

INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL TEACHERS' DEMOGRAPHIC AND CHARACTERISTICS  
UPON THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

BY

DOMINIC MERRILL

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of  
Doctor of Psychology in Human and Organizational Psychology

Touro University Worldwide, 2021

Doctoral Committee:

Dr. Ann-Marie Buchanan, Ph.D., MSW, LMSW, Chair  
Dr. Coy Hillstead, Ed.D., IPMA-SCP, Committee  
Dr. Godwin Igein, Ph.D., Committee

TOURO UNIVERSITY WORLDWIDE  
SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY  
LOS ALAMITOS, CALIFORNIA 90720

THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL TEACHERS' DEMOGRAPHIC AND  
CHARACTERISTICS UPON THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS  
INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

*This dissertation, written by*

DOMINIC MERRILL

---

*Submitted to the Faculty of Touro University Worldwide in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of*

**DOCTORATE IN HUMAN AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**


Approved by:   
*Dr. Shelia Lewis, Provost*


  
*Dr. Aldwin Domingo, Director of the School of Psychology*

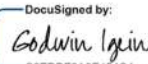
Date: November 15, 2021

*We, the undersigned, certify that we have read this dissertation and approve it as adequate in  
scope and quality for the Doctor of Human and Organizational Psychology.*

*Dissertation Committee:*

DocuSigned by:  
  
C08A0D6FD2714D7... 11-11-2021 | 11:16 PM EST  
*Dr. Ann-Marie Buchanan* *Chair*

DocuSigned by:  
  
8C961021F407484... 11-11-2021 | 11:03 PM EST  
*Dr. Coy Hillstead* *Member*

DocuSigned by:  
  
CBEDDF8A8E454C4... 11-11-2021 | 7:03 PM EST  
*Dr. Godwin Igein* *Member*

# INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

©2021

Dominic Merrill

All Rights Reserved

### **Acknowledgments**

I want to start by thanking my committee, which has been instrumental in making it to this point in this dissertation. Dr. Ann-Marie Buchanan, thank you for the continued guidance and support throughout this entire dissertation process; I would not have made it this far without you. Dr. Coy Hillstead and Dr. Godwin Igein, I also want to thank you for your continued guidance throughout this process; it has helped me immensely in this challenge. I especially want to thank all the participants of this study who have helped me in this journey to learn more about an important topic for me. Without each one of you, this would not have been possible to fulfill. Thank every one of you again for your support.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

*I want to dedicate this research to my friends and family who struggle to find the proper education for the special need's members of their families. I hope that others continue with this research to improve education.*

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

### **Abstract**

Inclusive classrooms have been an area of interest for many years and have encouraged continued research worldwide. Poland began this journey back in the 1990s, and even with the resistance, they refused to give up, and instead, they pushed forward. Over the years, there have been many reasons schools have decided to either participate in inclusive classrooms or continue with the previous method of having a general education classroom and a special education classroom. Research continues to be completed to show those who are unsure about inclusive classrooms why so many teachers and families want to change to this way. While there will always be those against the inclusive classes, continued research provides the opportunity to educate people on the potential benefits for everyone involved. The inclusive classrooms have been shown to benefit the special needs students and the general education students and teachers. They will learn to work with a population they previously were not working with. The research will continue to be needed to provide the best possible outcome for the educations of the special need's students.

**Table of Contents**

Abstract..... vi

List of Tables ..... viii

List of Figures ..... ix

List of Abbreviations ..... x

Chapter 1: Introduction..... 1

    The History of Inclusive Education ..... 2

    The Current State of Affairs ..... 3

    The Benefits of Inclusive Education..... 4

    Statement of the Problem..... 6

    Conceptual Framework..... 6

Chapter 2: Literature Review..... 11

    Research Methods..... 11

        Factors Affecting the Implementation of Inclusive Education..... 12

        Methods of Implementation..... 13

        Improper Student Classification ..... 14

        Support Networks and Context..... 14

        Financial and Moral Cost..... 15

        Degree and Type of Special Needs..... 16

        Teacher Demographics, Characteristics, and Attitude..... 17

        Necessary Knowledge, Skills, and Training..... 17

        Teachers' Attitudes..... 19

        Teachers' Age and Gender ..... 21

        Teachers' Experience ..... 21

        Class Size..... 22

        General Education Versus Special Education Teachers..... 23

Chapter 3: Methodology ..... 25

    Participants..... 25

    Measure..... 26

    Procedure ..... 26

    Analysis ..... 27

Chapter 4: Findings..... 29

Chapter 5: Discussion ..... 45

    Interpretation of the Findings ..... 45

    Limitations ..... 50

    Implications ..... 52

    Summary of Hypotheses ..... 54

    Conclusion ..... 56

References..... 58

Appendix A: Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scale (TATIS) ..... 62

Appendix B: Demographic Questions ..... 63

**List of Tables**

Table 1: Summary of Hypotheses.....	10
Table 2: TATIS .....	30
Table 3: ANOVA of Experience of Teachers in Comparison to the Classroom Type.....	36
Table 4: Between groups analysis.....	37
Table 5: T-Test.....	38
Table 6: Paired Samples Correlations.....	38
Table 7: Paired Samples Effect Sizes .....	39
Table 8: Tests of between-subjects effects .....	40
Table 9: Case processing summary.....	41
Table 10: Demographic Questionnaire .....	43
Table 11: Demographic Questionnaire (cont.).....	44



**List of Figures**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework ..... 7  
Figure 2: TATIS Questionnaire ..... 34  
Figure 3: Class size by the age of teacher ..... 35  
Figure 4: Additional TATIS Questionnaire Data..... 42

**List of Abbreviations**

Abbreviation	Explanation
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CSS	Child-Centeredness Scale
EAHCA	Education for All Handicapped Children Act
TAIS	Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education
TATIS	Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scale
TSEIES	Teacher Sense of Efficacy in Inclusive Education Scale

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Inclusive classrooms have been a topic of discussion for many years. Over the past decade, "early childhood and early childhood special education have advocated for the inclusion of special needs students into mainstream classroom settings" (Leatherman & Niemeier, 2005, p.23). Previous research on this topic has addressed the opinions and actions of preservice teachers only. As a result, its relevance to understanding inclusive classrooms is open to question. Such research has detailed areas in which inclusive classrooms were deficient yet possible given the proper setting. As teachers have stated, "inclusive classrooms seek to place all children, including those with severe disabilities, into mainstream classrooms, and this can occur with adequate support" (Saloviita, 2020, p. 64). For all the factors that can impact the implementation of inclusive classrooms, the teachers themselves will ultimately determine the success of such efforts. Therefore, my research needs to understand teachers' views on the inclusion of special needs students in inclusive classrooms. I plan to examine teachers' attitudes towards students with special needs who are often not provided with the same beneficial education that regular students receive.

It is essential to look briefly at the history of inclusive education, the current situation, and why there is a consensus that such an arrangement would be the most beneficial to all parties involved. This overview followed a clear statement of the research problem, the conceptual framework used to carry out said research, and the tested hypotheses. Subsequently, a review of relevant literature is presented, followed by a section on the methodology used for the present study. The paper will end with a section on data analysis and results, a discussion of the results, and close with a conclusion that will acknowledge any weaknesses in the study and potential areas for future investigation.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

### **The History of Inclusive Education**

Historically, students with special needs have been placed into specialized classrooms that educators meant to provide a learning environment that was more suited to them—at the very least creating an opportunity for them to attend school and learn. However, they followed the same curriculum for several years; students in a 9<sup>th</sup>-grade special education classroom, for example, took the same classes when they entered the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In other cases, students are provided 4<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup>-grade courses as 9<sup>th</sup> graders, further putting them behind their peers. As a result, these individuals did not academically progress the way they deserved to and would leave school lacking the academic and social interaction skills necessary to live successfully as adults in a community.

In the United States, some progress in special education began in 1975 with the passing of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA). Schools were required to place students with disabilities together with their peers in standard classroom settings. Even with the passage of this legislation, however, there were still many more challenges to overcome. For instance, the EAHCA referred to "mainstreaming," where special needs students were to sit in on regular classes for only a part of the day. At the same time, the more current notion of "inclusion" involves placing students in regular classes for the entire school day, regardless of their abilities (Alquraini & Gut, 2012). In other parts of the world, similar legislation continued to take shape, with one article mentioning specifically of the United Kingdom's DDA that "the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 had a huge part to play in making classrooms inclusive" (Barkas et al., 2020, p. 1).

State- and federal-level enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA 1990) showed that legislation continued to evolve in the United States. Even today, the outpouring of

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

information from the state, federal, and private educational stakeholders is constantly changing, making its way to school systems.

### **The Current State of Affairs**

Recently, there has been a growing interest in understanding the nature of elementary and high school learning concerning implementing inclusive classrooms worldwide (Vaz et al., 2015). Most of the countries that form the European Union, for example, support equality for students with a disability and promote inclusive education as a priority (Cyran et al., 2017). However, despite this growing interest and attention, inclusive elementary and high school educational policies have varied. American elementary and high schools are still not striving for equal access for students with special needs, and the legal ramifications for failing to address the interests of a protected class remain uncertain. Poland began implementing inclusive education in its schools in the early 1990s, but this was immediately met with the teachers' resistance. They did not feel they were prepared for the task (Cyran et al., 2017). Following international requirements, the Republic of Serbia created an inclusive education model that was implemented in 2009. It pushed inclusive education to the forefront of education reform, resulting in a mix of both success and difficulties in inclusive classrooms (Gava et al., 2018). Australia enacted the Disability Discrimination Act, which stated that it was against the law for anyone with a disability to be discriminated against based on education (Martin & Kudlacek, 2010). However, as a steadily increasing percentage of the population has been described as having a disability, the desire to support inclusive education in Australia has not risen parallel (Martin & Kudlacek, 2010).

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

### **The Benefits of Inclusive Education**

Past and current legislation aside, the inclusive classroom has been an evolving goal for education systems worldwide, whose ultimate intent is to immerse special needs students in regular classroom settings. A description of academic stakeholders' ongoing plan explains, "inclusive education seeks to place all children, including those with severe disabilities, in mainstream classrooms provided with adequate support. Children placed in special education classrooms should be an exception—they should be recommended only in those rare cases where it is demonstrated that education in regular classrooms is incapable of meeting a child's educational or social needs" (Saloviita, 2020, p. 64).

Research findings support this global motion towards more inclusive academic settings. A study by Leatherman and Niemeyer, for example, states that "potential benefits of inclusive classrooms include an increase in the students' social skills, as well as acceptance by their typically developing peers" (2005, p. 23). Students with Autism, for example, suffer from a lack of social skills and have the potential to benefit significantly from an inclusive setting that helps promote social skills. Additional findings for the social benefits of an inclusive classroom are that "children without disabilities are more aware of differences between people and display more comfort around a person with a disability" (Leatherman & Niemeyer, p.23). Typically developed children often become used to the "normality" of the students they see and learn with daily. This often blinds them to the fact that differences in people can potentially help them become better people.

In addition to its social benefits, the inclusive classroom has also been shown to have academic advantages. Research shows that "academic accomplishments of students with severe disabilities increase through interaction with their typically developing peers in an integrated

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

environment" (Alquraini & Gut, 2012, p.46). Previous research has also shown that "reading skills for students with severe disabilities in elementary schools have improved by 31.7%, and math skills improved by 23.9% when students are attending inclusive classrooms" (Alquraini & Gut, 2012, p.42). Suppose there is a consensus that inclusive classrooms are a worthy goal, but certain schools are still reticent to implement them. In that case, it becomes essential to examine the implementation agent—in other words, teachers themselves.

Two factors that affect whether a teacher is willing to work in an inclusive classroom are the teacher's professional category and the student's special educational needs. For example, a teacher's experience and tenure can play a huge role in their views towards inclusion, with newer tenured teachers being more likely, historically, to be more supportive of inclusive classrooms. Other studies cite "the educational supports offered by the schools, self-efficacy of the teachers, [and] demographic variables, including age and gender" as additional factors that come into play, stating that "female teachers are generally more positive towards inclusion than are male teachers" (Saloviita, 2020, p. 65). Class sizes also come into play in inclusive classrooms, and it is crucial to understand how class size can affect either a positive or negative outcome for students with disabilities.

The present study added to the existing body of knowledge on the inclusion of special needs students in regular classroom settings and to understand how all parties involved are affected by inclusive classrooms. School teachers are on the front line working with students. Therefore, they play an enormous role in how successful these classrooms are—from the overall classroom setting to the social dynamics developed therein—which makes understanding teachers' views on the inclusive classroom setting that much more important the focus of this paper.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aims to understand teachers' attitudes towards inclusive classrooms and the efficacy of implementing this classroom setting. I then want to know how these attitudes may potentially affect the nature of inclusive classrooms among the teachers.

The researched variables were teacher demographics and teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion, efficacy, and class sizes. These variables were selected to ensure that a broad spectrum of potential supports and barriers to inclusive classrooms were considered. Apart from students, teachers are an essential part of a classroom and play a massive role in this study as the primary source of information. I will therefore rely on this information to assist me in determining a relationship among all the stated variables.

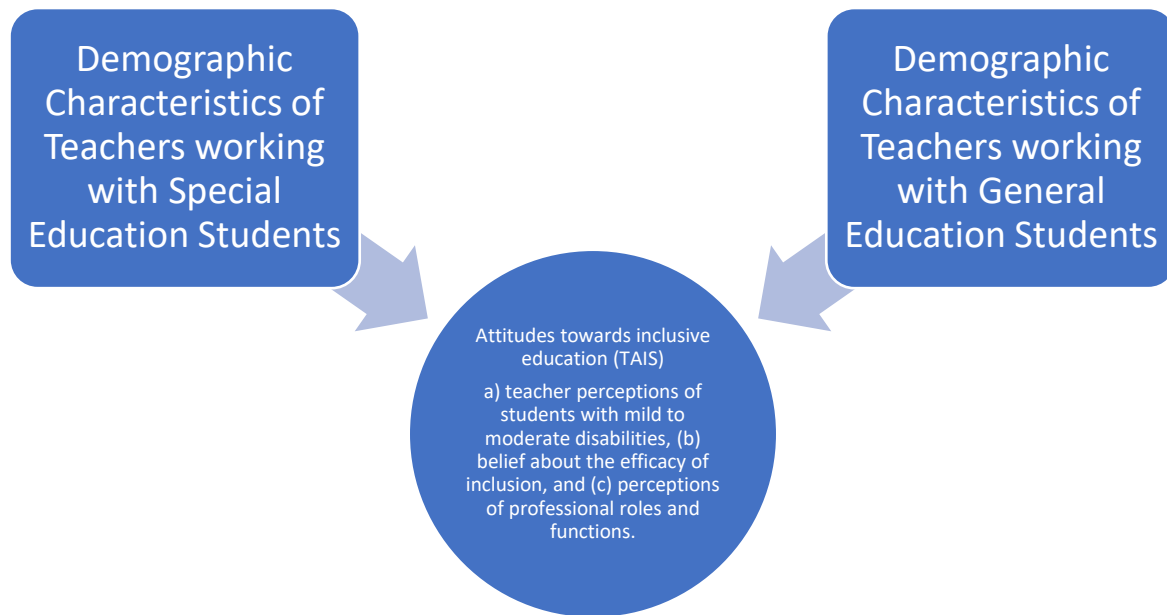
### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study explains the overall relationship between the independent variables of teachers' demographics and characteristics and the dependent variable of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and its efficacy. These variables were selected based on published research studies and the overall goal of the current study. Understanding teachers' demographics and characteristics are essential because these variables may inform their attitudes towards including students with special needs in the traditional classroom setting. Figure 1 shows the components of the conceptual framework for the present study.



## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework



Based on the conceptual framework, several research hypotheses were examined in the current research study, as follows (see also Table 1):

- Ho1: There is no difference between teachers who work with general education students versus teachers who work with special education students in their perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities.
- Ha1: There is a difference between teachers who work with general education students versus teachers who work with special education students in their perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities.
- Ho2: There is no difference between teachers who work with general education students versus teachers who work with special education students in their belief about the efficacy of inclusion for special education students.
- Ha2: There is a difference between teachers who work with general education students versus teachers who work with special education students in their belief about the efficacy of inclusion for special education students.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

- Ho3: There is no difference between teachers who work with general education students versus teachers who work with special education students in their perceptions of their professional roles and functions in the classroom setting.
- Ha3: There is a difference between teachers who work with general education students versus teachers who work with special education students in their perceptions of their professional roles and functions in the classroom setting.
- Ho4: There is no linear relationship between demographic characteristics (age, length of time working, class size) among teachers who work with general education students in their perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities.
- Ha4: There is a linear relationship between demographic characteristics (age, length of time working, class size) among teachers who work with general education students in their perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities.
- Ho5: There is no linear relationship between demographic characteristics (age, length of time working, class size) among teachers who work with general education students in their beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion for special education students.
- Ha5: There is a linear relationship between demographic characteristics (age, length of time working, class size) among teachers who work with general education students in their beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion for special education students.
- Ho6: There is no linear relationship between demographic characteristics (age, length of time working, class size) among teachers who work with general education students in their perceptions of their professional roles and functions in the classroom setting.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

- Ha6: There is a linear relationship between demographic characteristics (age, length of time working, class size) among teachers who work with general education students in their perceptions of their professional roles and functions in the classroom setting.
- Ho7: There is no linear relationship between demographic characteristics (age, length of time working, class size) among teachers who work with special education students in their perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities.
- Ha7: There is a linear relationship between demographic characteristics (age, length of time working, class size) among teachers who work with special education students in their perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities.
- Ho8: There is no linear relationship between demographic characteristics (age, length of time working, class size) among teachers who work with special education students in their beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion for special education students.
- Ha8: There is a linear relationship between demographic characteristics (age, length of time working, class size) among teachers who work with special education students in their beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion for special education students.
- Ho9: There is no linear relationship between demographic characteristics (age, length of time working, class size) among teachers who work with special education students in their perceptions of their professional roles and functions in the classroom setting.
- Ha9: There is a linear relationship between demographic characteristics (age, length of time working, class size) among teachers who work with special education students in their perceptions of their professional roles and functions in the classroom setting.

INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

**Table 1:** Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Type	H <sub>0</sub>	H <sub>a</sub>	
<b>1</b>	General Education Teachers vs. Special Education Teachers	Perception of students with disabilities	No Difference	Difference
<b>2</b>		Belief in the efficacy of inclusion	No Difference	Difference
<b>3</b>		Perception of own role and functions	No Difference	Difference
<b>4</b>	General Education Teachers' Age, Length of Time Working, and Class Size	Perception of students with disabilities	No Linear Relationship	Linear Relationship
<b>5</b>		Belief in the efficacy of inclusion	No Linear Relationship	Linear Relationship
<b>6</b>		Perception of own role and functions	No Linear Relationship	Linear Relationship
<b>7</b>	Special Education Teachers' Age, Length of Time Working, and Class Size	Perception of students with disabilities	No Linear Relationship	Linear Relationship
<b>8</b>		Belief in the efficacy of inclusion	No Linear Relationship	Linear Relationship
<b>9</b>		Perception of own role and functions	No Linear Relationship	Linear Relationship

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This section will review existing research about inclusive education, which typically examines the implementation factors: implementation methods, improper student classification, support networks and context, financial and moral cost, and severity and type of special need. Existing research on teachers' skills and training, attitudes, experience, age, and gender concerning inclusive education will also be reviewed. This overview of past studies will show that very little research has been conducted on the relationship between the teachers themselves and their attitudes towards inclusive learning, as proposed for the current study. As individuals on the front line of inclusive education, the teachers themselves must first be understood before we look at how to implement inclusive classrooms more successfully.

#### **Research Methods**

In general, the same research methods used to assess the needs of general education students must be used to determine the needs of special education students (Swain et al., 2012). Past studies in this area have used initial interviews with participants, observation of participants, and field notes as means of data collection. Some studies also included follow-up interviews with participants in determining the effectiveness of implemented measures based on research findings. Other instruments used in previous studies include the Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education (TAIS), the Teacher Sense of Efficacy in Inclusive Education Scale (TSEIES), and the Child-centeredness Scale (CSS). Each of these instruments utilizes different scales in terms of understanding teachers' views regarding inclusive classrooms.

Other investigations have used Attitude Toward Teaching Individuals with Physical Disabilities (ATIPD), which measures teachers' preservice ideas and attitudes about inclusive education (Martin & Kudlacek, 2010). Another study used evaluative priming and computers to

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

elicit immediate responses to stimuli, which facilitated inclusive research (Markova et al., 2016). Other methods employed to study inclusive education included using vignettes to control confounding variables and the Teachers' Attitudes and Expectations Scale to determine teachers' attitudes towards students with a disability versus those without (Donohue & Bornman, 2015). Still, other tools included surveys that collected data regarding the demographic information of participants or teachers' attitudes towards inclusion (Abu-Hamour & Muhaidat, 2013).

### *Factors Affecting the Implementation of Inclusive Education*

Much research has been dedicated to examining relationships related to the ones being studied here. Therefore, they merit attention as they touch on issues that sometimes overlap with the current study. While the research presented in this section has looked at the factors impacting how inclusive education is implemented successfully, it often bypasses the significant issue of teachers' perceptions and beliefs. Inclusive education considers many different factors for potential success. According to a study, "educational strategies and teacher collaboration must be included when deciding which type of inclusive classroom is best for students" (Gal et al., 2010). Research over the years has begun to shift the focus of the inclusive setting from being mainly on the child to the child's environment to understand if there is an environmental factor in a child's deficit (Gal et al., 2010). To get inclusive education off the ground, they must support parents, school professionals, researchers, and advocates for the program (Ford, 2013). Another factor influencing inclusive classrooms is understanding the "beliefs and practices of those looking for social justice" (Ford, 2013). Research shows that the student's needs with a learning disability can be met by "co-teaching, eliminating the need to pull students out of class for instruction "(Ford, 2013). Some of the needed supports to ensure that inclusive studies are successful are "include access to core general curriculum, peer support, any needed assistive

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

devices and teachers who are educated in inclusive education" (Alquraini & Gut, 2012). Another factor to consider is whether a school is willing to make changes to the curriculum to meet the needs of all its students. "Three of the most important issues to be concerned with that determines the success of inclusion are, "collaboration between professionals and those outside of the classrooms, having the support of the school administration, and preservice programs that help prepare teachers to work in an inclusive setting" (Alquraini & Gut, 2012). Another area to take into consideration are issues such as, "standardized tests being criteria for success, not having enough skilled teachers to teach inclusive studies, and current teachers not having the skills necessary to instruct an inclusive setting" (Braunsteiner & Maiano-Lapidus, 2014). One study noted an important fact in inclusive education, this being "to have a successful implementation of inclusive education, all functional variables must be taken into account, and applied where necessary for success" (Cambridge-Johnson et al., 2014). One study sought to learn what issues students may face that may cause an inclusive education to be less beneficial and more likely to be problematic for students, peers, and teachers. This area of concern is stated to be when the students have behavioral problems over the learning disabilities, as this requires much more hands-on for these students and potentially takes away from the education of the other students (Evans et al., 2021).

### ***Methods of Implementation***

Research has examined the success of inclusive education concerning how it has been implemented. For example, Odongo and Davidson (2016) looked at how Kenya began implementing inclusive education in several different steps, including initially having three different types of locations for children with disabilities to attend school. The first was just for students with disabilities who were given no contact with average students. The second was also

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

a setting for special needs students only, which provided opportunities to interact with intermediate students. The third setting was a fully inclusive classroom where special needs students attended classes with average ones. The Kenyan government discovered that by having the three types of classrooms, they were not effectively supporting the inclusive classroom concept, leading to meager attendance rates to inclusive classes (Odongo & Davidson, 2016).

Abdelhameed (2015) discussed the pilot programs Egypt created between 2004 and 2005 that would place special needs students into mainstream classrooms full time instead of splitting them up between special education classrooms and mainstream classrooms. More recently, Egypt enacted a policy known as "education for all," which provided special needs students with the option to attend either a special education classroom or a mainstream classroom. The latter, however, has yet to become 100% inclusive (Abdelhameed, 2015).

### ***Improper Student Classification***

Previous research has also investigated the biases that exist in the classification of students with special needs. For example, Markova et al. (2016) found that ethnic populations were over-represented in the special needs but under-represented in programs designed to assist such people. The researchers also found that for many years it was not just students with intellectual or physical disabilities that were put into the category of special needs; children who were immigrants were also placed into this category by different government entities. Teachers were also shown to have different expectations of students from ethnic backgrounds with learning disabilities, making standards for change more difficult (Markova et al., 2016).

### ***Support Networks and Context***

The environment in which inclusive education is to take place has also been a subject of research. Sharma and Nuttal (2016) explored how teachers working together with fellow



## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

educators and alongside the student and their parents or legal guardians could result in higher academic success rates for students with special needs. Furthermore, many parents felt that systems for inclusion would be more successful if they could provide personal input on program development (Abdelhameed, 2015). Some areas need to be addressed for successful inclusion, and some of them include "lack of knowledge and ability, and lack of behavioral teaching techniques" (Gal et al., 2010). Research has shown that the number of students with special needs being taught in inclusive classrooms has increased significantly (Ford, 2013). Teacher's around the world are beginning to utilize each other's skills and knowledge of inclusion by using the model known as "One Teach, One Assist" to get the process moving along more smoothly (Ford, 2013). According to research, the teach one, assist one model works by having one teacher who teaches the lessons. Another teacher follows behind to help students who may have difficulties (Ford, 2013). Research has shown that another form of teaching has been helpful when teaching students in inclusive classrooms, and the method is differentiated instruction. According to this article, "differential instruction requires the general education teacher and the special education teachers to work together to identify instruction methods and materials that are needed for each type of student" (Ford, 2013). Research shows that when looking to implement inclusive classrooms, it is crucial to understand that, "inclusion has shown to be more successful among the elementary level compared to secondary level" (Ford, 2013).

### ***Financial and Moral Cost***

Studies have commented on how teachers already tend to express concern about the cost of teaching children in mainstream classrooms, let alone a special needs child, who would require a great deal more resources (Abdelhameed, 2015). The costs of inclusion, from monetary

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

to moral, have been shown to cause difficulties in inclusive classroom implementation (Doulkeridou et al., 2011).

### *Degree and Type of Special Needs*

Previously, school systems did not perceive a need to differentiate between what students with special needs required and what general classrooms required. Yet, many countries outside of the United States have found that inclusive classrooms, while beneficial to some, may be more problematic for others, especially students with more severe disabilities (Martin & Kudlacek, 2010). Further studies have shown that individuals with severe to profound developmental disabilities do not show the possibilities of benefiting from inclusive classrooms and instead have been shown to benefit more from special education classrooms (Doulkeridou et al., 2011). Certain studies have also noted that parents could determine whether their child was not suited to the general education classroom setting, stating that their child's disability was too severe for such an environment (Abdelhameed, 2015).

Some research has focused on teachers' perception of students with disabilities, which aligns with the current study. Still, the relationship between this perception and teacher demographics/characteristics was not discussed, nor were general education teachers' perceptions compared to those of special education teachers. According to studies, the severity of the disability of the student plays a significant role in the attitudes of the teachers, as they believe that the more severe the disability, the more difficult it will be to work with them in the classrooms, which makes them favor seclusion as opposed to inclusion (Vaz et al., 2015). Furthermore, attitudes from peers and educators were more favorable for students with physical disabilities than for students with intellectual disabilities, varying the success rates of inclusion among classrooms (Martin & Kudlacek, 2010). Teachers also stated that they were much more

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

supportive of working with children with an intellectual or cognitive disorder than children who had social-emotional or behavioral issues. These appeared to be the most challenging to deal with and disruptive to the classroom (Markova et al., 2016).

### *Teacher Demographics, Characteristics, and Attitude*

"Inclusive studies have resulted in improved social/peer relationships, an increase in their self-esteem, improvement in post-school outcomes such as the ability to work and find employment" (Braunsteiner & Maiano-Lapidus, 2014). During one research study, some participants expressed negative thoughts towards inclusion, including: "parents stated that they were concerned about the effects of the diversity in the classroom on the children and may impact their learning" (Braunsteiner & Maiano-Lapidus, 2014). Society currently sees only one side of inclusion, and that is difficult and will not be successful. One study describes some of the negative issues that make inclusive studies more difficult and how they need to change, they are: "changing our beliefs and cultural expectations, changing how we in society label things, and learn to view others by their abilities and not their disabilities" (Braunsteiner & Maiano-Lapidus, 2014).

### *Necessary Knowledge, Skills, and Training*

It takes a particular type of person and a specific set of skills to work effectively with individuals with special needs. Many teachers have mentioned that they lack skills to the extent that they disagree with inclusive education. Therefore, an overwhelming amount of research was carried out on teachers' feelings of unpreparedness in the face of special education. Swain et al. (2012) determined that a lack of experience in working with special needs individuals has been a significant reason why teachers have not been involved in inclusive education and that teachers have expressed discouragement in working with individuals with special needs when they are

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

unsure of how to work with the population. Similarly, research carried out by Abdelhameed (2015) demonstrated how one of the biggest reasons why teachers do not want to work in inclusive classrooms is the feeling of being unprepared to work with the population, and more particularly, feeling that they did not have the skills required to teach special education students in a general education setting.

Additionally, Melekoglu (2013) explained how many teachers who did not have experience working with disabilities in the classroom stated they were not comfortable during the research. They did not feel qualified to work with special needs students. Many teachers interviewed by Gava et al. (2018) stated that they were not confident when it came to teaching individuals with special needs and were unsure of teaching methods. The same study highlighted the frustration and uncertainty experienced by teachers, who claimed that these feelings harmed students instead of helping them and that this was due to a lack of proper training. Markova et al. (2016) found that teachers showed reluctance when working in inclusive classroom settings when they had not received the appropriate training to work with children with disabilities, whether these were physical or intellectual. The same group of researchers revealed that teachers wish to possess knowledge about special needs to understand what they need to be successful in the classroom and understand how to work with students' behavioral and emotional needs. Finally, and in a similar vein, Vaz et al. (2015) explained how teachers require education in the area of special needs inclusion, as not all of them receive training on how to work with special needs before they begin in the classroom. Being untrained in inclusion was uncomfortable for the teacher and made them feel like they were doing the students a disservice by not being trained to teach them in the way they required.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Working with the special need's population requires educators to possess specific knowledge and understand what is needed for teachers to be the most successful when working with this population (Melekoglu, 2013). Therefore, a related issue currently being researched is how to increase the knowledge of educators working with students with special needs. Teachers themselves determined that increasing their ability to work with special needs students could be improved if offered courses in special education and inclusive education (Sharma & Nuttal, 2016). Research also has shown that a Service-Learning program is a positive way to prepare teachers who are not familiar with working with the special need's population to learn the skills needed to make the transition more effective (Melekoglu, 2013). Furthermore, Ahsan and Sharma (2018) explained how today, many countries require their elementary and high school teachers to take additional classes to offer better insight into working with students with special learning or educational needs.

Despite this extensive research on teachers' awareness of unpreparedness or inadequacy in educating special needs students, there remains a gap where the link between such feelings and attitudes and teachers' backgrounds should exist.

### ***Teachers' Attitudes***

Multiple studies have found that a positive attitude is linked to the successful implementation of integrated classrooms. For example, Martin and Kudlacek (2010) found that teachers' attitudes are the most significant determinant of whether inclusive classrooms will be successful. This was supported by a study by Abu-Hamour and Muhaidat (2013), which found that the attitudes that educators have towards their work play a role in the success or failure of an inclusive classroom, and by another study which showed that positive attitudes begin the continuous pattern of behavior changes that can help make an individual with a disability more

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

successful (Doukeridou et al., 2011). Finally, the teachers' attitudes regarding inclusive education determine how successful the inclusive settings will be, as the more positive their attitudes, the more likely the inclusive settings are to be successful. The teachers' general understanding of special needs plays a role in successfully integrating the special need's students (Markova et al., 2016).

Interestingly, attitude appears to be infectious. Research has shown that when teachers speak of inclusive studies in a favorable or positive light, the chances of their peers feeling the same way is more likely (Swain et al., 2012). However, none of these studies has examined the link between attitude (perceptions, beliefs) and teacher characteristics (demographic, experience, and class size). Suppose a positive attitude has been proven to lead to successful implementation. In that case, it is essential to examine what leads to a positive attitude so that conditions for inclusive education can be created.

Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive learning make the reality of change the most difficult. The teachers must create curriculums and find innovative ways to help children across the board learn and be successful, regardless of disability (Gal et al., 2010). Research shows that "many teachers' characteristics potentially affect their attitudes towards inclusion, as well as barriers such as stereotypes and labeling" (Gal et al., 2010). Research has shown that "attitudes are essential in the success of educating students with disabilities in regular classroom settings, and preservice training should be geared towards enhancing the teacher's attitude towards inclusion" (Cambridge-Johnson et al., 2014). Teacher attitudes vary all over the country, and as of now, there is no definitive answer for how particular teachers or regions will believe about inclusive education. One study state that "research completed to date on teacher's attitudes has stated that the majority of the teachers had a moderate level of acceptance towards inclusion, and

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

out of these teachers the ones with master's degrees had a more positive attitude towards inclusion, while those with a bachelor's degree had fewer positive attitudes" (Cambridge-Johnson et al., 2014). Current studies mention that one of the barriers to implementation of inclusive education is the lack of teacher understanding of what they are being asked to do, and this is causing a communication breakdown between governing bodies who want inclusive education and teachers who are unsure (Cambridge-Johnson et al., 2014).

### *Teachers' Age and Gender*

Only one study by Gava et al. (2018) found that examined whether gender made a difference in whether an instructor was for or against inclusion. The authors determined that there was no significant difference between the genders. Further research is needed in this area to determine the accuracy of these results. Similarly, only one study by Vaz et al. (2015) interviewed teachers to assess whether their feelings/attitudes towards inclusive classrooms varied depending on age. The study revealed that teachers in the area would learn more about special education to effectively work with the children in the area that is attempting change.

In contrast, only one study in this area is not enough to generalize the results to all teachers. Thus, more research is needed to investigate the trends of this phenomenon. The research was conducted to determine if the teacher's age made a difference in how willing they were to use inclusive classrooms. According to this study, "older teachers were found to have more of a negative attitude towards inclusive education" (Gal et al., 2010).

### *Teachers' Experience*

The variable of teacher experience concerning attitude in the current study is the one for which the most research has been carried out. For example, Donohue and Bornman (2015) showed that when teachers have more experience working with special needs students, they may

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

harbor more positive attitudes about inclusive education. Sharma and Nuttal (2016) found that the attitudes between preservice teachers and in-service teachers differed. Preservice teachers felt more positive about inclusive classrooms since they had just finished school and had more current information, while in-service teachers had to rely on previous knowledge. Conversely, Ahsan and Sharma (2018) later concluded that preservice teachers were more apprehensive than experienced teachers about working with individuals with special needs, making it difficult to progress.

Other studies have shown that teachers who teach in primary schools are more likely to support and have positive attitudes towards inclusive classrooms. In contrast, teachers who teach in secondary or higher schools are less supportive of inclusion as they feel that they are not prepared to work with this population (Markova et al., 2016).

In terms of teachers' educational experience, studies have reported that teachers who have completed at least graduate-level education (i.e., master's level and higher) were more successful working with individuals with learning disabilities (Swain et al., 2012).

### *Class Size*

Only Swain et al. (2012) looked at how class size affects teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. The study showed that as the number of students placed into inclusive classrooms increased, the more difficulty the teachers had in supporting the student placement. They felt unprepared to teach this level of students. According to research, larger classrooms make it more difficult for teachers to observe when a student requires additional assistance, and many teachers interviewed said they were in favor of the smaller inclusive classrooms due to them being able to work more closely with their students" (Sreckovic et al., 2018). Another study mentioned a more extensive classroom as a barrier to effective learning in an inclusive



## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

classroom. They do not feel they can provide the necessary learning experience when too many students are in the classroom (Cambridge-Johnson et al., 2014).

### ***General Education Versus Special Education Teachers***

Like the proposed research, some studies have looked at differences in teachers' attitudes of general education settings and those in special education settings towards inclusivity.

Abdelhameed (2015), for example, determined that teachers of both special education classrooms and mainstream classrooms admitted to having negative feelings regarding inclusive education, as many felt they did not have the tools to be successful in teaching students with special needs.

On the other hand, Saloviita (2020) showed that teachers who typically work in special education were more likely to have positive attitudes towards inclusive education over the average mainstream classroom teacher. Like Saloviita (2020) found that teachers who had the experience of working with special needs students had more confidence in inclusive classrooms, as they had seen them work first-hand. The proposed research will add more information regarding the differences between general education teachers and special education teachers regarding how they each feel about inclusive education. An area of inclusive classrooms that has also been studied involved students with special needs in physical limitations. An area of concern is with students who have other special needs, such as using brail or sign language, as these forms of communication are not taught in the standard classroom setting (Gal et al., 2010). Another area of concern is children with emotional disabilities, as they can potentially cause a disruption in the classroom for both the teachers and the students. Some of these children demonstrate challenging behaviors that cause a distance from the teachers and students, making the learning environment potentially less successful (Gal et al., 2010). "Over the past 20 years,

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

students with learning disabilities have made up the largest group in general education settings (Gal et al., 2010).

A study was reviewed that mentioned successes in the area of inclusive studies in schools with the results as follows: "Nearly a decade after the implementation of inclusive studies, students with different types of disabilities spent more than 79% of their school day in a regular education classroom" (Alquraini & Gut, 2012). The history of inclusive studies has focused greatly on the idea that "students with disabilities should be able to receive their education in the least restrictive manner, which includes allowing them to learn and interact with their peers (Alquraini & Gut, 2012).

According to studies, "inclusion and mainstreaming both searches for ways to improve the civil rights for those with disabilities, improving education as a whole" (Alquraini & Gut, 2012). Several research studies showed a consensus of how successful inclusion has been, results showing, "when compared to a special education classroom, a student who is learning in an inclusive classroom setting receives higher grades than they previously did in the special education classroom" (Alquraini & Gut, 2012). Studies have reported that "students with disabilities, as well as severe disabilities, have shown improvement in grades and overcoming social barriers when attending inclusive classrooms" (Alquraini & Gut, 2012).

### Chapter 3: Methodology

#### Participants

A survey was conducted of 51 teachers working in Texas. Twenty-two of these participants provided instruction in a special education classroom, and 29 taught in a general classroom setting. The teachers included came from a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds and had varying levels of experience. All surveys were conducted after obtaining approval from school superintendents along with teachers' written informed consent. Superintendent approval was solicited via an email that detailed the study, its purpose, and the reason for needing teacher cooperation. Contact remained open with the superintendents should they have had any questions or concerns about the study. If at any time, the superintendent or teachers wished to discontinue the study, they were encouraged to notify the research team.

The sample size used for this study met similar criteria from research about special needs inclusion, which ranged from 38 samples to 79 samples; many of them included representatives from different cultural backgrounds. A mixed methods research design was the most appropriate for the study. The data collected was descriptive as it was meant to provide insight into teachers' ideas and reasons for program implementation.

The inclusion criteria for participation in the study included teachers who worked in schools that had special education classrooms as an available setting, teachers from the age of 23 to 68, and who have had interaction with students with special educational needs, as well as those who have not worked with special needs students. Selection criteria also consisted of both male and female teachers who possessed at minimum a bachelor's degree. Exclusion criteria included teachers with children with special needs, as this was initially believed to nullify their ideas and feelings about inclusion potentially.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

### **Measure**

The tool used in the study was the Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scale (TATIS), along with short answer questions about teacher demographics and detailing the challenges of teaching special education students in a classroom setting.

The TATIS focused on three main areas: the teacher's attitudes towards special needs student inclusion in the classroom setting, the teacher's beliefs about their professional roles and responsibilities, and beliefs about how effective inclusion has been for their classroom setting. The subsequent survey included short answer questions that sought to understand the teacher's views about the strengths and limitations of the current local educational systems or policies that were in place for special needs students. All the survey questions elicited the participants' honest feelings about inclusive education and required them to reflect on personal feelings and experiences. The anonymity of the research was meant to ensure that the participants felt they could be honest without concern for repercussion. The survey also included questions on demographic characteristics and teaching experience for the target sample of teachers.

### **Procedure**

As stated earlier, the participants for this study were gathered by obtaining approval from superintendents of the schools where the teachers were currently employed. Upon approval, the teachers were contacted to request their participation in the study. The teachers who agreed to participate in the study were sent a written informed consent form that described the nature of the study, the research tools involved, and how their anonymity would be maintained. Participants were asked to write down their personal information, which included age, gender, nationality, and education level completed, even though this was confidential. The information provided was used to separate data into categories. The participants were then provided with a weblink that

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

directed them to a secure online survey platform that included the informed consent document, the TATIS questions, several short answer questions asking about the participant's experiences, and the demographic questions. The site also provided information on how the forms were completed and how to return them upon completion. Instructions about expectations in the study were delivered to the participants, and contact information for the researchers. Following the explanation of the study, the participants had the opportunity to express any questions or concerns they may have had. All data was kept in the secure online survey platform.

All the participants were provided with the same information. Upon completing the survey, collected personal information was stored in a secure online location to protect their identity. This location consisted of a password-protected online website and hard drive that only the researchers could access. No one besides the researcher and at least one research assistant required for the inter-rater reliability rating process had access to the data to avoid data nullification and ensure participant confidentiality and anonymity. Upon receipt of the completed surveys, they were then formatted to omit any identifying information about the participants.

### **Analysis**

Surveys were separated into responses from teachers who worked in special needs classrooms and those who worked in general classrooms. The primary researcher used the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) program to analyze the quantitative data. The researcher used a Multi-Variate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to examine the differences between teachers of special education and teachers of general education upon the dependent variables of (a) teacher perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities, (b) belief about the efficacy of inclusion, and (c) perceptions of professional roles and functions. There will also be a series of Multiple Regression analyses between the demographic characteristics

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

(age, the total number of students the teacher currently teaches in a school year, and length of time working with special needs students) of teachers working with special education students for the dependent variables of (a) teacher perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities, (b) belief about the efficacy of inclusion, and (c) perceptions of professional roles and functions. Finally, there was a series of Multiple Regression analyses between the demographic characteristics (age, the total students the teacher currently teaches in a school year, and length of time working with special needs students) among teachers working with general education students for the dependent variables of (a) teacher perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities, (b) belief about the efficacy of inclusion, and (c) perceptions of professional roles and functions.

To analyze the short answer responses, the researcher sought to recruit at least one other individual to help determine inter-rater reliability to evaluate qualitative coding and themes gathered. The overall goal for the inter-rater reliability score was to be no less than 85% following the short answer qualitative data review. Any interrater scores below 85% were not valid and would be re-evaluated or re-coded by the primary researcher for the short answer qualitative data.

### **Chapter 4: Findings**

This chapter begins by briefly reviewing the method used to collect the data to analyze the hypotheses. Next, it proceeds with the analysis of the TATIS questionnaire, followed by a visual depiction of the TATIS results. Afterward, a visual examination of the comparison of the class size and the age of the teachers follows. The descriptive statistics present frequencies, means, and standard deviations of the data, and the tests between subjects are presented from the resulting data. Furthermore, a case processing summary is presented to determine any data not included in the study. The additional questions and demographic questions are analyzed to include the data from the TATIS. Then, each research question is restated and answered based upon the results of the analyses of data.

Finally, the results of the data analyses are summarized. The TATIS and additional demographic questionnaire were distributed to the participants via the provided email. The superintendents and their assistants distributed an email invitation to faculty members that invited them to participate in the survey. Data from the questionnaires were compiled from the participants and entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to sort the data and make it easier to analyze. Descriptive statistics were calculated to define the participants who participated in this research. Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), means and standard deviations were calculated for (a) age, (b) number of years of teaching experience, and (c) number of years of teaching experience in inclusive classrooms and general education classrooms

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

**Table 2: TATIS**

	Agree VS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree VS
Question #1	17	17	8	0	5	3	1
Question #2	13	21	8	0	5	3	1
Question #3	13	20	11	1	5	0	2
Question #4	11	20	11	0	6	2	1
Question #5	9	21	12	0	5	3	1
Question #6	10	17	13	2	4	4	1
Question #7	0	4	5	1	24	12	5
Question #8	0	7	2	0	23	14	5
Question #9	0	7	2	0	22	13	7
Question #10	0	7	2	0	21	14	7
Question #11	12	25	4	4	4	2	0
Question #12	15	22	5	3	5	1	0
Question #13	17	19	6	1	4	4	0
Question #14	20	16	6	2	3	4	0

The TATIS includes the following questions:

- 1) All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be fully educated in regular classrooms with non-handicapped peers possible.

**Analysis:** The results of this question revealed that 82% of the teachers agreed that students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated with non-handicapped peers whenever possible.

- 2) It is seldom necessary to remove students with mild to moderate disabilities from regular classrooms to meet their educational needs.

**Analysis:** The results of this question revealed that 82% of the teachers agreed that it is seldom necessary to remove students with mild to moderate disabilities from regular classrooms to meet their educational needs.

- 3) Most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated.



## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

**Analysis:** The results of this question revealed that 86% of the teachers agreed that classrooms that are exclusively special education should be eliminated.

- 4) Most or all regular classrooms can be modified to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities.

**Analysis:** The results of this question revealed that 82% of the teachers agreed that most or all regular classrooms could be modified to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities.

- 5) Students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms.

**Analysis:** The results of this question revealed that 82% of the teachers agreed that students with mild to moderate disabilities could be better educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms.

- 6) Inclusion is a more effective model for educating students with mild to moderate disabilities because it reduces transition time (i.e., the time required to move from one setting to another).

**Analysis:** The results of this question revealed that 78% of the teachers agreed that inclusion is the most effective model for educating students with mild to moderate disabilities.

- 7) Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classrooms with non-disabled students because they will require too much of the teacher's time.

**Analysis:** The results of this question revealed that 80% of the teachers disagreed with the idea that teaching students with disabilities in a regular classroom would require too much of the teachers' time.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

- 8) I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the academic skills necessary for success.

**Analysis:** The results of this question revealed that 86% of the teachers disagreed about having doubts about the effectiveness of inclusive classrooms.

- 9) I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the social skills necessary for success.

**Analysis:** The results of this question revealed that 82% of the teachers disagreed with the statement that students with disabilities lacked the social skills necessary for success.

- 10) I find that general education teachers often fail with students with mild/moderate disabilities, even when they try their best.

**Analysis:** This question revealed that 82% of the teachers disagreed that general education teachers fail with students with disabilities.

- 11) I would welcome the opportunity to team-teach as a model for meeting the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.

**Analysis:** The results of this question revealed that 80% of the teachers agreed that they would welcome the opportunity to team-teach.

- 12) All students benefit from team teaching, which is the pairing of a general and special education teacher in the same classroom.

**Analysis:** The results of this question revealed that 82% of the teachers agreed that all students could benefit from team teaching.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

13) The responsibility for educating students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms should be shared between general and special education teachers.

***Analysis:*** The results of this question revealed that 82% of the teachers agreed that the responsibility of teaching students with disabilities should be shared between general and special education teachers.

14) I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teacher model (i.e., regular collaborative meetings between special and general education teachers to share ideas, methods, and materials) as a means of addressing the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.

***Analysis:*** The results of this question revealed that 82% of the teachers agreed that they would welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teacher model.

# INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

**Figure 2: TATIS Questionnaire**

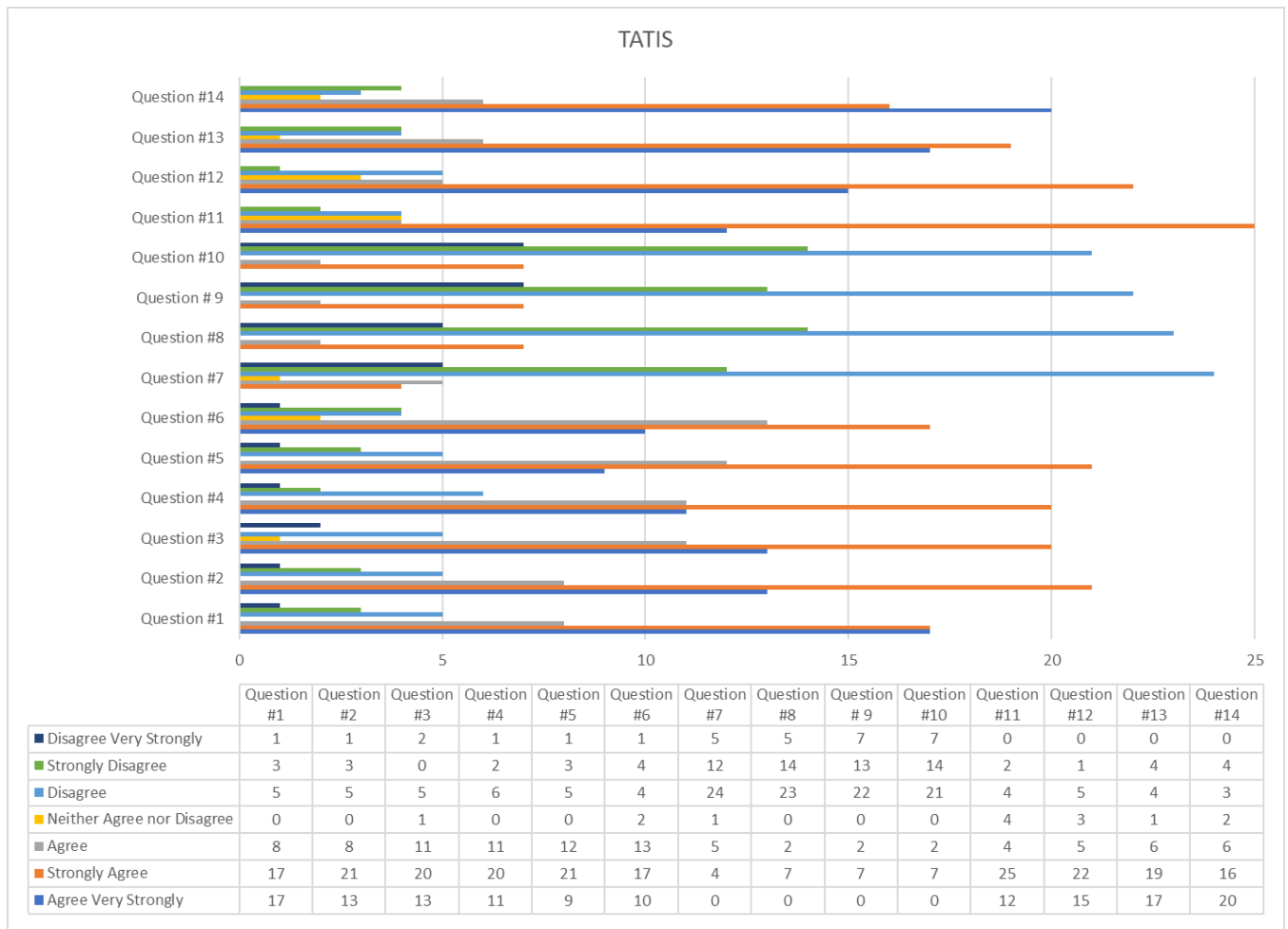
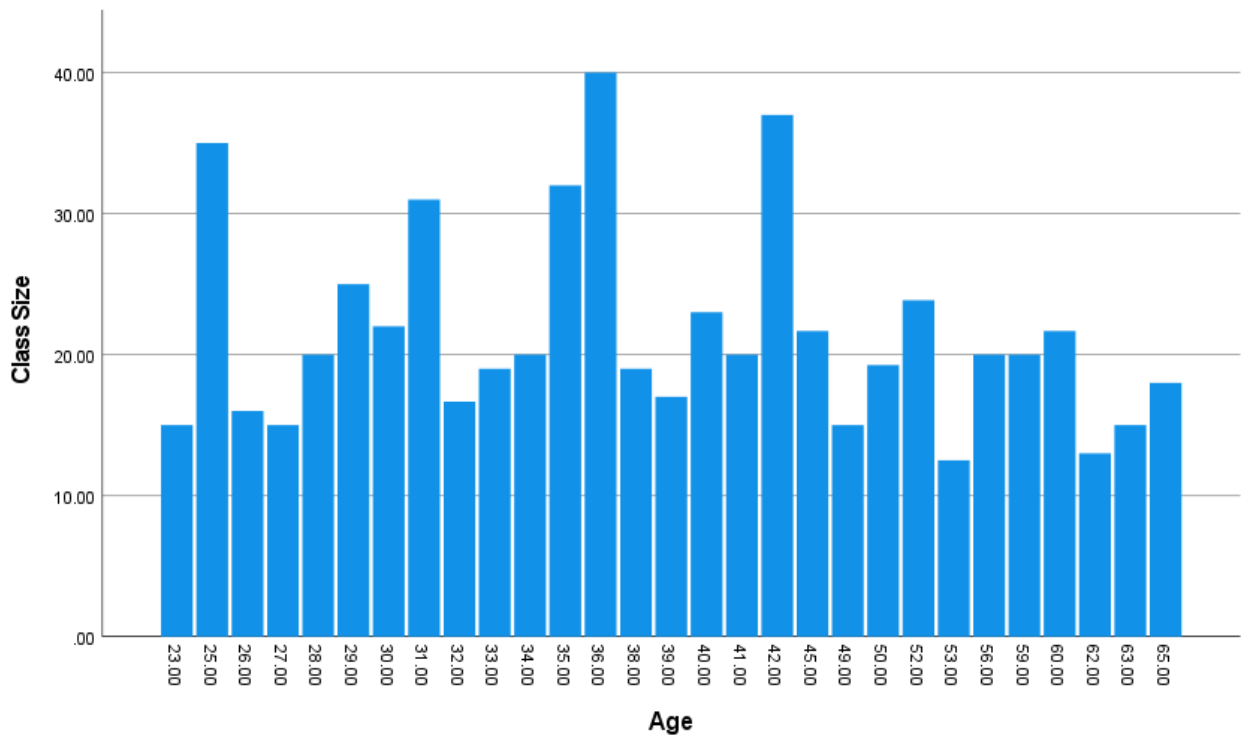


Figure 2 provides a visual display of the results of the TATIS. Fifty-one teachers from both general education and special education completed the scale with the delivered results. The responses of the teachers from both special and general education showed more support toward inclusive studies than opposition. Teachers from both general education backgrounds and special education backgrounds answered more in favor of inclusive classrooms. The integration of tactics to make the training for inclusive classrooms more available to tenured and new teachers was also scored higher among all participants.

**Figure 3:** Class size by the age of teacher



One of the addressed areas was whether the teacher's age determined the size of the classes. The results decided that the main difference was noticed with teachers who were 45 years old and above. There was no further information provided to determine the rationale for this. The information did not provide the reason behind age differences and the sizes of the classes they taught. It is believed that the teachers who have more experience, usually in their 30s, were more willing to teach larger classes.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

**Table 3:** ANOVA of Experience of Teachers in Comparison to the Classroom Type

Descriptives								
Type of Classroom	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
10.00	2	1.5000	.70711	.50000	-4.8531	7.8531	1.00	2.00
12.00	3	1.6667	.57735	.33333	.2324	3.1009	1.00	2.00
13.00	2	2.0000	.00000	.00000	2.0000	2.0000	2.00	2.00
15.00	7	1.7143	.48795	.18443	1.2630	2.1656	1.00	2.00
16.00	2	1.0000	.00000	.00000	1.0000	1.0000	1.00	1.00
17.00	2	1.5000	.70711	.50000	-4.8531	7.8531	1.00	2.00
19.00	4	1.5000	.57735	.28868	.5813	2.4187	1.00	2.00
20.00	12	1.5833	.51493	.14865	1.2562	1.9105	1.00	2.00
22.00	1	1.0000	.	.	.	.	1.00	1.00
25.00	4	1.5000	.57735	.28868	.5813	2.4187	1.00	2.00
26.00	2	2.0000	.00000	.00000	2.0000	2.0000	2.00	2.00
30.00	1	2.0000	.	.	.	.	2.00	2.00
31.00	3	1.3333	.57735	.33333	-.1009	2.7676	1.00	2.00
32.00	1	1.0000	.	.	.	.	1.00	1.00
35.00	3	1.6667	.57735	.33333	.2324	3.1009	1.00	2.00
37.00	1	2.0000	.	.	.	.	2.00	2.00
40.00	1	1.0000	.	.	.	.	1.00	1.00
Total	51	1.5686	.50020	.07004	1.4279	1.7093	1.00	2.00

The data from the above results determined that there was a significance between the experience that the teacher had and whether they taught special education or general education. These results had little significance in the overall findings until compared to the results of the rest of the study, as the results varied by the experience of each teacher. The numbers of standard deviation ranged from .0 to .7, which means that the data does not lie apart from any of the others, and the results are close to the mean.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

**Table 4:** Between groups analysis

*ANOVA*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups	.295	1	.295	1.173	.284
	Within Groups	12.332	49	.252		
	Total	12.627	50			
Age	Between Groups	397.861	1	397.861	2.915	.094
	Within Groups	6688.884	49	136.508		
	Total	7086.745	50			

An ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a statistical significance between the gender of the participant and type of classroom taught, and the age of the participant and the type of classroom taught. The results determined that with a  $p < .05$  being statistically significant, at .284, the relationship between the gender of the teacher and whether they taught general education students or special education students did not have a statistical significance. The results determined that with a  $p < .05$  being statistically significant, at .094, the relationship between the age of the teacher and whether they taught general education students or special education students did not have a statistical significance. The overall results of this ANOVA determined that there was no statistical significance between the age and gender of the teacher in relation to the type of classroom they taught.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

**Table 5:** T-Test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Gender	1.5490	51	.50254	.07037
	Age	43.8431	51	11.90525	1.66707
Pair 2	Experience	13.1176	51	8.62009	1.20705
	Type of classroom	1.5686	51	.50020	.07004
Pair 3	Degree	3.7255	51	1.72138	.24104
	Family with special needs	1.6275	51	.48829	.06837

A Paired Samples T-Test was conducted to determine if there was a statistical significance between the pairs of gender/age, experience/type of classroom, and degree of study/family member with special needs. The first pair tested was gender and age. Gender had a mean value of 1.5, while age had a mean value of 43.8. These results determined there was not statistical significance between age and gender. The next pair tested was experience and type of classroom. Experience had a mean value of 13.1, while type of classroom had a mean value of 1.5. These results determined there was a statistical significance between experience and type of classroom. The final pair tested was the degree of study and if the teacher had a family member with special needs. Degree of study had a mean value of 3.7 while having a family member with special needs had a mean value of 1.6. These results determined there was not a statistical significance between degree of study and having a family member with special needs.

**Table 6:** Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Gender and age	51	-.173	.226
Pair 2	Experience and type of classroom	51	.272	.054
Pair 3	Degree and family with special needs	51	.114	.426



## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

The paired samples correlations determined that between all three pairs that were compared, the only pair with statistical significance was the teacher's experience and the type of classroom they taught in, with a  $p = .05$ .

**Table 7:** Paired Samples Effect Sizes

Pair			Standardizer <sup>a</sup>	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
1	Gender and age	Cohen's d	12.00216	-3.524	-4.262	-2.780
		Hedges' correction	12.09312	-3.497	-4.230	-2.759
2	Experience and type of classroom	Cohen's d	8.49780	1.359	.973	1.737
		Hedges' correction	8.56220	1.349	.966	1.724
3	Degree and family with special needs	Cohen's d	1.73499	1.209	.843	1.568
		Hedges' correction	1.74814	1.200	.837	1.556

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference.

Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference, plus a correction factor.

The paired samples effect sizes test was completed to determine the effect sizes of the groups. The only group from the three samples that had a statistical significance in the study was pair 2; the teacher's experience and the type of classroom they taught in.

# INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

**Table 8:** Tests of between-subjects effects

<b>Tests of Between-Subjects Effects</b>					
Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Corrected Model	Degree	117.740 <sup>a</sup>	36	3.271	1.505
	Experience	3401.711 <sup>b</sup>	36	94.492	4.219
	Type of Classroom	9.760 <sup>c</sup>	36	.271	1.380
	Class Size	2274.412 <sup>d</sup>	36	63.178	1.698
	Family w/special needs	7.422 <sup>e</sup>	36	.206	.641
Intercept	Degree	566.293	1	566.293	260.650
	Experience	6211.401	1	6211.401	277.309
	Type of Classroom	93.695	1	93.695	476.994
	Class Size	18294.681	1	18294.681	491.604
	Family w/special needs	111.510	1	111.510	346.919
Gender	Degree	4.631	1	4.631	2.132
	Experience	68.121	1	68.121	3.041
	Type of Classroom	.296	1	.296	1.506
	Class Size	4.530	1	4.530	.122
	Family w/special needs	.181	1	.181	.564
Age	Degree	68.793	28	2.457	1.131
	Experience	2634.320	28	94.083	4.200
	Type of Classroom	6.977	28	.249	1.269
	Class Size	1532.016	28	54.715	1.470
	Family w/special needs	5.986	28	.214	.665
Gender * Age	Degree	41.965	7	5.995	2.759
	Experience	80.790	7	11.541	.515
	Type of Classroom	2.263	7	.323	1.646
	Class Size	647.283	7	92.469	2.485
	Family w/special needs	1.062	7	.152	.472
Error	Degree	30.417	14	2.173	
	Experience	313.583	14	22.399	
	Type of Classroom	2.750	14	.196	
	Class Size	521.000	14	37.214	
	Family w/special needs	4.500	14	.321	
Total	Degree	856.000	51		
	Experience	12491.000	51		
	Type of Classroom	138.000	51		
	Class Size	25666.000	51		
	Family w/special needs	147.000	51		

The tests of between-subjects were completed to present an overall depiction of the ANOVA results. Comparisons were made with the teachers' gender and ages to determine if

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

there was a significance between the two variables and the degree of study, experience in teaching, type of classroom taught, and having a family member with special needs. The data showed that there was a significance among the data tested for the experience of the teacher and the type of classroom they taught in, with a  $p = .05$ .

**Table 9:** Case processing summary

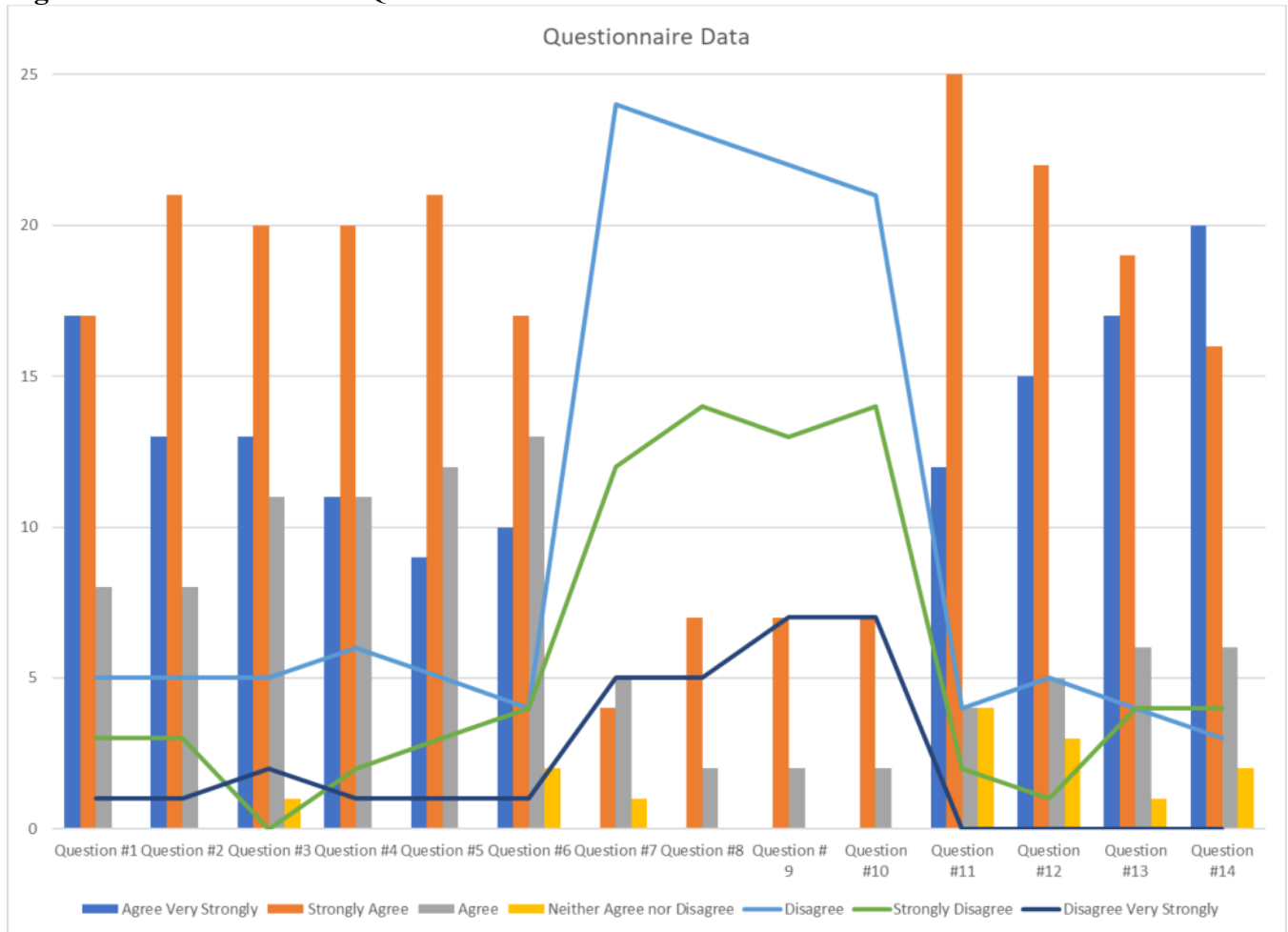
	Case Processing Summary					
	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Degree * Gender	51	100.0%	0	0.0%	51	100.0%
Experience * Gender	51	100.0%	0	0.0%	51	100.0%
Type of Classroom * Gender	51	100.0%	0	0.0%	51	100.0%
Class Size * Gender	51	100.0%	0	0.0%	51	100.0%
Family w/special needs * Gender	51	100.0%	0	0.0%	51	100.0%
Degree * Age	51	100.0%	0	0.0%	51	100.0%
Experience * Age	51	100.0%	0	0.0%	51	100.0%
Type of Classroom * Age	51	100.0%	0	0.0%	51	100.0%
Class Size * Age	51	100.0%	0	0.0%	51	100.0%
Family w/special needs * Age	51	100.0%	0	0.0%	51	100.0%

An analysis was completed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The information from the surveys was taken and entered into the SPSS system to determine the potential significance. The data came from the 51 participants of the study, and the ANOVA was completed to determine if the data were significant. Furthermore, an analysis was conducted by comparing the varying factors of degree/age, experience/age, type of classroom/age, class size/age, and family with special needs/age. The SPSS results determined that there was a  $p > .05$

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

of .363, resulting in no statistical significance. The exact comparisons were made with the gender of the teachers, resulting in similar outcomes.

**Figure 4:** Additional TATIS Questionnaire Data



The above graph depicts the data from the TATIS. The chart displays the positive teacher responses in the vertical data and the negative teacher responses with the lines. The responses that resulted in the data depicted with the lines were from the negative questions teachers disagreed with. The overall results from the TATIS are that the teachers welcome the idea of

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

inclusive education as long as it involves the teachers having the information needed to teach the inclusive classrooms.

**Table 10:** Demographic Questionnaire

Gender	Male- 24
	Female- 27
Age	(23-28)- 5 (29-34)- 10 (35-40)- 7 (41-46)- 6 (47-52)- 12 (53-58)- 3 (59-65)- 8
Years working with special needs students	(1-6)- 13 (7-12)- 8 (13-18)- 5 (19-24)- 15 (25-30)- 9 (31-36)- 1 (37-42)- 0
Population worked with most, general education/special education	General Education- 29 Special Education- 22
Do you have any family members with special needs?	Yes- 29 No- 22

Table 10 provides the information of the participants for the study, and it included the ages, gender, years working with special needs students, the population most worked with, and whether the participant has a family member with special needs. As observed, the data for the

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

type of population worked with and whether they had a family member with special needs were close together in number.

The following two additional questions were part of the demographic questionnaire to elicit the participants' personal opinions regarding the current school system's strengths and challenges and the policies in place that support special needs students.

**Table 11:** Demographic Questionnaire (cont.)

---

1) Elaborate on and explain the strengths of the current local educational system and policies in supporting special needs students.
2) Elaborate on and explain the challenges of the current local educational system and policies in supporting special needs students.

---

- 1) The results of question number one resulted in participants stating that they have noticed during their tenure that the educational system and policies have the potential for improvement and can create better policies for the educational system if provided with the right resources. Additionally, the participants stated that even with the educational system's baby steps in inclusive education, small steps are better than not doing anything.
- 2) The results of question number two resulted in participants stating that they have noticed during their tenure that the educational system is not as advanced as other areas in the world and are not as willing to enact changes in the system. They found that some of the challenges are getting everyone on the same page to create positive change and learning how to start the process of change.

### **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This study aimed to understand teachers' attitudes towards inclusive classrooms and the efficacy of implementing this type of classroom setting. I then wanted to know how these attitudes may potentially affect the nature of inclusive classrooms among the teachers. Based on the conceptual framework, several research hypotheses were examined in the current research study.

#### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The study utilized the TATIS and an additional questionnaire to elicit information about the participants' demographic information. While much of the information obtained from the questionnaire was demographic related, there were further questions to determine the participants' feelings towards current strengths and challenges in the local educational systems regarding the policies supporting special needs students. The different tools were utilized together to gather more productive information for the study.

The TATIS, comprised of 14 questions related to inclusive classrooms, was provided to the participants to understand each person's beliefs/feelings about issues involved with inclusive classrooms. There was a total of 51 scales completed by the participants. Once completed, they were separated into male and female participants. The number of males who participated is 24, and 27 females, ranging from ages 23-65. The overall goal with the TATIS was to determine how the participants felt about inclusive classrooms, including how it impacts both the teachers and the students. Another point of interest was determining if teachers who work in general education classrooms believe that they have similar professional roles to those who work in special education classrooms. Upon reviewing the documents, the results showed that questions 1-6 and 11-14 elicited more results of strongly agree from the participants. These questions

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

asked the participants if they agreed with inclusive classrooms and if they believed that the students with special needs had a better chance at success academically by being placed in an inclusive classroom. Questions 7-10 were geared more towards a negative view of inclusive classrooms and portrayed an overall refusal to participate in any activities that may improve student success. These questions also included asking the participant if they believed that special needs students were destined to fail regardless of their assistance. The purpose of the TATIS was to learn the perceptions of the participants regarding inclusive classrooms. The analysis of the TATIS documents concluded that teachers who worked with special education were more in favor of working with inclusive classrooms and believed that was the best environment to foster the students' learning. Teachers who worked with general education students were split in the inclusive classroom topic, as 5% of the general education teachers believed that inclusive classrooms would not foster the students learning; they believed that it might hinder the students' ability to learn and succeed. Results of the TATIS determined that there was not a linear relationship between the demographic characteristics of age, length of time working, and class size among teachers who work with general education students in their perceptions of students with disabilities. It was determined that the linear relationship was with the teachers who work with special education students, as the demographic characteristics showed to positively correlate with teachers who taught special education and demographic areas of age, length of time working, and class size. Results showed that teachers, both those for special education and general education, believed that the demographic characteristics influenced their beliefs about the efficacy of inclusive classrooms. Results also determined a linear relationship between special education teachers and the demographic areas of age, length of time working, and class size in terms of their beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion for special education students.



## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

The additional questionnaire was comprised of 9 questions, seven closed-ended and two open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were meant to elicit demographic information to determine where any potential correlations were represented. Also, open-ended questions included a way for the participant to include any additional relevant information from any previous questions from the survey. A total of 51 participants completed the additional questionnaire. These questionnaires were provided simultaneously with the TATIS, allowing the participants to complete them together. The participants were comprised of 24 males and 27 females: all provided with the same questionnaires. The questions on this questionnaire are designed to elicit personal information from the participant and provide the researcher a basis of personal attributes and how they can contribute to the TATIS results.

One of the questions asked was if the teacher worked in general education or special education, and the results are that 22 of the teachers work in special education. In contrast, the remaining 29 teachers work in general education. This question provided the researcher an understanding of the type of skill set the participants had, whether inclusive classrooms or special education classrooms. Another question used to determine the teacher attitudes towards inclusive classrooms was to learn their degree of study, therefore understanding whether the teacher has experience working with special education students.

Previous research has determined that having experience working with special education students has led to more positive input from participants regarding inclusive classrooms. Those without the experience are showing not to be as willing to support inclusive classrooms. The experience was determined to positively correlate with the benefits of inclusive classrooms, as the more experience the teacher had working with special needs students, the more benefits were noted. Overall, the data determined that the teachers who worked with special education and had

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

a special education degree were more likely to support and be willing to work in an inclusive classroom than teachers who do not have the experience working with special education students.

The rest of the participants were unsure of the success or benefits of special needs inclusion, or they had no real interest in being involved in the inclusive classrooms. The research showed that while there were larger numbers of participants willing to create an inclusive classroom, few had no interest in changing to this type of setting and instead wanted to continue using the separate system of special and general education classrooms. Other questions used to determine the participants' ideas and feelings towards inclusive classrooms included learning the strengths and challenges of the current educational system and the policies in supporting special needs students. Understanding the current educational system is important to the teachers, as this will help guide them through potential changes in the system.

Teachers continue to mold their teaching styles to the changing times and feelings and ideas of how their students will react to the changes. Many of the participants were willing to try different techniques of inclusion, as well as work with other teachers to create the most productive environment for the students. Most of the strengths listed by the participants included the ability of the special needs students to be more socially involved and learn with general education students, providing them with the feeling of fitting in. One issue, in particular, that was taken into account was the potential benefits socially for the students with special needs who are in the inclusive classrooms, as the students with special needs will be involved in activities of learning and socially that may increase the students' ability to interact with others. Participants' responses determined that social involvement is a critical component in teaching students who both have special needs and those who do not.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Learning to engage with others socially is critical to doing other things outside of the classroom, such as friendships, higher learning, and relationships. Another question asked was whether they have a family member with special needs, as this question was meant to elicit whether the teacher has a personal connection with someone with special needs. Initially, this question was going to be part of the exclusion criteria, as it was determined that it might create a bias. Following a reconsideration, this question was added back into the questionnaire to obtain a personal level response and determine if this was a deciding factor regarding the desire to support inclusive classrooms.

The results determined that 29 of the participants have a personal connection with someone who has special needs, although the type of special needs was not identified. Results showed that the participants with a connection with someone with special needs have a linear connection with positive feelings towards inclusive classrooms. While there is a linear connection in this study, there may be a different result if there was a larger pool of participants from different areas. The overall results of the study concluded that while the age of the teachers did not greatly influence the number of students in their classes, the age of the teacher did vary with the experience in inclusive education. The teachers reported an overall agreement that inclusive teaching is possible with the right tools for success and willingness to learn from others.

It is believed that these results are due to the teacher's choice of their degree of study is related to a family member with special needs. This result could potentially be due to teachers who have a family member with special needs wanting to distance themselves from that area of study. While the teachers may have a family member with special needs, they may not want to continue that experience into their professional life.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

### **Limitations**

The limitations identified in this study were that the sample size was not as large as planned for to provide the best possible pool of data, which would have been a sample pool of 80-100, the larger pool would have potentially provided enough change in data to sway the way the overall study resulted. The number of participants in the study was approximately half of what was originally desired to obtain more correlating results. Some questions were identified following the data collection that was determined to have been beneficial to understanding the contributing factor towards the teachers being more supportive of inclusive classrooms. Some of the questions identified involved understanding the participants' involvement with the creation of the inclusive classrooms, what it required to get them going, and what obstacles they faced on the way.

It was noted that there were no questions that required the participant to analyze their own experiences in the inclusive classrooms settings as a whole and during the creation stage. Originally, the exclusion criteria were that teachers with special needs children would not be included in the study due to the potential of skewing the results. This was removed due to the inadequate number of participants and that this population can yield beneficial results. The exclusion criteria were initially implemented to protect from potential biases from the teachers with children who have special needs. Still, following research, it was determined it should be used as an inclusion criterion.

Another issue to be noted about the limitations is that there is no way to understand what the participants have experienced in inclusive classrooms. The issue with this is that without knowledge of prior experiences in this area, it was impossible to determine if potential previous experiences have caused the participants to be swayed to believe one way or another. Also,

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

another issue identified is that all research had to be conducted via email, as at the start of the study, the COVID-19 pandemic was at its peak, closing businesses, and most important for this study, the schools.

At the beginning of the study, the initial problem was when consent for the research had to be approved by the governing body. This was more difficult as their meetings were limited and spread apart over weeks, making obtaining the approval a much lengthier process than it would have been in person. The original plan for the study was to conduct in-person research to get an idea of the teachers participating in the study and to have better communication with the participants. The most desirable scenario would have been for the researcher to meet face to face with the participants and learn more about their background in this area of study; instead, the information obtained was more of a generic method of collection without the best possible results.

The transitioning from in-person communication to computer-based communication required the methods of distributing the questionnaires to be changed to meet the data collection needs. The secure storage method went from being a physical collection station to a collection station on a computer with password-protected databases. The in-person stations were designed to be more easily accessible when analyzing the data instead of separating the data throughout the online access. Communication with the teachers was limited, and no in-person interviews were able to be conducted.

While the questionnaires elicited useful data, it is believed that an in-person communication base would have produced more detailed results that could have helped in understanding if the participants believed in inclusive classrooms as a solution or if they were just answering the questions generically without thinking it through. An additional survey to

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

determine experiences in special education would have been beneficial in understanding what in the teacher's background contributes to their overall views of inclusive classrooms. This additional survey would help bring together the conclusions of the other two surveys, therefore creating the belief that the data obtained was reliable and potentially useful in further studies. It is believed that having in-person interviews would have been more beneficial to the study because this type of interview would allow for a more personal interview, eliciting more personal information from the participants.

The method of online responses limits the information provided by the participants due to many not providing as detailed of answers as they potentially would during an in-person interview. It is believed that the quality of information was not as good as it could have been during an online interview. The two biggest changes in this research would be to create an additional study to elicit more detailed responses and conduct the interviews in person. They may have to be behind a protective shield, as it is believed that this would help provide better results. Another potential limitation is this researchers' twenty-one years of experience working in special education and intellectual disabilities. This field is very near to this researchers' heart, and it is believed that personal biases could have potentially limited the study's success.

### **Implications**

Important implications for this study include the change in educational policy, which refers to the installation of inclusive classrooms in all schools, providing all students with the ability to be included and learn beside their peers. There are still many schools that are not on board with inclusive education, and through the words of parents, teachers, and others, this is a great disservice to the students with special needs. Their potential successful education is being held while many others argue over what they each think is best for the students.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Although schools worldwide are making progress in the area of inclusive classrooms, many still have questions and concerns regarding the effectiveness of teaching special education students in the same classroom as general education students and continue to be unsure of where to continue research for improvement. The findings of this research show that there are teachers from varying ages and studies who believe that inclusive classrooms are beneficial to the learning of the special needs students, to the social skills of both special needs and general education, as well as the furthering of teachers' ability to teach students best.

Teachers can increase their own skill sets by being part of inclusive studies and passing on what they have learned to others. These results can potentially be used to further research in learning what areas can best be advanced by inclusive classrooms and the teachers where there are potential deficits or concerns regarding inclusive classrooms and the students. Many areas of study have linked the inclusive classroom to other improvements for students with special needs. It is not only in the classrooms where this benefits the students but also in the activities of their daily lives.

This area of research opens the door to continued research in this area and provides a way to create policy that changes the educational system to improve special education. Future research would benefit this area of study, as learning about improving special education is an ongoing issue. Although many regions have shown improvement in special education, many do not see inclusive classrooms as beneficial to the teachers or the students. Continued education and research in inclusive classrooms will benefit the students with improved education and social skill improvement. Alongside the benefits to the students and the teachers, inclusive classrooms can help the community, as students with enhanced learning abilities could succeed in other social areas.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

### Summary of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were analyzed following the research and complete data collection with the following results:

Ho1 – There was no determined difference between general education and special education teachers' perception of working with mild to moderate disabilities students. **Hypothesis Accepted.** Both types of teachers agreed that there is no difference between the way they perceive working with students with disabilities.

Ha1 – **Rejected**

Ho2 – There was no determined difference between general education teachers in their belief about the efficacy of inclusion for special education students. **Hypothesis Accepted.** Teachers agreed there was no determined difference between their personal beliefs and the efficacy of inclusion.

Ha2 – **Rejected**

Ho3 – There was no determined difference between teachers who work with special education and teachers who work with general education in their perceptions of their professional roles and functions in the classroom. **Hypothesis Accepted.** Both the general education teachers and special education teachers showed no difference about their professional roles and functions in the classroom.

Ha3 – **Rejected**

Ho4 – **Rejected**

Ha4 – There is a determined linear relationship between demographic characteristics among teachers who work with general education students in their perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities. **Hypothesis Accepted.** Results show that there is a



## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

determined linear relationship between the demographics of the teachers who work with general education students in their perceptions of students with disabilities.

### Ho5 - **Rejected**

Ha5 - There is a determined linear relationship between demographic characteristics among teachers who work with general education students in their beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion for students with mild to moderate disabilities. **Hypothesis Accepted.** Results determined that there is a linear relationship between demographics and teachers working in general education and their beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion.

### Ho6 – **Rejected**

Ha6 - There is a determined linear relationship between demographic characteristics among teachers who work with general education students in their perceptions of their professional roles and functions in the classroom setting. **Hypothesis Accepted.** Results determined that there is a linear relationship between demographics and teachers' perceptions of their professional roles and functions.

### Ho7 – **Rejected**

Ha7 – There is a determined linear relationship among teachers who work with special education students in their perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities. **Hypothesis Accepted.** Results determined that there was a linear relationship among special education teachers and their perceptions of students with disabilities.

### Ho8 – **Rejected**

Ha8 – There is a determined linear relationship among teachers who work with special education students in their beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion for special education students.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

**Hypothesis Approved.** Results determined that there was a linear relationship among teachers working in special education and their beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion.

### Ho9 – Rejected

Ha9- There is a determined linear relationship among teachers who work with special education students in their perceptions of their professional roles and functions in the classroom settings. **Hypothesis Approved.** Results determined that there was a linear relationship among teachers working in special education and their perceptions of their professional roles and functions.

### Conclusion

The overall goal of this study was to understand if different demographic aspects of the teachers played a role in how they believe regarding inclusive classrooms. The results overall show that teachers with experience in special education and having someone close to them with special needs were some of the determining factors of a positive correlation to inclusive classrooms being beneficial to the teachers and the special education students. While these two areas showed a positive correlation, other measurements such as the degree of study of the participant and the age of the participant were taken into account as well, with the results showing that the middle-aged teachers up to the teachers in their 60's were the most supportive of the inclusive classrooms, as well as the most likely to be involved in working with other teachers to learn about inclusive classrooms. Although the results showed a potential benefit of inclusive classrooms, this study does not have enough correlating data to determine a definite correlation. Continued research in this area will benefit the area of learning about inclusive studies. Still, it can potentially detail the areas where the most improvement is needed to obtain

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

the most reliable information. This is an area of study that continues to become more important every day in the teaching of our future generations, and with more attention, it can be successful.

**References**

- Abdelhameed, H. (2015). Teachers' and parents' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with Intellectual disabilities in general education schools in Egypt. *Journal of the International Association of Special Education, 16*(1), 23-32.
- Abu-Hamour, B., & Muhaidat, M. (2013). Special education teachers' attitudes towards Inclusion of students with Autism in Jordan. *Journal of the International Association Of Special Education, 14*(1), 34-40.
- Ahsan, T., & Sharma, U. (2018). Preservice teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students With high support needs in regular classrooms in Bangladesh. *British Journal of Special Education, 45*(1), 81-97. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12211>
- Alquraini, T., & Gut, D. (2012). Critical components of successful inclusion of students with Severe disabilities: Literature review. *International Journal of Special Education, 27*, 42-59.
- Barkas, L. A., Armstrong, P. A., & Bishop, G. (2020). Is inclusion still an illusion in higher Education? Exploring the curriculum through the student voice. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1776777*
- Braunsteiner, M. L., & Maiano-Lapidus, S. (2014). A perspective of inclusion: Challenges for The future. *Global Education Review 1*(1), 32-43.
- Cambridge-Johnson, J., Hunter-Johnson, Y., & Newton, N. G. L. (2014). Breaking the silence of Mainstream teachers' attitude towards inclusive education in the Bahamas: High school Teachers' perceptions. *The Qualitative Report 19*(84), 1-20.
- Cyran, M., Kudlacek, M., Block, M., Malinowska-Lipien, I., & Zyznawska, J. (2017). Attitudes

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

- of teachers towards inclusion of students with disabilities in physical education: Validity of the ATIPDPE-R instrument in Polish cultural context. *Acta Gymnica*, 47(4), 171-179.
- Donohue, D. K., & Bornman, J. (2015). South African teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of Learners with different abilities in mainstream classrooms. *International Journal of Disability, Development & Education*, 62(1), 42-59.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2014.985638>
- Doulkeridou, A., Evaggelinou, C., Mouratidou, K., Koidou, E., Panagiotou, A., & Kudlacek, M. (2011). Attitudes of Greek physical education teachers towards inclusion of students with Disabilities in physical education classes. *International Journal of Special Education*, 26(1), 1-11.
- Evans, W., Gable, R. A., & Habib, A. (2021). Lessons from the past and challenges for the Future: Inclusive education for students with unique needs. *Education Sciences*, 11(281), 1-10.
- Ford, J. (2013). Educating students with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms. *Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education*, 3(1), 1-20.
- Gal, E., Schreur, N., & Engel-Yeger, B. (2010). Inclusion of children with disabilities: Teachers' Attitudes and requirements for environmental accommodations. *International Journal of Special Education*, 25(2), 89-99.
- Gava, B. P., Boskovic, K., Smajic, M., Panic, D. S., & Naumovic, N. (2018). Work with disabilities- the teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. *Medicinski Pregled/Medical Review*, 71(7/8), 227-234. <https://doi.org/10.2298/MPNS1808227P>
- Leatherman, J. M., & Niemeier, J. A. (2005). Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion: Factors Influencing classroom practice. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 26(1).

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10901020590918979>

Markova, M., Pit-Ten Cate, I., Krolak-Schwerdt, S., & Glock, S. (2016). Preservice teachers Attitudes toward inclusion and toward students with special educational needs from different Ethnic backgrounds. *Journal of Experimental Education, 84*(3), 554-578.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.2015.1055317>

Martin, K., & Kudlacek, M. (2010). Attitudes of preservice teachers in an Australian university Towards inclusion of students with physical disabilities in general physical education Programs. *European Journal of Adapted Physical Activity, 3*(1), 30-48.

Melekoglu, M. A. (2013). Examining the impact of interaction project with students with Special needs on development of positive attitude and awareness of general education and awareness of general education teachers towards inclusion. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 13*(2), 1067-1074.

Odongo, G., & Davidson, R. (2016). Examining the attitudes and concerns of the Kenyan Teachers toward the inclusion of children with disabilities in the general education Classroom: A mixed methods study. *International Journal of Special Education, 31*(2).

Saloviita, T. (2020). Teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of students with support needs. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 20*(1), 64-73.

Sharma, U., & Nuttal, A. (2016). The impact of training on preservice teacher attitudes, concerns, and efficacy towards inclusion. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 44*(2), 142-155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2015.1081672>

Sreckovic, M. A., Schultz, T. R., Kenney, C. K., & Able, H. (2018). Building community in the Inclusive classroom. *The National Association for the Education of Young Children, 75*-82.

## INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Swain, K., Nordness, P., & Leader-Janssen, E. (2012). Changes in preservice teacher attitudes Toward inclusion. *Preventing School Failure, 56*(2), 75-81.

<https://doi.org/10.1080.1045988X.2011.565386>

Vaz, S., Wilson, N., Falkmer, M., Sim, A., Scott, M., Cordier, R., & Falkmer, T. (2015). Factors Associated with primary school teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with Disabilities. *PLoS ONE, 10*(8), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0137002>

**Appendix A: Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scale (TATIS)**

**Appendix A: Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scale (TATIS).**

**Directions:** The purpose of this confidential survey is to obtain an accurate and valid appraisal of your perceptions of the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms. It also contains questions pertaining to your beliefs about professional roles, attitudes toward collegiality, and perceptions of the efficacy of inclusion (i.e., whether or not you believe that inclusion can succeed). Because there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to these items, please respond candidly.

**Definition of Full Inclusion:** For the purposes of this survey, full inclusion is defined as the integration of students with mild to moderate disabilities into regular classrooms for 80% or more of the school day. Under federal special education law, mild to moderate disabilities include Learning Disabilities; Hearing Impairments; Visual Impairments; Physical Handicaps; Attention Deficit Disorders; Speech/Language Impairments; and mild/moderate Emotional Disturbance, Mental Retardation, Autism, or Traumatic Brain Injury.

Use the following scale for all items:

1=Agree Very Strongly (AVS), 2=Strongly Agree (SA), 3=Agree (A), 4=Neither Agree nor Disagree (NAD), 5=Disagree (D), 6=Strongly Disagree (SD), 7=Disagree Very Strongly (DVS)

	1 AVS	2 SA	3 A	4 NAD	5 D	6 SD	7 DVS
1. All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with non-handicapped peers to the fullest extent possible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. It is seldom necessary to remove students with mild to moderate disabilities from regular classrooms in order to meet their educational needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Most or all regular classrooms can be modified to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Inclusion is a more efficient model for educating students with mild to moderate disabilities because it reduces transition time (i.e., the time required to move from one setting to another).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students because they will require too much of the teacher's time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the academic skills necessary for success.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the social skills necessary for success.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I find that general education teachers often do not succeed with students with mild to moderate disabilities, even when they try their best.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. I would welcome the opportunity to team teach as a model for meeting the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. All students benefit from team teaching; that is, the pairing of a general and a special education teacher in the same classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. The responsibility for educating students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms should be shared between general and special education teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teacher model (i.e., regular collaborative meetings between special and general education teachers to share ideas, methods, and materials) as a means of addressing the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





