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A Survey of Teacher Attitude Regarding Self-Awareness and Inclusive Education of Special Education Students

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A Survey of Teacher Attitude Regarding Self-Awareness and Inclusive Education of Special
Education Students

A Project Presented to
The Graduate Faculty of
Minnesota State University Moorhead

By
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In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Science in Special Education

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the teachers who are working with challenging students and working with the students that come to school with a label. The amount of compassion and empathy shared between those teachers and their students is unmeasurable. These students need a constant and you are creating that constant for them. To the teachers that push the boundaries and make connections, thank you!

I would like to thank my husband, parents, friends, and colleagues for helping me achieve this goal and for helping me in every step of the way. Thank you to my husband, Dean, for keeping me calm and centered during the writing process and knowing when to refill my coffee cup! Thank you to my parents, Jay and Betsy, who have supported me through my entire college career and allowed me to follow my dreams. Thank you to my colleagues and friends for checking in on me during late nights and always listening to my thoughts or ideas. A special thank you to Sary Switajewski and Alex Bollman for taking time to edit and give feedback on a crucial topic in education today. With all of your help, I am able to present a topic that is near to my heart.

Abstract

Self-awareness is not something that develops individually or in solitude. Merriam-Webster (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2019) defines self-awareness as, “an awareness of one's own personality or individuality.” Schools have started to increase their understanding of the relevance of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and have been progressively providing more training in this area to their teachers. Inclusion happens when students with disabilities to mingle and learn with typically developing students; learn from each other and experiencing social expectations together. Research has indicated that students with learning and behavior disabilities lack social and emotional skills, specifically self-awareness skills.

In this study, educators were surveyed on their experience with inclusion and the self-awareness abilities of their students. The study focuses on the feelings and attitudes associated between inclusion and students' self-awareness. The purpose was to understand education professionals' thoughts and perspectives towards inclusion and their awareness of the effects that inclusion has on a special education students' self-awareness skills. The participants in this study have given written permission and agreement to be part of this study. They remain anonymous to maintain confidentiality and validity of the data provided. It has been concluded that the participants surveyed support inclusion in their classrooms, but are uncomfortable including all special education students in their classrooms. The participants expressed that they understand what self-awareness is, but do not believe inclusion will increase self-awareness skills among students with disabilities.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

General Problem

The purpose of this research is to understand the impact that inclusion has on students with disabilities' self-awareness skills and to further educate the educational community and community at large of the importance of social and emotional learning. "An inclusive educational system aims to provide equal educational opportunities and the right to participate in the regular school system to all children.... willingness to accept children with special education needs in their classrooms is a necessary premise for success" (Wuthrich & Lozano, 2018, p.1). A current model of operation used in special education is called 'pull-out.' Students with disabilities are being pulled out of the classroom and away from their general education peers to receive their specific instructional and/or behavioral supports in a different room and with a different teacher. Those lessons can be for reading, writing, math, social studies, social skills, or other academic areas that qualify as being significantly below grade-level expectations. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) ("Core SEL competencies," 2019, p.1) describes self-awareness as "The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a 'growth mindset.'" CASEL's program highlights five core competency areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. The focus of this study is self-awareness because it is the first competency area in the continuum. Students with disabilities have been found to have deficits in areas of social skill learning, specifically looking at self-awareness, especially students with learning disabilities,

...due to the comorbidity of learning disabilities with specific psychiatric disorders... there seems to be considerable evidence of emotional or behavioral difficulties in the population of children and adolescents with learning disabilities. As noted, comorbidity of learning disabilities within samples of individuals with disorders such as ADHD and depressive or dysthymic disorder may range as high as 25%. This could well mean that differences in social skills ratings between LD and non-LD samples found in previous studies. (Miguel, Forness, & Kavale, 1996, p.261).

A similar statement could be made about students with emotional and behavioral disabilities (EBD), “Students identified as EBD often lack the social skills necessary to negotiate demands, adapt to social expectations, and develop relationships with peers and authority figures both in and outside of the classroom” (Tidmore, 2018, p.17). Inclusion can increase their social and emotional skills and help them feel more connected with their peers. Some of the questions that have become the forefront of this research include: what are teacher’s feelings and attitudes towards self-awareness and the support given through collaboration, colleagues, and trainings? What are teacher’s feelings and attitudes towards inclusion and the support given through collaboration, colleagues, and trainings? Are teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion similar to the attitudes to self-awareness?

My purpose was to research and explore the areas of inclusion and self-awareness to find commonalities and to better understand how inclusion affects self-awareness skills. By understanding the participants’ attitudes towards inclusion and self-awareness at individual practices, it may help us to better support teachers’ efforts in achieving the students’ goals for inclusion and self-awareness development.

Subjects

Research was conducted at an elementary school with 24 participants, which consisted of administrators, teachers, and para-professionals. The adults in this survey have completed one year of teaching social and emotional learning targets through an explicit curriculum, Second Step and are encouraged to create an inclusive classroom (A strong foundation for life long learning, 2019). These educators have been exposed to inclusion and understand the importance of inclusion through professional development and administration goals for the past two years. This was the first year that this particular school learned about self-awareness and social and emotional learning as a curriculum expectation. Social and emotional learning is not a new practice for this staff but the explicit curriculum and weekly lessons provide a new expectation from years past. All participant adults in the study have worked with special education students for at least five years and have a background knowledge of inclusion and social and emotional learning. They have experience in teaching in both inclusive and non-inclusive classrooms. The adults, including administrators, in this survey were adequate participants because of their knowledge-base and experience in teaching both special education and general education students.

Participants were surveyed anonymously through a Google Forms survey which was sent out to school e-mails, which included multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions, and scaling questions. The survey asked questions about their impact and feelings towards inclusion and students' self-awareness. These participants completed a one-time survey and their answers were recorded through the Google Forms format. All participants were given two weeks to complete the survey. All participants in the survey have an opportunity to read the report and ask the surveyor more information about the study.

Selection

The participants in this survey were qualified teachers or certified educational staff. They have had five or more years of experience with students in the general education, special education, and inclusive environment. Participants were selected based on voluntary agreement and because the participating school just finished their first year with a school-wide social and emotional learning curriculum. The selected participants were knowledgeable in the area of social and emotional learning as well as the needs of students with disabilities.

Setting

This survey was taken in a suburban elementary school with 24 certified educators and two administrators. The students who make up this school were 83.2% white, 9.5% Hispanic and 4.5% two or more races. There were around 800 students and 29% receive free or reduced lunch. This school had programs like title one reading and math and reading corps. The teachers in this school were trauma-informed and have experience teaching social and emotional learning standards through the Second Step curriculum. Participants in this study took the survey at their convince through a Google Forms submission. Participants had two weeks to complete the form and a reminder e-mail was sent after one week. This form was sent to the teachers through the school's e-mail and will be protected through the school e-mail security systems.

Informed Consent

Participants in this study could not complete the survey unless they consented to the written agreement at the beginning of the survey. Through this agreement page, the participants agreed to be anonymous, understood their risks and expectations, and who to contact if they had questions or concerns. Risks of this study may have included loss of confidentiality because the open ended question can give clues to who took the survey based on ideas, thoughts, or biases

towards inclusion or self-awareness. Participants were not be able to take the survey unless they agreed to the terms written at the beginning of the survey. If they disagreed, they were transferred to the end of the survey. At the end of the two weeks, the Google Form was turned off and was no longer processing responses.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-awareness is not something that can be developed individually or in solitude. It is the ability to recognize personal emotions, values and influences behavior. Self-awareness helps us understand our strengths and limitations (CASEL, 2019). Students with learning disabilities have educational obstacles to overcome and are frequently removed from the classroom setting to attend a smaller instructional group to focus on specific academic or behavioral skills. “Students with learning disabilities may lack a positive or realistic self-concept, experience negative moods, and rate their self-efficacy as low in comparison with students without disabilities, including those who demonstrate underachievement” (Merlone & Moran, 2008, p.3).

Self-awareness is one of the core competency areas that CASEL has identified in their social and emotional learning framework. There are five competencies which include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. A child will start gain self-awareness in their infancy as they, “... begins to know her own name and refer to herself by name. The child will begin to look in the mirror and realize she is looking at herself. She will also make clearer her own likes and dislikes, needs and wishes” (Holinger, 2012, p.1) Though it is not required to go in a specific order when teaching about the competencies, it is good practice to establish self-awareness as one of the first competency areas.

Schools have begun to increase their knowledge about social and emotional learning (SEL) and the skills that students need to become successful and be able to advocate for themselves in the future. Research has shown that schools have started to incorporate SEL curricula into many grade-levels, but “research has demonstrated that while special educators value the development of awareness and self-determination in students, many feel they need

training and information on how to accomplish this work” (Merlone & Moran, 2008, p.3). Social and emotional learning is a new curriculum demand that has started a ripple effect across many districts through many states. We are at the cusp of SEL curricula and having more choice when it comes to teaching SEL standards. We are just beginning to understand the long-term effects that it has on students.

Social and Emotional Learning

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, CASEL, has been researching, defining and educating teaching professionals, parents and administration for more than two decades. They define social and emotional learning as, “... how children and adults learn to understand and manage emotions, set goals, show empathy for others, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (What is SEL?, 2019, p.1). SEL has five different competency areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. It is noted that these five competencies can be taught in a variety of formats and across a variety of settings and age ranges. Social and emotional learning can be enforced and taught through direct teaching as well as school-wide policies and climate practices. For example, Second Step provides lessons for direct teaching through age-appropriate lessons which include, “catchy songs, fun games, and other engaging activities that develop social-emotional skills. Children learn how to make friends, manage their emotions, solve problems, and deal with peer pressure” (A strong foundation for lifelong learning, 2019). Even though these lessons are age specific, they have incorporated similar language and expressions that can be used in a school-wide model. An example of this is the statement, “eyes watching, ears listening, body still, voice quiet” (Developing eager, curious, and cooperative learners, 2019, p.1). Because this statement is used in first through fifth grade, all students are aware of

the language and all teachers can use this language to set expectations with the confidence that students understand what the teacher is requesting.

Educators rely on the curriculum to teach SEL skills but studies have shown that the teachers themselves are as important as the curriculum and that their relationships with their students are just as important as the curriculum. A study found that while curricula does not change test scores, they impact the relationship that the teacher has with their students and that matters more (Loeb et al, 2018). “Teachers who increase test performance are not necessarily the same as those who help students improve their social-emotional skills” (Loeb et al, 2018, p.2). There is little research about the long-term effects of SEL curriculum but the short-term effects have shown a great impact. “Helping these students develop self-awareness of their learning styles, including their strengths and needs, allows them to overcome negative self-attribution make positive choices in addition to developing and achieving personal goals” (Merlone & Moran, 2008, p.3).

Social and emotional learning is not something that is developed by age 10 and completed. SEL is a skill that is constantly growing, molding, and the social experiences that we have throughout our entire life affect our social and emotional self. Some may call self-awareness ‘leadership’ or ‘management’ but it is still self-awareness at its core. Colleges still teach self-awareness in their foundation courses to help these bright and witty college students develop self-reflection skills. There was a suggestion “...for schools to develop students’ self-reflection and self-awareness as foundations for the successful implementation of change, such as a renewed focus on accountability, responsibility, and communication skills” (Hinkle, 2018, p.43). If colleges are refining students’ social and emotional skills, they need a place to start, which is why incorporating social and emotional learning in elementary schools is so important.

Social and emotional learning is the beginning step towards increased self-awareness. There are several studies promoting inclusion of special education as a means to nurture positive social relationships among peers and to expose students to grade-level materials for educational purposes (Powell, 2016, p.40). Currently, Inclusion data have been promoted for educational purposes, but can students also gain core SEL competencies through inclusion? The research indicates that inclusion supports educational practices, but an additional exploration should focus on inclusion as a means by which students with disabilities develop SEL outcomes.

Inclusion

Inclusion happens when every student, no matter the disability or ability, is incorporated in the lesson or subject that is being taught and his/her needs are addressed to access the content provided. Inclusion is not new to education and most research on inclusion has been incorporating assessment data based on self-reporting and reporting personal attitudes. This posits a challenge due to possible evaluation and interpretation biases. Researchers question the validity of self-reporting assessments (Wuthrich & Lozano, 2018). A recent study, the Single-Target Implicit Association Test (ST-IAT), sampled 163 educators and they found that the attitude towards inclusion is neutral. They did their best to eliminate emotional and personal bias from this survey. “These results suggest that the Inclusion ST-IAT might be a valuable tool in overcoming a possible social desirability bias in research on attitudes toward inclusive education” (Wuthrich & Lozano, 2018, p.61). Because of this, they considered the testing results to be valid and felt that their data represented the population sampled.

Interestingly enough, special education professionals rated the ST-IAT more positively than the general education teachers did. Both teaching professionals had positive remarks about inclusion but when addressing implications to the classroom, the general education teachers

scored towards the more neutral and negative end of the spectrum. This brings up a conversation about why the general education teachers showed a flux of negative and positive remarks about inclusion in the classroom. Inclusion is challenging and this study makes remarks about the challenge that educators face when being asked to include and teach a student who is one or two grade levels behind.

The idea of inclusion in regards to SEL and self-awareness is giving a student with disabilities as much time in the general education classroom as possible to help natural social skills grow. When a student with a disability is around a peer that does not have a documented disability, they mimic social cues and notice subtle social insights that cannot be taught through an SEL curriculum. In early elementary, students are more resilient and more accepting of those with disabilities. As the students get older, they start to segregate themselves and unknowingly group themselves into social circles. If inclusion is incorporated heavily in the elementary years, we may see a shift in the social acceptance of special education students among general education students.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is a SEL core that is challenging to measure, assess and create interventions because the skill is based on self-perceptions and identifying personal strengths and weaknesses. As stated before, self-awareness is not something that is developed in solitude. Educational professionals who expected their students to grow more self-awareness skills need to teach self-preservation, self-determination, and self-advocacy skills. It has been reported that students who have learning or behavior disabilities report lower self-awareness therefore signaling they feel less worth and their actions have less impact than those of their peers. "...participants higher in trait self-awareness tended to perceive their choices as more

subjectively meaningful than those lower in trait self-awareness irrespective of condition” (Dishon, Oldmeadow, & Kaufman, 2018, p. 2).

As we grow more knowledge about self-awareness and the effects it has on personal perceptions, curricula have emerged to support this deficit. Growth Mindset is a term in curriculum that is used to change perceptions and personal thoughts from ‘I can’t’ statements to ‘I can’ statements. This curriculum and skillset helps educators decrease the amount of depersonalization in their classrooms. “...‘depersonalization’ refers to a deep modification of the way things appear...characterized by the feeling of being detached from one’s body, one’s mental states and actions or even from oneself” (Billon, 2016, p.739). The overarching goal of becoming self-aware is to understand your impact on the world, the people around you and the environment that you live in. If we can grow self-awareness in the classroom setting through inclusion, students receiving special education services could become less impacted by the negative comments they hear from peers or teachers or members of their families and communities when these comments show low expectations about their abilities to accomplish in life.

Transition

When we put SEL, inclusion and self-awareness together, a common goal is to include special education students into the general education classroom without identifying their disability as an inability. When we think about students with disabilities, it is easy to define them by their disability and accommodate their needs based on the disability that they are assigned to. Our education system makes it challenging for special education teachers, who teach academic skills, to think about transitioning a student from special education to general education. The tools are there but the gap between the student’s abilities and the grade-level standards grow

every year. A similar statement could be made about SEL standards, but it is more accommodating to teach SEL standards as a whole group to keep that gap smaller and more manageable for the student and the teachers. Something that is missing from our special education model is transitioning fifth graders from the elementary school setting to the middle school setting. Transition services are part of every special education students' individualized education plan (IEP) when they are 16 years old. Their IEP does not indicate how to transition from elementary school, typically one classroom with one teacher and 30 students, to middle school, typically 6 to 8 classes with passing time and hundreds of students getting from one place to the next.

Demystification is a self-awareness model that has been developed to help fifth grade students become more self-aware and develop self-realization (Merlone & Moran, 2008). Demystification is specifically designed to support fifth grade students and can be used in a small group, special education setting, or with a larger group of general and special education students. This model consists of a ten-week curriculum that prepares fifth grade students to transition from elementary school to middle school. This model helps the fifth grade students gain an understanding of who they are and enforces the educators to sets goals based on emotional needs as well as academic needs. "The goal of demystification is to clarify any misconceptions students may have about their needs or difficulties, describe possible options to help with remediation, instill a sense of optimism, and allow students to fully participate in their educational planning and programs" (Merlone & Moran, 2008, p.3). These goals are reflected in the student's IEP and can be used to influence the goals of a classroom. The first five weeks explore the brain and reinforces the idea that not all minds are the same or think the same. Students learn about memory, attention, organization, behavior, and how their brain interprets or

uses those skills. The next five weeks explores self-advocacy and perseverance. The goal of these lessons and curricula is to teach the student about their disability and own the strengths and weaknesses that they possess. These lessons can be taught at the beginning, middle, or end of the school year but the results were more positive and students reported more self-awareness skills when the lessons were taught mid-year with time to practice the skills. Overall, this curriculum showed a positive outcome in preparing fifth grade students to transition into the middle school. The results also showed that students reported they were better at advocating for themselves in the academic setting, but there are still questions about the carry-over into the home and real-life setting.

Through inclusion and specific curricula that target self-awareness, we may see an increase in self-awareness skills by fourth and fifth grade. The framework needs to be established in the early elementary years but once the student becomes old enough to start noticing their differences, they will be able to use the skills taught in their classroom and feel included. The goal is to demystify what a disability is and bring all abilities to the front so we can understand who our students are, not just what the disability is.

Hypothesis

My hypothesis is that teachers, administration and para-professionals will report positive responses towards inclusion of special education students and will report neutral or negative responses to questions involving of self-awareness and social and emotional learning.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The research questions influenced the development of the survey questions and helped break them into five subdomain areas: a) student variables, b) peer support, c) administration support, d) collaboration and e) training and/or understanding. The survey questions, found in Appendix A, were focused around self-awareness and inclusion. The questions were presented to the participants in no particular order to reduce bias on a subdomain. The number of questions per subdomain were not equal but the questions that were given target specific feelings and attitudes towards self-awareness and inclusion. As posed in Chapter one, the research questions for this study are:

- What are teacher's feelings and attitudes towards self-awareness and the support given through collaboration, colleagues, and trainings?
- What are teacher's feelings and attitudes towards inclusion and the support given through collaboration, colleagues, and trainings?
- Are teachers' attitudes towards inclusion similar to the attitudes to self-awareness?

Research Plan

The survey was created to be an attitude scale to measure the participants' beliefs, perception, or feelings about themselves or others. Based on the attitude the participants had towards different questions, a conclusion was made about the overall impact and attitude towards those topics. To reduce bias towards specific topics, some questions were stated in a positive or negative orientation so that that the reader would really need to pay attention to the content of the

question prior to marking the response.. This was to ensure the validity of the survey and the validity of the responses.

The participants were sharing their attitudes and feelings towards self-awareness first, then inclusion. The questions were broken into five subdomains, which include a) student variables, b) peer support, c) administration support, d) collaboration and e) training and/or understanding of the topic. Student variable questions were student specific and asked about the participant's ability to understand student specific needs. Peer support questions asked about their feelings towards their teams and the ability to use their grade level or specialist teams as a support. Administration support questions asked about how the administration supported them in the field of self-awareness and inclusion. Collaboration questions asked about their ability to collaborate with other teachers to teach lessons and gain knowledge. The difference between collaboration and peer support questions was who is supporting whom. Peer support questions focused on grade-level team support whereas collaboration questions focused on teaming with other teachers for a selected purpose. Finally, training and/or understanding questions asked about the participant's training level, training needs and if they understood the topics of self-awareness and inclusion.

The instrument was broken into these subdomains because teaching is versatile and teaching abilities vary from teacher to teacher. When the questions were broken into these five subdomains, it was easier to understand the comfort level of teaching self-awareness and inclusion. It was easier to identify weak areas and suggest ways to improve a subdomain, rather than a large topic. If a group of educators understand inclusion but show a lower score in understanding how to use inclusion as a collaborative partner, a training could focus on that

specific area. Teachers that understand the topic but may need more administration support, can be given tools on how to ask or gain more support.

Methods

This study used a Survey research design and the Likert scale to interpret the data to create a conclusion about the participant's attitudes towards inclusions and self-awareness. Survey questions and responses are reported below in Appendix A. The survey contained questions about the participant's demographics, age range, gender, and educational level shown in Table 1. The body of the survey asked 82 questions that the participants answered on a scale of strongly disagree, disagree, agree or strongly agree. Tables 2 and 3 summarize and highlight key data point for this study. Of those 82 scaling questions, 42 questions were about inclusion and 40 were about self-awareness. The questions were placed in the survey in no particular order following five subdomain areas: a) student variables, b) peer support, c) administration support, d) collaboration and e) training and/or understanding. Through these five subdomains, I was able to answer the first two research questions and understand attitudes and feelings towards inclusion and self-awareness as well as understand which areas of support, or subdomains, may need more attention than others. I was able to compare data from both inclusion and self-awareness to answer the third research question and to understand similarities and differences between inclusion and self-awareness attitudes. The Likert scale has values used to understand the positive or negative trend to the question. Based on the data given, positive and negative trends were visible and conclusions were able to be made. The Likert scale was used to format the questions and better understand the trends behind the data when percentages were close.

The percentages were used to understand trends and attitudes towards specific statements. The statements were worded specifically to force a participant to choose positive or negative, as

there was no option for a neutral attitude. Participants in this study may have felt forced to make a decision of positive or negative, which is the purpose of this survey and the reason behind the scaling options. To get a true feeling of trends, participants were forced to choose a side, even if it was hard to make that decision.

The survey questions were worded in a broad manner because all special education disabilities are different, therefore the survey would have been too long to create specific questions for specific disability areas. This made it challenging for participants to choose a positive or negative side to some questions. Students with an emotional and behavioral disability have a different set of characteristics than speech and language disability students. Students with emotional and behavioral disabilities may have a harder time being included because of their characteristics whereas a speech and language student may be more able to be included in whole group activities. The purpose of the broad questions was to understand feelings and attitudes towards the special education population as a whole and the special education team as a whole. Further research can be conducted to understand the self-awareness and inclusion abilities by specific disability areas.

Schedule

Participants in this study were given two weeks over the summer to complete the survey. The participants were alerted of the survey one month prior to receiving the e-mail. Once the survey was started, the participant could not leave the survey and come back. They needed to complete the survey in one sitting. There was no timer on the survey and the participants could take as much time as needed to finish the survey.

The survey data were compiled and synthesized over the course of two weeks and placed in the report. The data was not shared with the participants until the final report was completed

and the researcher considered the actions that could take place based on the data collected. The participants had an opportunity to read the results of the survey and listen to a presentation about self-awareness and inclusion during a workshop session.

Ethical Considerations

This study was set up to remove the participants' jobs, names, and other identifying factors from the study itself. The participants remained anonymous throughout the entirety of the survey. The researcher only knew how many participants were involved, their age range, gender, and education level. Their age range and education level are needed to make conclusions and to better understand the demographics of the participants. All participants were given the opportunity to not disclose the above information with a selection of 'prefer not to say.' If the participants felt like the demographic questions could have revealed their identity, the 'prefer not to say' option was available for those participants.

Participants in this study were not asked their race, religious preference, or other targeting questions because it would not have helped or supported the data given. All participants were given the option to leave the survey at any time and the questions in the survey did not require a response to move on. But once they left the survey, they could not return. If a participant was unsure how to answer a question or if they did not want to answer a question, they could move past it without consequences.

Participants in this study had access to a signed permission form from the human resources director from the district. They were also given the contact information of the human resources director and the super intendent if they had any questions, concerns, or felt like their identity was in jeopardy. The researcher will not reach out to the participants after the survey is

completed and the data will be available to all staff within the building where the study was conducted in.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Data Collection

The purpose of this research is to understand the impact that inclusion has on students with disabilities' self-awareness skills and to further educate the educational community and community at large of the importance of social and emotional learning. My purpose was to research and provide a compelling argument that inclusion of special education students in a general education setting throughout the majority of their day is viewed by teachers as impacting the development of students' self-awareness skills. Data were collected from teachers, administration and para-professionals through a Google Forms survey, the results are presented in the tables below.

Results

Data were collected from a group of educators with five or more years of teaching experience. These data were collected in two sub-categories to better understand thoughts and feelings towards both inclusion and self-awareness. Full data results and tables can be found in Appendix A.

To answer the question, how does inclusion of special education students in a general education classroom influence their self-awareness skills, an understanding of the participant's knowledge and comfort with inclusion and self-awareness was needed.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participating Teachers

Characteristics	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		

Male	3	12.5
Female	21	87.5
Age Range (Years)		
20-35	1	4.2
36-45	8	33.3
>46	13	54.2
Prefer Not To Say	2	8.3
Educational Level		
Bachelor's	2	8.3
Bachelor's +10/20/30	2	8.3
Masters	2	8.3
Masters +10/20	16	66.7
Prefer Not To Say	2	8.3

The participants in this survey are predominantly female and the ratio of females to males that completed this survey mirrors the gender demographic at this school. Over half of the participants were 46 years or older and one third of the participants are ages 36-45. Over half of the participants have a master's degree or higher. This information is significant to understand the amount of experience and knowledge that the participants hold. It can be assumed, based on age and educational level, that more than half of the participants in this study were teaching or in teaching programs in 2004 when the United States government signed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) into law. This is significant because once IDEIA became the standard law and regulation for educators and administration, changes started to happen in schools and change is still happening today. The characteristics of the participants in this survey should be noted because their age and experience can give a better understanding

as to what has worked and what has not worked in the past, present, and what may work in the future.

What Are Teachers' Feelings And Attitudes Towards Self-Awareness?

Table 2a

*Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Self-Awareness and Special Education
(n=24)*

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Student Variables				
Q2 I feel confident with identifying a student with self-awareness	0%	8.3%	70.8%	20.8%
Q3 I feel confident with identifying a student who needs more support in social and emotional learning areas	0%	0%	54.1%	45.8%
Q21 Students in the special education program have lower self-awareness than their peers	0%	37.5%	58.3%	4.1%
Q22 Students who are verbally aggressive lack self-awareness skills	0%	29.9%	62.5%	8.3%
Q23 Students who are physically aggressive lack self-awareness skills	0%	33.3%	58.3%	8.3%

Participants shared positive feelings and attitudes towards self-awareness and the variables that come with teaching and identifying this social skill in schools. Shown in table 2a above, participants feel confident in their ability to identify a student who has self-awareness and

a student who may need more support in a social and emotional learning area. They agree that special education students lack social and emotional skills and that they miss social skills when they are being pulled for academic services. Interestingly, participants agreed that students with disabilities have self-awareness, but when asked about their specific special education students in the classroom, they disagreed that their students have self-awareness. This can start a conversation about what self-awareness looks like in various setting and how self-awareness can be different for each special education student. Participants agree that students who have low self-awareness should be part of groups and those who are two years below in academic skills show similar defects in self-awareness skills.

Table 2b

Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Self-Awareness and Special Education
(n=24)

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Peer Support				
Q26 My colleagues are willing to help me understand my students on a social and emotional level	0%	4.1%	70.8%	25%
Q27 My colleagues are willing to help me see past the behavior and look through a different lens	0%	0%	66.6%	29.1%

The majority of participants in this survey agreed that their colleagues help them understand self-awareness better and help them look past behaviors to look through a different lens. Table 2b and 2c helps us understand how the participants feel about their colleagues and the support they get in the school from administration.

Table 2c

Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Self-Awareness and Special Education
(n=24)

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Administration Support				
Q31 I feel supported by my administration when asking for assistance teaching social and emotional lessons.	4.1%	8.3%	62.5%	25%
Q36 My administration provides me with sufficient support when I have self-awareness lessons	4.1%	12.5%	62.5%	12.5%

They feel like they can get support when teaching lessons about self-awareness and they get support when trying to understand a specific student's social and emotional needs. The majority of participants feel supported by the administration and that they can go to their admin for materials and assistance when it comes to social and emotional learning lessons. Though the majority feel supported, there are three or four participants that do not feel support and do not feel like they are given the materials to succeed. The participants that have disagreed with these statements are asking for more help and more assistance when it comes to self-awareness lessons.

Table 2d

Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Self-Awareness and Special Education
(n=24)

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Collaboration				
Q7	8.3%	33.3%	50%	8.3%

I support a push-in model to keep my students in my room as much as possible				
Q8 I see the benefit of push-in models, but I am not sure I want that for my classroom	8.3%	37.5%	50%	4.1%
Q34 I would prefer a push-in model to benefit social and emotional learning goals	4.1%	41.6%	33.3%	20.8%

When the participants answered questions about collaboration and self-awareness, there were a few questions that covered both inclusion and self-awareness. Above in Table 2d, questions seven, eight, and thirty-four ask about their support of a push-in model and their willingness to have push-in supports instead of pulling the students out for small groups. The participants are split down the middle, 50-50, when it comes to understanding the benefit of a push-in model. They are also split when asked about a push-in model to benefit social and emotional learning.

Table 2e

Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Self-Awareness and Special Education (n=24)

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q1 I feel confident with identifying and defining self-awareness	4.1%	4.1%	66.6%	25%
Q4 I understand why self-awareness is important for a student's social skills	0%	0%	41.6%	58.3%

Q11 Social and Emotional Learning is something that I support	0%	0%	37.5%	62.5%
Q16 It is hard for me to understand the purpose for self-awareness	29.1%	66.6%	4.1%	0%

The participants displayed a good knowledge base and an understanding towards what self-awareness is and identifying the purpose behind self-awareness skills in the school setting. Some participants disagreed with social and emotional skills being taught in the school setting, but the majority agreed that they supported social and emotional learning. The participants agreed that social and emotional learning lessons have helped them in the classroom setting this year. All participants support social and emotional learning, but some would like more training and workshops to perfect their skills.

What Are Teacher’s Feelings And Attitudes Towards Inclusion?

Table 3a

Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Inclusion and Special Education (n=24)

Subdomain

Student Variables	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q7 Students who are 2 or more years below grade level should be in special education classes	0%	16.6%	58.3%	25%
Q8 Students who are diagnosed as autistic need to be in special education classes	13%	60.8%	26%	0%

Q10 Students who are diagnosed as developmentally and cognitively delayed should be in special education classrooms	0%	50%	50%	0%
Q38 Students who are 1 year below grade level should be in special education classes	4.1%	58.3%	37.5%	0%

Participants answered questions about inclusion and the student variables that come with including students with disabilities. The participants answered this portion of the survey with a positive trend towards inclusion based on specific student needs. Participants identified that students who are two years or more below grade level or with autism should be in special education classes. However, if a student is one year below grade level, participants are more likely to include those students in the general education curriculum. Participants showed agreement in wanting to teach students with IEPs in the classroom and agree that verbally aggressive students can better succeed more in the classroom setting than physically aggressive students. They believe that students who are physically aggressive cannot be maintained in the classroom and have split reactions to developmentally and cognitively delayed students being in the classroom setting. However, looking at those three data points as one, students who are verbally and physically aggressive are less likely to be included in the general education classroom than students who have a cognitive disability.

Table 3b

Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Inclusion and Special Education

(n=24)

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Peer Support				
Q4 My colleagues are willing to help me with issues which may arise when I have students with an IEP in my classroom	0%	0%	79.1%	20.9%
Q22 I can approach my colleagues for assistance when needed if I have students with special needs in my classroom	0%	0%	70.8%	29.1%
Q29 My colleagues are approachable when I ask for their advice when I teach students with special needs	0%	0%	62.5%	37.5%

Participants feel supported and like they can approach their colleagues about students with special needs. Table 3b is an example of the positive remarks collected from the survey. They feel that their colleagues are willing to help them with issues and they ask their colleagues for advice when working with special education students.

Table 3c

Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Inclusion and Special Education
(n=24)

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Administrative Support				
Q14	4.1%	8.3%	75%	12.5%

I can approach my administration with concerns I hold teaching students who have special needs

Q15

I feel supported by my administration when faced with challenges presented by students with behavioral difficulties in my classroom

12.5% 16.6% 58.3% 12.5%

Q20

My administrators provide me with sufficient support when I have students with an IEP in my classroom

4.1% 37.5% 45.8% 12.5%

In all questions related to administration support, at least one participant strongly disagreed with most statements and does not feel supported by their administration. The participants do not feel encouraged to go to conferences or workshops and they feel like they do not get enough time to go to conferences to learn how to support students with special needs. When asked about being able to approach administration, more than half of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they feel comfortable bringing issues to administration and get support when they have a special education student in their classroom.

Table 3d

Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Inclusion and Special Education (n=24)

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Collaboration				
Q5 I feel comfortable in working	4.1%	0%	66.6%	29.1%

collaboratively with special education teachers when students with an IEP are in my classroom				
Q6				
I welcome collaborative teaching when I have a student with an IEP in my classroom	0%	8.3%	66.6%	25%
Q12				
Collaborative teaching of children with special needs can be effective particularly when students with an IEP are placed in regular classrooms	0%	16.6%	79.1%	4.1%

Nearly all participants feel comfortable working with special education teachers and welcome them into the classroom with the understanding that collaborative teaching can be effective for students with an IEP. About half of the participants agree that special education teachers should teach students with an IEP, but the other half disagreed or strongly disagreed. This could be interpreted as the participants asking for more support with interventions and tier 2 supports. A minority of teachers agreed they like being the only teacher in a classroom, showing that there is a want to be more collaborative and could enjoy team teaching.

Table 3e

Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Inclusion and Special Education (n=24)

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Training/Understanding				

Q2 I need more training in order to appropriately teach students with an IEP for learning disabilities	12.5%	41.6%	41.6%	4.1%
Q16 My district provides me with sufficient out of district training opportunities in order for me to appropriately teach students with learning disabilities	12.5%	50%	29.1%	4.1%
Q17 My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students with behavioral difficulties	8.3%	37.5%	41.6%	12.5%
Q18 My educational background has prepared me to teach students with special needs	8.3%	37.5%	41.6%	12.5%
Q34 I need more training in order to appropriately teach students with an IEP for behavioral problems	12.5%	29.1%	54.1%	4.1%

In all questions, at least one participant strongly agrees with the statement while another participant strongly disagrees with the statement. The participants feel that their educational backgrounds have not prepared them to teach students who are two years or more below grade level but they feel comfortable teaching students who are one grade below. These data mirror the data collected in the student variables subdomain where teachers felt comfortable having students in their classroom who are one year below grade level, but did not feel comfortable with

students who are two or more years below grade level. Participants would like more training to support students with behavior disabilities and learning disabilities.

Are Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion Similar To The Attitudes Of Self-Awareness?

In terms of self-awareness, there is a common understanding of what self-awareness is and the importance of student possessing self-awareness skills to be successful. On the other hand, there is also a fear that comes with a push-in model and a negative reaction to pushing special education students into the classroom to support their social skills and self-awareness skills. There is also a disconnect, even though it is not a significant amount, between participants and the administration feeling supported and encouraged in the classroom setting. These data have a dynamic spread and too much inconsistent data ratios to make a solid conclusion about the feelings the participants have about self-awareness and the variables that come with each student. This could be significant for future training opportunities because the data shows inconsistent feelings about self-awareness which raises the question if there is a true understanding of self-awareness within these participants. It is possible that they understand social skills and how to teach social skills, but when looking at the specific identification of what social skills are lacking, their abilities are not as good. After being introduced to a social and emotional curriculum for one year, the participants are showing a positive trend of understanding self-awareness and the benefit it has for all students, especially those with disabilities. My conclusion about the data collected about self-awareness is the participants are willing to try new things, teach new curricula, and support the students' social and emotional needs as long as there is purpose and support from the administration or those around them. These participants need to see the benefits and understand that their hard work is going to help all students. I can also

conclude that some are ready for this change, and others need a little more time to understand the impact that it has on students.

When asked about their thoughts about self-awareness, one participant said, *“I am all for including SPED students in the regular classroom, but the degree of their disability really depends on if that is the most appropriate and best place for them to learn. If they are disruptive either physically or verbally and they take learning time away from the other students on a consistent basis, they should not be in the regular classroom.”* However, one participant stated, *“Collaborative learning is wonderful! I’ve team taught with LD reading teachers and it was terrific. The key was we both prepared and taught, the push in special ed teacher did not come in and watch.”* Similar to inclusion, some participants are ready and willing to try collaborative learning to support self-awareness skills, whereas other participants are not quite ready for the challenge that comes with collaborative learning.

The participants showed a willingness and understanding for inclusion when it came to collaboration, peer support, and training or understanding. Similar to self-awareness, there is a confusion and frustration with understanding the disabilities and the purpose for all students, no matter the disability to be included. Some students are verbally or physically aggressive; others are two or more years below grade level expectations, which makes it hard to teach in an inclusive environment because they could be triggered or unable to complete the tasks at any time. This is a logical thought and fear that many educators and the participants in this study have. Inclusion is different from a push-in model, but it all stems from the same idea that all students deserve to learn with other children. The participants in this survey are happy with the inclusion that they have created, but are not ready for a push-in model yet. They are still trying to

understand the benefit and purpose behind inclusion as a support for self-awareness and social and emotional skills.

One participant wrote that the questions were too broad, “These are so situational and totally depend on the student and the situation. I am always willing to give kids with special education needs a chance in my room, but I wish there was more communication time to team teach with the special ed teachers.” There is purpose behind the broad or ‘blanket statement’ questions. To eliminate stigmas and traits from specific disabilities that are favorable or unfavorable. For example, there are favorable characteristics of students with developmental disabilities such as being funny, likeable and innocent. There are also favorable characteristics about students with autism and learning disabilities such as, always trying hard but quirky in their own way. If these questions were asked about emotional and behavioral disability students specifically, I could only assume that there would be a negative trend to the questions about inclusion and self-awareness. Some educators assume that students with emotional and behavioral disabilities have self-awareness because they choose actions based on a wanted reaction or escape. What some teachers do not understand about self-awareness, is it is not always about a student being aware of their actions, but it is also about being aware of the reactions and consequences for their actions. A student who has higher self-awareness will understand the consequences of calling names before doing the action. They have better impulse control and, therefore they think before they do. Students with emotional and behavioral disabilities do not have great impulse control and are challenged with their actions every day. Their self-awareness skills are much lower because they cannot understand why their actions reduce friendships, create a stigma, and create consequences until that action has been completed and they see the result.

Based on the data provided by the participants, there is an agreement that inclusion should be happening in the schools and that inclusion supports student's learning and social skills. There is also an agreement that social and emotional learning has helped classrooms and has been a support in the classroom setting. However, there is a lack of acceptance and willingness to include students, of all disabilities, in the classroom through a push-in model. The participants are interested in inclusion, as long as the students are still pulled out during academic times to get the direct support that they need. They understand the purpose behind self-awareness but some have not fully committed to the idea of social and emotional learning yet.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATION OF PRACTICE

Action Plan

Every school is run by different ideals, different goals, and has a demographic of students and staff that cannot be replicated. When every school is so different, we have to make a plan that can be molded and shaped to fit almost any school. One of the best ways to start change is through a ripple effect and by teaching. We need to continue to educate our educators so they feel confident in the practices that they are teaching. It is time for this school to start opening their mind to change and feeling comfortable with being uncomfortable or vulnerable. Standards still need to be taught and curriculum needs to be followed, but I believe that this school could succeed if they take a step back and realize that they are doing well in the area of academics and that they can feel comfortable with teaching social and emotional learning curriculum without losing the academic piece of teaching. The administration can give the green light and the teachers are going to need the confidence to be uncomfortable.

I do not believe that this school needs intense support to get back on track. This school is doing well and this school is succeeding, every kid, every day! They work endless hours for their students and put their efforts together as a team to raise a group of intelligent students every year. However, this school, just like all other successful schools, has some imperfections and wrinkles that can be supported for the future. This action plan is versatile and it educates because we never stop learning and we never stop growing.

This school has one staff meeting every month and at least one workshop opportunity every month that brings all of the staff together into one room. I propose that a five-session workshop begins during the first month of the school year, and follows five consecutive

workshop or staff meeting days. The expectation for these workshops is to highlight disabilities and gives teachers the opportunity to ask questions and to challenge thoughts. The workshops can be run by special education teachers, professionals in the mental health field, administration, teachers from other buildings, or maybe even students. The options are endless because they are expected to be tailored to fit the specific needs of your school. The goal of these workshops is to help the teachers understand that the disability doesn't define the child, but the disability defines how we teach that student. Based on the data that were taken from the survey, these educators specifically are unsure of how to teach multiple students with multiple disabilities and make a lesson work for everyone. This is differentiation at its core! If we can set up a workshop that is safe and welcoming, educators may be more willing to increase their inclusion of these students in the classroom setting. Once they gain trust in the workshop providers, there may be more opportunities for push-in model teaching and more collaboration between special education and general education.

This five-session workshop can snowball into different topics and teams can research areas of passion to share with their fellow educators. Educators can learn about new RTI models, mindfulness, speech strategies, ways to deescalate students, how to help a student with slow processing speeds, and so much more. The real solution to any problem is to learn more about the problem and educate yourself on how to make that problem turn into a solution.

I think it is important to remember that change doesn't happen quickly and change is hard to understand. This is going to be very challenging for educators, especially for them to let their guard down. Educators are constantly comparing themselves to others on the Internet and to each other. Maybe this is the space where they feel unjudged, confident, and comfortable in feeling worried about change. Change is not going to happen simply by showing the results and

action plan to the staff. This is a process that will need to be revisited and revised over the next few years. Education is always changing and moving in directions known and unknown. An administrator once told me, “baby steps!” Together, our baby steps can turn into leaps.

Plan For Sharing

This study and its results will be presented to the participating school’s administration at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. The participants of this study agreed and showed willingness to attend a workshop or training on self-awareness. Once approval is given from administration, the information will be presented to the staff in a workshop manner. The staff will learn more about self-awareness, how to identify when a student has high or low self-awareness, and will be given tools to use in the classroom to increase self-awareness and to promote social and emotional learning.

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Appendix A

Table 2a

*Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Self-Awareness and Special Education
(n=24)*

Subdomain Student Variables	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q2 I feel confident with identifying a student with self-awareness	0%	8.3%	70.8%	20.8%
Q3 I feel confident with identifying a student who needs more support in social and emotional learning areas	0%	0%	54.1%	45.8%
Q5 I think special education students lack skills in social and emotional learning	4.1%	20.8%	62.5%	12.5%
Q6 Students with disabilities miss out on some social experiences because of pull-out services	4.1%	20.8%	66.6%	8.3%
Q12 Students with disabilities have self-awareness skills	0%	20.8%	75%	4.1%
Q14 Students with disabilities benefit from self-awareness lessons	0%	8.3%	58.3%	33.3%
Q17 Self-awareness is something my students with disabilities have	12.5%	33.3%	54.1%	0%
Q18 Students who are 2 or more years below grade-level academically show similar deficits in self-awareness	0%	33.3%	50%	16.6%

Q19 Students who have low self-awareness should be in groups to gain the skill	0%	8.3%	66.6%	25%
Q20 All efforts should be made to educate students about self-awareness in the regular education classroom	0%	29.1%	45.8%	25%
Q21 Students in the special education program have lower self-awareness than their peers	0%	37.5%	58.3%	4.1%
Q22 Students who are verbally aggressive lack self-awareness skills	0%	29.9%	62.5%	8.3%
Q23 Students who are physically aggressive lack self-awareness skills	0%	33.3%	58.3%	8.3%
Q24 All students should receive Social and Emotional Learning in the regular education classroom	0%	16.6%	62.5%	20.8%
Q25 Students who are identified as depressed but do not display overt disruptive behaviors do not need additional self-awareness lessons	58.3%	37.5%	4.1%	0%
Q32 I believe students become more socially aware when they are near same aged peers	0%	12.5%	66.6%	20.8%
Q33 Students in special education benefit socially	0%	4.1%	54.1%	41.6%

from being in my
classroom

Table 2b

Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Self-Awareness and Special Education
(n=24)

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Peer Support				
Q26 My colleagues are willing to help me understand my students on a social and emotional level	0%	4.1%	70.8%	25%
Q27 My colleagues are willing to help me see past the behavior and look through a different lens	0%	0%	66.6%	29.1%
Q28 My colleagues are approachable when I ask for advice when I teach students about their emotions	0%	8.3%	62.5%	29.1%
Q29 I feel comfortable approaching my colleagues for help when teaching self-awareness lessons	0%	8.3%	62.5%	25%

Table 2c

Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Self-Awareness and Special Education
(n=24)

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Administration Support				
Q31 I feel supported by my administration when asking for assistance teaching social and emotional lessons.	4.1%	8.3%	62.5%	25%
Q36 My administration provides me with sufficient support when I have self-awareness lessons	4.1%	12.5%	62.5%	12.5%
Q37 My administration provides me with the materials I need to teach self-awareness	4.1%	12.5%	70.8%	12.5%

Table 2d

*Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Self-Awareness and Special Education
(n=24)*

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Collaboration				
Q7 I support a push-in model to keep my students in my room as much as possible	8.3%	33.3%	50%	8.3%
Q8 I see the benefit of push-in models, but I am not sure I want that for my classroom	8.3%	37.5%	50%	4.1%
Q15 I would like more support with including self-awareness in my classroom	0%	33.3%	58.3%	8.3%
Q30 I would rather teach a whole group lesson to the grade level on self-awareness instead of individually to my classroom	29.1%	62.5%	8.3%	0%
Q34 I would prefer a push-in model to benefit social and emotional learning goals	4.1%	41.6%	33.3%	20.8%
Q35 I enjoy having the special education teacher in the classroom with me to support my students	0%	20.8%	54.1%	16.6%
Q38 I feel comfortable in working collaboratively with the social workers and special education teachers to help my students gain self-awareness	0%	4.1%	62.5%	29.1%
Q39	0%	8.3%	50%	37.5%

I work collaboratively
with my team to support
students with low self-
awareness

Table 2e

*Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Self-Awareness and Special Education
(n=24)*

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Training/Understanding				
Q1 I feel confident with identifying and defining self-awareness	4.1%	4.1%	66.6%	25%
Q4 I understand why self-awareness is important for a student's social skills	0%	0%	41.6%	58.3%
Q9 Social and Emotional Learning is something that should be taught at school	4.1%	4.1%	50%	41.6%
Q10 Social and Emotional Learning lessons have helped my classroom this year	0%	4.1%	58.3%	37.5%
Q11 Social and Emotional Learning is something that I support	0%	0%	37.5%	62.5%
Q13 I am given opportunities to go to workshops/conferences to enhance my social and emotional learning knowledge	8.3%	37.5%	50%	4.1%
Q16 It is hard for me to understand the purpose for self-awareness	29.1%	66.6%	4.1%	0%
Q40 I am aware of the importance of self-awareness	0%	4.1%	66.6%	29.1%

Table 3a

Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Inclusion and Special Education
(n=24)

Subdomain

Student Variables	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q7 Students who are 2 or more years below grade level should be in special education classes	0%	16.6%	58.3%	25%
Q8 Students who are diagnosed as autistic need to be in special education classes	13%	60.8%	26%	0%
Q9 All efforts should be made to educate students who have an IEP in the regular classroom	0%	25%	50%	25%
Q10 Students who are diagnosed as developmentally and cognitively delayed should be in special education classrooms	0%	50%	50%	0%
Q11 Students who are verbally aggressive towards others can be maintained in regular education classrooms	8.3%	50%	37.5%	4.1%
Q25 Students who are physically aggressive towards others can be maintained in regular education classrooms	8.3%	62.5%	29.1%	0%
Q26	29.1%	66.6%	4.1%	0%

All students who have an IEP for any reason need to receive their education in special education classrooms

Q27

Students who display speech and language difficulties should be included in all areas of the classroom

4.1%	16.6%	37.5%	16.6%
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Q38

Students who are 1 year below grade level should be in special education classes

4.1%	58.3%	37.5%	0%
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Q39

Students who are identified as depressed but do not display overt disruptive behavior should be in regular education classes

0%	16.6%	62.5%	20.8%
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Table 3b

*Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Inclusion and Special Education
(n=24)*

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Peer Support				
Q4 My colleagues are willing to help me with issues which may arise when I have students with an IEP in my classroom	0%	0%	79.1%	20.9%
Q22 I can approach my colleagues for assistance when needed if I have students with special needs in my classroom	0%	0%	70.8%	29.1%
Q29 My colleagues are approachable when I ask for their advice when I teach students with special needs	0%	0%	62.5%	37.5%
Q37 I feel comfortable in approaching my colleagues for help when I teach students with special needs	0%	0%	79.1%	20.8%
Q41 My colleagues will try to place all of their special needs students in my classroom if I start including students with an IEP in my regular classroom	29.1%	50%	16.6%	0%

Table 3c

*Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Inclusion and Special Education
(n=24)*

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Administrative Support				
Q3 I am encouraged by administrators to attend conferences/workshops on teaching students with special needs	18.1%	45.5%	36.3%	0%
Q14 I can approach my administration with concerns I hold teaching students who have special needs	4.1%	8.3%	75%	12.5%
Q15 I feel supported by my administration when faced with challenges presented by students with behavioral difficulties in my classroom	12.5%	16.6%	58.3%	12.5%
Q20 My administrators provide me with sufficient support when I have students with an IEP in my classroom	4.1%	37.5%	45.8%	12.5%
Q21 I am provided with enough time in the order to attend conferences/workshops in teaching students with an IEP in my classroom	16.6%	41.6%	33.3%	4.1%
Q31 I am provided with sufficient material in order to be able to make appropriate accommodations for	4.1%	45.8%	48.5%	4.1%

students with special needs

Q35

I feel supported by my administration when faced with challenges presented by students with learning disabilities in my classroom

4.1%

16.6%

70.8%

8.3%

Q36

I am provided with monetary support in order to attend conferences/workshops on teaching students with special needs

29.1%

41.6%

20.8%

4.1%

Table 3d

*Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Inclusion and Special Education
(n=24)*

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q5 I feel comfortable in working collaboratively with special education teachers when students with an IEP are in my classroom	4.1%	0%	66.6%	29.1%
Q6 I welcome collaborative teaching when I have a student with an IEP in my classroom	0%	8.3%	66.6%	25%
Q12 Collaborative teaching of children with special needs can be effective particularly when students with an IEP are placed in regular classrooms	0%	16.6%	79.1%	4.1%
Q13 Special education teachers should teach students who hold an IEP	4.1%	33.3%	50%	12.5%
Q23 Regular education teachers should not be responsible for teaching children with special needs	25%	58.3%	12.5%	4.1%
Q24 I like being the only one teaching in the classroom	12.5%	70.8%	16.6%	0%
Q28	33.3%	62.5%	4.1%	0%

I should only be responsible for teaching students who are not identified as having special needs

Q30

Both regular education teachers and special education teachers should teach students with an IEP

	0%	0%	58.3%	41.6%
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Q40

Special education teachers might lose their jobs if I teach children with an IEP

50%	50%	0%	0%
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Table 3e

*Ranking of Thoughts and Feelings Towards Inclusion and Special Education
(n=24)*

Subdomain	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Training/Understanding				
Q1 My education background has prepared me to effectively teach students with cognitive delays and deficits in daily living skills	4.1%	29.1%	54.1%	12.5%
Q2 I need more training in order to appropriately teach students with an IEP for learning disabilities	12.5%	41.6%	41.6%	4.1%
Q16 My district provides me with sufficient out of district training opportunities in order for me to appropriately teach students with learning disabilities	12.5%	50%	29.1%	4.1%
Q17 My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students with behavioral difficulties	8.3%	37.5%	41.6%	12.5%
Q18 My educational background has prepared me to teach students with special needs	8.3%	37.5%	41.6%	12.5%
Q19 I am provided with sufficient in-service through my school district which allows	4.1%	41.6%	50%	4.1%

me the ability to teach students with an IEP

Q32

My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students with speech impairments	16.6%	54.1%	25%	4.1%
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Q33

My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students who are 1 year below level	0%	8.3%	83.3%	8.3%
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Q34

I need more training in order to appropriately teach students with an IEP for behavioral problems	12.5%	29.1%	54.1%	4.1%
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Q42

The educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students who are 2 or more years below level	20.8%	37.5%	41.6%	0%
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