students were present in the classroom, their teachers did not believe they could learn in the general education classroom and, thus, made little or no effort to teach them or include them in class activities. Within inclusive schools, teachers

created their own educational cultures, often based on their education, experience, and prejudices. As early as 1958, researchers examined public school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995; Cochran, 1997; Debettencourt, 1999; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Stanovich & Jordan, 1998). In 1996, a review of 28 studies found a majority of public school teachers agreed with the concept of inclusion but that significantly fewer were willing to implement inclusion practices themselves (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Only 30% believed the best environment for students with special needs was the general education classroom.

In school systems that assign single letter grades and that record student progress on transcripts, teachers have express concerns about fairly assessing the work of students with special needs who have received accommodations or modifications (Kurth, Gross, Lovinger, & Catalano, 2012). According to Singal (2008), more important than educating teachers in effective teaching strategies for inclusion is “the need for focusing upon and changing values, beliefs and attitudes. There is a need for re-examining perceptions around the values and purposes of education for children with disabilities” (p. 1527).

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Disability Models**

Historically, according to Thorsos (2012), special education services were based on a Medical Model of Disability that perceived disability as a condition to alleviate or, at least, ameliorate. It diagnosed and treated disability with the goal of returning the patient to a normal condition. One problem with this model was that it focused on weaknesses and disregarded the strengths and contributions of people with disabilities. According to *The Salamanca Statement* (UNESCO, 1994), “For far too long, the problems of people with disabilities have been

compounded by a disabling society that has focused upon their impairments rather than their potential” (p. 7). Another problem was that children with special needs as determined by a medical model came under the auspices of health systems rather than education programs (Bayat, 2014), preventing educators from interacting with and serving these students. This model is still used in some countries today.

The Social Model of Disability instead focused on the attitudes of society as a contributing factor of disability. *Impairment* was defined by this model as the loss or limitation of function on a long-term or permanent basis and *disability* was defined as limitation of opportunity to participate equitably because of physical and social, including attitudinal, barriers (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2013; Thorsos, 2012). The Social Model promoted inclusion of adults and children in all aspects of community, setting high expectations for students with special needs, and valuing the contributions of every member of society. The Social Model aligned with New Testament teachings according to Thorsos (2012): “The New Testament sees people with disabilities as persons in need of compassion whom God accepted and included” (para. 13). It erred, however, according to Anastasiou and Kauffman (2013), by regarding physical and emotional difficulties as neutral instead of an obstacle to overcome. This model recommended eliminating treatments and promoted full inclusion as the most socially just paradigm. The authors cautioned, however, that this does not mean special education services should be ended in order to create a sense of social justice and fairness for all: “We do need to recognize the fact that disabilities are socially constructed in part without denying the biological differences from which they are constructed or the value of such social construction for achieving what we consider basic fairness” (p. 146).

Neither of these models proved satisfactory to everyone. Efforts toward inclusion usually

emphasized differences and created groups of “us” and “them,” a condition Anderson (2012) named *Ghettoization*. In response, Anderson proposed application of Black’s Theology of Interdependence to schools: “Inclusion in the classroom built around a theology of interdependence challenges several aspects of our thinking, particularly our vision of humanness and normalcy, and of community and belonging” (p. 148). This model assumed value and expected giftedness of all people. It recognized diversity as a condition of belonging. Through reciprocity, all people would contribute to the welfare of others, creating respect, responsibility, and community and interconnectedness. This theology was practiced by the private Christian schools in Hong Kong surveyed by Poon-McBrayer and Wong (2013) and was given as a reason to implement inclusion policies even though the surveyed schools were not legally bound to do so. “Today, valuing and loving each person are central to the Christian educators as demonstrated by participants in this inquiry” (Poon-McBrayer & Wong 2013, p. 1522). According to Killoran and Adams (2006), inclusion is “a belief in the value of each individual” as a contributor to society (p. 3).

These three disability models show some of the differences in perception that educators and policy makers may hold toward students with special needs. They are contributors to the many attitudes teachers internationally and in the United States have held concerning inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms. Applying the Social Model of Disability may help researchers understand how adjusting societal attitudes can contribute positively to inclusion of adults and children in all aspects of community (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2013; Thorsos, 2012). Without modification, however, the model may deny students with special needs the help they need to overcome differences in learning.

Within the private schools’ society, teachers may hold attitudes about disability and

inclusion that affect students positively or negatively. Because private schools set their own policies and are not required to follow the same federal regulations concerning inclusion that public schools must obey, it is possible that they create societal views that may differ from those of public schools (Cavanagh, 2012). Because they are not required to identify students according to special needs, they may choose to disregard those needs or may choose a different system and different standards for identification than public schools do. Their perceptions of students may differ from those held by teachers in public schools, who are more stringently regulated by state and federal laws. Private schools with religious missions (68% in the United States) may base inclusion strategies on Black's Theology of Interdependence or may exclude students, applying the Medical Model of Disability that requires intervention by qualified public school personnel (Broughman & Swaim, 2013). Private school teachers may successfully practice inclusion without unnecessary government intervention or they may deny students needed supports. Though causal-comparative relationships are not proved, according to Berry (2010), "It may be that the presence or absence of positive attitudes and a sense of commitment to principles of inclusion can tip teachers toward making or avoiding efforts to effectively teach students with disabilities" (p. 76). One study looked at students who switched between public and private schools and "found that the proportion of students identified as having a disability in the public schools appeared to be 60 percent higher than it was in private schools" (Cavanagh, 2012, p. 10). A possible explanation was that private schools counseled families to attend public schools, thus reducing the financial burden on the private schools of serving these students. More research is needed to determine the tendencies of private school teachers to apply the various disability models within their systems.

## **Attitudes Theories**

While attitudes cannot be directly measured, they can be estimated through expressions of opinion (Fazio, 2007). Importantly, attitudes can affect one's information processing and judgment and can be (but are not always) predictive of behavior (Ajzen, 2001; MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013). Attitude theory considers attitude to be a form of knowledge related to memory and experience (Fazio, 2007; Logan & Wimer, 2013), thus, the context in which a person experiences an object may influence a subject's opinion about that object. The social norms and culture of a school, including the expressed attitudes of fellow faculty members can influence teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms (Dupoux, Wolman, & Estrada, 2005; Urton, Wilbert, & Hennemann, 2014). Ryan and Gottfried (2012) argued that school leaders must recognize the importance of teacher attitudes in regard to including students with special needs into general classrooms: "As a supervisor, it is necessary to have an understanding of the supervisee's belief systems in order to successfully implement inclusive education programs within a school because without the support of the teachers, these programs are destined to malfunction" (p. 564).

According to Fazio (2007), without motivation or opportunity to consider carefully an object or idea, previously established attitudes and immediate perceptions combine to influence judgments and behaviors. Explicit attitudes result from careful consideration and lead to controlled behaviors; implicit attitudes result from memory and often influence spontaneous and nonverbal behaviors (Glock & Kovacs, 2013). In most people, these two types of attitudes work in conjunction with other factors to influence intentions and behaviors. According to Jaccard (2012), attitudes alone do not result in action: "People change their minds, they encounter obstacles that prevent them from performing the behavior, or automatic processes override

people's intent" (p. 61), but the goal of attitude theorists is to research determinants for intentions and targeted behaviors. A precursor of attitude, according to Silverman (2007) is belief; for teachers to hold a positive attitude toward inclusion, they must believe that students with special needs can learn and that they, the teachers, are effectively able to instruct these students. Additionally, some teachers believe students' successes or failures are attributable to internal factors such as ability and effort, while others believe they are a result of external factors related to teachers' abilities and behaviors (Brady & Woolfson, 2008). These beliefs influence teacher attitudes and actions in the classroom and can be addressed through pre-service and in-service education coursework.

Teachers' attitudes are "filters through which their practices, strategies, actions, interpretations and decisions are made" (Rajovic & Jovanovic, 2013). They resist change but are critical in implementation of inclusion strategies. According to Mulvihill, Shearer, and Van Horn (2002), "Attitudinal barriers to inclusion are held by many groups, including parents, public and private school special education teachers, and child care administrators and teachers" (p. 200). These barriers may appear in tracking decisions, special education referrals, and assessment of student achievement because attitudes guide a teacher's attention in the classroom, color the teacher's perception of what is observed, affect processing of information, and shape judgments as favorable or unfavorable (Glock & Kovacs, 2013). Attitudes influence teachers' willingness to implement various accommodations and modifications for students with special needs (Hawpe, 2013). Recognizing the effects and implications of teachers' attitudes in their daily interactions with students and other duties of teaching is essential for stakeholders considering inclusion policies in both public and private schools.

### **Predictor Variables**

Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in the general classroom have been studied extensively internationally and in American public schools (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Berry, 2010; Cook, 2001; De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2010; Dupoux et al., 2005; Logan & Wimer, 2013; MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Research in countries as diverse as Canada, Haiti, Hong Kong, and Israel have focused on the effects of a number of variables on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom (Abbott, 2006; Dupoux et al., 2005; Heiman, 2001; Stanovich & Jordan, 1998; Zhang, 2014). These studies correlated positive attitudes toward inclusion with in-service and special education training, inclusion of students with less severe disabilities, greater teacher access to supports, teacher certification and training, and more extensive interaction with students with special needs. Previous studies indicated that gender can influence attitudes, although studies in various nations have presented contradictory findings in this area (Alghazo, Gaad, & El, 2004; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Batsiou, Bebetos, Panteli, & Antoniou, 2008; Buford & Casey, 2012; Glaubman & Lifshitz, 2001; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001; Mazurek & Winzer, 2011; Parasuram, 2006).

#### **Age and Years of Experience**

Age alone has not always been a predictor of attitudes but was thought instead to coincide with years of teaching experience (Alghazo et al., 2004; Mazurek & Winzer, 2011). Research into the effect of years of teaching experience has produced varying results. In a survey of studies of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) found that several studies conducted in the 1980s and 1990s showed younger teachers with fewer years of experience held more positive attitudes than older, more experienced teachers. More recently,



in the United States, Buford and Casey (2012) found that teachers under the age of 36 years felt more prepared for inclusion demands than older teachers. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slavica (2010) found that teachers with over 10 years' experience had more negative attitudes toward inclusion than those with less experience. According to MacFarlane & Woolfson (2013), less experienced teachers in Scotland held more positive attitudes toward inclusion than more experienced teachers. The authors surmised that this was because more experienced teachers had completed pre-service training before special education and inclusion strategies were included in teacher education programs, while newer teachers were generally younger and had received pre-service coursework presenting positive information about inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms.

Contradictory findings by Alghazo et al. (2004) showed that teachers in the United Arab Emirates with greater classroom experience were more positive about inclusion of students with special needs into general education classrooms. In Serbia, Kalyva, Gojkovic, and Tsakiris (2007) found no difference in attitude based on teaching experience. In the United States, Logan and Wimer (2013) also found no difference when studying secondary teachers. Most of these studies did not distinguish between teachers with general experience and those with experience specifically with students with special needs.

One possible explanation for contradictions in research of the relationship between teaching experience and teachers' attitudes has been proposed:

It is possible that there are two groups of teachers. One group may show the expected relationship in that the more experience they have, the more favorable the attitudes toward integration. For the other group of teachers, the more experience they have with students with disabilities, the more cynical, burnt-out, and unfavorable they become.

(Dupoux et al., 2005, p. 53)

These two groups may be greatly influenced by their teaching environments and less by individual experiences, thus the authors suggest further research into additional factors that contribute to teachers' attitudes.

In private schools, students with special needs are not always diagnosed or identified specifically as having special needs (Cavanagh, 2012). Private schools may use standards for determining special needs that differ from those used in public schools; families may be reluctant to reveal diagnoses leading to labels that would stigmatize their children; or their schools may choose not to ask about special needs status. Private school teachers may have classroom experience with these students without knowledge of students' special needs status; thus, in this study, teachers were asked to give their years of teaching experience rather than years of experience with students with special needs as a factor in order to determine their attitudes about inclusion. In the United States, the average age of private school teachers is two years greater (44) than those of public school teachers (42), but both groups average 14 years' experience (Goldring et al., 2013). Because age and years of experience are closely related and generally collected demographic data for studies of teachers, years of experience was an appropriate variable for this study.

### **Previous Public School Teaching Experience**

According to Glock and Kovacs (2013), understanding teachers' implicit and explicit attitudes requires analysis of teachers' past service environments and experiences. Few studies have examined the relationship between teachers' previous experience in public or private schools and their attitudes. In Gaad and Khan's study (2007) of private school teachers in Dubai, the authors stated that none of the teachers had previous public school experience. Results of a

study conducted in the United States (Finegan, 2004), indicated that teachers who had served in public and private schools generally held views concerning inclusion that were similar to teachers who had served in public schools only. Teachers with only private school experience differed, however, in their stated need for additional in-service training for working with students with special needs and their perception of parent and teacher involvement in developing and implementing student education plans. Finegan (2004) did not clarify where teachers who had served in both systems were employed at the time of the study.

Some teachers in private schools in the United States have previously served in public schools, within an inclusion framework mandated by federal law. The current study examined the effect previous public school teaching experience may have on private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in the general classroom. Although not widely researched, this factor was an appropriate variable for this study.

### **Teacher Level of Education**

Research into the relationship between teacher level of education, apart from coursework and professional development focused on special education needs, has produced contradictory results. Brady and Woolfson (2008), Buford and Casey (2012), Dapudong (2014), and Slavica (2012) found no relationship between degree held and teachers' attitudes. In contrast, Charley (2015) found a significant relationship between teacher level of education and teachers' attitudes: those with bachelor's degrees and those with master's degrees plus 30 or more credit hours were more positive in attitudes toward inclusion than those with master's degrees alone. Dupoux et al. (2005) reported that teachers with graduate degrees held more positive attitudes than those with less than a master's degree. In addition, teachers' tolerance for behaviors perceived as *disturbing*, such as those manifested by students with special needs, positively correlated with

earned degrees and credit hours (Johnson & Fullwood, 2006).

Private school teachers may not be required by employers to hold the same certification and education of their public school peers, depending on individual schools' policies and state regulations (Sharkey & Goldhaber, 2008). In the United States, private school teachers hold more doctorates than public school teachers. Only 43% of private school teachers, however, held graduate degrees compared to 56% of public school teachers (Goldring et al., 2013). The contradictory findings of previous studies and the differences between public and private school teachers' levels of education made teacher level of education an appropriate variable for this study.

### **Teacher Training in Addressing Special Education Needs**

In 2000, the *Dakar Framework for Action* recognized the impact of teachers on inclusion efforts: "Teachers must be able to understand diversity in learning styles and in the physical and intellectual development of students, and to create stimulating, participatory learning environments" (UNESCO, 2000, p. 21). To this end, international research has explored factors related to effective teacher education programs designed to positively influence teacher attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in their classrooms (Bangsaen, 2013; Florian & Rouse, 2009; Haq & Mundia, 2012; Mdikana, Ntshangase, & Mayekiso, 2007; Ryan, 2009; Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Malinen, 2012).

Lifshitz, Glaubman, and Issawi (2004) found that Israeli and Palestinian teachers' attitudes were changed as they participated in an intervention program. An experimental program in Turkey succeeded in improving teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with hearing impairments (Sari, 2007) and another in Korea indicated a positive effect on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with a variety of disabilities (Kim, Park, & Snell, 2005).

Two studies in Australia demonstrated improvement in participants' confidence and comfort when interacting with students with disabilities (Carroll, Forlin, & Jobling, 2003; Cologon, 2012). Several researchers demonstrated that teachers strongly desire better, more extensive training to help them effectively implement inclusion strategies (Bangsaen, 2013; Marin, 2014; Zulfija, Indira, & Elmira, 2013). According to Kosko and Wilkins (2009), teachers' hours of professional development related to inclusion was a better predictor of teachers' perception of their ability to adapt instruction for students with special needs than their years of experience with these students, but only when teachers had received eight or more hours of training. "Training not only enhances positive attitudes, but promotes a willingness to accept students with disabilities" (Mazurek & Winzer, 2011, p. 19).

Contrary to these findings, one training program resulted in participants developing less positive attitudes toward inclusion than those held by a control group, according to Wilkins and Nietfeld (2004). Forlin and Chambers (2011) reported that an intervention in Australia exposing pre-service teachers to students with disabilities resulted in less positive attitudes than they had previously held, perhaps because they were became more aware of potential difficulties in implementing inclusion in general education classrooms. Killoran (as cited in Killoran & Adams, 2006) found that members of a cohort of teacher candidates held more anti-inclusion attitudes at graduation than at the beginning of their program.

Other studies found no difference in attitudes after professional development or other in-service training. In the United States, Cook (2004) found no correlation between teachers' attitudes and special education coursework at the post-secondary level. Leyser and Tappendorf (2001) wrote that a single pre-service course on teaching students with special needs was unlikely to be effective in changing teachers' attitudes. In another study, the pre and post course

attitude ratings of graduate students who participated in one introductory special education class on attitudes toward inclusion were not found to have changed (Martinez, 2003). Similar results were measured by Dodge-Quick (2011) in a study of in-service teachers. In Cyprus, teachers reported that previous in-service programs were inadequate for preparing them to serve students with special needs in their classrooms (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009).

In the United States, only 7–10% of coursework for pre-service teachers in the United States is related to inclusion of students with special needs, contributing to teacher burnout and the tendency of new teachers to leave the classroom within three years, according to Allday, Neilsen-Gatti, and Hudson (2013). Although most teacher education programs offer special education coursework and field experience with students with special needs, not all programs require students to take these courses. Additionally, over 10% of pre-service teachers may not receive field experiences specific to inclusion (Harvey, Ysell, Bauserman, & Merbler, 2010). Pre-service training may be insufficient for general education teachers entering the classroom and may be a factor in teachers' attitudes toward inclusion.

Private school teachers are more likely than public school teachers to be solely responsible for inclusion implementation in their classrooms (Alt & Peter, 2002; Hall, 2013). They are also less likely to have participated in professional development activity focused on teaching students with special needs compared to their public school counterparts, according to Goldring et al. (2013). Approximately 28% of private school teachers participated in professional development activities specifically related to teaching students with disabilities compared to 36% of public school teachers (Goldring et al., 2013). Because teacher training in special needs has been shown by research to be inconclusive in predicting teacher attitudes and because of the documented differences in private and public school professional development

activities focused on teaching students with special needs, this was an important variable for this study.

### **Contribution of Current Study**

The study of private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion is important for many reasons. Teacher attitudes affect communication with students, curricular decisions, selection and implementation of teaching strategies, and professional development needs (Logan & Wimer, 2013; MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013). Students with special needs who are viewed positively by teachers are more likely to thrive in the general education classroom while those viewed negatively may be less successful (Berry, 2010; Silverman, 2007). According to Ross-Hill (2009), successful inclusion programs require understanding of the perceptions of teachers toward students with special needs in their classrooms. Attitudes have been found to vary according to the severity of student needs in the classrooms, teacher level of education, teaching experience, age, and gender (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Cook, 2001; De Boer et al., 2010; Mazurek & Winzer, 2011). Attitudes can also vary according to school type: Anwer and Sulman (2012) found that Pakistani private school teachers reported more negative attitudes toward inclusion than public school teachers. Private Christian school teachers in Turkey were found by Pursley (2014) to hold more negative attitudes toward inclusion than their secular private international school peers.

Research has found that a large majority of general education teachers felt they were not adequately prepared by pre-service teacher preparation, in-service, or professional development programs to support students with special needs in their classrooms (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010). Teachers who feel inadequately prepared to meet inclusion needs are likely to leave the teaching profession (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). Somewhat paradoxically, when teachers do not

meet their own expectations for success in the classroom, it is the teachers with initially positive attitudes toward inclusion who experience greater emotional fatigue than their peers (Talmor, Reiter, & Feigin, 2005). According to MacFarlane and Woolfson (2013), research into determinants of teachers' attitudes and their behavior is "crucial" (p. 51) for developing professional development programs to help teachers practice effective inclusion strategies.

This study contributes further understanding of determinants related to teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms by measuring those attitudes and their predictor variables in a different setting than that of previous research. Recognizing that national and cultural influences themselves affect attitudes, international researchers have examined various aspects of teachers' attitudes in more than 50 countries or geographic regions and in public and private schools. Published research on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion in the United States has focused on public school teachers who work within a highly regulated environment guided by federal policy that has fully embraced inclusion as a model for service for students with special needs. This study examined teachers' attitudes in a geographic setting, New Mexico, similar to a region where research in public schools showed negative or uncertain attitudes toward inclusion (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003). The authors of that study recommended further research to examine the relationships between teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and predictor variables such as age, teacher level of education, and teaching experience.

This study looked closely at variables thought to affect private school teachers' attitudes in the United States. It forms a basis for future research comparing private and public school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion through assessment of the predictor variables years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, and



training in addressing special education needs. In addition, results from this study can help parents, administrators, board members, and other private school stakeholders to formulate inclusion policies and determine professional development needs for teachers in the private school setting.

### **Summary**

Few studies have examined the attitudes of private school teachers toward inclusion. According to Glendinning (2009), teachers in private schools are unaware of how to help students with special needs succeed in rigorous college preparatory curriculums. Like their public school counterparts, they may be supportive of inclusion in concept but untrained in meeting the needs of students with disabilities in their general classrooms. Additionally, in the United States, private schools are not required by federal law to implement inclusion strategies in their programs. They may establish selective admittance criteria on the basis of academic policies, thus allowing exclusion of students with special needs who may not be able to participate in a rigorous academic curriculum (Hensel, 2010). Beyond access, private schools "... are not obligated to provide a meaningful education and cannot legally be held accountable when a student makes no academic progress" (Hensel, 2010, p. 319). The choice to include students with special needs or to deny them admittance but not provide accommodations may be a variable influencing teachers' attitudes toward these students that public school teachers do not experience.

When students with special needs are admitted to a private school or when students previously admitted are discovered to have special needs, their teachers can provide accommodations but will receive no federal funds to provide special education services themselves (Drang & McLaughlin, 2008). Research in public schools has shown that levels of

support, resources, and knowledge of special education strategies affect teacher attitudes toward inclusion (Lindsay, 2007). Private school teachers may address special needs informally (Eigenbrood, 2010; Wolf et al., 2012) without requiring costly formal diagnosis of a specific disability but using their existing resources to meet the needs of all of their students across the spectrum of ability and disability. These legal, economic, and organizational conditions may influence private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion with special needs similarly or differently than their public school counterparts. This study sought to determine private school teachers' attitudes and predictor variables and to provide a foundation for further studies comparing the attitudes of private school teachers with public school teachers.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

### Design

A predictive correlation design was appropriate for this study as it allowed an in-depth investigation of the strengths of teacher attributes on inclusion of special needs children in private schools (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). This study measured private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in the general classroom (inclusion) and its relationship to four predictors. The criterion variable was *teachers' attitude toward inclusion* (teacher attitude). The predictor variables were *years of teaching experience*, *previous public school teaching experience*, *teacher level of education* and *training in addressing special education needs*. The variable *years of teaching experience* refers to years of teaching experience at any school and was measured by this study in increments corresponding to those measured by the U.S. Department of Education and reported in its *Digest of Education Statistics, 2012* (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). The variable *previous public school teaching experience* refers to any experience serving as a teacher in a public school system and was measured as existent (yes) or non-existent (no). The variable *teacher level of education* refers to the highest level of education attained and was measured by this study with labels corresponding to those measured by the U.S. Department of Education and reported in its *Digest of Education Statistics, 2012* (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). The variable *training in addressing special education needs* refers to college or university coursework (university-based), measured by categories of undergraduate coursework and graduate level coursework, and training provided at the workplace or through other professional organizations (auxiliary), measured by categories of in-service training and professional development courses. With the exception of *previous public school teaching experience*, these variables were selected to correspond with previous

research on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2010; Ernst & Rogers, 2009; Kilanowski-Press, Foote, & Rinaldo, 2010; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001; MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013).

### **Research Question**

The following research question was proposed:

**RQ1:** What are the best predictors (*years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, training in addressing special education needs*) of attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs for private school teachers in New Mexico?

### **Null Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis was proposed:

**H01:** There will be no significant predictive relationship between the criterion variable teachers' attitude toward inclusion scores (*teacher attitude*) as measured by the *Opinions Relative to the Integration of Students with Disabilities* (ORI) and the linear combination of predictor variables (*years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, training in addressing special education needs*).

### **Participants and Setting**

The participants for this study were a convenience sample of teachers at private schools that are members of the New Mexico Association of Non-Public Schools (NMANS) or that were on the contact list of this organization supplemented by schools discovered through an internet search for private schools in New Mexico serving kindergarten through 12th grade. New Mexico was selected because of the researcher's location and its regional similarity to the Hammond and Ingalls (2003) study of three rural southwestern districts in the United States.

## Setting

New Mexico is a distinctive blend of cultures: Native American, Black, Hispanic, and Caucasian. It also features a significant immigrant population (United States Census Bureau, 2015). According to the 2010 United States Census figures (United States Census Bureau, 2015), New Mexico's residents self-identify as White (68.4%), Native American (9.4%), Black (2.1%), Bi- or Multi-racial (3.7%), Asian (1.4%), or Other (15%). Almost half of New Mexicans self-identify as Hispanic ethnicity (46.3%), which the United States Census categorizes separately from race. New Mexico's foreign-born population is 9.8% but 36.1% of residents speak a language at home other than English. The median household income in New Mexico from 2009–2013 averaged \$44,927 compared to a national average of \$53,046. One-fifth of New Mexicans live below the poverty level (21.9%) compared to United States residents as a whole (15.4%).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2013-2014 report (U.S. Department of Education, 2013) listed 52 private schools in New Mexico with approximately 611 teachers (from two to 130 per school). An internet search and telephone follow-up conducted in 2016 discovered 125 schools with over 645 teachers; 18 schools from the NCES 2013-2014 list were no longer open. Only schools serving kindergarten or above were invited to participate in this study.

Administrators or other representatives of 18 of the 77 schools contacted for this study through email or telephone communication indicated their school would participate in this study. These schools ranged in size as measured by number of teachers from three to approximately 120. They were located throughout the state of New Mexico in large (e.g., Albuquerque, pop. over 500,000), medium (e.g., Roswell, pop. approximately 50,000) and small (e.g., Zuni, pop.

under 10,000) communities. The largest number of participants ( $N = 17$ ; 24%) were from the researcher's home school in Las Cruces (pop. over 100,000).

Participants for this study included 79 K-12 private school teachers from at least 16 schools in New Mexico. Of these, 71 completed the majority of demographics information and the ORI. Instructions for scoring the ORI, however, recommend not scoring responses with more than four questions unanswered; thus the two participants meeting this condition were excluded from the sample. The valid responses for this study, therefore, produced a total sample size  $N = 69$  (11% of the estimated number of private school teachers in New Mexico). This number exceeded the required minimum of 54 ( $50 +$  number of predictor variables as recommended for use with five or fewer variables by Harris, 1985, quoted in Austin and Steyerberg, 2015, and in VanVoorhis and Morgan, 2007) for a medium effect size with statistical power of .7 at the .05 alpha level as required for a multiple regression study. This number is slightly higher than the sample ( $N = 64$ ) reported by Buford and Casey (2012) in their similar study of teachers' attitudes regarding students with special needs.

### **Demographics**

The sample included a total of 49 females (71%) and 20 males (29%). These were 28 elementary teachers (40%), 33 secondary teachers (48%), and 8 teachers with both elementary and secondary teaching assignments (11%). Participants were almost equally split between those who had previously taught in a public school ( $n = 33$ , 47.8 %) and those who had not ( $n = 36$ , 52.2%). Previous public school teaching experience refers to any experience as a full or part-time teacher while employed in a public school setting.

Almost 70% ( $n = 48$ ) of participants were 45 years old or above, comparable to but higher than the national average: "The average age of teachers in private schools (44 years) was

greater than the average age of teachers in all public schools (42 years)” (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). These teachers had varying years of teaching experience: 1-2 years ( $n = 6$ ; 8.7%); 3-9 years ( $n = 15$ , 21.7%); 10-20 years ( $n = 25$ , 36.2%); and 20 years or more ( $n = 23$ , 33.3%). Years of teaching experience refers to the years a teacher has spent regularly teaching “scheduled classes to students in any of grades K-12” (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013, p. B-4). Nationally, both public and private school teachers average 14 years’ experience (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

The highest education level attained by members of the sample were as follows: less than Bachelor’s ( $n = 2$ ; 2.9%), Bachelor’s ( $n = 29$ ; 42%), Master’s ( $n = 29$ ; 42%), Education Specialist ( $n = 2$ ; 2.9%), and Doctorate ( $n = 7$ ; 10.1%). These categories correspond to those measured by the U.S. Department of Education and reported in its *Digest of Education Statistics, 2012* (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). That report found the following percentages of private school teachers throughout the United States: less than Bachelor’s (8.4%), Bachelor’s (48.5%), Master’s (35.8%), Education Specialist (5%), and Doctorate (2.3%). Thus, participants in this survey had attained greater education levels over all than United States private school teachers in general. Additionally, participants with previous public school education reported higher levels of education overall than those without previous public school experience (see Table 1).

Various types of training in addressing special education needs in the classroom were received by participants (an individual may have selected more than one category): 43 teachers (62.3%) had received this training through in-service programs, 43 through professional development courses (62.3%), 35 through undergraduate coursework (50.7%), and 25 through graduate level coursework (36.2%). Training through all four types was reported by 14

Table 1

*Education Levels by Public/Private School Experience*

Have you ever taught in a public school?				
Education	<i>No</i>		<i>Yes</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Less than Bachelor's	2	5.6	0	0
Bachelor's	18	50	11	33.3
Master's	12	33.3	17	51.5
Education Specialist	0	0	2	6.1
Doctorate	4	11.1	3	9.1
Total	36	100	33	100

participants (20.3%). No training in addressing special needs was reported by 15 participants (21.7%).

All participants reported having worked at some time with a student with at least one of the following categories of special needs in their classrooms. By disability and in order of frequency, responses were as follows (an individual may have selected more than one category served so percentages may not total 100): Specific Learning Disability ( $n = 60$ ; 87.0%); Emotional Disturbance ( $n = 50$ ; 72.5%); Speech or Language Impairment ( $n = 47$ ; 68.1%); Autism ( $n = 42$ ; 60.9%); Other Health Impairment ( $n = 39$ ; 56.5%); Intellectual Disability ( $n = 33$ ; 47.8%); Hearing Impairment (including Deafness) ( $n = 32$ ; 46.4%); Orthopedic Impairment ( $n = 28$ ; 40.6%); Multiple Disabilities ( $n = 25$ ; 36.2%); Visual Impairment (including Blindness) ( $n = 18$ ; 26.1%); Traumatic Brain Injury ( $n = 9$ ; 13.0%); and Deaf-Blindness ( $n = 2$ ; 2.9%).

These categories of disabilities served refer to the federally-designated disability categories in



the United States that qualify students for special education services as defined by IDEIA.

Participants who selected *no* to all disabilities would have been skipped to the *Opinions Relative to the Integration of Students with Disabilities* (ORI) instrument for the remaining portion of the survey. As no participant selected *no* to all disabilities, this did not occur. Instead, every participant, upon selecting *yes* to one or more disabilities, was presented a second question: “Do you currently have a student with the following category/categories of special needs present in your classroom?” The answer choices for this question only included those the participant had previously indicated had been present at some time in the classroom. Thus again, participants could select all, none, or any combination of answers to this question. Most participants ( $n = 57$ ; 83%) reported that they currently had at least one student with a special need present in their classrooms (an individual may have selected more than one category served so percentages may not total 100): Speech or Language Impairment ( $n = 20$ ; 29.0%); Emotional Disturbance ( $n = 17$ ; 24.6%); Specific Learning Disability ( $n = 41$ ; 59.4%); Visual Impairment (including Blindness) ( $n = 4$ ; 5.8%); Hearing Impairment (including Deafness) ( $n = 13$ ; 18.8%); Orthopedic Impairment ( $n = 10$ ; 14.5%); Autism ( $n = 16$ ; 23.2%); Other Health Impairment ( $n = 16$ ; 23.2%); Intellectual Disability ( $n = 14$ ; 20.3%); and Multiple Disabilities ( $n = 4$ ; 5.8%). No participants reported currently having students designated as having Deaf-Blindness or Traumatic Brain Injury.

### **Instrumentation**

This study examined a correlative predictive relationship between the criterion variable private school teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs (referred to as *teacher attitudes*) and the predictor variables *years of teaching experience*, *previous public school teaching experience*, *teacher level of education*, and *training in addressing special*

*education needs*. These variables were selected to correspond with previous research on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; De Boer et al., 2010; Ernst & Rogers, 2009; Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001; MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013). Each variable was presented as a demographic question for participants' self-report (see Appendix A for Survey Demographics Section). This survey gathered additional demographic information about gender and age. Teachers were also asked which grade level they teach (elementary, secondary, or both) and whether they had ever had or currently have a student with any of the federally-designated disability categories in the United States that qualify students for special education services as defined by IDEIA (Deaf-Blindness, Speech or Language Impairment, Emotional Disturbance, Specific Learning Disability, Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Orthopedic Impairment, Autism, Other Health Impairment, Intellectual Disability, and Multiple Disabilities).

The criterion variable was measured using the ORI instrument authored by Antonak and Larrivee (1995). (See Appendix B for the ORI instrument with scoring information and author permissions.) The ORI is their revision of the *Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming Scale*, originally created by Larrivee and Cook (1979). The revision was necessary to update terminology and to eliminate validity threats (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995). The construction of the instrument was modified to reduce acquiescent and midpoint response styles. The ORI was validated against the *Scale of Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons* survey (Antonak, 1982) that measured global attitudes toward people with disabilities. The ORI measures teachers' attitudes toward the integration (inclusion) of students with disabilities in general classrooms (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995). The ORI has been used in international and United States studies researching

teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Dupoux, Wolman, & Estrada, 2005; Miller, Gresham, & Fouts, 2011; Leyser & Kirk, 2004; Leyser & Romi, 2008; Martinez, 2003; Romi & Leyser, 2006; Sari, 2007; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). The sample used to develop the ORI were undergraduates pursuing a special or general education degree and in-service professionals pursuing initial or recertification in special or general education (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995). This instrument was appropriate for the current study because the sample was private school in-service teachers.

The ORI uses a six-item Likert scale with both positively and negatively worded statements. A positive example is "Teaching students with disabilities is better done by special- than by general-classroom teachers" (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995). A negative example is "The classroom behavior of the student with a disability generally does not require more patience from the teacher than does the classroom behavior of the student without a disability" (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995). Participants indicate their degree of agreement with the statement by selecting a number on a six-point Likert scale: (-3) "I disagree very much," (-2) "I disagree pretty much," (-1) "I disagree a little," (+1) "I agree a little," (+2) "I agree pretty much," (+3) "I agree very much." Scores are summed, then a constant of 75 is added to eliminate negative scores. The total scores on the measure range from 0 to 150. Higher scores represent a more positive attitude toward inclusion; lower scores represent a more negative attitude toward inclusion. A score of 75 indicates a neutral attitude. The instrument requires approximately 20 minutes to complete (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995).

The authors found the overall scale's reliability and homogeneity to be acceptable and reported the following statistics of reliability and validity. Their sample results were as follows:

[Mean ORI] was 108.72, SD = 14.10; range, 75 to 142. The distribution of these scores

was normal, skewness = 0.01, NS; zero-centered index of kurtosis = -0.48, NS. The value of the Spearman-Brown corrected split-half reliability estimate was 0.82, with a standard error of measurement of 5.98. The value of Cronbach's coefficient alpha homogeneity coefficient was 0.88. with a Spearman-Brown split-half reliability of 0.82. (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995, p. 144)

A hierarchical multiple-regression analysis determined the distribution of attitude scores was normal.

### **Procedures**

The researcher obtained IRB approval for this study (See Appendix C). The New Mexico Association of Non-public Schools (NMANS) acted as sponsor of this survey. NMANS is a non-profit organization founded to promote diversity in education and to support communication and cooperation among New Mexico's non-public schools, between these schools and public schools, and between these schools and state and federal education agencies (New Mexico Association of Nonpublic Schools, n.d.). NMANS is the state affiliate of the Council for American Private Education, a national organization of private schools. The use of this organization as sponsor was intended to add legitimacy to the survey and to increase participation (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014).

The NMANS president sent by email a letter of introduction and a request for participation in this survey to administrators and contact persons at each member school as well as to additional New Mexico private schools on its mailing list (See Appendix D for Letter to Administrators). The email introduced this study, its purpose, and an explanation of selection criteria. It also included the researcher's contact and educational information. The email requested administrators' consent or refusal to participate by email reply to this researcher.

Additionally, if consenting, administrators were asked to supply the school's updated contact information and the number of teachers who would be participating. The researcher allowed two weeks for receipt of a reply, then the survey was re-sent to the same contacts as previously.

Additional private schools were discovered through examination of the NCES 2013-2014 private schools database and internet searches. Attempts were made to contact those schools through phone calls to verify contact information. Emails inviting participation were sent to schools on the original contact list and to these additional schools approximately two weeks after the initial mailing. The researcher followed up emails with phone calls and face-to-face contacts as necessary to obtain additional responses. A total of 77 schools were invited to participate in this study.

Upon receipt of the administrators' email or verbal request to participate, the researcher sent an email to be distributed by the administrator electronically to each participating teacher (See Appendix E for Teacher Invitation Letter). This email contained an introduction to the researcher's Qualtrics® survey, including the following: the general purpose of the study, assurance of confidentiality, and assurance that participation in the study was purely voluntary. Finally, the file contained a hyperlink and a QR code to access the survey instrument and general instructions for completing the survey.

Upon arrival at the online survey instrument, through either hyperlink or QR code, participants were presented with the Teacher Consent Form (see Appendix F) that included an introduction to the survey, including all information listed above, and more detailed instructions concerning how to take the survey. They were presented an option to choose to participate, in which they would proceed to access the instrument, or to decline to participate, in which case they would exit the survey to a page thanking them for their time. If participants selected the

option to participate, they progressed through the survey until completion. Participants were allowed to skip responses if they chose. Participants were allowed to go back to questions and change their answers if desired. More than three months (14 weeks) was allowed for participants to access the survey. Survey information was then downloaded into SPSS® software and analyzed. When the study was completed, the researcher sent survey results via email to Dr. Barbara Larrivee, one of the authors of the ORI. When giving permission to this researcher for use of the ORI, Larrivee requested results be sent to her to pool with data concerning the ORI for further research purposes.

### **Data Analysis**

The ORI instrument was scored following ORI prescribed procedures to obtain an overall score indicating teacher attitude toward inclusion. A value of 75 indicated a neutral attitude toward students with special needs. Demographic information and ORI values were entered into SPSS® software for analysis. Data was analyzed with the assumption of normality of population distribution. For each variable, a scatterplot was analyzed to determine linearity and Assumption of Bivariate Normal Distribution and, because the parameters of the population were not known, a Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality was used to determine normality. According to Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012), "It is preferable that normality be assessed both visually and through normality tests, of which the Shapiro-Wilk test, provided by the SPSS software, is highly recommended" (p. 489). Shapiro-Wilk's test "shows good power properties for a wide range of alternative distributions" (Öztuna, Elhan, & Tüccar, 2006, p. 176) and is useful because the normal distribution of the private school population could not be determined before this study. Razali and Wah (2011) determined that Shapiro-Wilk is a powerful test for all sample sizes, although it does not perform as well for samples of 30 and below.

A multiple regression analysis assessed the comparative strength of relationship of each predictor variable to the teacher attitude as measured by the ORI. Multiple linear regression is appropriate “for determining the correlation between a criterion variable and a set of predictor variables when the correlations are hypothesized to be linear” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 355).

According to Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003), the criterion variable's relationship with each predictor variable overlaps. The results of this type of analysis “is often sharply different from that provided by looking at each factor singly” (Cohen et al., 2003, p. 35).

A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine if there was a correlation between the total score for the ORI and the individual predictor variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient is an index or effect size ranging from values of -1 to +1, indicating how scores on one variable correlate with scores on another variable (Green & Salkind, 2011). The probability value of each predictor/criterion relationship was compared to the alpha ( $p < .05$ ) to determine whether the null should be accepted or rejected (Gall et al., 2007). If no significant relationship between predictor variables and the criterion variable existed, the null hypothesis was upheld. If significant relationships existed, the multiple regression analysis compared the strengths of each of these relationships to determine the best predictor variables of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

### Research Question

The following research question was proposed:

**RQ1:** What are the best predictors (*years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, training in addressing special education needs*) of attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs for private school teachers in New Mexico?

### Null Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was proposed:

**H01:** There will be no significant predictive relationship between the criterion variable teachers' attitude toward inclusion scores (*teacher attitude*) as measured by the *Opinions Relative to the Integration of Students with Disabilities* (ORI) and the linear combination of predictor variables (*years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, training in addressing special education needs*).

### Descriptive Statistics

#### Criterion Variable (ORI Responses)

The *Opinions Relative to the Integration of Students with Disabilities* (ORI) instrument was scored following ORI prescribed procedures to obtain an overall score indicating teacher attitude toward inclusion. A value of 75 indicated a neutral attitude toward students with special needs. Using SPSS® software, the researcher calculated the mean ( $M = 89.84$ ), standard deviation ( $SD = 19.43$ ), and range of scores (39 – 129) of responses ( $N = 69$ ) to the ORI instrument.



## Predictor Variables

The predictor variable *years of teaching experience* refers to the years a teacher has spent regularly teaching “scheduled classes to students in any of grades K-12” (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013, p. B-4). Nationally, both public and private school teachers average 14 years’ experience (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). This variable was measured by the demographic question “How many years of teaching experience do you have?” Participants reported a median response of 10-20 years: 1-2 years ( $n = 6$ ; 8.7%); 3-9 years ( $n = 15$ , 21.7%); 10-20 years ( $n = 25$ , 36.2%); and 20 years or more ( $n = 23$ , 33.3%) (see Table H1).

The predictor variable *previous public school teaching experience* was measured by the demographic question “Have you ever taught in a public school? (Please do not include time spent in public schools while in an intern/practicum/apprenticeship program required for licensing or certification.)” Participants were almost equally split between those who had previously taught in a public school (yes,  $n = 33$ , 47.8 %) and those who had not (no,  $n = 36$ , 52.2%). *Previous public school teaching experience* refers to any experience as a full or part-time teacher while employed in a public school setting (see Table H2).

The predictor variable *teacher level of education* was measured with the demographic question “What is your level of education?” Question choices corresponded to those measured by the U.S. Department of Education (2013) and reported in its *Digest of Education Statistics, 2012*. Participants reported the following education levels: less than Bachelor’s ( $n = 2$ ; 2.9%), Bachelor’s ( $n = 29$ ; 42%), Master’s ( $n = 29$ ; 42%), Education Specialist ( $n = 2$ ; 2.9%), and Doctorate ( $n = 7$ ; 10.1%). If a respondent selected more than one answer, the highest level reported was used for the purposes of this study. For analysis, participants choosing the degree Education Specialist were combined with those who chose Doctorate to create the value Upper

Graduate ( $n = 9$ ; 13%) (see Table H3).

The predictor variable *training in addressing special education needs* was measured by the demographic question “Have you had the following types of training in addressing special education needs in your classroom?” Answer choices were *in-service training*, *undergraduate coursework*, *professional development courses*, and *graduate level coursework*. Responses to this question are not exclusive; that is, participants may have received all, none, or a combination of training types, and may have selected more than one category. Participants reported the following individual types of training (an individual may have selected more than one type of training, so percentages may not total 100): in-service training ( $n = 43$ ; 62.3%); undergraduate coursework ( $n = 35$ ; 50.7%), professional development courses ( $n = 43$ ; 62.3%), and graduate level coursework ( $n = 25$ ; 36.2%) (see Table H4).

Training through all four types was reported by 14 participants (20.3%). Both auxiliary (in-service and/or professional development) and university-based (undergraduate and/or graduate) training in addressing special education needs was reported by 73% of private school teachers with previous public school teaching experience compared to 50% of those without previous public school teaching experience. No training in addressing special education needs was reported by 15 participants (21.7%). Data was examined to determine that this number was not a result of participants not answering the question but that they had actually chosen the option “No” for each type of training. More teachers with previous public school experience reported training of some type (85%) than teachers without public school experience (72%).

## Results

### Assumptions

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the null hypothesis and to assess the

comparative strength of relationship of each predictor variable (*years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, training in addressing special education needs*) to the criterion variable (ORI total). The multiple regression analysis required that three assumptions were met: bivariate outliers (no unusual variable combinations), bivariate normal distribution (normal distribution across two variables), and non-multicollinearity among the predictor variables. Scatter plots were run between the predictor variables (*years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, training in addressing special education needs*) and the criterion variable (ORI total) and between the predictor variables themselves. The scatter plots did not indicate extreme bivariate outliers; they did indicate bivariate normal distribution (see Figure 1).

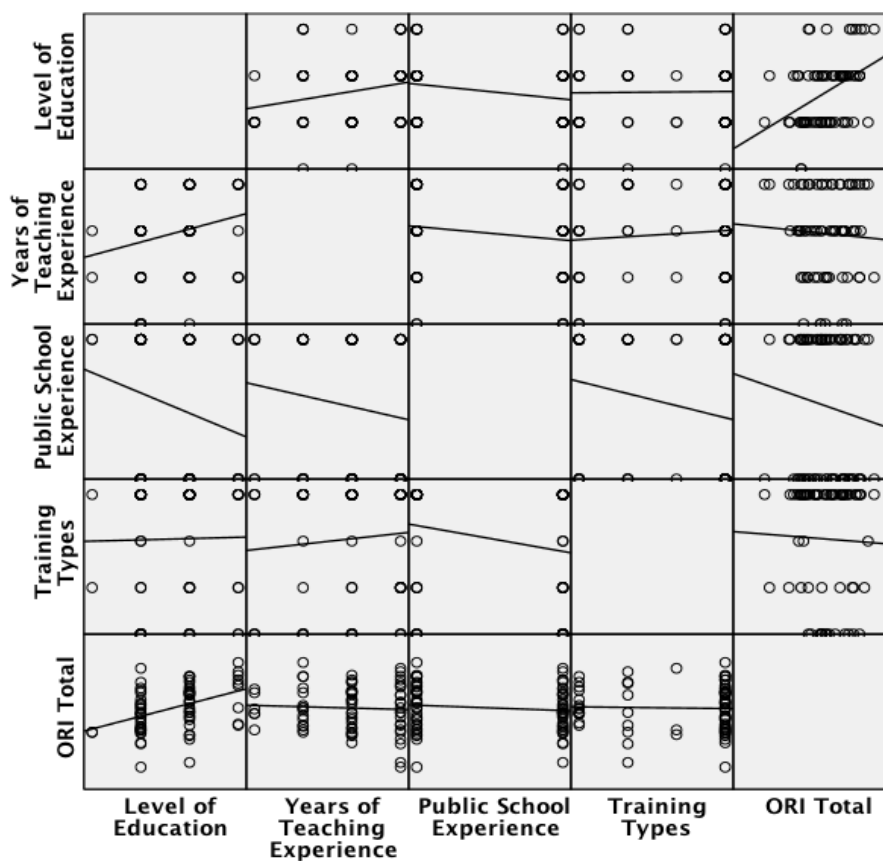


Figure 1. Scatterplot Matrix for Predictor Variables and Criterion Variable

The assumption of non-multicollinearity among the predictor variables was examined using a collinearity table and comparing the Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) among the predictor variables. Collinearity between variables was well within reasonable limits, between one and five (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Collinearity Statistics*

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>		Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Tolerance	VIF
1	Public School Experience	0.9	1.112
	Level of Education	0.916	1.092
	Years of Teaching Experience	0.937	1.068
	Training Types	0.947	1.056

a. Dependent Variable: ORI\_total

**Results for Null Hypothesis**

Regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well each predictor variable predicted the criterion variable private school teachers' attitude toward students with special needs in the general classroom as measured by the ORI. The null hypothesis was that there will be no significant predictive relationship between the criterion variable teachers' attitude toward inclusion scores (*teacher attitude*) and the linear combination of predictor variables (*years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, training in addressing special education needs*). The null hypothesis was rejected because data

showed a significant predictive relationship between the criterion variable and one or more of the predictor variables. The overall regression model was statistically significant,  $F(4, 64) = 4.00, p < .05$ . The null hypothesis was rejected at a 95% confidence level (see Table 3).

Table 3  
ANOVA

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5138.084	4	1284.521	4.004	.006 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	20531.162	64	320.799		
	Total	25669.246	68			

a. Dependent Variable: ORI Total

b. Predictors: (Constant), Training Types, Level of Education, Years of Teaching Experience, Public School Experience

Examination of the correlation coefficients produced the following results (see Table 4). *Years of teaching experience* was not a significant predictor ( $r = -.16, p = .18$ ). *Previous public school experience* was not a significant predictor ( $r = -.06; p = .64$ ). *Training in addressing special education needs* was not a significant predictor ( $r = -.04, p = .77$ ). However, *level of education* was a significant predictor ( $r = .44, p = .00, R^2 = .17, \text{adj. } R^2 = .16$ ). The Pearson correlation coefficient (.42) indicated a large effect. The results of this study suggest that, on average, private school teachers with higher levels of education have more positive attitudes

toward inclusion of students with special needs in the general classroom than those with lower levels of education.

Table 4

*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results*


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*Coefficients<sup>a</sup>*

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	Unstandardized		Standardized		t	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	73.132	14.047			5.206	.000
Years experience	-3.206	2.355	-.157		-1.361	.178
Public school experience	-2.114	4.551	-.055		-.464	.644
Teacher education	11.505	3.050	.441		3.772	.000
Training types	-.566	1.748	-.037		-.324	.747

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<sup>a</sup>Criterion Variable: ORI\_total

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Discussion

The purpose of this predictive correlation study was to determine the best predictors (*years of teaching experience, previous public school teaching experience, teacher level of education, training in addressing special education needs*) of private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion in New Mexico. Because teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs affects the education community in multiple ways, studies of variables that affect these attitudes are needed. Research has shown that teacher communication with students, faculty input into curriculum development and implementation, effective selection of teaching strategies, and professional development efforts are all affected by teacher attitudes (Logan & Wimer, 2013; MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013). Successful inclusion programs require those developing the programs to understand the perceptions of teachers toward students with special needs in their classrooms (Ross-Hill, 2009); thus, those in the education community determining inclusion policies and practices should be aware of teachers' attitudes and what can influence them.

Because most research in the United States and internationally has focused on public school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of special needs students, this study was needed to examine private school teachers' attitudes instead. The setting of this study, New Mexico private schools, was similar to a study of public school teachers in a rural southwestern region of the United States (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003), allowing some comparison between studies. The Hammond and Ingalls study found that "a very high percentage of teachers in this community had either negative attitudes or uncertainty toward inclusionary programs" (p. 28). This study, on the contrary, found that the majority of teachers in private schools in New Mexico have



positive attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in general classrooms ( $M = 89.84$ , indicating a positive attitude compared to a neutral ORI value of 75). This difference alone should encourage researchers to search for other differences between public and private school educators and their resulting effects on students as recommended by Doran (2013).

One result that the two studies had in common was that teachers believe they have inadequate training for providing services needed for successful inclusion programs. In this study, participants' responses to questions #2 and #19, on the *Opinions Relative to the Integration of Students with Disabilities* (ORI), indicated a strong belief that they need additional and more effective training to teach students with disabilities in the regular classroom. The finding that some private school teachers of all education levels and years of experience have had no training in addressing special needs necessitates a closer look at how to best treat this deficiency. Participants' wide range of answers to question #15 suggests one area in particular that training could target how to meet challenges in classroom management when a student with special needs is present.

An important fact this study established is that New Mexico private schools are serving students with disabilities. Critics have said that private schools exclude students with special needs, or at least those with low-incidence disabilities (Fischbach, 2013; Hensel, 2013; Taylor, 2005b). This does not appear to be true of New Mexico public schools, however. Although some of the private school teachers surveyed may have experienced teaching a student with special needs while working in a previous public school setting, 57 participants said they currently had a student with special needs in their classrooms. Furthermore, at least one teacher from every identified school reported currently working with a student with special needs. These results affirm that students with special needs are currently present in New Mexico private

schools' classrooms.

Students in every category of special needs had been served by at least two teacher participants. Every respondent reported having worked at some time with a student with special needs. The most common needs served among participants were Specific Learning Disability, Emotional Disturbance, Speech or Language Impairment, Autism, and Other Health Impairment, in decreasing order. This closely corresponds with data from the United States *Digest of Education Statistics* 2014 that reports Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, Other Health Impairment, and Autism as the highest percentage of disabilities served in United States public schools (Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2016).

### **Predictor Variables**

**Years of teaching experience.** Previous studies—both in the United States and worldwide—produced varying results about the relationship between *years of teaching experience* and teachers' attitudes. Some studies showed that teachers with less experience had more positive attitudes (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Buford & Casey, 2012; MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013; Slavica, 2010; Todorovic, Stojiljkovic, Ristanic, & Djigic, 2011). Alghazo, Gaad, and El (2004), on the other hand, found that teachers with more experience held more positive attitudes about inclusion. Still other authors showed no difference in teachers' attitudes toward inclusion based on teaching experience (Kalyva, Gojkovic, & Tsakiris, 2007; Logan & Wimer, 2013). This study agreed with the latter studies in that years of experience was found to have no significant relationship to New Mexico private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Also, these teachers were not different in the number of years of experience than the United States average of 14 years for both private and public school teachers.

**Previous public school teaching experience.** According to Doran (2013), private

school teachers “operate within a different framework and set of understandings from that common to public school personnel” (p. 84). Additionally, teachers’ attitudes can be affected by their previous teaching experiences (Glock & Kovacs, 2013). One might conclude, then, that private school teachers with previous public school teaching experience should differ in attitude from private school teachers who have no such experience, but in the current study, the variable *previous public school teaching experience* was not found to have a significant effect on teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs as measured by the ORI. This study corresponds to one conducted by Finegan (2004), who reported that teachers who had served in Texas public and private schools generally held the same views concerning inclusion as those who had served in public schools only. The current study instead compared teachers who had served in public and private schools with those who had served in private schools only, but found similar results. The public school emphasis on inclusion as mandated by federal law did not have a significant relationship to the attitudes toward inclusion of New Mexico private school teachers who had previously served under that system compared to those who had not.

One might expect that teachers with previous public school experience would have assimilated a pro-inclusion perspective of the public school system through pre-service and in-service training or through other education and societal exchanges. Accordingly, in this study, teachers with previous public school experience reported a higher mean ORI score (a more positive attitude toward inclusion of students with special needs) than those who had only taught in private schools. It should be noted, though, that participants with previous public school experience also had a higher overall level of education; none had less than a Bachelor's degree. As the data clearly demonstrates, a higher level of education exerts a significant and positive influence of medium effect size on teachers’ attitudes; thus the higher ORI of teachers with

previous public school experience is more likely to be a result of these higher education levels than of the influence of previous service in a public school environment.

**Teacher level of education.** The variable *teacher level of education* was found by the current study to have significant relationship to New Mexico private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs as measured by the ORI. Higher levels of education were generally correlated with more positive attitudes toward inclusion. Previous studies in countries as diverse as the United Kingdom (Brady & Woolfson, 2008), the United States (Buford & Casey, 2012), Thailand (Dapudong, 2014), and Bosnia (Slavica, 2012) found no significant relationship between a teachers' degree and attitude. One United States study (Charley, 2015) showed a relationship between the two, but it was not linear; that is, an increase in level of education did not automatically result in an increase in positive attitude. Other studies in Haiti and the United States (Dupoux, Wolman, & Estrada, 2005) and the Bahamas (Johnson & Fullwood, 2006) did show that greater levels of education were correlated with more positive attitudes toward inclusion.

One explanation for how teacher level of education affects private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs could be that greater levels of education result in more content knowledge and more exposure to multiple teaching methodologies (Muñoz, 2007). As teachers learn more about the subject matter they teach and as they learn varied and effective instructional strategies, they may find, or simply believe, that they are more able to meet students' needs, regardless of disability status. This belief may lead to a more positive attitude toward students with special needs than a person with a lower level of education might have. According to Brady and Woolfson (2008), "teachers with a strong sense of efficacy were more willing to adapt their teaching methods to suit the needs of included students" (p.

540). Self-efficacy has been found to positively influence teachers' attitudes toward students with special needs (Glaubman & Lifshitz, 2001).

**Training in addressing special education needs.** Numerous studies have examined the relationship between various training types and teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs. While many individual studies have shown positive effects on attitudes, others have actually resulted in less positive attitudes. The current study looked at the relationship between teacher attitudes toward inclusion and auxiliary training as received through in-service and/or professional development activities and university-based training received through undergraduate or graduate coursework. These categories correspond to those used by Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden (2000) who reported that teachers with no inclusion training and those with university-based training scored lower on attitude toward inclusion measures than those who received auxiliary training.

Over half of the participants in the current survey had received both types of training while over 20% had received no training of any type; however, no significant relationship was found between attitude toward inclusion of students with special needs and types of training in addressing special needs. This finding is not surprising. Nishimura (2014) reviewed multiple studies on professional development strategies and found that the majority require participants to sit for a number of hours, listening to an expert speaker who tells them how to implement inclusion in their classrooms. Nishimura surmised that is an ineffective approach to changing ingrained attitudes; change would be more likely to occur through on-going support and training with time for repeated practice and reflection. Wilkins and Nietfeld (2004) wrote that attitudes are resistant to change and that short-term interventions are not powerful enough to affect them. The visiting expert who instructs passive learners in how to implement instructional strategies

but provides little or no follow-up or long-term support is common but of dubious value: “In spite of the widespread concerns regarding the limited effectiveness of expert-centered professional development, research has shown that many school districts and state departments continue to rely on this form of professional development” (McLeskey, 2011, p. 27-8).

Continued research is needed into how to effectively train pre-service and in-service teachers in meeting inclusion needs. One study that found auxiliary training resulted in more positive attitudes than no training at all or university-based training (Avramidis et al., 2000). University coursework may discourage positive attitudes toward inclusion by introducing the idea that students with special needs present problems for teachers to solve or, at least, to bear. In fact, Forlin and Chambers (2011) and Killoran and Adams (2006) reported that graduating students held more negative attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs than when they began their programs. Additionally, according to Allday, Neilsen-Gatti, and Hudson (2013), university-based training may include little actual coursework in inclusion studies, often less than seven credit hours over the course of the degree program. On the other hand, Avramidis and Kalyva (2007) observed that university-based programs affected attitudes toward inclusion more positively than no training at all. Following Nishimura’s (2014) logic, the long-term coursework required by some university-based training may be effective because of repeated opportunity for practice and reflection.

It is important to note that predictive studies may be able to show correlations between variables, but they do not consistently indicate the direction of those relationships. Park and Chitiyo (2011), for example, found that study participants who had attended multiple autism workshops had more positive attitude scores than those who had attended one or no workshops. They warned, though, that the causal relationship was unclear. It may be that the training

influenced attitudes, or it may be that participants with more positive attitudes were more likely to attend the training than others. This may be true for participants of the current study as well. Over three quarters of New Mexico private school teachers in this study had some type of inclusion training; 62% received training through professional development activities. This differs from United States Department of Education *2011-2012 Schools and Staffing Survey* data (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013) reporting that only 28% of United States private school teachers participated in professional development focused on teaching students with special needs compared to 36% of United States public school teachers. One explanation may be that, in the five years since that survey, New Mexico private school teachers have realized their need for such training and have sought it out. In the current study, a finding of no significant relationship between teachers' attitude toward inclusion of students with special needs based on training types corresponds to previous studies reporting a lack of consistent results for any one type of training. More information about the longevity, curriculum elements, and skills development of training programs for private school teachers may result in clearer information about their effectiveness for teachers in both public and private school systems.

### **Conclusions**

In the United States, from the days when students with special needs were placed in private residential institutions and day schools designed to serve specific disabilities to today when all students in the country are entitled to a free public education, the focus on serving these students educationally has shifted to the public school system. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA; U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, 2000) promoted public school programs to address specific needs of students with federally-defined disabilities. Internationally, movement to include students with special needs in general education classrooms

received increased emphasis with the publication of *The Salamanca Statement* in 1994 (UNESCO, 1994). The belief that students with special needs should not be restricted to separate facilities in private or public schools continued to gain traction worldwide as legislative bodies and educational institutions established policies promoting inclusion. Private schools continued to provide services to students with special needs, however, throughout this international change of philosophy. Today they serve over 300,000 students in the United States alone (Goldring et al., 2013; Ramirez & Stymeist, 2010; Wolf, Witte, & Fleming, 2012).

Inclusion practices differ, however, from one country to the next (Bines & Lei, 2011), and even within school districts and between classrooms. Unless teachers change their pedagogy to meet students' needs, the physical placement of a student in the classroom may not meet the definition of true inclusion (Freire & César, 2003; Sailor & McCart, 2014). According to Singal (2008), teachers need positive beliefs and attitudes about inclusion as much as they need to know how to implement inclusion strategies.

Teachers' attitudes and beliefs affect their interactions with students, including their judgments about student motivations and their assessment of student progress (Freire & César, 2003). These attitudes and beliefs also color teachers' decisions about curriculum and its implementation, their perceived professional development needs, their job satisfaction, and their longevity in the teaching field (Allday et al., 2013; Logan & Wimer, 2013; MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013). Understanding the attitudes of teachers within a school system is needed to aid parents, administrators, board members, and other private school stakeholders in formulating inclusion policies and determining professional development needs for teachers in the private school setting. Public school personnel from local educational agencies (LEAs) responsible for determining IDEIA proportionate spending may be able to design more effective programs if



participants' attitudes toward inclusion are considered (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Eigenbrood, 2005; Hsieh & Hsieh, 2012; Sopko, 2013). All students, including those in private schools, benefit from teachers who hold positive attitudes toward them and their ability to succeed (Love & Kruger, 2005). Private school teachers and students benefit from greater understanding of the factors influencing and the promotion of positive attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms.

When parents place students with special needs in private schools, they expect those students to benefit from such placement in ways that differ from the benefits these students would receive in public schools. Although some private schools exist to address the needs of students with a specific disability, in New Mexico, few private schools were created for this purpose: none chose to participate in this study. Instead, New Mexico private schools, like others throughout the United States and internationally, have constructed their own missions emphasizing religious training, cultural traditions, academically rigorous instruction, college preparation, language immersion studies, pedagogical approach, school safety, discipline methods, or other educational elements (Alt & Peter, 2002; Boerema, 2006; Bosetti & Pyryt, 2007; Taylor, 2005a). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), principals of private schools participating in the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program “were more likely to report that student behavior, student motivation, parental support for student learning, and instructional skills of teachers were excellent or very good ” (p.1). These differences may be some of the reasons parents place their students with special needs into private schools regardless of the presence or lack of formal special education programs.

Many students with special needs have been placed in New Mexico private schools. The results of this study show that students identified with at least one of 10 federally-defined

categories of special needs are currently present in many New Mexico private schools classrooms. Participants in this study reported experience teaching students identified with all federally-defined categories, though they were not asked to clarify if that experience occurred in public or private school environments. In their current private school situation, these teachers are more likely to be responsible for determining teaching strategies, assessment methods, discipline measures, course content, and textbooks and materials than teachers in public schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Because attitudes affect information processing and judgments (Ajzen, 2001; MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013), positive teachers' attitudes are needed to create a fair and effective environment for learning for all students. According to Ryan and Gottfried (2012), without teachers' support, "it is almost impossible" for a school to implement a successful inclusion program. This study examined the relationship between attitudes toward inclusion of private school teachers in New Mexico and four predictor variables frequently researched as predictors of those attitudes.

The significance of studies which look exclusively at private schools should be emphasized. From 2004 to 2012, the number of private schools in the United States remained at approximately 30,000 (Broughman, 2004; Broughman & Swaim, 2013). Internationally, however, private schools are experiencing immense growth. The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), an organization that promotes and supports private Christian schools, counted 2,700 member schools in the United States in 2016 but 5,000 in other countries according to Mike Epps, Senior Vice President ACSI Global (M. Epps, personal communication, September 26, 2016). In addition, ACSI Global is working on a project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to serve its 18,500 Christian schools. It is also moving forward in other countries to establish membership for approximately 10,000 existing private Christian schools,

including India (5,000) and Rwanda (2,000). An example outside a religious context is the growth of private schools in India. According to Kumari (2015), in Delhi, the average annual growth rate of enrollment for private schools is 19%, nearly double the rate of public schools. At the secondary level, this growth is 51%, more than three times the growth in public schools. To limit educational research to public school systems alone ignores the educational contributions of private schools in communities worldwide and may exclude findings that could help teachers in both systems.

The current study found no significant differences in attitude toward inclusion between private school teachers who had previously served in public schools and those who had not. A great difference, however, was apparent when the generally positive attitude of private school participants in this current study was compared to that of the public school teachers in the Hammond and Ingalls (2003) study. Those participants expressed “an overwhelmingly strong pattern of negative or uncertainty toward inclusion” (p. 27) while participants in this study reported a somewhat positive attitude toward inclusion. Research into variances between private school and public school teachers in attitudes toward inclusion and in other pedagogical areas is needed for greater understanding of how each system can improve student success.

Participants in this survey were of similar age and had similar years of experience as private and public school teachers throughout the United States. The majority (73%) had experienced both auxiliary and university-based training in addressing special education needs. A surprising number of participants in this study had previous public school experience (47.8%). These factors did not demonstrate a significant effect on New Mexico private school teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs. The finding that so many private school teachers had previously taught in public schools seems contradictory to Ingersoll’s

statement (2001) that private school teachers are more likely to move to public systems than public school teachers are to move to private school systems. Policies and training programs designed to affect teachers' attitudes toward inclusion should address the similar needs of teachers in both environments who may migrate from one system to another even as their students do. Public school personnel responsible for designing private school professional development and special education training programs funded by IDEIA proportionate spending may be more effective if they consider participants' previous school system experiences and attitudes toward inclusion.

The need for such training was expressed strongly by participants of the current study. Even though the variable training in addressing special education needs was insignificant as a predictor of teachers' attitudes, New Mexico private school teachers expressed clearly through their ORI answers that they feel unprepared to meet inclusion demands (see Appendix G, ORI Results). This may be a result of New Mexico's policy of minimal regulation of its private schools and private school teachers, not requiring certification, licensure, or other types of training. On the other hand, the need for additional training was also evinced by teachers with teaching experience in public schools systems with strict licensure requirements. The results of this study correspond with findings of previous research into teachers' attitudes and inclusion training methods. Those studies found a sense of inadequacy in meeting special needs affects both public and private school teachers (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Doran, 2013; Kutash, Duchnowski & Lynn, 2009; LaBarbera, 2011; Swain, Nordness, & Leader-Janssen, 2012). A vast number of international studies have attempted to find the "magic bullet" that will allow general education teachers to have confidence in their abilities to meet special education needs and to develop positive attitudes toward inclusion efforts. Wilkins and Nietfeld (2004) found,

though, that beliefs and attitudes are resistant to change by any method. Pre-service, in-service, lecture, practicum, etc.—researchers have found little that clearly works and have actually found programs that result in more negative attitudes. What does seem to have some success are programs that take a long-term approach with coaching and opportunity for reflection and teacher interaction among themselves and mentors (Kosko & Wilkins, 2009; Nishimura, 2014; Schlessinger, 2014).

One intriguing finding of this study was the significant relationship between teachers' level of education and teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in the general classroom. A clear correlation exists between participants' higher levels of formal education and positive attitudes toward inclusion in the current study. Previous authors have found no significant relationship (Alquraini, 2012; Brady & Woolfson, 2008; Buford & Casey, 2012; Dapudong, 2014; and Slavica, 2012), an inconsistent relationship (Charley, 2015), or a significant inverse relationship (Ahmmed, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2012) between degrees held and teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Similar to this study, however, Parasuram (2006) and Dupoux et al. (2005) found a direct and significant relationship between teachers' level of education and teachers' attitude toward inclusion. An explanation for the dissimilar results of these studies may be the nationalities of their subjects. The diversity of results clearly shows that research can only indicate relationships, not explain them. It may be that, for teachers in some cultures, personality traits and predispositions held by those with positive attitudes toward inclusion also lead them to pursue higher education levels.

### **Implications**

The teachers surveyed for the current study were similar in age and years of experience to public and private school teachers throughout the United States; thus, the findings of this study

are likely to be applicable to teachers in this country. Most of the findings correspond with those of researchers throughout the world as well. The most obvious difference, though, was the finding of this study that a teacher's level of education is likely to be directly correlated to teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. In terms of application, board members, superintendents, and other stakeholders may consider the level of education of teachers within their private school districts when planning to implement or improve existing inclusion programs. Financial support, flexible scheduling, and encouragement for continuing education that leads to attainment of higher degrees may help teachers to gain the knowledge, understanding, and dispositions they need to participate in successful private school inclusion programs.

According to Brackenreed (2001), nearly half of all new teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching; many of these cite a lack of support and stress in achieving inclusion goals as their reasons for leaving. Private school leaders should not leave these teachers alone to find success or failure in their inclusion classrooms. These teachers need administrative support regardless of their years of teaching experience. When school leaders find that teachers have negative attitudes toward inclusion, they should reflect on how the school culture, previous inclusion experiences, ineffective training efforts, lack of support, poor communication, or other factors might have contributed to this negativity. The fact remains, however, that attitudes are resistant to change (Ajzen, 2001) and multiple studies have still not determined how to best inspire teachers with more positive attitudes toward inclusion once they have been formed. While research examines samples of populations, classrooms are filled with teachers and students, actual people with unique backgrounds and beliefs. Knowing more about what does or does not influence teachers' attitudes toward inclusion may help private school leaders implement and maintain successful inclusion programs.

### **Limitations**

This study is limited in its application to other populations. New Mexico private school teachers may differ from other private school teachers in the United States and in other countries because of New Mexico's unique blend of culture and because of the state's specific legal requirements for teaching in private schools. New Mexico blends Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo heritages in both rural and large urban settings. Its employers include high-tech industries, ranches, dairies, and military organizations. The needs of the large Native American population of the northern half of the state and a significant immigrant population from Mexico and Central and South American countries affect curriculum, materials, and teaching methods throughout the state (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2016; United States Census Bureau, 2015). Furthermore, New Mexico's private school teachers are not required to be certified or licensed. Although this study did not look at the effect of certification and licensure on teachers' attitudes, others have with various results. These differences between New Mexico private schools and other school populations may create an environment affecting teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs differently than teachers in other environments might experience.

Another limitation is that this study utilized a convenience sample drawn from private schools that agreed to participate; teachers at schools that did not agree to participate may work in different teaching environments and have different experiences that would influence their attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs. Within surveyed schools, only teachers who selected to take this survey were participants. Teachers who elected not to participate may have responded differently to survey questions than participants did. Additionally, although instructions directed administrators to distribute this survey to all faculty at their schools rather

than to select participants, the possibility remains that not all teachers at every participating school were actually invited to take the survey, thus skewing the sample from the target population. Nonetheless, the fact remains that nonprobability sampling methods such as convenience sampling is used in more than 95% of research studies in the social sciences (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 175). Inferring the population to which the sample may generalize can be done through careful description of the sample and conceptualization of the population it is supposed to represent. Convenience sampling was appropriate for this non-experimental study, which provided detailed descriptive information as well as information about the represented population.

To examine the likelihood that this convenience sample is representative of the general New Mexico private school teacher population, demographics of participants were examined. As noted above, the sample is comparable to the United States national average in age and teaching experience. Teaching experience with students with disabilities is comparable to United States general education teachers, and training types correspond with those received by teachers internationally. The sample does appear to have attained higher education levels overall than United States private school teachers in general, which may or may not be representative of New Mexico private school teachers as a whole. Participants represented teachers from geographical regions throughout New Mexico and from schools of varying size. Almost one quarter of participants were from the researcher's home school, however, which makes it possible that bias was introduced into the data. That school is the largest private school in southern New Mexico, though, so excluding it from participation in this study would have skewed the results as well.

Lastly, because the design of this study was quantitative rather than qualitative, teachers



were not asked to explain their answers and were not given opportunity to clarify their responses. More than one participant expressed in person or by email that they were ambivalent while taking the survey because their experiences with students with a variety of needs led them to believe an ORI statement might be true when the teacher considered one student but not when the teacher thought of another student. One teacher from a large New Mexico private school wrote the following (shared with permission):

When answering the questions, I was looking at it from all perspectives, and while I believe that children with significant disabilities—physical, educational or emotional—pose a significant challenge to a “regular” classroom and its teacher, I do not feel that it is an impossible situation. It is significantly dependent on the child and their needs as well as the teacher’s ability to handle those needs.... I think it would have helped to have places for comments during the survey, or most certainly at the end.

The Likert survey style of the ORI may be too restrictive to fully measure teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion in relationship to the dependent variables of this study. On the other hand, the ORI does not present the concept of a continuum of placement for students with special needs but gives teachers the option of answering that they agree or disagree pretty much or a little and presents concepts with both positive and negative wording. The goal is to measure an overall attitude rather than responses to specific situations. A qualitative follow-up to this study might clarify or measure more precisely the attitudes held by New Mexico private school teachers.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Two recommendations for further research are proposed. First, implicit in the overwhelming majority of research conducted worldwide into various aspects of teachers’

attitudes toward inclusion is the belief that positive teachers' attitudes benefit students with special educational needs. Munoz and Chan (2008) conducted a longitudinal study of the relationship between various teacher characteristics (attitude was not included) and student academic growth but found no clear evidence pointing to teacher factors that contribute to student success. Similar studies connecting teachers' attitudes explicitly to student academic, emotional, social, or other type of growth are needed to support the assumption that teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special education needs are important.

Second, while the current study reported the demographics of teachers in regard to their experiences with students with specific disabilities, it was limited in measuring how frequently these experiences occurred. Also, although this study asked if teachers currently taught students with specific disabilities in their classrooms, it did not ask which previous experiences with students with particular disabilities were in private or public school settings. Because so many teachers had previous public school teaching experience, many of their interactions with students with special education needs may have occurred in that environment rather than in their current private school setting. Further research should look more closely at the relationship between public school and private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and the type and number of disabilities these teachers have served.

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## APPENDIX A

### Survey Demographics Section

Please answer all questions.

1. At which school do you teach?
2. What is your gender?  female  male
3. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ years
4. What is your level of education?  less than Bachelor's  Bachelor's  Master's  
 Education Specialist  Doctorate
5. At which level do you teach?  Elementary  Secondary  Elementary and Secondary
6. How many years of teaching experience do you have?  1-2  3-9  10-20  20+
7. Have you ever taught in a public school?  yes  no (*Please do not include time spent in public schools while in an intern/practicum/apprenticeship program required for licensing or certification.*)
8. Have you had the following types of training in addressing special education needs in your classroom?  
 yes  no In-service training                       yes  no Professional development courses  
 yes  no Undergraduate coursework               yes  no Graduate level coursework
9. Have you ever had a student with the following category/categories of special needs present in your classroom?  
 yes  no Deaf-Blindness                                       yes  no Autism  
 yes  no Speech or Language Impairment               yes  no Other Health Impairment  
 yes  no Emotional Disturbance                               yes  no Intellectual Disability  
 yes  no Specific Learning Disability                       yes  no Multiple Disabilities  
 yes  no Visual Impairment (Including Blindness)  
 yes  no Hearing Impairment (Including Deafness)  
 yes  no Traumatic Brain Injury  
 yes  no Orthopedic Impairment
10. Do you currently have a student with the following category/categories of special needs present in your classroom?  
 yes  no Deaf-Blindness                                       yes  no Autism  
 yes  no Speech or Language Impairment               yes  no Other Health Impairment  
 yes  no Emotional Disturbance                               yes  no Intellectual Disability  
 yes  no Specific Learning Disability                       yes  no Multiple Disabilities  
 yes  no Visual Impairment (Including Blindness)  
 yes  no Hearing Impairment (Including Deafness)  
 yes  no Traumatic Brain Injury  
 yes  no Orthopedic Impairment

**APPENDIX B****Author Permission to Use *Opinions Relative to the Integration of Students with Disabilities***

RE: Request permission to use ORI  
Barbara Larrivee <blarrive@csusb.edu>  
Tue 1/27/2015 3:06 PM

To: O'Hara, Debra <dohara@liberty.edu>;  
3 attachments  
2011 Permission Form to Use ORI.doc; ORI REFS REVISED 2012.rtf; Opinions Relative Revised.pdf;

Debra,

You have my permission to use the *Opinions Relative to the Integration of Students with Disabilities (ORI)*.

Attached please find a copy of the ORI with scoring instructions, citations on the ORI, and an official permission form. Page 4 permission form and page 5 citations on the ORI, of this PDF file have been revised and updated and are attached as separate files.

There is no charge to use the survey. I am requiring that you send the results of the research in order to pool data to conduct further research on the ORI.

You can e-mail me your completed permission form. Your typed name will suffice as a signature.

Good luck with your research,

Dr. Barbara Larrivee, Professor  
College of Education, CE-245  
California State University  
5500 University Parkway  
San Bernardino, CA 92407  
Phone: (909) 537-5670  
Email: blarrive@csusb.edu

## APPENDIX C

### IRB Exemption

*February 10, 2016*

*Debbra O'Hara*

*IRB Exemption 2387.021016: Predictors of Attitudes of Private School Teachers toward Inclusion of Students with Special Needs in New Mexico*

*Dear Debbra,*

*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 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 46:101(b):*

- (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 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 change in protocol form or 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,*

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**  
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research  
**The Graduate School**

## APPENDIX D

### Letter to Administrators

Dear (Head of School):

You and the teachers at your school are invited to participate in a research study of private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms. Your school was selected for participation as a private school in New Mexico. Your participation is very important as it will contribute to research into private schools and their teachers.

Teacher attitudes affect communication with students, curricular decisions, selection and implementation of teaching strategies, and professional development needs. Results of this study will benefit private school educators, administrators, and developers of professional development programs. The survey includes a demographic section and a survey instrument to measure teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms.

This study is being conducted by Debra O'Hara, a doctoral student at Liberty University, School of Education. Please respond with your *permission* to participate by email reply to her at [dohara@liberty.edu](mailto:dohara@liberty.edu). In the subject line of your email, write the *name of your school* and the word *permission* if you wish to participate. If you do grant permission, please provide the following in the body of your email.

1. *Your school's updated contact information, including your name as administrator.*
2. *The number of teachers at your school.*

Upon receipt of your permission to participate, Debra O'Hara will send an email to be distributed by you electronically to each teacher at your school. (Note: If you choose to allow your school to participate, you agree to distribute a survey invitation to each teacher at your school, rather than distributing the survey selectively to only those whom you wish to participate. Each teacher will then make the individual decision to participate or not.) This email will contain an introduction to the survey, including the following: the general purpose of the study, assurance of confidentiality, assurance that participation in the study is purely voluntary, notice that the results of the study will be available for review upon its completion, and thanks for participation. The email will contain a hyperlink and a QR code to access the survey instrument and general instructions for completing the survey. Teachers will choose individually whether to participate in this study or not. They will be free to not answer any particular question or to stop taking the survey at any time. You will not know who participated and who did not participate. (A copy of the email each teacher will receive is attached below for your information.)

Neither you, your school, nor individual teachers will receive compensation for participation. The records of this study will be kept private. The only specifically identifying information teachers will be asked to provide is the name of the school at which they work. Schools will be assigned pseudonyms to be used for any reporting of data. In any sort of report Debra O'Hara may publish, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify a participant or individual school. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. SSR encryption will be used to protect survey answers online. Survey responses will not be released to school officials, Liberty University, or the New Mexico Association of Non-Public Schools (NMANS) except as compiled information through reports of study results. Data will be stored online through the survey company used to collect information and on the researcher's personal computers. Data from this survey will be used for this study and may be used for future educational research into related topics by Debra O'Hara.

Sincerely,  
Debra O'Hara, Ed.S.  
Graduate student, Liberty University

## APPENDIX E

### Teacher Invitation Letter

Dear Teacher:

*As a graduate student in the education department at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to measure the attitudes of New Mexico private school teachers toward students with special needs in their general classrooms. I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.*

*If you are a teacher in a private school in New Mexico and are willing to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey. It should take approximately 10 minutes for you to complete the survey questions. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be required.*

If you agree to be in this study, please click the "Take the Survey" hyperlink below or QR code below. Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary and you may stop at any point if you wish.

*A consent document is provided as the first page you will see after you click on the survey link attached to this letter. The consent document contains additional information about my research, but you do not need to sign and return it. You will be asked to choose the "Take the Survey" button to consent or the "Decline" button to choose not to participate and to exit the survey.*

*Sincerely,*

Debbra O'Hara, Ed.S.

Graduate student, Liberty University

**TAKE THE SURVEY:** [https://liberty.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_3rZW1pNeGiWEqTb](https://liberty.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3rZW1pNeGiWEqTb)



## APPENDIX F

### Teacher Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 2/10/16 to -- Protocol # 2387.021016

#### **CONSENT FORM**

You are invited to participate in a research study of private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. You were selected as a possible participant because you teach at a private school in New Mexico. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions by email that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Debbra O'Hara, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University. The title of this research project is Predictors of Attitudes of Private School Teachers toward Inclusion of Students with Special Needs in New Mexico.

#### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship of private school teachers' characteristics to their attitudes toward inclusion.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

Click on the "take the survey" link below to begin the study. You will be taken to the survey.

Alternatively, you may decline to participate, in which case, please click the "decline" link below to exit the survey. Once you have chosen to participate, please select the most appropriate answer to each survey question. You may go back to previous questions if you desire. You may also save your answers as you take the survey. If you choose to receive a copy of the results of the study, please provide your email address when prompted. This study will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary and you may stop at any point if you wish.

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

The study has the following risks: A minimal risk of individual identification exists in spite of steps to maintain confidentiality.

A benefit to other private school educators and to people who develop professional development programs and policies is an understanding of private school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs in their general education classrooms.

**Compensation:** You will receive no payment or compensation for your participation.

#### **Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. SSR encryption will be used to protect survey answers online. The only specifically identifying information you will be asked to provide is the name of the school at which you work. Schools will be assigned pseudonyms. Answers will not be released to your school's officials, Liberty University, or the New Mexico Association of Non-Public Schools except as compiled information through reports of study results. Data will be stored online through the survey company used to collect information and on the researcher's personal computers. Data from this survey will be used for this study and may be used for future educational research into related topics by this researcher.



**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 Liberty University or New Mexico Association of Non-Public Schools. 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 Debra O'Hara. You may email her with any questions you have before beginning this survey. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at [dohara@liberty.edu](mailto:dohara@liberty.edu). The advisor for this study is Dr. Phyllis Booth of Liberty University. She may be contacted at [pbooth@liberty.edu](mailto:pbooth@liberty.edu), (434) 582-2445.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*You may print a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

## APPENDIX G

### ORI Results

#### *ORI Results*

Questions	Answers <sup>b</sup>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>
ORI 1: Most students with disabilities will make an adequate attempt to complete their assignments.	1.54	2.00	1.17
<sup>a</sup> ORI 2: Integration of students with disabilities will necessitate extensive retraining of regular-classroom teachers.	1.14	1.00	1.47
ORI 3: Integration offers mixed group interaction that will foster understanding and acceptance of differences among students.	1.81	2.00	1.28
<u>ORI 4</u> : It is likely that the student with a disability will exhibit behavior problems in a regular classroom.	-.46	-1.00	1.79
ORI 5: Students with disabilities can best be served in regular classrooms.	.46	1.00	1.33
<u>ORI 6</u> : The extra attention students with disabilities require will be to the detriment of other students.	-.33	-1.00	1.63
ORI 7: The challenge of being in a regular classroom will promote the academic growth of the student with a disability.	.94	1.00	1.20
<u>ORI 8</u> : Integration of students with disabilities will require significant changes in classroom procedures.	.48	1.00	1.53
<u>ORI 9</u> : Increased freedom in the regular classroom creates too much confusion for the student with a disability.	-.12	-1.00	1.57
ORI 10: Regular-classroom teachers have the ability necessary to work with students with disabilities.	-.13	.00	1.65
<u>ORI 11</u> : The presence of students with disabilities will not promote acceptance of differences on the part of students without disabilities.	-1.62	-2.00	1.34
<u>ORI 12</u> : The behavior of students with disabilities will set a bad example for students without disabilities.	-1.78	-2.00	1.41
ORI 13: The student with a disability will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a regular classroom than in a special classroom.	.04	-1.00	1.43
<u>ORI 14</u> : Integration of the student with a disability will not promote his or her social independence.	-1.43	-2.00	1.09
ORI 15: It is not more difficult to maintain order in a regular classroom that contains a student with a disability than in one that does not contain a student with a disability.	.28	1.00	1.87
ORI 16: Students with disabilities will not monopolize the regular-classroom teacher's time.	-.03	-1.00	1.68
	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>

ORI 17: The integration of students with disabilities can be beneficial for students without disabilities.	1.57	2.00	1.19
<u>ORI 18</u> : Students with disabilities are likely to create confusion in the regular classroom.	-.90	-1.00	1.50
ORI 19: Regular-classroom teachers have sufficient training to teach students with disabilities.	-1.26	-2.00	1.44
<u>ORI 20</u> : Integration will likely have a negative effect on the emotional development of the student with a disability.	-1.35	-2.00	1.22
ORI 21: Students with disabilities should be given every opportunity to function in the regular classroom where possible.	2.19	2.00	.83
ORI 22: The classroom behavior of the student with a disability generally does not require more patience than does the classroom behavior of the student without a disability.	-.65	-1.00	1.81
<u>ORI 23</u> : Teaching students with disabilities is better done by special-than by regular-classroom teachers.	.17	1.00	1.61
<u>ORI 24</u> : Isolation in a special classroom has a beneficial effect on the social and emotional development of the student with a disability.	-1.38	-2.00	1.40
ORI 25: The student with a disability will not be socially isolated in the regular classroom.	.51	1.00	1.64

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<sup>a</sup>Underlined question numbers indicate those considered by the ORI authors to constitute negative attitudes.

<sup>b</sup>Answer choices were (-3) "I disagree very much", (-2) "I disagree pretty much", (-1) "I disagree a little", (+1) "I agree a little", (+2) "I agree pretty much", (+3) "I agree very much"

## APPENDIX H

### Tables of Variable Analysis

Table H 1

*Years of Teaching and ORI Means*

How many years of teaching experience do you have?						
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	min	max	R
1-2	6	89.83	12.94	71	106	35
3-9	15	92.33	18.51	69	129	60
10-20	25	89.64	17.44	60	118	58
20+	23	88.43	23.92	39	124	85

a. Dependent Variable: ORI\_total

Table H 2

*Previous Public School Experience and ORI Means*

Have you ever taught in a public school?						
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	min	max	R
No	36	87.67	18.54	43	124	81
Yes	33	92.21	20.37	39	129	90

a. Dependent Variable: ORI\_total

Table H 3

*Level of Education and ORI Means*

What is your level of education?						
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	min	max	R
less than Bachelor's	2	69.00	0.00	69	69	0
Bachelor's	29	83.21	17.76	39	124	85
Master's	29	93.28	18.17	43	117	74
Upper Graduate	9	104.78	19.68	75	129	54

a. Dependent Variable: ORI\_total

Table H 4

*Types of Training and ORI Means*

Have you had the following types of training in addressing special education needs in your classroom?						
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	min	max	R
None	15	92.60	12.58	75	117	42
In-service	9	86.33	26.78	43	121	78
University-based coursework	3	87.33	31.82	67	124	57
Both	42	89.79	19.41	39	129	90

a. Dependent Variable: ORI\_total