Will They Be Welcomed In? The Impact of K-12 Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions

of Inclusion on the Placement of Students with Disabilities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions K-12 principals and teachers have of inclusive education in a school district in Beaver County, Pennsylvania. The dependent variables are the teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion and the independent variables are years of educational experience, extent of special education background, and level of support by district administrators. Instrumentation for this study is the Multidimensional Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES) survey. Data were analyzed for correlational relationships using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings suggest an average to high level of support by administration in supporting inclusive practices. A statistically significant, small negative relationship between the years teaching and responses on the affective and behavioral factors surfaced. No significant relationship was demonstrated between teachers' perceptions of inclusion and the level of support they receive from administrators. Future study can explore how perceptions directly impact placement of students with disabilities.

Keywords: Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), General Education Classroom, High-incidence Disabilities, Inclusion, Individualized Education Program (IEP), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Low-incidence Disabilities, Pull-out Classroom

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Chapter 1

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions K-12 principals and teachers have of inclusive education in a single school district in Beaver County, Pennsylvania. After six years of teaching special education and a few months of being a special education director and building-level principal in a Beaver County, Pennsylvania school district, it has become evident that significant latitude is given to both teachers and school principals in determining the placement of students with disabilities. Therefore, it is relevant to determine if their perceptions of inclusion are impacting where students are receiving their education. According to the National Council on Disability (2018), 62% of Pennsylvania students with disabilities are integrated with their nondisabled peers for 80% or more of the school day, while other states, such as Alabama, integrate as many as 84% of students with disabilities for 80% or more of the school day. Undoubtedly, Pennsylvania has room for growth in its inclusion of more students with disabilities for greater amounts of the school day. Therefore, this study has significance as it will examine various factors that may contribute to teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion that can impact students' placements. Ultimately, the implications of the study can lead to future professional development fostering dynamics that will lead to more positive perceptions of inclusion and will allow for a greater number of students to be educated with their non-disabled peers.

Problem Statement

In the ruling of *Brown v. the Board of Education* (1954), Justice Earl Warren remarked, "to separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their *race* [emphasis mine] generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the

community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone" (Alexander & Alexander, 2012, p. 896). Although this statement deals with the school segregation of students of color, if the term "race" was replaced with "disability", the statement could be applied to the segregation of students with disabilities.

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), public schools are required to provide students with disabilities with special education services if they meet eligibility requirements (2012). Requirements are two-fold: a student must have a disability and, as a result, be in need of specially designed instruction (SDI). The 13 disability categories include autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment. SDI can be defined as adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction (a) to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and (b) to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children. (34 C.F.R. §300.39[b][3])

Not only is the integration of students with disabilities a civil right, but it also carries many positive results. Cosier, Causton-Theoharis, and Theoharis (2013) found a strong positive relationship between the higher number of hours students spend in general education and their achievement in mathematics and reading. Social interactions and social skills also improve with inclusive practices (McGregor & Voglesberg, 1998). Furthermore, inclusive practices have led to fewer absences from school, less referrals for

disruptive behavior, and increased post-graduation outcomes in employment and independent living (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Garza, 2005).

The importance of inclusion can be tied to Vygotsky's social constructivism (1978), Dweck's growth mindset theory (2016), as well as the transformational leadership theory (Leithwood & Sleegers, 2006). Praisner (2003) found that principals who have a more positive perception of inclusion are more likely to place students in less restrictive settings, while Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) found the same to be true regarding teachers' attitudes toward inclusion impacting placement. A gap exists in current research with regard to which factors are impacting teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion. Updated research on these factors could contribute to effective professional development to rectify negative perceptions allowing more students to be educated in less restrictive placements. Therefore, the research problem is that there is not a clear picture of variables impacting teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine relationships that exist between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion. Once the perceptions are revealed, school leaders can focus on professional development that will equip teachers and principals with skills that can contribute to more positive attitudes towards inclusion, thus resulting in students being educated in less restrictive environments.

Research Questions

There are four research questions guiding this study:

1. What differences exist between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion?

2. Is there a relationship between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion and their years of educational experience?

3. Is there a relationship between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion and their extent of background in special education?

4. Is there a relationship between teachers' perceptions of inclusion and the level of support they receive from administrators?

Theoretical Framework

When examining the value of educating students with disabilities alongside their nondisabled peers, a multitude of theories emerge in relation to the subject. For the intent of this study, three theories will be explored. These three theories include social constructivism as it relates to the importance of inclusion for students with and without exceptionalities, growth versus fixed mindset as it pertains to teachers' and leaders' willingness to implement inclusive practices, and transformational leadership for those administrators and teacher leaders putting forth the effort to change a school system for the betterment of all students and staff impacted by children with disabilities.

Social constructivism. Soviet developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky asserted that motivation is a socially negotiated construct that is exchanged by individuals within a classroom (Sivan, 1986). Learning happens in a social manner. Therefore, the concept of social constructivism would lend educators to believe that students with and without disabilities glean social, emotional, and academic knowledge from learning together. Additionally, both students with disabilities and those without have

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opportunities to learn from one another. Because of the social benefits to inclusion, the study at hand has an importance as to why teachers and principals should consider inclusion as a best practice. If teachers and principals have negative perceptions of inclusion, they may tend to place students in more restrictive settings or may not differentiate for the students once they are included in the general education classroom. Therefore, there is a need to determine their perceptions to allow more students to be included to reap benefits associated with social constructivism theory. Mallory and New (1994) argued for a move toward more inclusive classrooms based on the work of Vygotsky, where learning is facilitated by social activities and learners can add to their own development.

Core values for inclusive education brought to light by the social constructivism theory include classroom communities, learning as a social process, contextually pertinent and meaningful curricula, and reliable assessment (Mallory & New, 1994).

Another key component of the social constructivist theory that supports students with disabilities is that children's learning can be supported through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is described as the distance between where students currently are developmentally and where they have the potential to be (Vygotsky, 1978). Only through guidance from adults or more capable peers do students succeed to the full extent possible. Therefore, if teachers do not have positive perceptions of inclusion, they may not fully realize the potential of the students in their inclusion classes, thus under-teaching them.

Growth versus fixed mindset. What makes certain individuals willing to adapt to change more readily than others? Some teachers and school leaders accept inclusion

as a best practice in education and revise their methods of instruction based on this notion. Other teachers and school leaders are more prone to keeping practices as they have always been even when there is a great body of research and theory supporting inclusive education. Why is this?

Dweck's (2016) mindset theory explained that there are two types of people: those with fixed mindsets and those with growth mindsets. People with fixed mindsets believe that abilities are set; intelligence and talents are fixed and will not show further development. An example of a teacher with a fixed mindset would be someone who believes his or her teaching pedagogy learned several decades ago is the best way to instruct and that current research is irrelevant. These people may feel that students with disabilities should be educated in a resource room since that was what they were taught decades ago. They may also feel that students with disabilities are also fixed in terms of development and, therefore, should not access rigorous general education standards. These individuals with such a thought process are less likely to accelerate at the rate of their counterparts who have growth mindsets (Dweck, 2016).

Growth mindsets are held by those who believe abilities can be developed over time and that dedication and hard work are sure ways to become higher caliber employees, friends, coaches, leaders, family members, etc. (Dweck, 2016). As it relates to this study, an example of a teacher or principal who exhibits this characteristic would be one who is interested in evolving best practices for educating students with disabilities. These individuals realize that, with further research, pedagogy is likely to change as is the concept of meaningful educational experiences for students with disabilities. Therefore, these individuals are open to evolving and growing their

perceptions of best practices in educating this population of students. Moreover, these individuals feel that students with disabilities have the potential to grow when given the necessary supports and instruction in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

With new evidence that the brain is not static and is, in actuality, quite malleable, Dweck's growth mindset applies to students within a K-12 classroom setting as well as to the teachers instructing them and their school administration (2016). Jensen (2013) suggested that teachers can significantly impact student gains by providing constructive learning opportunities in the classroom. Unfortunately, educators are lacking in background in cognitive science (Ricci, 2013). Therefore, they need to receive professional development in this theory that emphasizes that students under their direction can flourish given proper evidence and training on facilitating growth mindsets among their students. In doing so, more teachers can realize the potential of the students whom they service, both those with and without disabilities.

Miller (2013) contended that promoting a growth mindset allows students to value mistakes as part of the learning process. Inquiry of new knowledge only happens when children are challenged and progress from experiencing errors. Such an environment allows students to realize that they are safe to explore, imagine, make mistakes, and learn from those mistakes. Likewise, Dweck (2016) suggested that leaders can promote success within an organization when focusing on particular strategies to challenge employees and encourage their development. Therefore, if a school district has leaders who believe in the benefits of practices promoting growth mindset, the district will encourage teachers and support staff to adopt this mindset as well (Dweck, 2016). These individuals would be more willing to integrate students with disabilities into general

education classrooms. With their sense of value in having a growth mindset, they can foster this same notion in the minds of the students in their classrooms.

Transformational leadership. Transformational leaders set the tone for motivation, teamwork, and goal setting within a system (Leithwood & Sleegers, 2006). Characteristics of an effective transformational leader include one who can provide incentives and opportunities for all employees to make gains and develop their skill sets. Only then can the system thrive in promoting change and transforming to greater heights (Leithwood & Sleegers, 2006).

Transformational leadership was found to be the most effective approach while trying to bring about change in a school system (Smith & Bell, 2011). Through the lens of special education and inclusive practices, an impactful transformational leader would need to instill multiple concepts in staff members for change to ever occur. One method would be facilitating Carol Dweck's (2016) growth mindset paradigm. Another would be providing professional development honing in on the importance of inclusion and how to logistically facilitate this practice. Lastly, the leader would need a clear plan to move students to less restrictive placements while providing support for staff along the way.

Lentz (2012) remarked that there is a stark difference between Individual Educational Plan (IEP) teams that are chaired and those that are led. Those teams that have a leader following the principles of transformational leadership most effectively deliver meaningful special educational services that are linked to optimal student outcomes. Student advancement, school improvement, and district accountability are positively impacted by a transformational leader on an IEP team.

Overview of Methodology

A quantitative study took place looking at factors related to teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion. The dependent variable was teachers' and principals' perception of inclusion and the independent variables were years of educational experience, extent of special education background, and level of support by district administrators. Instrumentation for this study was the Multidimensional Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES) survey (see Appendix A) and a questionnaire (see Appendix B). The target population was teachers and principals within the Beaver County, Pennsylvania school district that was selected. The study occurred during the winter of 2020. Data were analyzed for correlational relationships using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Rationale and Significance

The placement of students with disabilities depends in large part on the members of the IEP team. Two key members of this team include teachers and principals whose perceptions of inclusion have a direct impact on the placement of students with disabilities (Praisner, 2003; Scruggs & Mastopieri, 1996).

A clearer understanding of the relationship between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion and factors of educational experience, background in special education, and administrative support can lead to future professional development opportunities that can positively impact the placement of students with disabilities.

Limitations

Findings and recommendations of this study cannot be generalized to all school districts; they are limited to districts of similar demographics as the district being studied. Also, teachers and principals may feel that they need to answer a certain way to appease

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their administrators. According to Lüke and Grosche (2018), recent research has focused on attitudes toward inclusion. A significant limitation to valid data in such a study is social desirability bias. Social desirability occurs when respondents give responses on topics that lend to them appearing in a positive light. Consequently, the validity of results is a limitation when considering the likelihood of social desirability bias.

Definition of Key Terminology

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) – mandatory regulation that all students with disabilities in a district's jurisdiction must be provided supplementary aids and services that will produce educational benefit regardless of severity of disability and free of charge to families (Fenell, Gilchrist, Katz, Kirkpatrick, & Makofsky, 2019).

General Education Classroom – a classroom where the general population of students are educated heterogeneously (Morin, 2019).

High-incidence Disabilities – frequently occurring disabilities including learning disability, speech or language impairment, a mild to moderate intellectual disability, or emotional or behavioral disorder (U.S. Department of Education, [DOE] 2010).

Inclusion – students with disabilities are immersed with their non-disabled peers throughout the school day and have the opportunity to learn alongside them (Fenell et al.).

Individualized Education Program (IEP) – a document outlining the comprehensive plan to ensure a child with a disability receives specialized instruction, related services, and ultimately FAPE (Fenell et al.).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – a federal law that requires schools to appropriately service the needs of eligible students with disabilities (Fenell et al.).

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – a component of IDEA that mandates students with disabilities are educated with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate (Fenell et al.).

Low-incidence Disabilities – disability categories taking up a very small percentage of students with disabilities (DOE, 2010).

Pull-out Classroom – a placement where students are pulled from the general education classroom to a separate setting that provides special education services to students with disabilities (Morin, 2019).

Summary

This study will examine the impact teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion have on the placement of students with disabilities. A quantitative approach will be utilized to glean these individuals' perceptions within one western Pennsylvania county school district. Chapter 2 will review the literature associated with concepts in this study. Beginning with the history of special education, Chapter 2 will detail legal cases and policies related to special education, the benefits and challenges of inclusion, and conclude with factors that impact teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Many strides have been made over the last few decades in educating students with disabilities among their nondisabled peers. According to the 40th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of IDEA, there was an increase from 57.2% to 63.1% of students educated inside the general education classroom for 80% or more of the school day from 2007 to 2016 (DOE, 2018). Although the nation has seen great reform and effort in educating more students with disabilities with their non-disabled peers, there is a continuing need for growth. Kurth, Morningstar, and Kozleski (2014) argued that while there are added prospects to learning and advancing in inclusive educational settings, thousands of students with disabilities are still educated in overly restrictive settings.

History of Special Education

The history of special education is rife with controversy, misinformation, unimaginable and inappropriate placements, and some examples of complete disregard for humanity (Osgood, 2008). Although the initial stories in special education begin with instances of pure neglect, the 19th Century showed individuals with disabilities moving from receiving education in segregated schools to a slow but sure progression toward the entitlement of all children to receive appropriate programming in their LRE (Mock & Kauffman, 2002).

Until the 19th Century, there is no substantial evidence that individuals with disabilities received any type of formal education (Leonardi, 2001). Many 19th Century influencers saw special training as an avenue in which they could uplift those with disabilities. Henry Barnard and Horace Mann were two of these individuals. These men

were paramount in establishing institutions that could serve individuals with disabilities. There were undoubtedly precursors and similarities in these early institutions to the FAPE mandate that was later instituted; however, these institutions were often perceived as more charitable in nature than they were viewed as places where much education occurred (Winzer, 1993).

Throughout the 19th Century, enrollment of those with disabilities in institutions increased as did the number of these institutions around America. Additional improvements included increased attendance, lengthened school year, standardization of the classification of disability categories, and the differentiation of programs offered. Even so, many students with disabilities were still not being educated due to a number of factors including poverty, a lack of understanding as to what the institutions would provide, as well as reluctance to allow children with disabilities out of the family's care (Winzer, 1993). Winzer (1993) also noted the intrigue and eeriness of the fact that there was very little history on the perceptions of families of students in these institutions. No writings or formal interviews document what it was actually like in these establishments.

According to Winzer (1993), the opening of the 20th Century saw many changes in the areas of more specific classifications for students with disabilities. Teachers were also being better prepared to teach students based on their specific diagnoses and needs. Yet, there was a notion that came about that the "feebleminded" were the cause of such misery and despair, and that they could be a social threat (Winzer, 1993, p. 279). Solutions to eradicate this population included ideas such as sterilization and/or segregation of males with disabilities from females with disabilities (Winzer, 1993).

Moreover, the 20th Century saw the initiative of segregated classes in a public school building for children with special needs. Compulsory attendance laws also came into play. Special classes and special schools were developed with the intent of educating those with disabilities (Leonardi, 2001). From 1910-1930, there was a huge increase in the number of students with disabilities being enrolled in public schools. The most heavily funded schools were for those considered mentally retarded (now referred to as intellectually disabled) and for those with speech disabilities following that category's lead. Into the 1930s, there was a loss of optimism involving special classes; reasons included segregation, watered-down curricula, and untrained teaching staff (Winzer, 1993).

In light of World War II, there were imperative advances in special education both directly and inadvertently. Improvements with medicine provided treatment and prevention of disabling conditions. The field of special education became professionalized. Segregation in education dropped as an issue and became widely accepted again (Winzer, 1993).

Legal Cases and Policies

Special education legal cases and policies that are paramount to this study are summarized in Table 1 and will follow in narrative form in more depth.

Table 1.

Timeline for Special Education Legal Cases and Policies

Timeline for Special Education Legal Cases and Policies		
Date	**Event**	**Description**
1954	*Brown v. the Board of Education*	This court ruling set the tone for the elimination of segregation. Although geared toward segregation of students of color, the ruling had implications for the segregation of students with disabilities as well (Winzer, 1993).
1962	Panel on Mental Retardation	President John F. Kennedy convened to determine ways in which to support those with disabilities. This initiative opened the door for conversations regarding those with disabilities (Department of Administration Council on Developmental Disabilities, 2019).
1971	*Pennsylvania Association of Retarded Children (PARC) v. the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*	Suit claimed that the commonwealth was in violation of providing access to public education for children with disabilities who could benefit from such schooling (334 F. Supp. 1257).
1975	P.L. 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act established	This law established regulations which guaranteed handicapped children FAPE. LRE was first mentioned in this law (Leonardi, 2001).
1982	*Board of Education v. Rowley*	In this supreme court ruling, FAPE was discussed in the realm of the meaning of *appropriateness* for a child with a disability as well as what outcomes IDEA expected for students. The court ruled that services had to be reasonably calculated for students to receive educational benefit (Winzer, 1993).
1983	*Roncker v. Walter*	This case was known for the "Roncker Portability Test". This test looked at the possibility that a segregated setting would be more appropriate for a child. The second tier of this test considered if the services provided in the segregated setting could be transported to the neighborhood school and be provided in a less restrictive setting. If so, the school district was responsible for this provision to maintain LRE (Yell, 2012).

1989	*Daniel R. R. v. State Board of Education*	This case set the standard for a two-part test in determining if schools met their obligation in providing FAPE under IDEA. The first prong of the test was to determine whether the child's needs could be met satisfactorily in the general education setting with the use of supplementary aids and services while the second prong looked at if a child was included with peers to the maximum extent appropriate when a student with a disability was placed in a special setting (Yell, 2012).
1994	*Gaskin v. Pennsylvania Department of Education*	In the suit, the families called for IEP teams to consider whether the goals in a student's IEP could be worked on and met in the general education setting with the use of supplementary aids and services before considering a more restrictive setting. In the general education classroom, responsibility was increased for districts to provide appropriate accommodations and related services. With the 2005 settlement agreement, PDE made systemic changes over special education as a whole. These changes included most notably the LRE mandate in terms of monitoring that districts complied with state and federal requirements. The settlement also established an LRE advisory panel (Silla-Zaleski, Bauman, & Stufft, 2007).
1994	*Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education v. Rachel H.*	The ruling yielded a four-factor test to look at placement decisions. The first factor was comparing the educational benefits of the general education classroom compared with that of the special education classroom, the second looked at nonacademic benefits of educating students with students without disabilities, the third factor examined the impact of the student's presence on the teacher and other peers, and the final aspect analyzed the cost factor of mainstreaming (Yell, 2012).
1994	*Clyde K. v. Puyallup School District*	Behavioral needs of a student with a disability were at the forefront of the placement decision in this ruling. The student in question displayed aggressive behaviors that were threatening to the other students in the classroom. The district decided that the child's needs could be met in a separate school. The child's parents disagreed and proceeded with a due process hearing in an effort to have the child back in

		the general education setting with a one-on-one paraprofessional. The hearing officer ruled in favor of the district based on the four-factor test from *Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education v. Rachel H.* (1994). The hearing officer found that the student being educated in the general education classroom would violate factors one and three. The paraprofessional would not make that much of a difference in the behaviors, and the other students' safety was being violated (Yell, 2012).
1997	*Hartmann v. Loudoun County Board of Education*	The court favored the district's decision of placing a student with aggressive behaviors and autism in a separate school and developed a three-part test in its ruling. They argued that mainstreaming was not the LRE when the student would not receive educational benefit from the model, that any minimal benefit from mainstreaming would be overshadowed by benefits that could be achieved in a more restrictive educational setting, and the student was a disruption to others' education in the general education classroom (Yell, 2012).

The 1950s and 60s showed increased concern from parents with having their children's needs met in their neighborhood schools. Many studies investigated if there was value and justification in educational segregation. The 1954 *Brown v. the Board of Education* put forth a precedent that set the tone for the elimination of segregation. Although the landmark case specifically addressed racial segregation, it impacted the segregation of students with disabilities as well (Winzer, 1993). Additionally, in 1961, President John Kennedy convened the President's Panel on Mental Retardation to look into ways in which to support those with intellectual disabilities.

PARC filed suit in a U.S. District Court against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1971 (334 F. Supp. 1257). The suit claimed that the commonwealth was in violation of providing access to public education for children with disabilities who

could benefit from such schooling. That same year, the U.S. District Court issued an agreement that granted much of the purpose for special education legislation (Leonardi, 2001).

Public law (P.L.) 94-142. In 1975, Congress passed P.L. 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Regulations were established which guaranteed handicapped children FAPE. In 1990, Congress passed IDEA reauthorizing P.L. 94-142 (Leonardi, 2001).

LRE mandate. Bailey and Bauer-Jones (2015) noted that part of the trust and safeties for a student and their families are guarded under IDEA and corresponding Procedural Safeguards. With these protections comes the provision of education in the LRE. LRE contends that students with disabilities are educated with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate and removal from the general education classroom should happen only if education cannot be achieved satisfactorily in the inclusive setting. The LRE mandate is a cornerstone of IDEA as it holds great importance with where students with disabilities are educated (Burke & Sandman, 2015). According to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education (2010), the 35 years of IDEA (formerly P.L. 91-142), from 1975-2010, proved that students with disabilities had excelled in areas never before expected as a result of this law. Not only were students educated in neighborhood schools, but more children were included in the general education curriculum and classroom. As a result, students built meaningful relationships with students without disabilities and gained access to opportunities once thought of as unimaginable prior to this law.

Inclusion

One of the most notable changes to special education reform over the last half-century is in regard to where students with special needs receive their education. Educational professionals have come to the realization that students with disabilities have an inherent right to be a part of a classroom learning community with their peers who do not have disabilities.

To make inclusion successful, school professionals need to find a way to blur the lines of general education and special education. Hornby (2015) noted that general and special education do not need to be conflicting entities in the education of children with and without disabilities. Instead, inclusive special education encompasses a shared vision of procedures and educational strategies for the benefit of all children. For IEP teams to collaborate for the social and civil rights of all students with disabilities, they should focus on constant team reflection, goal setting, action plans, and readily make changes when needed (Skilton-Sylvester & Slesaransky-Poe, 2009). Barnes and Gaines (2015) found that negative attitudes toward inclusive practices led to reduced self-efficacy contributing to increased stress levels of teachers. These increased stress levels can negatively impact student outcomes.

Benefits of inclusion. Not only is it morally and ethically upright for students with disabilities to be immersed in a heterogeneous school experience, but research also suggests that there are substantial benefits to inclusion and that inclusion is considered a best practice. Momentous increases in IEP quality in terms of age-appropriateness, functionality, and generalization were found when students were integrated into general education classes from more restrictive special education settings (Hunt & Farron-Davis, 1992). Furthermore, in the general education classroom, there was an increase in the

amount of practical lessons as well as academic activities when compared to a pull-out special education class. Students were also more engaged in the general education setting and were not alone or isolated (Hunt, Farron-Davis, Beckstead, Curtis, & Goetz, 1994). In an additional study of elementary school students with significant disabilities, it was observed that general education classrooms delivered more instruction where content was addressed further, students were provided a comparable amount of one-to-one instructional time, and the teacher relied on non-disabled peers more and adults less (Helmstetter, Curry, Brennan, & Sampson-Saul, 1998). In a two-year study of students with intellectual disabilities immersed in a general education setting, inclusion students made more progress in literacy skills than those with the same diagnosis who attended special schools (Dessemontet, Bless, & Morin, 2012).

Inclusive education is not and should not be a one-size-fits-all approach. When content is tailored to students' needs, students with disabilities can gain access to a classroom and curriculum that otherwise may be unattainable. Lee, Wehmeyer, Soukup, and Palmer (2010) asserted the importance of curricular modifications to allow students with disabilities to be educated in their LREs.

Although inclusive education is beneficial for students with disabilities, does it have a negative impact on the children without disabilities in the class? Misconceptions of students with disabilities as being a distraction to nondisabled peers have circulated for years. Nonetheless, research has shown that non-disabled students in an inclusive setting make similar or greater gains than those not being educated with students with disabilities in regard to math and literacy (Waldron, Cole, & Majd, 2001). Moreover, Hollowood, Salisbury, Rainforth, and Palombaro (1995) found that there was no difference in

instructional time, engaged time, and time allotted for instruction between a general education class without students with severe disabilities and an inclusion class where there are those with disabilities. In fact, nondisabled peers benefit from building relationships with children with disabilities, and having these children included with them leads to new and enriching learning opportunities for all students (McGregor & Vogelsberg, 1998).

With continued research on the impacts of inclusive practices, students with a range of disabilities have increasingly been moved from being educated in private special education schools to presently being more likely integrated into their neighborhood, public school districts. Nonetheless, true inclusive education is more profound than just being placed in one's neighborhood school. Inclusion implies that students with disabilities will be educated alongside their nondisabled peers and are not receiving their instruction in a segregated setting. The notion of inclusion is that special education is a service and not a place. To that end, a child should not be removed from the general education setting, but the service that child needs should be provided to him or her in the general education classroom, if at all possible (Kirby, 2017).

Challenges of inclusion. Without a doubt, there are challenges when it comes to inclusive practices. Particularly to placement, some educators still believe that disabilities can be eradicated. Additionally, special education delivery not taking place in a general education classroom is another common misconception (Kirby, 2017). Kirby (2017) recommended that to make education a place where all can learn, districts must do away with labels. Stronger teacher preparation must occur as well as continued

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professional development in terms of special education and appropriate placement. Evidence-based instruction is key regardless of where a child is placed.

An additional challenge is that students with higher incidence disabilities are educated more often in general education settings but those with more significant, lower incidence disabilities are not. Kurth et al. (2014) depicted how highly restrictive placements for students with low-incidence disabilities are still commonplace. Districts do not set goals that are rigorous enough to bring students in restrictive placements back to their neighborhood schools (Kurth et al.). Therefore, there is quite a disproportionality between students with low-incidence disabilities being educated in restrictive placements with little initiative to move them toward being educated in less restrictive environments. In a 14-year study looking at the changes involving LRE for students with low-incidence disabilities, it was discovered that not much change elicited for students with significant disabilities in terms of reform to lesser restrictive placements (Morningstar, Kurth, & Johnson, 2017).

Yell, Katsiyannis, Collins, and Losinski (2012) debated the challenge of high-stakes testing for students with disabilities. In essence, teachers and administrators are responsible for students' state test scores. This stressful level of accountability has implications on teachers' time and flexibility in also meeting the needs of including students with disabilities; they are challenged with their other students' achievement scores as reflecting their teaching ability. The suggestion by the authors for teachers and administrators to remedy this issue and to prevent legal issues with the testing of these students with exceptionalities is that districts must take the initiative for continued professional development in this area.

Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, and Shamberger (2010) noted that co-teaching, a collaborative approach between special education and regular education personnel, works to alleviate the stressors of one teacher making inclusion meaningful for those with disabilities. The model suggests that two teachers work with one another to seamlessly provide pedagogy appropriate for students with and without disabilities. Nonetheless, co-teaching presents challenges in time management, its existence when there is not a supportive school culture, and the lack of professional preparation for this service delivery model to be successfully implemented.

Factors Related to Perceptions of Inclusion

There are a multitude of factors that impact the perceptions of inclusion. For the purpose of this study, the focus will remain on the variables including years of experience in education, extent of special education courses and professional development, and the level of special education leadership within a school system.

Years of experience in education. Barnes and Gaines (2015) found that teachers with fewer years of experience had more negative attitudes towards inclusion when compared to educators with more experience. Contrary to this, MacFarlane and Woolfson (2013), found that more veteran teachers had more negative attitudes towards students with social, emotional, and behavioral disabilities. Gaines and Barnes (2017) discovered that educators with more than 10 years of experience had added negative views of inclusion when compared to those with less experience. Regardless, years of experience in education impacts teachers' and principals' attitudes toward inclusion (Hwang & Evans, 2011).

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Special education courses and professional development. Research has shown professional development as being a factor in the success of inclusive practices. Waitoller and Artiles (2013) brought to light that most professional development research for inclusive education utilized a unitary approach toward difference and exclusion and that teacher-learning for inclusive education is undertheorized. Zagona, Kurth, and MacFarland (2017) found a correlation between educators' preparedness for special education and whether or not they took university courses on the topic or received relevant professional development. Additionally, in a study of non-traditional preservice teachers, inclusion literature in teacher preparation programs showed promising value among teacher candidates (Sutton, 2015). Swain, Nordness, and Leader-Janssen (2012) suggested breaking the system of ill-prepared inclusion teachers by providing preservice teachers with both theoretical and practical experience in working in effective inclusionary settings.

Aitken (2012) noted that those individuals working with students with disabilities must have proper professional development training in order for the children under that teacher's direction to be successful. Gokdere (2012) suggested increased professional development on inclusive practices for in-service teachers in order to increase the quality of services. Professional development as it relates to the development of teachers who believe in inclusive education is necessary for teachers to be able to change their practices to coincide with the attitude for the necessity of inclusionary practices (Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhie-Richmond, 2009). Lack of teacher training (Alahbabi, 2009) negatively impacts teachers' perceptions of inclusion.

Obiakor, Harris, Mutua, Rotatori, and Algozzine (2012) contended that a collaborative inclusionary model between general education and special education can work if staff are provided with appropriate professional development. Clearly, there is much support for continued professional development for staff to efficaciously implement inclusive practices. Nonetheless, strong leadership is the conduit for realizing a need for continued education in this area and vehemently supporting that need.

Leadership. Do principals' interpretations and knowledge of LRE trickle down to impact students' placement? Sumbera, Pazey, and Lashley (2014) implied that principals' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions regarding LRE and FAPE influence their policies on inclusion. O'Laughlin and Lindle (2015) echoed the same sentiment as the aforementioned authors in terms of principals' interpretations of special education placement law and the effects those interpretations have on placement policy within their buildings. According to O'Laughlin and Lindle (2015), principals' ideas of what the law says differed from the intent, not to mention, principals may fail to realize that special education is a service and not a place (O'Laughlin & Lindle, 2015). Ultimately, their knowledge, or lack thereof in terms of LRE and FAPE, influences placements for students.

School leaders, specifically principals, having a knowledge base of special education is vital to the success of students with special needs under that principal's direction (Grogan, 2013). To resolve situations dealing with IEPs, 504s, due process hearings, and staying in compliance with IDEA, one must possess a deep understanding of special education in order to make sound decisions involving students with disabilities. Unfortunately, many school leaders have neither received proper education nor had

professional development in special education (Grogan, 2013; Yell, 2013). Therefore, these leaders place districts at a significant disadvantage compared to districts that do have leaders well versed in special education. Yell (2013) reinforced the imperativeness of school leaders needing extensive training to be both compliant with IDEA and to avoid common procedural errors in the provision of special education services in the LRE. Potmesilova, Potmesil, and Roubalova (2013) reiterated that supervision is a needed prevention for staff morale, and a correlation exists between strong supervision and attitudes of those inclusively serving students with disabilities. Lack of administrative support has shown to negatively impact the provision of inclusive practices (Fuchs, 2010).

Of additional note is that lack of administrative staff can impact the success of inclusion (Murphy, 2018). Although some educational leaders may know better, in terms of special education law and what should be done to provide students with both compliant and beneficial placement, if they are overwhelmed in daily work, the best intentions will likely fall short. Grieco (2019) reinforced that a significant factor in the success of an inclusive model is time from all within the education system. If school leaders are bearing too many responsibilities and cannot commit the time required to make inclusion meaningful to all students, inclusion will fail to thrive.

Summary

Weintraub (2012) noted that although special education delivery has improved substantially over the last half-century, LRE and increased access to the general education classroom and curriculum for students with disabilities need to continue to advance. How can the issue of students being in LRE settings develop? One way is to

promote inclusive practices from an early age. Lee, Yeung, Tracey, and Barker (2015)

found that in an early childhood setting, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion depend on

the severity of the special needs. This study also implied that regardless of staff role,

their opinions were similar in terms of educating students with disabilities.

Additionally, the application of a special education continuum of services may

have a negative impact on restrictive placement. Because there is an option for students

to be removed from their nondisabled peers, it oftentimes happens that districts try to

prove why students cannot be in a general education setting instead of how they can meet

with success in that setting (Ryndak et al., 2014). A suggestion that is offered to guide

IEP teams is to bring special education to the child and not the child to special education

(Marx et al., 2014). Therefore, if appropriate services can be provided in the general

education classroom for students with disabilities, and they enhance educational benefit

as a result, that is their LRE and there is no need for removal from this setting.

Ultimately, the move to more inclusive practices has come a far way since the

days of students with disabilities not being educated at all. Inclusion is currently revered

as a best practice in education. Suleymanov (2015) remarked that effective inclusion is

the result of no single factor but a combination of planning, staff training, and appropriate

funding. Nonetheless, increasing tasks placed on teachers' and principals' shoulders can

make differentiating instruction and delivering services to students with special needs in a

general education setting to be taxing. Teachers' and principals' attitudes and

perceptions can impact a child's authentic LRE from not being realized. Therefore,

gaining insight into teachers' and principals' views on inclusion is a foundational step in

determining what measures need to be taken to eliminate negative attitudes toward inclusion and promote a successful inclusive setting.

Special education has made so many positive strides to honor all individuals' civil rights. Inclusion and LRE are two substantial successes of this initiative. To move backwards to separate classrooms and schools for those with disabilities would be a detrimental reversal that cannot happen (McLeskey, 2007). Nonetheless, to continue paving the way for inclusion and the rights of students to be educated in their LREs, a study into the perceptions of teachers and principals needs examined to determine underlying negativity that is hindering ideal inclusive practices. This research study can serve as a starting point for further research as to the impact of providing teachers and principals with necessary training and support to educate students with disabilities within the general education setting and abolish pessimism toward this vital educational initiative.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Teachers' and principals' views of inclusion likely exist along a continuum starting at negative perceptions of inclusion and progressing to positive perceptions. As illustrated by the conceptual framework in Figure 1, the purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between various factors and the impact they have on teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusive education. The factors that will be investigated include years of educational experience, amount of special education background, and degree of support by district administrators. Ultimately, the study will explore the relationship between the variables and teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion. Future study could determine the impact those perceptions have on the placement of students with disabilities. The dependent variable is teachers' and principals' perception of inclusion and the independent variables are years of educational experience, extent of special education background, and level of support by district administrators.
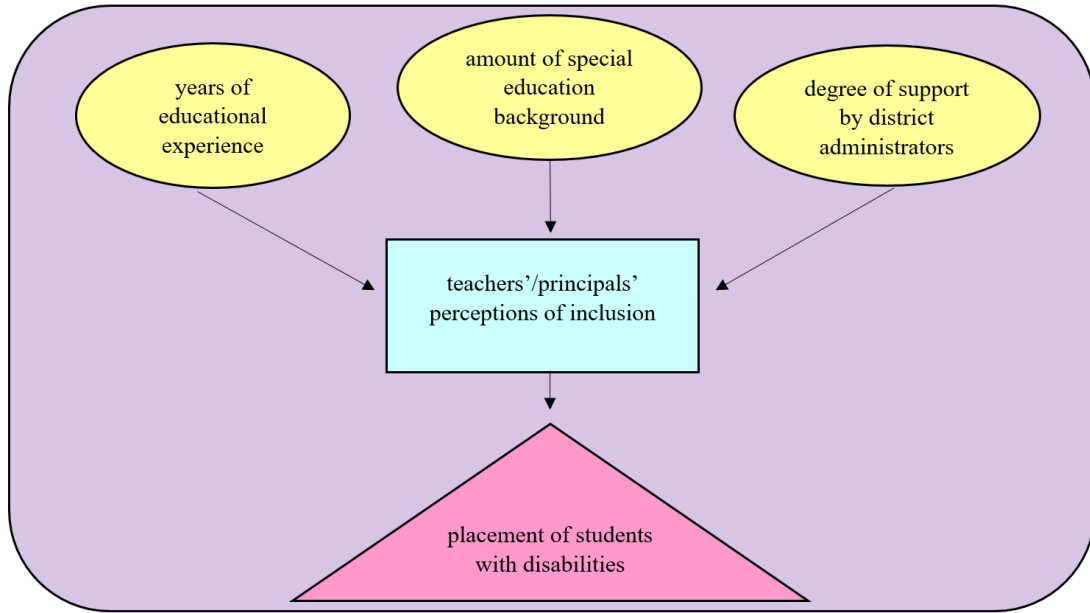
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Study

This chapter will progress to detail the research purpose, questions, hypotheses, design, target population, sampling method and size, instrumentation, analysis methods, validity, and limitations of the research.

Research, Purpose, and Questions

In short, LRE denotes that students with disabilities are educated with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Appropriateness is determined by both principals and teachers as they are contributing members of a child's IEP team. Therefore, principals' and teachers' attitudes and perceptions of inclusion can be strong indicators of whether they not only embrace inclusion, but also will facilitate a successful model of inclusive education. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the relationships between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion with their years of experience, special education background, and degree of support felt by their

administrators. Principals' and teachers' attitudes are important because these feelings can impact the educational experience for students, how accepted children with differences are, future funding for special education, and future policies regarding LRE and inclusion. Also, attitudes and perceptions can indicate future professional development trainings needed as well as possible trainings that would help in teacher and principal preparation programs to aid in the future of optimal inclusive education practices. To this end, the following questions will guide the study at hand.

1. What differences exist between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion?

2. Is there a relationship between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion and their years of educational experience?

3. Is there a relationship between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion and their extent of background in special education?

4. Is there a relationship between teachers' perceptions of inclusion and their level of support they receive from administrators?

Research Design

This study was a quantitative correlational research design. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2006), a correlation exists when two things perform in a synchronized manner. A correlational research design for this study was appropriate because the researcher was determining if teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion acted in a corresponding fashion with years of experience in education, background in special education, and level of administrative support. Field (2017) noted

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that in a correlational study, one observes what naturally goes on in the world without interfering with it.

For the purpose of determining if correlations exist, a survey was selected to measure teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion. A questionnaire was sent to participants that asked about years of experience in education, background in special education, and degree of administrative support.

On January 16, 2020, an email was sent from the researcher's dissertation advisor to all of the district teachers and principals from the selected school district inviting them to participate in the researcher's study in an effort to determine if there were relationships that existed between perceptions of inclusion and years of educational experience, background in special education, and level of administrative support. A link in this email opened a survey (Appendix A) and questionnaire (Appendix B) through Survey Monkey. A deadline of January 30, 2020 was noted in the email. A follow-up email reminder was sent by the researcher's dissertation advisor one week prior to the deadline. Once all participants' surveys and questionnaires were submitted on January 30, 2020, the researcher input data into SPSS for analysis.

Target Population

The participants in this study included principals and teachers in the selected Beaver County, Pennsylvania school district. The district administrators include the superintendent, high school principal, high school assistant principal, two 3rd-8th grade co-principals, and a PreK-2nd grade principal/director of special education.

During the 2015-2016 school year, 255 students (approximately 17% of the overall student population) were identified as needing special education services. Of

those 255 students, 69.9% of students with disabilities were inside the general education classroom for 80% or more of the school day (District Plan Report, 2018).

In 2008, 35 district students with disabilities were placed in alternative placements. This placed the district alternative setting percentage at 15% compared to the state average of 4.2%. This number was reduced to 17 students in 2014 in outside placements. Only 12 students with disabilities were educated in outside placements in the 2017-2018 school year. The district is comprised of 96.4% white students and 2.6% black students. Of the students with disabilities, 95.3% are white.

(District Special Education Plan Report, 2018).

Sampling Method and Sample Size

The sampling method is considered heterogeneity sampling. Trochim and Donnelly (2006) noted that heterogeneity sampling occurs when one wants to include multiple viewpoints. In this particular study, all teachers (special education, general education, specials teachers) of all grade levels as well as principals had the opportunity to be in the sample as they represented varying opinions on inclusion thus making heterogeneity sampling ideal for this study. If all participants chose to partake, the sample size would include 114 individuals. Every teacher and principal in the selected school district had the opportunity to participate in this study. All possible participants are white.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation utilized was the MATIES survey (see Appendix A). According to Mahat (2008), MATIES measures the affective, cognitive, and behavioral attitudes in regard to inclusion. The affective factor measures teachers' emotions and

feelings regarding inclusion. The cognitive factor measures teachers' attitudes and perceptions about inclusion. The behavioral factor measures teachers' willingness to promote inclusive practices. This instrument incorporates both theoretical and psychometric approaches to scale development. These components of the attitudes' instrument include brevity, ease of administration, flexibility, validity, and reliability (Mahat, 2008). The MATIES utilizes a Likert-type scale that allows for six ratings in regard to the inclusion of students with disabilities - *Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Agree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree and Strongly Disagree*. Mahat (2008) asserted the Item Separation Index with MATIES has values close to 1.0 for each of the subscales signifying that the items are separated appropriately for the variable being measured. Furthermore, the Teacher Separation Index delivered adequate indication of the capacity of the subscales to distinguish between opposing levels of teachers' attitudes. The Cronbach reliability for each subscale was significant with alpha coefficients between 0.77 and 0.91 (Mahat, 2008). MATIES can be considered a valid, reliable multi-dimensional tool in determining educators' attitudes towards inclusion.

In addition to the MATIES was a questionnaire inquiring about the participants' years in education, extent of background in special education, and rating of level of support they feel they receive from their administrators (see Appendix B).

Data Analysis Methods

Data were analyzed for frequency and percentages of teachers and principals by level and frequency and percentages of teachers and principals by role. Additionally, frequency of years of experience with special education and level of support from administrators were noted in Chapter 4. Furthermore, data were evaluated with a variety

of tests of statistical assumptions in an effort to ensure that the data were tenable for the respective analyses. A preliminary analysis was conducted to look at reliability estimates. Also, results were provided to determine relationships between role and factor responses. Pearson's Zero-order Correlation between Factors was utilized. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was run to address the three research questions.

Summary

This chapter proposes the outline for the quantitative study at hand. Ultimately, both teachers and principals are active voices of an IEP team. Their perceptions of inclusion do impact the placement of students with disabilities under their direction. Therefore, the intent of the methodology of this study was to examine the possible relationship that three specific factors could have on teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion within the selected Beaver County, Pennsylvania county school district. The purpose of determining the impact of such factors was to decide what measures need to be taken to rectify factors leading to negative perceptions of inclusion so students can truly be educated in their LREs.

Chapter 4

Results

The current investigation examined the relationships that exist between teachers'

and principals' perceptions of inclusion and three specific variables. These variables

include years of educational experience, extent of background in special education, and

level of support they receive from administrators.

The research questions guiding this study include:

1. What differences exist between teachers' and principals' perceptions of

inclusion?

2. Is there a relationship between teachers' and principals' perceptions of

inclusion and their years of educational experience?

3. Is there a relationship between teachers' and principals' perceptions of

inclusion and their extent of background in special education?

4. Is there a relationship between teachers' perceptions of inclusion and the level

of support they receive from administrators?

Chapter Summary

Descriptive statistics were computed regarding participants and their frequency of

participation broken up by grade span in which they currently work. Relationships

between perceptions of inclusion and years of educational experience, extent of

background in special education, and level of support received from administrators were

reported. Preliminary results provided the reliability in regards to the relationship

between role and factors of the respondents. Finally, the MANOVA was utilized to

examine each of the aforementioned research questions.

Descriptive Statistics

The levels of teachers and principals were broken into three categories. The categories

were those in grade levels PreK-2nd grade, 3rd-8th grade, and 9th-12th grade.

Table 2.

Frequency and Percentages of Teachers and Principals by Level

Level	Frequency	Percent
PreK-2nd	22	28.6
3rd-8th	32	41.6
9th-12th	23	29.9

As evidenced in Table 2, Grades 3-8 represented the highest frequency of

respondents. Grades PreK-2 represented the lowest frequency of respondents. The actual

population includes 31 individuals (71% participation) in Grades PreK-2, 46 individuals

(69.6% participation) in Grades 3-8, and 37 individuals (62.2% participation) in Grades

9-12. In total, 77 individuals completed the survey out of a possible 114 respondents.

This yields a 67.5% participation rate. The grade span with the highest percentage of

participation was PreK-2nd grade, and the lowest percentage was 9th-12th grades.

The frequencies and percentages of teachers and principals by role were broken

down in Table 3.

Table 3.

Frequency and Percentages of Teachers and Principals by Role

Role	Frequency	Percent
Teacher	72	93.5
Principal	5	6.5

As noted in Table 3, 72 teachers responded to the survey (93.5%), and 5 administrators responded (6.5%). There are 109 teachers total in the district. Therefore, 66.1 % of teachers participated. There are five principals in the district; 100% of principals participated in the investigation.

The average reported years in education were 17.43 (sd = 7.40). The years reported were broken down into quartiles, with the first quartile including up to 12 years, the second quartile including up to 17.5 years, and the third quartile being 21.75 years. The minimum years of educational experience were one and the maximum was 35.

Table 4 provides a breakdown of the level of experience in special education.

Table 4.

Years of Experience with Special Education

Level	0	8	10	29
PreK-2nd	21	1	0	0
3rd-8th	32	0	0	0
9th-12th	21	0	1	1

Table 4 notes the years of experience with Special Education were reported as M = .61 (sd = 3.60). A total of 74 respondents indicated no years or provided no response.

Table 5 depicts the level of support teachers at each grade range felt from administrators.

Table 5.

Level of Support from Principals

Level	No support	Minimal	Average	Fair	Exceptional
PreK-2nd	0	1	7	6	7
3rd-8th	2	8	9	4	7
9th-12th	1	3	10	4	3

PreK-2nd grade staff had the least amount of respondents with no support (0). Third through eighth grades had the most individuals indicating no support (2). PreK-2nd

grade staff and 3rd-8th grade staff had the same number of respondents indicate exceptional support (7).

Preliminary Analysis

Reliability estimates were computed based on the guidelines reported in Mahat (2008). The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6.

Reliability Estimates

Factor	Cronbach's α	N of Items
Cognitive	0.721	6
Affective	0.793	6
Behavioral	0.855	6

As indicated above, all reliability estimates exceed .70, which is considered an acceptable level according to Field (2017). Since the reliability of the factors was found to be acceptable, factors were constructed by aggregating the mean responses for the six items associated with each factor. Item numbers 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 were recoded prior to the construction of the factors since these were negatively worded.

Table 7 displays the relationship between the respondents' roles and their factor responses of cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

Table 7.

Relationship between Role and Factor Responses

Factor		Teachers	Principals
Cognitive	Pearson Correlation	-0.199	-0.553

		0.097	0.334
Affective	Pearson Correlation	**-.239***	-0.431
	Sig.	0.045	0.469
Behavioral	Pearson Correlation	**-.315****	-0.734
	Sig.	0.007	0.158

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As indicated in Table 7, there is a statistically significant, small negative relationship between years teaching and responses on the affective factor. There is also a statistically significant, small negative relationship between years teaching and responses on the behavioral factor.

Table 8 provides the correlation between the three computed factors.

Table 8.

Pearson's Zero-Order Correlation between Factors

	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioral
Cognitive	-	.579**	.750**
Affective		-	.693**
Behavioral			-

Since the factors are highly correlated, a MANOVA was determined to be the best analysis to address the three research questions.

Research Question Two

Research Question Two asked: Is there a relationship between teachers' and

principals' perceptions of inclusion and their years of educational experience?

Table 9 looks at the results of the MANOVA between years and role on factors.

Table 9.

Results of MANOVA between Years and Role on Factors

Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.
Years	Cognitive	4.44	0.038
	Affective	4.78	0.032
	Behavioral	11.63	0.001
Role	Cognitive	3.17	0.079
	Affective	1.73	0.192
	Behavioral	0.01	0.925

Results of the MANOVA indicate that Box's M Test ($F = .048$) and Levene's Test of Homogeneity ($p > .05$) were tenable. The Multivariate Test indicates that both Years, $F(3,71) = 3.94$, $p = .012$, and role, $F(3,71) = 2.97$, $p = .037$, were significant. The Between Subjects Tests indicates that these differences exist across all factors for Years, but only exist marginally for Role on the cognitive factor.

Figure 2 provides a graphical depiction of the average response on each factor by role.
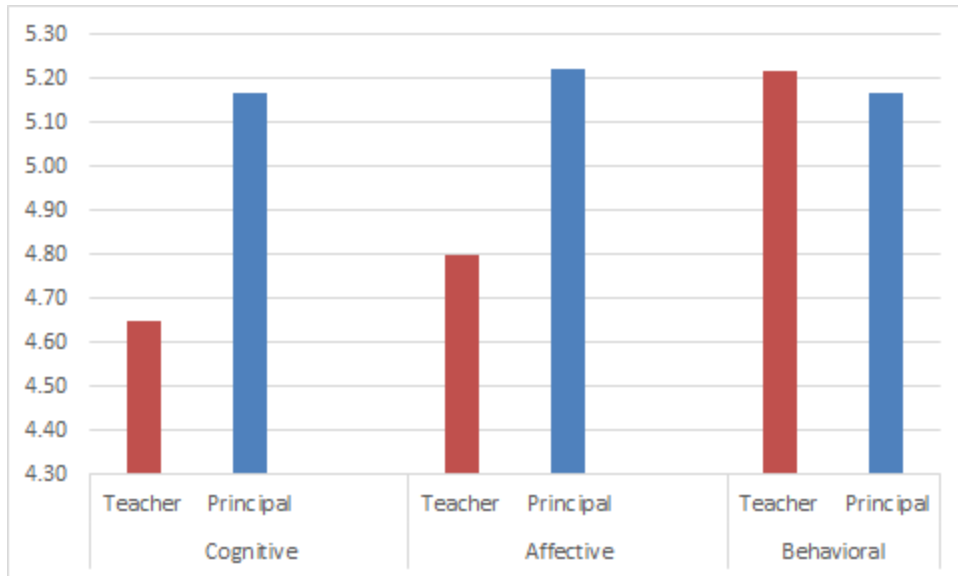
Figure 2. Average Response on Each Factor by Role

Figure 2 shows a trend between the roles of respondents and the cognitive factor. There is no significance between roles of respondents and affective nor behavioral factors.

Table 10 provides the mean responses on each factor for the teachers and the principals.

Table 10.

Average Response on Factors by Role; F Test

Factor	Role	Mean	SD	*F*	Sig.
Cognitive	Teacher	4.65	0.69		
	Principal	5.17	0.92	2.54	.116
Affective	Teacher	4.80	0.82		
	Principal	5.22	0.67	1.24	.270
Behavioral	Teacher	5.22	0.59		
	Principal	5.17	0.90	.039	.845

As indicated above, the results of the F test show no significant differences between the average response of teachers and principals on each of the factors.

Research Question Three

Research Question Three asked: Is there a relationship between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion and their extent of background in special education?

Table 11 reports the years of special education experience by factor.

Table 11.

Reported Years of Special Education Experience by Factor

Years	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioral
10	4.67	4.60	5.00
29	6.00	4.17	6.00
8	4.50	5.00	4.83

In regard to the responses from this question, 13 individuals indicated zero years of special education experience. Three individuals indicated 10, 29, and 8 years of special education experience respectively. All other participants had missing responses.

Research Question Four

Research Question Four asked: Is there a relationship between teachers' perceptions of inclusion and the level of support they receive from administrators?

Table 12 provides the results of the MANOVA for teachers' reported level of administrative support.

Table 12.

MANOVA Results for Levels of Support

Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.
Support	Cognitive	1.38	0.250
	Affective	0.99	0.421
	Behavioral	2.12	0.087

Results of the MANOVA indicate that Box's M Test ($F = .049$) and Levene's Test of Homogeneity ($p>.05$) were tenable. The Multivariate Test indicates that level of support was not significant, $F(3,65)=1.59$, $p = .124$. The Between Subjects Tests indicates that these differences exist across all factors for Years, but only exist marginally for role on the cognitive factor.

Table 13 provides level of support across average factor score.

Table 13.

Level of Support by Factor Score

	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioral
No	3.94	4.00	4.33
Minimal	4.45	4.87	5.33
Average	4.68	4.77	5.19
Fair	4.71	4.73	5.35
Exceptional	4.82	4.99	5.25

Table 13 demonstrates that the average response across all factors was similar. Therefore, the level of support that the teacher reported on his or her responses to the inclusion factors did not have a significant impact on their perceptions of inclusion.

Table 14 provides the average factor scores between role and level.

Table 14.

Average Factor Scores by Role and Level

	Grade Span	Teacher	Principal
Cognitive	PreK-2nd	4.79	6.00
	3rd-8th	4.47	4.17
	9th-12th	4.77	5.75
Affective	PreK-2nd	5.01	5.00
	3rd-8th	4.77	4.85
	9th-12th	4.63	5.70
Behavioral	PreK-2nd	5.37	6.00
	3rd-8th	5.19	4.25
	9th-12th	5.11	5.67

In Table 14, the largest difference for the cognitive factor was between teachers and principals in PreK-2. The largest difference between the affective factors was teachers and principals in Grades 9-12. The largest difference between the behavioral factors was between teachers and principals in Grades 3-8.

Summary

In total, 67.5% of teachers and principals within this Beaver County, Pennsylvania school district participated in this investigation. This broke down to 72 teachers and five principals. There was a high reliability revealed. Average to high level of support by administration in supporting inclusive practices was noted by teachers. Additionally, there was a high correlation between the three factors of cognitive,

affective, and behavioral. Two MANOVA tests were run. The MANOVA results for

levels of support were not significant. The second MANOVA demonstrated that the

average response across all factors was similar. Chapter 5 will describe the results of this

study in relation to implications of current research on inclusive practices of students

with disabilities.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This study was conducted in an effort to glean the relationships that exist between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion and their years of educational experience, background in special education, and level of support felt by administrators. The MATIES survey in Appendix A (2008) was administered in the winter of 2020 to all teachers and principals within a Beaver County, Pennsylvania school district. Additional questions were asked regarding the factors of educational experience, background in special education, and level of support from administrators (Appendix B). This chapter provides a summary of the major findings from the study, the limitations, and recommendations for further investigation.

Summary of Findings

Research Questions One and Two

Research Question One asked: What differences exist between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion? This is an overarching question that will cover the three remaining questions. Research Question Two asked: Is there a relationship between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion and their years of educational experience? In the review of MANOVA results, it is evident there is a significant relationship between years of educational experience and teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion.

The average response for teachers on the cognitive and affective factors was lower than principals. This could be partially as a result of principals being further removed from the classroom when compared to a teacher. They are not in the trenches of

planning instruction daily and differentiating for those with disabilities. Principals' responses were marginally lower than teachers' on the behavioral factor. This can be explained by the wording of the behavioral questions. The questions were more geared toward teachers than principals.

When analyzing the role of the teacher and the principal across the affective, cognitive, and behavioral factors, a statistically significant, small negative relationship between the years teaching and responses on the affective and behavioral factors surfaced. MacFarlane and Woolfson (2013), had similar findings in that more seasoned teachers had more negative perceptions of inclusion.

There are a few possibilities as to why this study has demonstrated such results. Saloviita and Takala (2010) noted that when teachers have had experience with inclusion, their perceptions are more positive than the perceptions of those without this involvement. As a result, they are more willing to have students with disabilities in their classrooms. More seasoned teachers have likely had less experience with inclusion. Teachers with less formal experience have been taught in preservice education programs that focus on inclusion. Teacher-prep programs that advocate for students with disabilities to be separated from their nondisabled peers virtually no longer exist. Therefore, teachers with less experience have likely been educated in undergraduate and graduate courses promoting students being educated in their LREs with specially designed instruction and have had exposure to inclusive practices during their preservice education.

Gaines and Barnes (2017) found that teachers with more than 10 years of experience had added negative views of inclusion. To the contrary, teachers with more

years of teaching experience are more likely to have preservice experience at a time when inclusion was not at the forefront of special education. As a result, they may present more negative perceptions in the attitude and behavioral factors. These findings are in conflict with an earlier study by Barnes and Gaines (2015), where results noted that teachers with fewer years of educational experience tend to have more negative perceptions of inclusion. Although findings in this study and current research are mixed, Hwang and Evans (2011) demonstrated that years of experience does have an impact on perceptions of inclusion.

An interesting discovery relating to question one is that the aforementioned findings are evident in the teachers' role but not that of the principals'. Perhaps in the Local Education Agency (LEA) representative role that administrators play at IEP meetings, they have further exposure to the benefits of inclusive practices due to the degree of exposure they experience in their respective roles. They see the triumphs of inclusive practices on a child and the IEP team as a whole. Therefore, regardless of their educational years of experience, they have the opportunity to observe and evaluate best practices in special education which may, in turn, lead to them having more positive perceptions of inclusion. Their role on the IEP team allows them to witness how different placement and specially designed instruction positively impact students' success. More research is warranted in this area.

Research Question Three

Research Question Three asked: Is there a relationship between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion and their extent of background in special education? Due to only three respondents indicating years of special education experience, it is

challenging to determine a relationship between such variables. One individual did indicate 29 years of special education experience. On the cognitive and affective factors, this individual did have the highest possible perceptions of inclusion. The other two respondents had eight and 10 years of special education experience respectively. Their responses across factors were lower than the individual with 29 years of educational experience. With so few responses, a clear relationship cannot be determined. Nonetheless, the three responses lend to the notion that the greater years of special education experience yields a more positive outlook on the results/benefits of inclusion. This notion coincides with Zagona, Kurth, and MacFarland (2017) who found a correlation between educators' preparedness for special education and their level of special education courses and/or professional development. McCray and McHatton (2007) argued that preservice teachers have more positive perceptions of inclusion after taking a course on the importance of inclusion and the service delivery model that will provide FAPE to students with disabilities.

Research Question Four

Research Question Four asked: Is there a relationship between teachers' perceptions of inclusion and the level of support they receive from administrators? The average response across all factors was similar regardless of level of support. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of inclusion and the level of support they receive from administrators.

Current research argues the importance of strong, well-versed leaders in special education. Principals having a knowledge base of special education is vital to the success of students with special needs in that principal's building (Grogan, 2013). To be

proactive and competent in dealing with IEPs, 504s, due process hearings, and complying with IDEA, one must possess a deep understanding of both compliance issues regarding special education as well as appropriately servicing children with special needs within their LREs. Although the current study does not show a trend with administrative support impacting teachers' perceptions of inclusion, Fuchs (2010) found that lack of administrative support has shown to negatively impact the provision of inclusive practices.

Limitations

A few limitations were evidenced in this study. Findings and recommendations can only be generalized to districts of similar demographics. Additionally, respondents to the survey may feel a need to answer in a socially desirable manner. Social desirability bias poses a validity concern in studies like those involving perceptions of inclusion; respondents tend to answer in a way in which they will be perceived positively (Lüke & Grosche, 2018).

An additional limitation to the study was the recent realignment of administrators within the district. Prior to the 2019-2020 school year, there was a PreK-5th grade principal, 6th-8th grade principal, 9th-12th grade principal, and assistant principal. There was also a superintendent and assistant superintendent in the district. As of July 1, 2019, there was a substantial shift in administration. The superintendent retired, and the assistant superintendent was promoted to superintendent. A position was created for K-12 Director of Special Education combined with PreK-2nd grade principal. The former elementary principal became co-principal of Grades 3-8 along with the former middle school principal. In December of 2019, the high school principal resigned. The former

superintendent stepped in as an emergency interim high school principal until the position could be permanently filled. As a result of all of the changes, data were limited in that teachers' and principals' perceptions could not necessarily be tied to one specific administrator since all buildings in the district had recently experienced quite a change. Furthermore, many teachers work for more than one supervisor as they straddle multiple grade levels and, therefore, multiple principals.

Recommendations for Further Study

Recommendations for further investigation would include expanding the study beyond the demographics of the small, rural district studied. In such a study of a higher magnitude, it would be interesting to see if the results vary significantly. The same study could be conducted in all districts in Beaver County, Pennsylvania.

In the current study, the researcher was the special education director for the district being investigated. A limitation of this would be that respondents may have felt they needed to answer a certain way, not only to be viewed in a more positive light, but also to appease their administrator with the knowledge that the admintrator is their supervisor who evaluates them and has the authority to shape professional development based on research implications.

Another recommendation for the study would be to develop and utilize an instrument in which detailed scenarios regarding specific student needs are detailed. Informal feedback from teachers and principals with the study using the MATIES was that the statements were too broad in nature. They had difficulty rating statements when they might be answered differently based on the severity of various students' disabilities.

An additional study focus might be to investigate the attitudes of teachers and principals on various models of inclusion. The study at hand is broad in its discussion of inclusion; an important component of inclusion is what that service delivery looks like and how that ultimately benefits the students with disabilities, those without, and the teachers and principals involved in their schooling.

Conclusion

The implications of this study provide districts with possible professional development needs in relation to special education, inclusion, and LRE. Because there is a small, negative relationship between higher years of teaching experience and lower levels of inclusion, the leadership team in this district should be analyzing professional development opportunities pertaining to areas of Dweck's (2016) growth mindset, special education law and history, co-teaching models, specially designed instruction, and supplementary aids and services. Ultimately, students with and without disabilities retain a right to be educated alongside one another; the responsibility of how to make this initiative successful lies with school leaders to ensure the appropriate training for staff members. Leithwood and Sleegers (2006) found that a transformational leader can motivate staff to develop skill sets of new heights. Their transformational leadership can create the climate and culture within schools to allow students an immersive educational experience.

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Appendix A

Items on the Multidimensional Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES)

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree

Cognitive

1. I believe that an inclusive school is one that permits academic progression of all students regardless of their ability.
2. I believe that students with a disability should be taught in special education schools.
3. I believe that inclusion facilitates socially appropriate behavior among all students.
4. I believe that any student can learn in the regular curriculum of the school if the curriculum is adapted to meet their individual needs.
5. I believe that students with a disability should be segregated because it is too expensive to modify the physical environment of the school.
6. I believe that students with a disability should be in special education schools so that they do not experience rejection in the regular school.

Affective

7. I get frustrated when I have difficulty communicating with students with a disability.
8. I get upset when students with a disability cannot keep up with the day-to-day curriculum in my classroom.
9. I get irritated when I am unable to understand students with a disability.
10. I am uncomfortable including students with a disability in a regular classroom with other students without a disability.
11. I am disconcerted that students with a disability are included in the regular classroom, regardless of the severity of the disability.
12. I get frustrated when I have to adapt the curriculum to meet the individual needs of all students.

Behavioral

13. I am willing to encourage students with a disability to participate in all social activities in the regular classroom.
14. I am willing to adapt the curriculum to meet the individual needs of all students regardless of their disability.
15. I am willing to physically include students with a severe disability in the regular classroom with the necessary support.
16. I am willing to modify the physical environment to include students with a disability in the regular classroom.
17. I am willing to adapt my communication techniques to ensure that all students with an emotional and behavioral disorder can be successfully included in the regular classroom.
18. I am willing to adapt the assessment of individual students in order for the inclusive education to take place.

Appendix B

Teacher and Principal Role and Experience Questionnaire

- Role in the school district: teacher or principal

- Grade span in which you currently work: K-5, 6-8, 9-12

- Type the number of years of professional experience you have in education.
  Professional experience refers to the sum of time being employed as either a
  teacher and/or principal.

  _____

- Type the amount of experience of special education that you hold. Indicate
  whether this education was obtained at the collegiate level or through professional
  development opportunities.

  _____

- Number associated to the level of overall support you feel your administrators
  provide in an effort for inclusive education to be effective:

0=No support

1=Minimal support

2=Average support

3=Fair support

4=Exceptional support

I am conducting a study to investigate relationships that exist between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion and 1.) years in education, 2.) background in special education, and 3.) degree of administrative support and am inviting you to participate in this project. In this study, you will be asked to rate your level of agreement with statements associated to the inclusion of students with disabilities. I will also need to collect information to describe you such as your role in the school district (principal or teacher), grade span in which you currently work, years of professional experience, amount of special education background, and degree of administrative support you have in inclusively educating students with disabilities.

The survey you will be asked to participate in will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and is distributed and collected via Survey Monkey. There is no potential harm to those surveyed as the research data will be kept confidential.

The potential benefit to you from being in this study is that the results may help you and the district better meet the needs of students with disabilities. The instrumentation utilized will be the Multidimensional Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES) survey. MATIES measures affective, cognitive, and behavioral attitudes in regard to inclusion. Rating choices for statements involving inclusion will be *Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Agree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree,* and *Strongly Disagree*.

Since the responses come from sensitive questions about attitudes toward inclusion, a breach in confidentiality could cause harm to participants if they knew others had knowledge of their positions regarding this topic. Therefore, no identifying information is being collected and no identifying demographic information about responses will be reported. Principal data will be reported as aggregate information only.

Your privacy is important, and I will handle all information collected in a confidential manner. I will report the results of the project in a way that will not identify any one person. I do plan to present the results of the study as a published dissertation and potentially in organizationally affiliated journals/periodicals.

You do not have to be in this study. If you do not want to, please do not complete the survey. If you do agree, you can stop participating at any time. If you wish to withdraw, please inform me or the contact person listed below.

If you have questions about this research project please contact Ms. Emily Smith at (724) 758-7512 x3034 or Dr. Karen Larwin at (330) 941-2231. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research project, you may contact the Office of Research Services at YSU (330) 941-2377 or at YSUIRB@ysu.edu.

10/16/2019
Date   Protocol Number

CLAIM OF EXEMPTION APPLICATION
Request for designation as Exempt for a research project involving no risk to human subjects

A. INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION			

Please list all study personnel involved in the conduct of this study. All study personnel must complete required training in human subject research and provide to the IRB office documentation verifying completion of the requirement. The IRB will not review a study without such forms on file for all research personnel. Only YSU faculty, staff, students, or registered volunteers are considered YSU affiliated and thus covered by the YSU IRB review. All non-affiliated study personnel must have their participation reviewed by the appropriate IRB. (Attach a separate sheet if more space is needed.)

STUDY TITLE	Will They Be Welcomed In? The Impact of K-12 Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions of Inclusion on the Placement of Students with Disabilities		
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR OR FACULTY ADVISOR	Dr. Karen Larwin	Phone Extension (330)941-2231	Email Address khlarwin@ysu.edu
DEPARTMENT	Counseling, School Psychology, & Educational Leadership		
CO-INVESTIGATOR OR STUDENT INVESTIGATOR	Emily Smith	Phone Extension (724)407-8464	Email Address esmith03@student.ysu.edu
CO-INVESTIGATOR OR STUDENT INVESTIGATOR		Phone Extension	Email Address
CO-INVESTIGATOR OR STUDENT INVESTIGATOR		Phone Extension	Email Address

B. SPONSOR/FUNDING INFORMATION			
Will this project be supported by an external funding agency?	☐ Yes	☒ No	
If yes, please identify the source and contact information			
Agency:	Contact Person:	Phone:	Email:

C. LOCATION OF RESEARCH		
Where will the study take place?	YSU	Other Facility Riverside Beaver County School District
If not at YSU, attach a letter of cooperation on the letterhead of the facility and provide contact information. If there are multiple facilities, attach an additional page with the information for each.		

1

Facility Name: Riverside Beaver County School District	Contact Person: Bret Trotta, Superintendent	Phone: (724)758-7512 x3028	Email: btrotta@rbcsd.com

D. RATIONALE FOR EXEMPT CATEGORY CLAIMED
The information must include a brief specific description, <u>written in lay terms</u>, of the procedure(s) involving the human subjects in sufficient detail to demonstrate to the IRB reviewer that the research protocol meets the requirements for each category of exemption claimed in this human subjects research protocol. Complete <u>all</u> of the following :
Describe the background of the study and the objectives of the research project. The purpose of this study is to figure out relationships that exist between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion. Once the perceptions are revealed, school leaders can focus on professional development that will equip teachers and principals with skills that can contribute to more positive attitudes towards inclusion thus resulting in students being educated in less restrictive environments.
Provide the rationale for the use of the selected subject population and plans for recruitment (include the number of subjects, inclusions/exclusions). The researcher is an administrator in the Riverside Beaver County School District so has interest in strengths/needs within the district. All teachers and principals within the district will be asked to participate. There are four principals and approximately 125 teachers. There will be no exclusions. Identifiers of the district will not be present in the published dissertation.
Will your subjects be compensated? How? They will not be compensated.
Describe the methods to be used for data collection and data analysis. The Multidimensional Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES) survey and a questionnaire will be distributed electronically. Data will be analyzed for correlational relationships using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
Describe the risks and benefits, if any, to the subjects. There are no risks. Benefits include subjects being a part of a study where results may help them better meet the needs of students with disabilities.
What steps will be taken to protect the privacy (anonymity and/or confidentiality) of the subjects. Survey results will not include names and will be anonymous. All results will be submitted electronically and will not be linked back to respondents. The district name will not appear in the dissertation.
What plans do you have for data retention and document storage? All data and document storage will not have individuals' names on them and therefore will not link responses back to any individuals. The district's name will not be disclosed in publication.
You must notify the IRB immediately if an adverse event should occur during your project, however unlikely. What other procedures will you use to manage and adverse event if one should occur? No adverse effects can be foreseen in this study. If one came up, I would consult with IRB and my dissertation chair.

E. SURVEYS AND QUESTIONNAIRES, IF APPLICABLE
Please attach a copy of each survey, questionnaire, or other instrument that you intend to use in this study.
Is the Instrument you are using self-generated? If not, identify the source of the document.   Two instruments will be used. One is the Multidimensional Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES) survey. The other is a self-generated questionnaire inquiring about subjects' roles and experience.
Describe the setting and mode of administering the instrument (e.g., by phone, one-on-one, group)   The survey and questionnaire will be administered electronically via email.

F. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING DATA, IF APPLICABLE
Existing data is data that was collected before the research is proposed and must have been collected for reasons other than the proposed research project.
Describe the database or data to be analyzed. NA
If publicly available, give the name of the database and identify the holder of the data. If not, provide documentation that you have permission to access the data. NA
How and when was the data originally collected and how large will your sampling be? NA
Will you be recording identifiers (information items that could potentially identify human subjects)? Describe them. NA

G. INFORMED CONSENT
Ethical and regulatory guidelines ensure that potential subjects must be fully informed about the research in a manner comprehensible to them and then be allowed to choose whether to participate in the research. Attach an Informed Consent Form of your own design, according to the YSU Guidelines for Fully Informed Consent for each subject population, or a Waiver of Informed Consent Request Form. The IRB has provided a template containing the Elements of Informed Consent/Assent (per 45 CFR 116) on the YSU IRB website: http://cms.ysu.edu/administrative-offices/research/human-subjectsinstitutional-review-board. Using the template is strongly suggested in order to eliminate errors and revisions.
If the subjects are children under 18 years of age, you must provide for both written Informed Consent of the parent or guardian and for Assent of the child.
Informed Consent for an anonymous survey can take the form of a statement preceding the survey that includes the Elements of Informed Consent and states that completion of the survey implies consent.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCE STATEMENT

I certify that the information provided in this claim of exemption is complete and correct.

I understand that as Principal Investigator, I have the ultimate responsibility for the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects and the ethical conduct of this research protocol. I agree to comply with all IRB and Institutional policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects in research, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The research will not be initiated until written approval is secured from the IRB.
- The project will be performed by qualified personnel according to the research protocol
- Maintain a copy of all questionnaires, survey instruments, interview questions, data collection instruments, signed Informed Consent Forms, and information sheets for human subjects for at least three years following termination of the project
- Necessary review by the IRB will be sought if changes made in the research protocol may result in the research no longer meeting the criteria for exemption.

I will complete the required educational program on ethical principles and regulatory requirements in human subjects research before initiating a research project.

I have read and understand the above policy concerning IRB protocols.

_____   _____   _____ 10/17/2019
Principal Investigator/Faculty Advisor   Date   Co-investigator/Student Investigator   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Approving Official   DATE

INVESTIGATOR PROCEDURES CHECKLIST	
A.	After completion of screening questions, fill out the appropriate form and submit one electronic copy to the committee (email: YSUIRB@ysu.edu) and one hard copy with original signatures to the Office of Research Services, Melnick Hall, Room 2101 (phone ext.2377). Your project will be logged, screened, and referred to a Committee Member for review. The Reviewer will contact the Principal Investigator via email with the results of the review within 5-10 days of submission and you may begin collecting data at that time. The Investigator will also receive a hard copy approval memo signed by the Authorized Institutional Official via campus mail.
B.	Please review the following checklist for application completeness. IRB applications that are not complete or do not have the appropriate signatures or attachments will be returned for resubmission.

The following MUST be included with all applications:	
☑	IRB Application with all of the appropriate signatures.

The following MUST be included IF APPLICABLE:	
☑	Research Instruments (surveys, questionnaires, or other instruments) to be used
☑	Informed Consent/Assent Forms, if applicable
☐	Waiver of Informed Consent Form, If applicable
☑	Approval letters from other sites where research will be conducted.
☑	Recruitment Information

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this <u>Requirements Report</u> reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Emily Smith (ID: 7700668)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Youngstown State University (ID: 2520)
- **Institution Email:** esmith03@student.ysu.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership

- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

- **Record ID:** 29725912
- **Completion Date:** 14-Dec-2018
- **Expiration Date:** 13-Dec-2021
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)	12-Dec-2018	3/3 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Human Subjects Research (ID: 17464)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	14-Dec-2018	4/4 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?k3808e83c-43ae-4c93-acf0-063e15f35cf9-29725912

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT**

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Emily Smith (ID: 7700668)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Youngstown State University (ID: 2520)
- **Institution Email:** esmith03@student.ysu.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership

- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

- **Record ID:** 29725912
- **Report Date:** 14-Dec-2018
- **Current Score**:** 100

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)	12-Dec-2018	3/3 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	14-Dec-2018	4/4 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)	14-Dec-2018	5/5 (100%)
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For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?k3808e83c-43ae-4c93-acf0-063e15f35cf9-29725912

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 14-Dec-2018
Expiration Date 13-Dec-2021
Record ID 29725912

This is to certify that:

Emily Smith

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher (Curriculum Group)
Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Youngstown State University

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w195a6f3b-35dd-4b91-8384-a775c7f5af60-29725912

Protocol #070-20

Daniel Keown <dkeown@ysu.edu>

Tue 1/7/2020 10:34 PM

To: Emily Smith <esmith03@student.ysu.edu>; Karen H Larwin <khlarwin@ysu.edu>
Cc: ckcoy@ysu.edu <ckcoy@ysu.edu>; Karen H Larwin <khlarwin@ysu.edu>

📎 2 attachments (41 KB)

Informed consent letter amended 12.22.2019.docx; IRB application amended 12.22.2019.docx;

Dear Investigators,

Your research project "Will They Be Welcomed In? The Impact of K-12 Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions of Inclusion on the Placement of Students with Disabilities" protocol (#070-20) has been reviewed. This study seeks to examine the relationship between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion in the school environment. Participants (teachers and principals) will complete the MATIES standardized survey and an additional questionnaire during the data collection process. The investigators have indicated that all identifiable information would be removed upon the collection of data prior to analysis in an effort to limit a breach in confidentiality. The consent form also includes a statement of these risks of sharing personal and professional opinions about the decisions of inclusion in education.

The research project meets the exempt definition of 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). You may begin the investigation immediately. Please note that it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to report immediately to the YSU IRB any deviations from the protocol and/or any adverse events that occur.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Daniel J. Keown
Designated IRB Reviewer
Youngstown State University

Daniel Keown, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Vocal Music Education
Youngstown State University
Dana School of Music
www.linkedin.com/in/danieljkeown/
Facebook: **@VoicesofYSU**

__12/22/2019_____
Date

CLAIM OF EXEMPTION APPLICATION

Request for designation as Exempt for a research project involving no risk to human subjects

A. INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION			

Please list all study personnel involved in the conduct of this study. All study personnel must complete required training in human subject research and provide to the IRB office documentation verifying completion of the requirement. The IRB will not review a study without such forms on file for all research personnel. Only YSU faculty, staff, students, or registered volunteers are considered YSU affiliated and thus covered by the YSU IRB review. All non-affiliated study personnel must have their participation reviewed by the appropriate IRB. (Attach a separate sheet if more space is needed.)

STUDY TITLE	Will They Be Welcomed In? The Impact of K-12 Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions of Inclusion on the Placement of Students with Disabilities		
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR OR FACULTY ADVISOR	Dr. Karen Larwin	Phone Extension (330)941-2231	Email Address khlarwin@ysu.edu
DEPARTMENT	Counseling, School Psychology, & Educational Leadership		
CO-INVESTIGATOR OR STUDENT INVESTIGATOR	Emily Smith	Phone Extension (724)407-8464	Email Address esmith03@student.ysu.edu
CO-INVESTIGATOR OR STUDENT INVESTIGATOR		Phone Extension	Email Address
CO-INVESTIGATOR OR STUDENT INVESTIGATOR		Phone Extension	Email Address

B. SPONSOR/FUNDING INFORMATION			

Will this project be supported by an external funding agency?	☐ Yes	☒ No	
If yes, please identify the source and contact information			
Agency:	Contact Person:	Phone:	Email:

C. LOCATION OF RESEARCH		

Where will the study take place?	YSU	Other Facility Riverside Beaver County School District
If not at YSU, attach a letter of cooperation on the letterhead of the facility and provide contact information. If there are multiple facilities, attach an additional page with the information for each.		

Facility Name: Riverside Beaver County School District	Contact Person: Bret Trotta, Superintendent	Phone: (724)758-7512 x3028	Email: btrotta@rbcsd.com

D.   RATIONALE FOR EXEMPT CATEGORY CLAIMED
The information must include a brief specific description, <u>written in lay terms</u>, of the procedure(s) involving the human subjects in sufficient detail to demonstrate to the IRB reviewer that the research protocol meets the requirements for each category of exemption claimed in this human subjects research protocol. Complete <u>all</u> of the following :
Describe the background of the study and the objectives of the research project. The purpose of this study is to figure out relationships that exist between teachers' and principals' perceptions of inclusion. Once the perceptions are revealed, school leaders can focus on professional development that will equip teachers and principals with skills that can contribute to more positive attitudes towards inclusion thus resulting in students being educated in less restrictive environments.
Provide the rationale for the use of the selected subject population and plans for recruitment (include the number of subjects, inclusions/exclusions). The researcher is an administrator in the Riverside Beaver County School District so has interest in strengths/needs within the district. All teachers and principals within the district will be asked to participate. There are four principals and approximately 125 teachers. There will be no exclusions. Identifiers of the district will not be present in the published dissertation.
Will your subjects be compensated? How? They will not be compensated.
Describe the methods to be used for data collection and data analysis. The Multidimensional Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES) survey and a questionnaire will be distributed electronically. Data will be analyzed for correlational relationships using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
Describe the risks and benefits, if any, to the subjects. The limited number of principals is a risk to the principals' identity. Since the responses come from sensitive questions about attitudes toward inclusion, a breach in confidentiality could cause harm to participants if they knew others had knowledge of their positions regarding this topic. In addition, the consent form states that participants would be identified as either teacher or principal (without names attached). This could put the principal responses in a more vulnerable position since there are very few principals in a school compared to teachers. Therefore, with four principals compared to 125 teachers it may be easier to identify principal participants' responses compared to a single teacher. In order to protect from identification, no identifying information will be collected; and Dr. Larwin (who does not know the potential participants) will be responsible for data cleaning and preparation to ensure that no identifying information was provided by the participants before the data is analyzed by Ms. Smith. Benefits include subjects being a part of a study where results may help them better meet the needs of students with disabilities.
What steps will be taken to protect the privacy (anonymity and/or confidentiality) of the subjects. Survey results will not include names and will be anonymous. All results will be submitted electronically and will not be linked back to respondents. The district name will not appear in the dissertation. The data will be stored in a password protected cloud space for at least three years.

What plans do you have for data retention and document storage? All data and document storage will not have individuals' names on them and therefore will not link responses back to any individuals. The district's name will not be disclosed in publication. The data will be stored in a password protected cloud space for at least three years.
You must notify the IRB immediately if an adverse event should occur during your project, however unlikely. What other procedures will you use to manage and adverse event if one should occur? No adverse effects can be foreseen in this study. If one came up, I would consult with IRB and my dissertation chair.

E. SURVEYS AND QUESTIONNAIRES, IF APPLICABLE
Please attach a copy of each survey, questionnaire, or other instrument that you intend to use in this study.
Is the Instrument you are using self-generated? If not, identify the source of the document. 　　　Two instruments will be used. One is the Multidimensional Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES) survey. The other is a self-generated questionnaire inquiring about subjects' roles and experience.
Describe the setting and mode of administering the instrument (e.g., by phone, one-on-one, group) 　　　The survey and questionnaire will be administered electronically via email.

F. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING DATA, IF APPLICABLE
Existing data is data that was collected before the research is proposed and must have been collected for reasons other than the proposed research project.
Describe the database or data to be analyzed. NA
If publicly available, give the name of the database and identify the holder of the data. If not, provide documentation that you have permission to access the data. NA
How and when was the data originally collected and how large will your sampling be? NA
Will you be recording identifiers (information items that could potentially identify human subjects)? Describe them. NA

G. INFORMED CONSENT
Ethical and regulatory guidelines ensure that potential subjects must be fully informed about the research in a manner comprehensible to them and then be allowed to choose whether to participate in the research. Attach an Informed Consent Form of your own design, according to the YSU Guidelines for Fully Informed Consent for each subject population, or a Waiver of Informed Consent Request Form. The IRB has provided a template containing the Elements of Informed Consent/Assent (per 45 CFR 116) on the YSU IRB website: http://cms.ysu.edu/administrative-offices/research/human-subjectsinstitutional-review-board. Using the template is strongly suggested in order to eliminate errors and revisions.
If the subjects are children under 18 years of age, you must provide for both written Informed Consent of the parent or guardian and for Assent of the child.

Informed Consent for an anonymous survey can take the form of a statement preceding the survey that includes the Elements of Informed Consent and states that completion of the survey implies consent.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCE STATEMENT

I certify that the information provided in this claim of exemption is complete and correct.

I understand that as Principal Investigator, I have the ultimate responsibility for the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects and the ethical conduct of this research protocol. I agree to comply with all IRB and Institutional policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects in research, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The research will not be initiated until written approval is secured from the IRB.
- The project will be performed by qualified personnel according to the research protocol
- Maintain a copy of all questionnaires, survey instruments, interview questions, data collection instruments, signed Informed Consent Forms, and information sheets for human subjects for at least three years following termination of the project
- Necessary review by the IRB will be sought if changes made in the research protocol may result in the research no longer meeting the criteria for exemption.

I will complete the required educational program on ethical principles and regulatory requirements in human subjects research before initiating a research project.

I have read and understand the above policy concerning IRB protocols.

_____   _____   _____   _____
Principal Investigator/Faculty Advisor   Date   Co-investigator/Student Investigator   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Approving Official   DATE

INVESTIGATOR PROCEDURES CHECKLIST

A.	After completion of screening questions, fill out the appropriate form and submit one electronic copy to the committee (email: YSUIRB@ysu.edu) and one hard copy with original signatures to the Office of Research Services, Melnick Hall, Room 2101 (phone ext.2377). Your project will be logged, screened, and referred to a Committee Member for review. The Reviewer will contact the Principal Investigator via email with the results of the review within 5-10 days of submission and you may begin collecting data at that time. The Investigator will also receive a hard copy approval memo signed by the Authorized Institutional Official via campus mail.
B.	Please review the following checklist for application completeness. IRB applications that are not complete or do not have the appropriate signatures or attachments will be returned for resubmission.

The following MUST be included with all applications:	
☐	IRB Application with all of the appropriate signatures.

The following MUST be included IF APPLICABLE:	
☐	Research Instruments (surveys, questionnaires, or other instruments) to be used
☐	Informed Consent/Assent Forms, if applicable
☐	Waiver of Informed Consent Form, If applicable
☐	Approval letters from other sites where research will be conducted.
☐	Recruitment Information

January 7, 2020

Dr. Karen Larwin, Principal Investigator
Ms. Emily Smith, Co-investigator
Department of Counseling, School Psychology & Educational Leadership
UNIVERSITY

RE: HSRC PROTOCOL NUMBER: 070-2020
        TITLE: Will They Be Welcomed In? The Impact of K-12 Teachers' and
                      Principals' Perceptions of Inclusion Placement of Students with
                      Disabilities

Dear Dr. Larwin and Ms. Smith:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed the abovementioned protocol and determined that
it meets the criteria of DHHS 45 CFR 46.104(b)(2) and therefore is exempt from full committee
review and oversight. Your project is approved.

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Institutional Review
Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard
to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be
promptly reported to the IRB.

The IRB would like to extend its best wishes to you in the conduct of this study.

Sincerely,

Dr. Severine Van Slambrouck
Director Research Services, Compliance and Initiatives
Authorized Institutional Official

SVS:cc

c: Dr. Jake Protivnak, Chair
        Department of Counseling, School Psychology & Educational Leadership